

**Procedural Justice Dialogues to Enhance the Youth-Police Relationship including
VR Technology**

The Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI)

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Abstract

A positive relationship between young people and the police contributes to social cohesion, institutional trust, and public safety. Research has shown that frequent negative interactions with law enforcement can undermine these relationships, particularly among youths from structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods and ethnic minority backgrounds. Procedural Justice Theory (PJT) suggests that police officers' treatment of citizens—whether they (1) treat them with dignity and respect, (2) display trustworthy motives, (3) make unbiased decisions, and (4) provide opportunities for citizens to express their views—shapes their identification with society and law enforcement. In turn, this identification influences trust in the police and perceptions of police legitimacy, two key determinants for lawful behavior and cooperation with law enforcement.

In response to these challenges, the Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) was developed to facilitate positive, meaningful interactions between police officers and youths. The intervention aimed to foster perspective taking and mutual understanding through structured dialogues supported by virtual reality (VR) technology. This study examines the design, implementation, and evaluation of the PPCI across 16 intervention sessions in various Dutch cities, involving over 130 youths and 10 police officers. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study assesses the intervention's impact on youths' perceptions of procedural justice, trust in law enforcement, police legitimacy, social identity, and career interest in policing, measured before and after the intervention. Qualitative data were collected to capture youths' evaluations of the intervention.

Findings indicate that 80% of the youths had a positive experience, and 64% reported feeling able to express themselves during the interaction. Dialogues centered on (1) police decision making, (2) youths' perceptions and experiences with the police, and (3) profession-related topics. Youths particularly valued (1) the VR experience, (2) exchanging perspectives, and (3) the educational aspects of the intervention. Correlational analyses revealed strong associations between procedural justice perceptions, trust, legitimacy, identification with the Netherlands and the police, and career interest in policing. The intervention did not significantly alter procedural justice perceptions, trust, legitimacy, or career interest in policing. Notably, however, identification with Dutch society increased, while identification with the police decreased. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed to inform law enforcement strategies, future research, and intervention design aiming to enhance the youth-police relationship.

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Furthermore, I extend my gratitude to the youth professionals who provided crucial insights into youths' perspectives, emotions, and challenges in their interactions with law enforcement. Their expertise and experience working with young people were instrumental in shaping the intervention's approach, ensuring that it was both engaging and relevant to the target group.

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1. Introduction

A positive relationship between young people and the police contributes to social cohesion, institutional trust, and public safety. Decades of research have shown that frequent and negative encounters with law enforcement can erode trust in the police and diminish perceptions of police legitimacy (Hinds, 2007; Bemer & Schalker, 2021; Fix et al., 2022). When people lack trust in law enforcement and perceive it as less legitimate, they are less willing to comply with the law and cooperate with the police (Farren & Hough, 2018; Bolger & Walters, 2019; Walters & Bolger, 2019). According to Procedural Justice Theory (PJT), the way police officers treat citizens—whether they (1) show dignity and respect, (2) demonstrate trustworthy motives, (3) make fair and unbiased decisions, and (4) provide opportunities for citizens to voice their opinions—shapes their identification with society and law enforcement (Murphy et al., 2022, Chan et al., 2023).

This, in turn, influences trust in the police and perceptions of police legitimacy (Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Nobo, 2022). In other words, police interactions affect people's sense of belonging and willingness to cooperate with law enforcement (Bradford, 2012; Bradford et al., 2014), making them a relevant factor in maintaining public safety and social cohesion. Research suggests that procedural justice by the police is more important for identifying with the national society and law enforcement to young people and those with migration backgrounds (Murphy, 2013a, 2013b; Bradford et al., 2017; Murphy et al., 2022).

1.1. The Need for Inclusive Policing

However, young people, particularly those from marginalized communities, experience policing disproportionately. Ethnic minority youths and those from lower socioeconomic conditions are more likely to have frequent and negative encounters with law enforcement (Roché & Hough, 2018; van Breen et al., 2023). While self-reported offenses show little variation across gender, income, and ethnic background, these groups are overrepresented in crime statistics, pointing to potential biases in policing in the Netherlands (Bemer & Schalker, 2021; Bezemer & Leerkes, 2021; Farren, 2022; Meeusen et al., 2024). Such experiences can weaken their identification with society and the justice system, reducing their willingness to comply with laws and engage with authorities.

Accordingly, these groups frequently report structural unfairness, lower levels of trust, and reduced perceptions of police legitimacy internationally and in the Dutch context (Roux, 2018; Schaap, 2018; van Kapel et al., 2018; Politie Nederland, 2023b, 2024b, 2024c; Meeusen et al., 2024). These negative perceptions are often reinforced by citizens' social environment and widely shared incidents of police misconduct on social media (Jackson et al., 2009; Peirone et al., 2017; Graziano, 2019; Meeusen et al., 2024). Additionally, the same groups often perceive a lack of participation, recognition, and representation in law enforcement (van Kapel et al., 2018; Politie Nederland, 2023b, 2024b, 2024c). Research by Bemer and Schalker (2021) highlights that many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds want to be taken more seriously by authorities and call for greater recognition of their perspectives and needs.

Community Oriented Policing (COP) seeks to address these issues by actively involving residents in law enforcement efforts (Center for Court Innovation, 2015; Barnes-Proby et al., 2023). In recent years, COP has gained attention as an alternative to traditional crime prevention methods (van Sluis et al., 2010; van Steden et al., 2021; Tyler & Nobo, 2022). While the traditional, coercive model relies on deterrence through the perceived threat of punishment, research suggests that this approach is often ineffective and can even be counterproductive. The systematic use of dominant behaviors increases the likelihood of excessive or unnecessary force, and practices such as stop-and-search procedures and over-policing in disadvantaged neighborhoods contribute to biased policing, including ethnic profiling. Such practices can weaken societal inclusion, eroding trust and legitimacy, which may, in turn, reduce legal compliance and cooperation with law enforcement, ultimately hindering effective policing (Tyler, 2011; Kane, 2014; Trinkner et al., 2019; Tyler & Nobo, 2022; van Meeteren et al., 2023).

In contrast, COP focuses on building stronger relationships between police officers and the communities they serve, with the goal of increasing trust, legitimacy, and cooperation. This approach promotes shared responsibility for public safety by fostering regular dialogue, participating in local events, and collaborating with organizations to better understand residents' concerns and develop solutions (Center for Court Innovation, 2015; Barnes-Proby et al., 2023). Research demonstrated that COP could enhance perceptions of the police and promote cooperation between citizens and law enforcement (Hinds, 2009; Mazerolle et al., 2014; Leroux & McShane, 2017; Peyton et al., 2019; Lau & Ali, 2019; Tamela, 2022; Ekici et al., 2022).

COP has been part of Dutch policing since 1977, introduced in response to declining public trust following rigid police responses to 1960s protests. The shift toward area-based policing (*gebiedsgebonden politiewerk*) sought to counteract the alienation caused by hard policing and zero-tolerance policies, particularly among minority groups. Today, this approach is well established in the Netherlands, primarily through the deployment of neighborhood officers assigned to specific areas (van Sluis et al., 2010; van Steden et al., 2021). However, the youth-police relationship remains complicated, particularly among young people from marginalized communities. Despite the potential benefits of COP, interventions designed to improve police-community relations often lack inclusion of vulnerable groups, institutional support, and empirical evaluation (van Steden et al., 2021; Böing et al., 2022; KIS, 2022). For example, van Steden et al. (2021) found that young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and those with migration backgrounds are often underrepresented in COP initiatives. The exclusion of these groups risks reinforcing social inequalities and weakening the effectiveness of policing (e.g. Mazerolle et al., 2013b).

To address these issues, the police must develop targeted community oriented strategies that reduce and mitigate the impact of frequent negative youth-police interactions. The Dutch Police Academy advocates for more inclusive and communicative policing practices to achieve this goal (Team Communication, 2024). Research has shown that positive, constructive youth-police interactions can significantly shape young people's perceptions of law enforcement (Lee et al., 2017; Maguire et al.,

2017; Peyton et al., 2019). Furthermore, Fix et al. (2022) suggest that the absence of positive experiences may be more influential than isolated negative interactions, highlighting the need for positive youth-police engagement.

One promising strategy for fostering positive engagement is youth-police dialogues. These structured conversations have been shown to reduce mutual bias, increase trust and respect, and promote a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives (Hinds, 2009; Mazerolle et al., 2013b; Perez et al., 2021; Barnes-Proby et al., 2023; Cohen & Moore, 2023). By creating a space for open and constructive communication, these dialogues allow participants to share their experiences, challenge stereotypes, and build empathy. Research indicates that intergroup dialogues can significantly improve attitudes toward law enforcement and vice versa (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Mazerolle et al., 2013b; Spencer et al., 2016; Leroux & McShane, 2017). By facilitating meaningful exchanges between youths and police officers, such initiatives can enhance societal inclusion and participation of marginalized groups, ultimately contributing to fairer and more effective policing. These effects seem to be more prominent among minority youths (Perez et al., 2021), making youth-police dialogues particularly relevant for these groups.

1.2. The Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI)

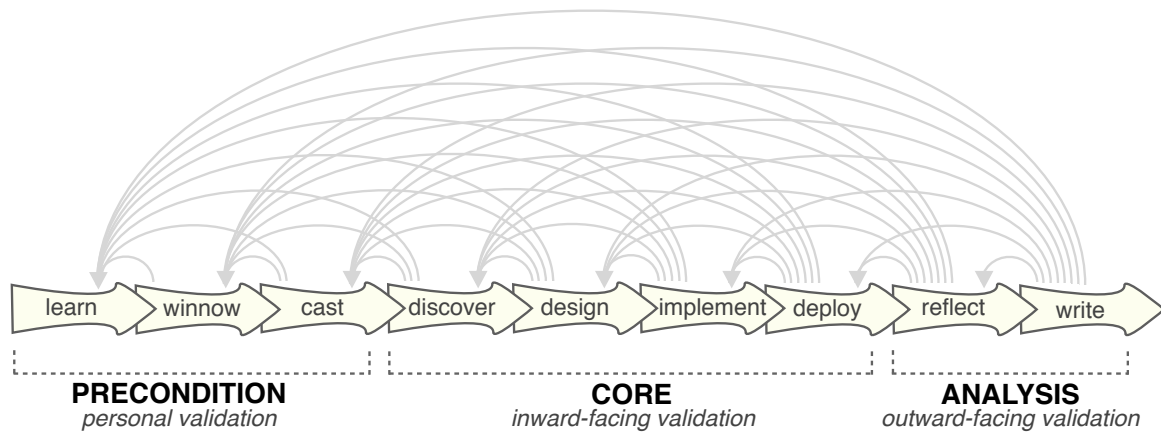
Recognizing the need for structured, positive youth-police interactions, the Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) was developed as an innovative approach to improving youth-police relations in the Netherlands. The PPCI aims to overcome organizational and structural barriers by creating a resource-efficient way for police officers to engage with young people in a meaningful, non-enforcement setting. The intervention combines virtual reality (VR) technology with structured dialogues, providing an interactive platform for perspective taking and mutual understanding.

This study presents the design, implementation, and evaluation of the PPCI, focusing on its impact on youths' perceptions of procedural justice, trust, legitimacy, and social identity. The intervention was conducted in 16 sessions across four Dutch cities, involving over 130 youths and 10 police officers. Using a mix of quantitative and qualitative analyses, this research examines the effectiveness of the PPCI in fostering positive youth-police interactions and explores the mechanisms underlying its outcomes. The findings contribute to the growing body of research on youth-police relations and procedural justice, offering insights into how intergroup dialogues can strengthen trust, police legitimacy, and cooperation. Additionally, this study aims to inform future efforts to improve youth-police relations and promote social belonging in diverse communities.

2. Methodological Framework

Figure 1

Design Study Framework (Sedlmair et al., 2012)



This paper's methodological basis was Sedlmair's et al. (2012) framework for conducting design studies. The framework includes three phases: precondition phase, core phase, and analysis phase. Each phase includes several iterative stages (Figure 1). The *precondition phase* focuses on the groundwork necessary for a successful design study. It includes identifying necessary knowledge, setting up collaborations with relevant stakeholders and allocating responsibilities to the involved parties. After better understanding the problem and outlining a solution path, the *core phase* encompasses the translation of identified challenges into solutions. More concretely, the acquired information is used to design and implement the intervention. Finally, the *analysis phase* is dedicated to evaluating and refining the prototype by analyzing outcomes and collecting feedback. While the framework is presented linearly, its iterative nature is characterized by overlapping stages and feedback loops, allowing for continuous refinement throughout the process (Sedlmair et al., 2012).

3. Precondition Phase

3.1. Learn: Gathering Knowledge

3.1.1. Literature Review

Relevant literature was studied to better understand the dynamics underlying youth-police relationships and interactions. This review showed that youths from disadvantaged neighborhoods, especially those with migration backgrounds, have worse relationships and interactions with law enforcement than their native peers and the average population. The roots and consequences of conflicted youth-police relationships and interactions were analyzed and tools to enhance these relationships were assessed.

Hereby, the core concepts characterizing youth-police relationships, namely procedural justice, trust, legitimacy and social identity, were identified. These are discussed in depth in paragraph 4.1, the discover stage. This section will also explore the endeavors and challenges of community policing initiatives both in the Netherlands and internationally. Understanding both, the effective mechanisms and shortcomings of past interventions is crucial for developing an intervention prototype that considers these factors, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful implementation. Based on the literature

review analyzing youth-police relationships and tools to enhance these, the intervention prototype was developed.

3.1.2. Consultations

Youth criminality, the dynamics of youth-police relationships, and the influence of ethnicity are deeply intertwined and sensitive topics. Addressing these issues requires the involvement of domain experts from different fields to ensure a comprehensive and nuanced approach. Accordingly, meetings were organized with professionals from various sectors essential for developing an effective intervention aimed at improving youth-police relationships. Youth professionals and police officials participated in these discussions. During these meetings, the intervention idea was presented to gather feedback, foster collaboration, and request support for the implementation of the PPCI.

3.1.2.1. Youth Professionals

Understanding youths' thoughts, emotions and behaviors can be challenging. Therefore, professionals who have great experience working with youths were consulted, providing crucial insights into the youths' daily lives, relationships with law enforcement and challenges in working with youths. First, meetings were held with youth officers (Jeugdagenten). They work with youths and their social environment to prevent crime and support their social development through guidance, intervention, and community programs (Politie Nederland, 2017). Youth officers highlighted the importance to approach young people with a positive, open-minded attitude to establish a constructive relationship. Listening to youths concerns and exchanging about everyday events in their neighborhoods is crucial. The youth officers also emphasized the value of creating a network around young people, including schools, youth institutions and parents.

Additionally, meetings were held with a youth worker who possesses nearly three decades of extensive experience across a wide range of social projects, education and methodologies within youth care sectors in Dutch society. The youth worker also stressed that young people often feel disregarded or treated unfairly, which can be addressed by giving them more attention. Creative and playful interventions were mentioned as effective tools to engage with youths, especially when addressing sensitive topics, e.g. discrimination. However, the youth worker also pointed to the difficulty to get young people involved in interventions. Hereby, fun was mentioned as a valuable source to constructively engage with youths. During all consultations with youth professionals, the intervention idea received much approval and support.

3.1.2.2. Police Officials

Next, multiple police professionals were consulted, including project and team leaders. Conducting research with the police can be challenging, as resistance to change and skepticism towards external parties' influence is typical. The barriers for a practical implementation of the intervention and potential paths to overcome these were discussed with the police partners. Implementing an intervention presents several challenges, including obtaining permission, securing financial and material resources, and recruiting police participants. Similarly, finding young people to participate in police initiatives may

be particularly challenging, as they are often hesitant or unwilling to engage with the police. Overcoming these obstacles requires organizational support from police officials who are both willing and able to bring such an initiative forward.

Consultations also offered valuable insights into police perceptions of youth-police relationships. While police officials reported various efforts to structurally implement youth engagement, these initiatives often faced limited success due to the previously mentioned barriers. Additionally, they noted a broader lack of organizational awareness regarding the importance of fostering positive connections with young people, which may, in part, stem from negative preconceptions, particularly toward youths with migration backgrounds. However, officials also emphasized that a significant portion of the police organization recognizes the need for a different approach—one that prioritizes positive, constructive exchanges over forceful policing (e.g. Team Communication, 2024).

In summary, the literature review and the consultations with youth professionals and police officials are an essential component for the development and implementation of the PPCI, enabling a better understanding of the youth-police relationship and implementing community interventions.

3.2. Winnow and Cast: Collaborators and Roles

Sedlmair et al. (2012) defined two critical roles in the design of an intervention prototype: the front-line analyst and the gatekeeper. The **front-line analyst** is responsible for executing and analyzing the project, while the **gatekeepers** are individuals with the authority to approve or block the project. Additional roles can be defined based on the activities and tasks of the various partners. **Translators** facilitate abstracting practical problems into more general concepts aligning with larger domain goals. Additionally, **connectors** built the interconnection between researcher and relevant parties for a successful intervention design and implementation.

3.2.1. Supervisors

The PPCI was developed and tested under the supervision of Peter W. de Vries, assistant professor in Psychology of Conflict, Risk, and Safety at the University of Twente, and Bas Böing, program leader and PhD researcher at Dutch National Police and the University of Twente. Their expertise is crucial throughout the intervention design, testing and evaluation.

The supervisors fulfil multiple roles. Firstly, they act as gatekeepers, holding the authority from the University of Twente to approve the project or intervene when necessary. Secondly, they serve as translators, drawing from their experience in conducting research projects with both the police and youth to provide guidance on research design, including questionnaire development, ethical approval, and document revisions. Lastly, they function as connectors, facilitating collaboration with police officials. Given their involvement in the project, they can be considered co-developers rather than external parties.

3.2.2. Police Partners

Furthermore, to secure institutional support, police officials were approached to assess their willingness and capacity to facilitate the intervention. Two project leaders from the Professional

Controls program (Professioneel Controleren) committed to supporting the PPCI. As part of the Police for Everyone initiative (Politie Nederland, 2023a), which promotes a fair and inclusive Dutch police force, their involvement aligned closely with the PPCI's goals and provided essential institutional support.

The police partners also play multiple roles. Firstly, they act as gatekeepers, serving as the leading police authorities in this intervention with the power to halt the project at any time. Secondly, they function as connectors, actively promoting the PPCI within the police force and facilitating participant recruitment. Lastly, by integrating the PPCI into their Professional Controls and Police for Everyone initiatives, they broadened the focus from the specific issue of youth-police interactions to the wider context of fairer citizen-police relations. This includes promoting a just police, diversity, and transparency by addressing issues such as discrimination.

3.2.3. Other Partners

Additionally, an academic exchange agreement was established with the PhD student who is part of the research team “In Search of Trust”. The PhD student is developing interventions aimed at fostering mutual trust between youth and police officers in the Netherlands. Given the overlap between this research and the objectives of the PPCI, both parties agreed to engage in a professional exchange regarding theoretical and practical matters.

4. Core Phase

4.1. Discover

Adverse interactions with police officers can lead to negative attitudes towards the police generally, undermining youths' cooperation and compliance with law enforcement. This creates a vicious cycle where negative interactions lead to less cooperation and compliance with laws, reinforcing negative interactions. Various dynamics underly this cycle.

4.1.1. Legal Socialization

Legal socialization refers to the process by which individuals develop their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward the law and legal authorities. It encompasses how individuals come to understand and internalize legal norms, expectations, and the legitimacy of legal institutions, often beginning in childhood and continuing throughout life (Trinkner & Reisig, 2021). Legal socialization is shaped by both direct and indirect experiences with legal authorities. Personal interactions, such as encounters with police officers, as well as experiences from one's social environment—including family, peers, and media (e.g., social media)—influence perceptions of the legal justice system (e.g., Cavanagh et al., 2020; Fine & van Rooij, 2021). These perceptions, in turn, shape young people's willingness to comply with the law and cooperate with law enforcement (Tyler & Huo, 2002; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Tyler & Trinkner, 2017; Cheon et al., 2023).

Positively influencing young people's legal socialization involves guiding them to understand, respect, and engage with the law in a constructive and responsible manner. Strategies such as educating young people about their rights and responsibilities, facilitating positive contact with legal authorities,

and encouraging civic engagement (e.g., through safe space dialogues) can enhance their understanding of legal procedures, foster trust, and improve perceptions of police legitimacy. By providing knowledge and fostering feelings of inclusion, these strategies can increase the likelihood of youths' compliance and cooperation with law enforcement (e.g., Geller & Fagan, 2019).

However, positive legal socialization is more complicated for youths in marginalized communities due to a range of unique challenges they may face, including social, economic, and systemic factors. First, minority youths, who are often overrepresented in these neighborhoods, can confront cultural differences. They may come from cultures with different legal norms or traditions, which can create confusion or conflict when navigating the legal system of their host country. For example, practices that are acceptable in their culture of origin may be illegal in the host country, leading to misunderstandings or unintentional violations of the law (Tyler & Trinkner, 2017; Fine & van Rooij, 2021; Cole et al., 2023).

Second, young people in disadvantaged communities have more contact with the police compared to the average populations, *inter alia*, due to increased police presence and checks (Bezemer & Leerkes, 2021; Bemer & Schalker, 2021; van Meeteren et al., 2023; Meeusen et al., 2024; WODC & CBS, 2024). Additionally, youths with a migration background are more likely to experience discrimination and unfair treatment by law enforcement, which can erode their trust in the legal system (Geller & Fagan, 2019; Cavanagh et al., 2020; Kogan et al., 2024). These negative experiences are often amplified by citizens' social environment and social media, where stories of injustice are shared widely, reinforcing the perception that the legal system is biased or unjust (e.g. Jackson et al., 2009; Peirone et al., 2017; Graziano, 2019). This can lead to a cycle of mistrust and alienation, making it harder for marginalized youth to see the law as fair or legitimate. Frequent and perceived unfair treatment exacerbates feelings of exclusion, eroding citizens' identification with the criminal justice system and society. This lack of identification can undermine compliance with the law and cooperation with the police (e.g. Murphy et al., 2018, 2022).

Third, socioeconomic disadvantages limit young people's access to legal resources and education, making them more likely to break the law and face legal consequences (Geller & Fagan, 2019; Perez et al., 2020; Bea & Poppe, 2021; Marotta, 2022). Living in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods may also hinder positive legal socialization due to increased exposure to unlawful behavior and a sense of hopelessness about the law's ability to protect them (e.g. Meeusen et al., 2024). In such environments, young people may come to view the legal system as irrelevant or oppressive, rather than a source of protection and justice. In these so-called high-risk neighborhoods, the increased police presence often results in a higher frequency of negative youth-police interactions, undermining their attitude towards law enforcement (Roché & Hough, 2018; Farren et al., 2018; Farren, 2022).

All these factors undermine minority youths' trust in the legal system and reduce their likelihood of complying with the law and cooperating with law enforcement. Understanding legal socialization helps explain why some youths hold positive attitudes toward the police while others may distrust or

resent them. In the context of legal socialization and citizen-police relationships, three distinct but interrelated variables have been identified as core concepts: **procedural justice, trust, and legitimacy**. Hereby, **social identity** plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' perceptions and interactions within these relationships. These concepts strongly relate to direct and indirect **experiences** between youths and law enforcement. The interconnectedness between the youth-police relationship, social identity, and experiences forms the theoretical foundation for understanding and enhancing the youth-police relationship, thereby influencing the likelihood to comply with laws and cooperate with law enforcement.

4.1.2. Trust and Legitimacy

Trust and legitimacy are fundamental to fostering positive citizen-police relationships. Trust in the police reflects the belief that law enforcement will act with competence, fairness, integrity, and responsiveness to community needs (Jackson & Bradford, 2010b; Oberwittler & Roché, 2017; Schaap, 2018). Police legitimacy, on the other hand, refers to the public's perception that the police have the rightful authority to enforce laws and maintain order (Tyler, 1990, 2011; Jackson & Bradford, 2010a; Hough et al., 2013). These two concepts are closely intertwined, reinforcing one another (Oberwittler & Roché, 2017).

Research consistently demonstrates that both trust and legitimacy significantly influence law-abiding behavior and citizens' willingness to cooperate with law enforcement (Tyler, 1990, 2005, 2006, 2011; Jackson & Bradford, 2010b; Hough et al., 2013, 2014, 2017; Farren & Hough, 2018; Perry, 2020; Farren, 2022). Individuals who trust and view the police as legitimate authorities are more inclined to share information, support community policing efforts, and comply with laws and the police, all of which are crucial for crime prevention and effective law enforcement (Tyler, 2005, 2011; Guzy & Hirtenlehner, 2014; Walters & Bolger, 2019; Politie Nederland, 2023b).

However, young people, particularly those from marginalized communities and with migration backgrounds, often report lower levels of trust in and perceptions of police legitimacy compared to the average population (Tyler, 2005; Murphy et al., 2013a; Oberwittler & Roché, 2017; Farren & Hough, 2018; Farren, 2022; Politie Nederland, 2023b, 2024b, 2024c). This perception can contribute to decreased compliance with laws and the police, reduced willingness to cooperate with law enforcement, and diminished support for community policing (Hinds, 2009; Jackson & Bradford, 2010b; Hough et al., 2013, 2014; Oberwittler & Roché, 2017; Murphy et al., 2017; Farren et al., 2018; Politie Nederland, 2023b). Therefore, building trust and legitimacy is crucial to enhance compliance with laws, willingness to cooperate with police, and support for community policing.

4.1.3. Procedural Justice

Procedural justice is the central source of trust and legitimacy for the police. It refers to the fairness of the processes used by the police in making decisions and exercising authority (Tyler, 1990, 2011; Mazerolle et al., 2014; Roux, 2018). It can outweigh distributive justice, meaning that a fair process can promote positive evaluation of a decision despite unfavorable outcomes, thereby mitigating

negative effects (Krehbiel & Cropanzano, 2000). For instance, a young person is more likely to accept a police officer's decision if they perceive the officer's behavior as fair and just, even if the decision is perceived as negative.

According to Tyler's procedural justice theory, there are multiple aspects determining perceived procedural justice: feeling represented or having a voice, consistency and neutrality of decisions, the benevolence in the motives behind decisions, and being treated with dignity and respect (Tyler, 1990; Hinds, 2009). These components largely determine whether an interaction is perceived as just, significantly impacting individuals' perceptions of trust, legitimacy and thereby their willingness to cooperate or comply with authorities (Tyler, 2005, 2011; Hinds, 2007, 2009; Hough et al., 2013, 2014, 2017; Mazerolle et al., 2014; Farren et al., 2018; Bolger & Walters, 2019; Walters & Bolger, 2019). This relationship is even more pronounced among youths compared to adults, making procedural justice particularly relevant for young people (Murphy, 2013a; Chan et al., 2023).

Marginalized citizens perceive the police as less procedurally just compared to the average population (Tyler, 2005, 2011; Oberwittler & Roché, 2017; Roux, 2018; Schaap, 2018; Farren, 2022; Politie Nederland, 2023b, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c; Meeusen et al., 2024). Direct and indirect experiences of perceived unfair treatment have disrupted some young peoples' belief in just policing. This dynamic can also explain the disparity in trust and perceived legitimacy between citizens with migration backgrounds and those without. Therefore, perceived procedural justice of law enforcement must be promoted to enhance police trust and legitimacy. This can ultimately lead to increased compliance with laws and cooperation with law enforcement, thereby facilitating policing.

4.1.4. Experiences with Law Enforcement and Attitude

Positive encounters, where youths feel heard, treated with respect, neutrally, and with trustworthy motives, reinforce the perceived procedural justice, enhancing their trust in the police and police legitimacy. Conversely, negative experiences, characterized by perceived discrimination, unfair treatment, or lack of respect, undermine perceptions of procedural justice, damaging youths trust in the police and their perceived police legitimacy (Hinds, 2007, 2009; Schuck, 2013; Guzy & Hirtenlehner, 2014; van Sluis & van de Walle, 2015; Maguire et al., 2017; Roux, 2018; Farren et al., 2018).

Moreover, youths' perception of the police seems to be more often associated with the absence of positive rather than specific positive or negative experiences (Fix et al., 2022). However, young individuals from disadvantaged neighborhoods have more frequent and negative experiences with the police compared to the average population, explaining a large proportion of their more negative attitude towards the police (Svensson & Saharso, 2014; Schaap, 2018; Farren et al., 2018; Farren, 2022; Politie Nederland, 2023b, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). The adverse effects of negative, and the beneficial effects of positive youth-police encounters, especially on perceptions of procedural justice, trust and legitimacy, which in turn influence cooperation and compliance with law enforcement, demonstrate the importance to facilitate such positive contact.

4.1.5. Why Contact Works – Social Identity and the Group Engagement Model

4.1.5.1. Social Identities and Stigma

Citizens' social identity plays a crucial role in building law enforcements' trust and legitimacy. Social identity, as defined by Tajfel and Turner (1986) in their Social Identity Theory (SIT), refers to the part of an individual's self-concept that derives from their membership in social groups, such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, or profession. Among other factors, people's social identity is shaped by their interactions and the social contexts they engage with.

Individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics. They adopt the identity of the groups they belong to, internalizing the norms, values, and behaviors associated with those groups, creating a sense of belonging. Individuals then evaluate their own group (in-group) in relation to other groups (out-groups), often seeking to enhance their self-esteem by viewing their in-group as superior or distinct. These processes influence attitudes and behaviors towards other individuals (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Members of outgroups are generally evaluated more negatively, increasing the likelihood of stigmatization and discrimination (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Brewer, 2016). Thus, for instance, citizens with migration backgrounds are likely to view members of their ethnic minority as more positive than police officers, and vice versa. The prominence of a particular identity is influenced by the social context and situation in which individuals find themselves (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In interracial citizen-police interactions individuals with migration backgrounds may become more aware of their ethnic identity, especially if they perceive potential bias or discrimination. This can lead to defiant behavior towards officers as a reaction to internalized feelings of discrimination (Sargeant et al., 2023). In turn, police officers may primarily identify with their law enforcement role, which can lead to fulfilling the stereotypical behavior of a police officer, for instance, displaying discriminating behavior (Burke, 2022).

This activation of stereotypes in intergroup contact influences behaviors and expectations. For example, police officers may—consciously or unconsciously—expect that individuals from disadvantaged communities are more likely to commit crimes, leading to biased policing (e.g., Spencer et al., 2016). On the other hand, citizens expect police officers to be discriminatory, which can result in defensive or aggressive behavior during encounters (e.g. Sargeant et al., 2023). Such group-based assumptions contribute to mutual stigmatization and discrimination. These dynamics can create a cycle of mistrust and conflict, undermining positive interactions and perpetuating tensions between citizens and law enforcement. However, individuals can simultaneously identify with multiple social groups. For example, a citizen with a migration background may identify both with their ethnic minority group (e.g., Moroccan) and the broader national community of their resident country (e.g., Dutch). Similarly, police officers may primarily identify with their law enforcement role but also as part of the national community (e.g., Dutch).

In this context, ethnic or professional identities function as subordinate identities, which refers to specific group memberships. The broader national identity serves as a superordinate identity, referring

to broader categories that unify multiple subgroups (Huo, 2003). Individuals can also hold multiple subordinate identities simultaneously. This means that a citizen with a migration background may also identify with the police force, and conversely, a police officer may identify with certain minority groups. Research suggests that citizens' identification with the broader national society and the police are crucial for effective policing, fostering a sense of moral obligation to contribute to social order and assist the police (Murphy et al., 2022).

4.1.5.2. The Group Engagement Model

The Group Engagement Model (GEM), is a key component of procedural justice theory, also known as the 'social identity mediation hypothesis'. It explains how police officers' treatment of citizens shapes people's attitudes toward law enforcement by influencing their national identification and with legal authorities. Citizen-police interactions carry identity-relevant signals, communicating to citizens their standing and worth within society and law enforcement. Therefore, when police treat citizens with trustworthy motives, respect, neutrality, and give them a voice during interactions, citizens feel valued and accepted as part of society and the criminal justice system.

When citizens feel included and respected, e.g. through procedurally just policing, they are more likely to identify with the group represented by law enforcement (e.g., society or the justice system). This identification encourages them to adopt the norms and values associated with that group, such as the sense of responsibility for maintaining social order. Identifying with the nation or law enforcement also determines citizens' trust in the police and their perceptions of police legitimacy. As a result, they are more likely to cooperate with law enforcement and comply with laws. Essentially, if citizens see themselves as part of the same group as the police, they are more likely to trust officers, view them as legitimate authorities, and feel motivated to support crime control efforts.

On the other hand, if citizens are treated disrespectfully or unfairly, they may feel excluded from society and the justice system. This lack of identification prevents them from adopting the group's norms and values, leading to lower trust in the police, reduced perceptions of legitimacy, and decreased cooperation and legal compliance. In short, negative interactions may delegitimize the police, hinder identity formation with society and law enforcement, ultimately undermining effective policing.

Accordingly, studies demonstrate that perceptions of procedural justice are associated with greater identification with the police and society. The identification with the police and society is associated with increased trust, legitimacy, willingness to cooperate and comply. They also suggest that identification with the police and society mediate the influence of procedural justice on trust, legitimacy, cooperation and compliance, supporting the Group Engagement Model of procedural justice theory (Bradford, 2012; Murphy, 2013a, 2013b; Bradford et al., 2014; Bradford et al., 2017; Murphy et al. 2017; Murphy & Cherney, 2017; Farren & Hough, 2018; Walters & Bolger, 2019; Murphy et al., 2022; Chan et al., 2023).

Research also found that age and social development level moderates the relationship between procedural justice and police legitimacy, with young people being significantly more impacted than

older ones (e.g., Chan et al., 2023). This finding aligns with the concept of social legalization. The social identities of young people are more malleable, making them more receptive for identity relevant information. Since perceived procedural justice in citizen-police interactions carries identity relevant information, these encounters shape youths' identity, thus their perceptions of trust, legitimacy, willingness to cooperate and compliance more than adults'.

In summary, social identity plays a multifaceted, crucial role in shaping citizens' perceptions of procedural justice, trust, legitimacy, their willingness to cooperate with the police and obedience to laws and the police, even more among ethnic minority youths. Hence, fostering both procedurally just interactions and a sense of a shared identity might be a promising avenue to enhance the youth-police relationship and facilitate policing.

4.1.6. Inclusive Policing

The importance of fostering constructive citizen-police relationships has led to the development of Community Oriented Policing (COP) strategies. These aim to build trust, legitimacy, shared responsibility and cooperation in maintaining public safety with the residents. COP shifts the focus away from coercive crime control to proactive engagement with residents. By better integrating officers into communities, this approach emphasizes proximity, problem-solving, and active resident involvement in identifying and addressing local issues (van Sluis et al., 2010; Center for Court Innovation, 2015; van Steden et al., 2021; Tyler & Nobo, 2022; Barnes-Proby et al., 2023).

4.1.6.1. COP: Interventions and Psychological Impact

Traditional, coercive oriented policing strategies, including the systematic use of dominant behaviors, increase the risk of inappropriate and excessive use of force as well as ethnic profiling. Such practices undermine citizens' attitude towards law enforcement, particularly among marginalized groups (van Sluis et al., 2010; Kane, 2014; van Steden et al., 2021; Bezemer & Leerkes, 2021; Trinkner et al., 2019; Tyler & Nobo, 2022; van Meeteren et al., 2023; Murphy & McCarthy, 2024). While abandoning coercive policing practices entirely is unrealistic, reducing and mitigating its negative impacts is essential. However, achieving organizational and cultural change within policing is often a lengthy process that requires both policy adjustments and their effective implementation. To address the issue at hand, practical interventions have been developed and tested to improve the relationship between citizens and law enforcement by facilitating positive, non-enforcement contact through citizen participation.

For instance, Peyton et al. (2019) examined the impact of door-to-door visits by police officers, during which residents were asked about their concerns. Their findings revealed that even a single positive interaction significantly improved citizens' attitudes towards the police, including perceptions of legitimacy and willingness to cooperate, effects that persisted for at least 21 days after the interaction. Notably, these effects were most pronounced among minority citizens. Similarly, other approaches, such as facilitating positive contact through fun activities (e.g., football matches) or mutual community service initiatives (e.g., youths and police officers patrolling their neighborhoods together), have been

shown to improve mutual attitudes (Development Services Group, Inc., 2018; Lau & Ali, 2019; van Steden et al., 2021; Tamela, 2022).

Community meetings are another method to restore the citizen-police relationship, especially for young people and minority citizens from disadvantaged neighborhoods. These meetings aim to create an environment for positive, non-enforcement interactions where participants can openly discuss their perspectives, such as concerns about discrimination. Research consistently shows that dialogue with residents significantly improves mutual perceptions—enhancing citizens' attitudes toward law enforcement as well as police officers' attitudes toward the communities they serve (Nuño et al., 2022; Cohen & Moore, 2023). They also foster sentiments of belonging among citizens (Marder & Kurz, 2023), reduce perceptions of discrimination (Leroux & McShane, 2017), enhance respect towards police officer and understanding for the challenges they face (Perez et al., 2021). These effects are often more pronounced for young individuals, minority citizens, and those who had more negative experiences with law enforcement prior to these interventions (Lee et al., 2017; Leroux & McShane, 2017; Perez et al., 2021). Similarly, citizen-police dialogues increase officers' respect for and trust in the community, but also feelings of respect from residents (Perez et al., 2021).

Decades of research highlight the benefits of Community Oriented Policing, with community dialogues emerging as a promising approach. These dialogues can reduce mutual biases between police and citizens, lowering the risk of discrimination and forceful encounters. By incorporating principles of procedural justice, they also foster trust in the police and enhance perceptions of legitimacy (e.g. Mazerolle et al., 2013b). Consequently, youth-police dialogues can improve cooperation and compliance, protect individuals from unnecessary force, and strengthen support for both community policing and use of force. Hence, creating opportunities for positive, cooperative citizen-police interactions remains essential for effective and inclusive law enforcement.

4.1.6.2. COP in the Netherlands

Community policing in the Netherlands began in 1977 with *A Changing Police*, which called for a shift from traditional policing to community engagement due to declining public trust, especially after the rigid responses to 1960s protests. Early efforts emphasized decentralization, local engagement, and problem-solving but faced internal resistance as officers saw these roles as “soft.” In the 1990s, the rise of organized crime led to a return to hard policing, including zero-tolerance policies, which strained relationships with minority groups. Particularly homeless people, youths and those from ethnic minorities reported feeling excluded and discriminated against. The police force's centralization, completed in 2013, further challenged community policing by reducing local autonomy (van Sluis et al., 2010; van Steden et al., 2021).

To address the conflict between centralization and community oriented efforts, *gebiedsgebonden politiewerk* (area-based policing) was implemented (van Steden et al., 2021). This policing approach includes a multitude of elements, such as neighborhood officers (*Wijkagenten*), digital platforms like *Burgernet*, and youth officers (*Jeugdagenten*) focused on building trust,

cooperation and preventing youth delinquency. Despite these efforts, the youth-police relationship remains complicated. Perceived structural discrimination and high-profile incidents shared on social media have damaged the police reputation among youths, especially among those with migration background.

Therefore, targeted interventions have been developed to rebuild trust, confidence and cooperation between youth and the police. For instance, the program Police for Everyone (Politie voor Iedereen) introduced the youth connection days (jeugd-verbindingsdagen). The youth connection days aimed to counter polarization by engaging professionals and youths on specific topics, such as laughing gas (KIS, 2022). These initiatives were designed using established criteria for effective youth-police interventions (KIS, 2018). Another effort to connect with youths was the implementation of a youth council (Jongerenraad), allowing young people to voice their concerns, for instance regarding discrimination (Politie Nederland, 2022). Additionally, dialogues on stop-and-search practices were organized to address their potential to undermine procedural justice perceptions and trust, particularly among young residents (Böing et al., 2022).

However, such efforts often faced challenges, including limited duration, financial constraints, low participation, lack of empirical evaluation or perceived ineffectiveness in improving youth-police relations (Böing et al., 2022; KIS, 2022). Still, the Dutch police and institutions informing law enforcement have acknowledged the need for effective interventions in this area. An international literature study on community policing has been conducted to inform these efforts (van Sluis & van de Walle, 2015; van Steden et al., 2021). Institutes for social inclusion have also developed and tested guidelines for effective youth-police interventions (KIS, 2018; 2022). Furthermore, the Dutch Police Academy has called for organizational change to foster a shared identity with young people through communicative policing (Team Communication, 2024).

5. Designing the PPCI

5.1. Guiding Principles

Designing and implementing effective interventions requires evidence-based recommendations from past initiatives. The theoretical framework, supported by empirical evidence, has highlighted the potential of youth-police dialogues to enhance mutual attitudes, thereby facilitating policing. This section outlines concrete criteria from evaluations of past interventions, providing actionable insights to increase the likelihood of success for the PPCI. Three key elements have been identified as critical for enhancing citizen-police relationships through dialogues: **representative participation, reconciliation, and procedural justice principles.**

5.1.1. *Representative Participation*

First, representative participation is crucial. As previously elaborated, participation serves as a powerful tool for inclusion and for gaining a deeper understanding of citizens' perspectives. However, many past interventions have failed to adequately include minority citizens, young people, and individuals with lower socioeconomic status. These groups were often either overlooked by the police

or unable or unwilling to participate. Yet, these same groups are frequently identified as at-risk for criminal activity and tend to hold more negative attitudes toward the police. They often feel excluded and report lower levels of perceived procedural justice, trust in the police, and perceived legitimacy. These at-risk groups are also disproportionately represented in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods, which are frequently associated with high crime rates. Therefore, engaging citizens from all groups—particularly those who are often marginalized—is critically important. Participation that lacks equal representation risks being ineffective or even counterproductive, potentially exacerbating feelings of exclusion (Mazerolle et al., 2013b; O’Brien & Tyler, 2019; O’Brien et al., 2019, 2020; van Steden et al., 2021; Tyler & Nobo, 2022; Barnes-Proby et al., 2023).

5.1.2. Reconciliation

Second, reconciliation has been identified as effective trust-building strategy. This includes acknowledging and apologizing for past injustice, combined with a sincere intent and actions signaling change. More concretely, law enforcement representatives should explicitly communicate the intervention purpose. They must explain that community-police dialogues aim to foster better relationships and understanding between law enforcement and the community. This reconciliation approach is specifically relevant when addressing topics like discrimination, which for many citizens triggers strong emotions of injustice, exclusion, helplessness or even hate (O’Brien & Tyler, 2019; O’Brien et al., 2019, 2020; van Steden et al., 2021; Tyler & Nobo, 2022; Barnes-Proby et al., 2023).

5.1.3. Procedural Justice Dialogue

Third, both representative participation and reconciliation should be embedded in a procedural justice dialogue. Concretely, this implies creating an atmosphere which allows the participants to freely express their views on the topic, e.g. ethnic profiling (voice). They should be respected by the police representatives, highlighting that they generally view them as good citizens (respect), whose needs and concerns are being taken seriously (trustworthy motives). Police officers should be transparent about police decision making aiming to be unbiased (neutrality). These principles also imply admitting imperfection and limits in organizational change, e.g. through internal resistance, but can highlight the sincere efforts in progressive policing towards enhanced procedural justice for all citizens (e.g. O’Brien & Tyler, 2019; Tyler & Nobo, 2022).

5.1.4. Specific Criteria for Youth-Police Dialogues

The Platform Inclusion & Community (Kennisplatform Inclusief Samenleven, KIS) conducted a comprehensive study combining a literature review, interviews with social organizations, stakeholders, and police officers, as well as a survey of youths with migration backgrounds (KIS, 2018; 2022). The goal was to identify key conditions and recommendations for improving interventions that strengthen youth-police relations (see Appendix 2). The findings align with the three general principles previously discussed while offering a more tailored approach young residents in the Netherlands. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services developed a Police-Youth Dialogue Toolkit based on various initiatives across the country (Center for Court Innovation, 2015). Together,

these criteria and guidelines serve as valuable tools for designing and evaluating effective youth-police interventions.

5.2. PPCI Procedure

5.2.1. General Approach

Organizational change in policing is often a slow process, requiring policy adjustments, training modifications, and cultural shifts. However, given the strained relationship between youth and the police, immediate and practical solutions are essential. Therefore, the Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) leverages existing personnel and resources to ensure cost-efficient and simple implementation. The PPCI aims to improve mutual attitudes between young people and police officers by facilitating positive interactions and meaningful exchanges of perspectives, including the use of VR technology. It emphasizes physical proximity to enhance officers' familiarity and approachability, as well as community engagement through partnerships with schools and youth institutions. The PPCI directly addresses sensitive issues such as discrimination, unfair treatment, and ethnic profiling. Addressing past injustices is crucial in reconciliation processes.

Aligning with principles of procedural justice, it provides youths with a platform to voice their concerns and being heard on issues that directly affect them. Additionally, police officers can address these experiences and share their side of the story. Ultimately, the PPCI seeks to increase youths' perceptions of procedural justice, trust, and legitimacy by fostering a shared identity with police officers through positive contact and meaningful dialogue. By adopting this approach, young people from marginalized communities can be specifically engaged to support their legal socialization through positive interactions and meaningful insights into law enforcement. Taken together, the PPCI's approach addresses principles of participation, reconciliation and procedural justice by enabling constructive dialogues between police officers and young individuals to exchange perspectives on police work, particularly on police officers' behavior.

5.2.2. Police Officer Recruitment

Police officer participants are recruited by the lead researcher in collaboration with team leaders from respective police stations. The PPCI is presented directly to stations and officers, with participation being entirely voluntary. This approach ensures that only officers genuinely interested in connecting with youths take part, minimizing the risk of adverse interactions stemming from negative attitudes. Limitations of this recruitment approach will be discussed later in the report.

5.2.3. Intervention Sites

Intervention sites, such as schools or youth institutions, are selected by participating officers. The focus is on locations serving young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and those in lower educational levels, such as Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (VMBO) and Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (MBO). Ethnic minority youths are often overrepresented in these settings (Netherlands Court of Audit, 2024). Selecting these intervention sites increases the likelihood of engaging youths who generally have more adverse experiences with law enforcement. This approach

aligns with the principle of representative presentation, including marginalized groups in law enforcement procedures. It also promotes police officers' familiarity with youths in their working areas and vice versa. This can enhance mutual trust and cooperation by reducing biases towards the other group.

5.2.4. Preparation

Participating officers, preferably in pairs, coordinate with the chosen institution to agree on a date for the intervention. During this process, they explain the purpose and planned activities. One week prior to the intervention, officers receive an intervention briefing via email, outlining the procedure and expected behaviors to ensure proper implementation (see Appendix 3).

5.2.5. Intervention Day and Setup

On the agreed date, the lead researcher meets the officers approximately one hour before the intervention begins. This allows for personal introductions, a review of the briefing, and an opportunity to address any questions or uncertainties. Upon arrival at the school, the team sets up the intervention site, which includes VR goggles and a circle of chairs. The circular arrangement is designed to promote equality and open dialogue, avoiding an authority-centered setup. The briefing document is placed nearby for reference during the session.

5.2.6. Phase 1: Introduction and VR

5.2.6.1. Initial Setup and Introduction

Before starting the intervention, police officers distribute a youth briefing, providing an overview of the session (see Appendix 4). Youths are instructed to scan a QR code on the briefing, directing them to an online questionnaire, assessing informed consent and relevant variables. Officers then introduce themselves and the lead researcher, clearly stating the purpose of the intervention: to improve youth-police relationships through positive contact and a better understanding of youths' experiences and perspectives. This introduction emphasizes the officers' commitment to addressing past mistakes and fostering change.

5.2.6.2. Facilitating Open Dialogue

Youths are invited to share their thoughts and experiences related to the police, with officers emphasizing that there are no right or wrong answers. Officers are encouraged to create a relaxed and open atmosphere to stimulate dialogue. When youths share their attitudes or experiences, officers respond with genuine interest, respect, and empathy to build trust and understanding. After this discussion—whether contributions are made or not—the officers introduce the VR phase of the PPCI.

5.2.6.3. VR Scenario

After explaining the VR glasses and informing youths about potential risks, such as motion sickness, the VR scenario begins. Participants experience a stop-and-search situation from the perspective of a police officer. In the simulation, they drive a police car after receiving a report about noisy youths. On the way, a woman on a motorcycle dangerously crosses their path. Upon arrival, participants must choose between approaching a group of youths—who appear to have a migration

background but do not seem noisy—or the woman by her motorcycle. The VR allows various interaction options, such as asking for ID, making an arrest, or engaging in small talk. This scenario, adapted from actual police training, is designed to encourage reflection on decision making in policing.

5.2.6.4. Officers' Role During the VR Phase

During the VR phase, officers adopt a supportive and friendly role, assisting youths and fostering an atmosphere of mutual curiosity and enjoyment. The VR experience serves as an icebreaker, creating opportunities for fun interactions and lighthearted moments. It also highlights shared interests, such as the fascination with VR technology, shifting focus from differences to similarities. By stepping into the role of a police officer, youths gain insight into the challenges and complexities of policing, promoting empathy and understanding.

5.2.7. Phase 2: The Conversation Phase

5.2.7.1. Reflecting on the VR Experience

During the conversation phase, police officers and youths discuss their experiences in the VR scenario. Officers can ask reflective questions such as, “Who did you approach?”, “How did you approach them?”, or “Why did you choose the youths or the woman?” These questions encourage participants to consider the motives behind their decisions, with officers emphasizing that there are no right or wrong answers. This open, judgment-free discussion allows officers to explain how policing decisions are made, stressing that actions should be based on behavior rather than physical appearance. Immersing into the role of a police officer and discussing processes and challenges behind their decision making can create transparency regarding police officers' behavior. Such transparency is crucial for building trust and understanding, especially when highlighting police officers' obligation to take decision based on facts, rather than on physical appearance.

5.2.7.2. Transitioning to Broader Youth-Police Relationships

The initial dialogue serves as a foundation for discussing the broader youth-police relationship. Officers can ask questions like, “How do you generally perceive interactions between youths and the police?” or “What personal experiences have you had with the police?” Again, officers should reassure youths that no experience will be judged, explaining that sharing perspectives helps them better understand youths' viewpoints. This conversation allows both positive and negative aspects of the relationship to be explored.

5.2.7.3. Addressing Concerns and Building Understanding

Youth participants may raise concerns about police brutality or discrimination, often influenced by personal experiences or social media. This opens a dialogue about police misconduct, such as ethnic profiling. Officers must demonstrate genuine interest and a sincere intent to understand youths' perspectives. They should ask for concrete suggestions on how policing can be improved, addressing which ideas are realistic and which may not be feasible. Reaching agreement on desirable behaviors lays the groundwork for mutual understanding and practical steps to improve the relationship.

5.2.7.4. Acknowledging Past Misconduct and Promoting Change

This phase also provides an opportunity for officers to acknowledge past misconduct and explain how it has led to training programs aimed at reducing implicit bias and promoting procedurally just decision making. Questions, doubts, and criticism from youths should be met with empathy, calm explanations, and a focus on reconciliation. Officers can acknowledge ongoing issues like discrimination while emphasizing their commitment to addressing them.

5.2.7.5. Documenting Feedback

Throughout the dialogue, officers should take notes or document youths' experiences and suggestions on a board, signaling their intent to consider this input for future improvements. This approach aims to foster a sense of feeling heard and reinforcing trustworthy motives by showing that the police take their concerns seriously. Whenever possible, participating officers should work in the areas of the intervention sites, enabling them to better understand shared experiences and implement suggested changes effectively.

5.2.7.6. Concluding the Session

The session concludes with officers summarizing agreed-upon points, expressing gratitude for the youths' input, and formally ending the intervention. Youths are then asked to complete the second part of the questionnaire, again assessing informed consent and relevant concepts. If time and space allow, they can stay for further conversations, additional questions, or even replay the VR scenario.

5.3. Empirical Evaluation

5.3.1. Youth Questionnaire

The youth questionnaire assessed the intervention's impact by measuring procedural justice, trust in the police, police legitimacy, social identity, and willingness to work for the police before and after the intervention. The pre-intervention questionnaire collected demographic information, including age, gender, and level of education. Additionally, it assessed previous experiences with the police. The post-intervention questionnaire also explored youths' experience during the intervention (see Appendix 5 for the full item list).

5.3.1.1. Previous Experiences with the Police

Previous experiences with the police were assessed through two items examining the quantity and perceived quality of prior encounters. To measure contact frequency, participants were asked how often they had interacted with the police in the past 12 months. Responses were given on a five-point ordinal scale: "Never" (1), "Once" (2), "2–3 times" (3), "4–5 times" (4), and "More than 5 times" (5).

The perceived quality of these interactions was measured using a single-item scale in which participants rated their overall past experiences with the police on a five-point Likert scale: "Very negative" (1), "Negative" (2), "Neutral" (3), "Positive" (4), and "Very positive" (5).

5.3.1.2. Procedural Justice

Procedural justice was assessed using a three-item scale adapted from Roché and Hough (2018). Participants rated statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree). For

instance, items included statements such as “The police treat people with dignity and respect” and “The police base their decisions on facts, not their own opinions.” The internal consistency of the scale was good (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$).

5.3.1.3. Trust

Trust in the police was measured with a single-item statement: “I trust the police”, rated on a five-point Likert (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree).

5.3.1.4. Police Legitimacy

Police legitimacy was assessed using a two-item scale adapted from Roché and Hough (2018). Participants rated statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree). For instance, items included statements such as “The police have the right to tell people what to do”. The scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .72$).

5.3.1.5. Social Identity

Social identity was measured in relation to three different reference groups: identification with the Netherlands, identification with another ethnic community, and identification with the police. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree) using two items, respectively.

Identification with the Netherlands and another ethnic community was assessed using items adapted from the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). For identification with the Netherlands, an example item was: “I identify with Dutch society”, with the scale showing acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$). For identification with another ethnic community, an example item was: “I am proud to be part of another ethnic community”, with the scale demonstrating acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$).

Identification with the police was measured using items adapted from Radburn et al. (2016) and Murphy et al. (2022). An example item was: “I feel connected to the police in my community.”, with the scale showing acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .70$).

5.3.1.6. Career Interest in Policing

Willingness to work for the police was assessed with a single-item measure: “It is possible that I will work for the police in the future.” Responses were provided on a five-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree).

5.3.1.7. Intervention Experience

In addition to these pre- and post-intervention measures, the post-intervention questionnaire included items evaluating participants’ experiences during the intervention. One item asked: “How did you like the encounter with the police officers?” rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very much disliked, 5 = very much liked). Participants were then prompted to provide open-ended feedback: “Name at least one aspect you liked and one you did not like about the encounter with the police.” Another item asked: “Do you think meetings like this can improve the relationship between young people and the police?” with response options of “No” (1), “Maybe” (2), or “Yes” (3).

To assess perceived voice during the intervention, participants rated the statement: “During the encounter with the police officers, I felt I could express myself,” on a five-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree).

5.3.2. Police Questionnaire

Following the intervention, police officers completed a questionnaire evaluating their experiences with the PPCI (see Appendix 6 for the full item list). Officers were asked, “How much did you enjoy interacting with the young people?” which was rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very much disliked, 5 = very much liked). They were also asked, “Do you think meetings like this can improve the relationship between young people and the police?” with response options of “Yes,” “Maybe,” or “No.” Additionally, an open-ended question prompted them to provide detailed feedback on the intervention: “What did you think of this VR intervention? Please be as honest and detailed as possible.”

Beyond these evaluative measures, the broader police questionnaire collected demographic data, including age, gender, years of work experience, and primary working area. It also assessed police officers’ previous contact with youth, their attitudes toward youth engagement, their identification with young people, the quantity and quality of youth-related training they had received, and their overall evaluation of the PPCI. However, for the purpose of this study, only their evaluations of the intervention itself will be a subject of discussion.

6. Implementation and Results

6.1. The Intervention Days

The PPCI was conducted 16 times across schools and youth institutions in Enschede, Hengelo, Zwolle, and Culemborg, involving 10 police officers and over 130 youths. Sessions took place in various settings, including MBO, VMBO, and HAVO schools, as well as a youth institution, with participation either as part of the curriculum or on a voluntary basis. Each session lasted between one and 1.5 hours. Police officers from different roles—such as Operational Experts, neighborhood officers, and youth officers—led the interventions. Sessions varied in structure, with some being large classroom discussions and others involving smaller group interactions. In most cases, school staff or social workers were present. A detailed breakdown of each intervention day, including locations and participant numbers, is provided in Appendix 7.

6.2. Dialogue Content

The structure and content of the 16 youth-police dialogues varied, but they generally focused on three key topics. First, discussions about the VR scenario, centering on decision making. Second, youths’ attitudes toward the police, including their direct and indirect experiences with law enforcement. Third, profession-related matters, such as police officers’ experiences and education.

6.2.1. Introduction and VR Conversation

6.2.1.1. Youths

The conversation about the VR scenario primarily included three elements: the youths' behavioral choices within the simulation, their reflections on these decisions, and police officers' insights into their own decision making processes. When asked, youths reported whom they chose to approach in the VR scenario—the young people with a migration background on the bench or the motor rider—and how they interacted with them, whether by simply having a conversation, checking their ID, giving them a warning, or even arresting them.

When reflecting on their choices and motivations, different reasoning emerged. Youths who approached the young men on the bench often cited following the order given in the police car, which stated that a neighbor had complained about noisy youths. Others mentioned that the young men appeared suspicious or that they simply wanted to engage in a conversation. Those who approached the motor rider typically pointed to her dangerous driving, the fact that she was smoking a joint, or an interest in speaking with her. Overall, the young men on the bench were approached more frequently.

When reflecting on how they approached either the young men on the bench or the motor rider, many youths chose to check the young men's IDs, issue a warning, or even arrest them. When asked why they conducted an ID check, responses included statements such as, "They looked suspicious", "Because that is what a police officer has to do," "I need to know who they are," or "Because I need to follow the order." Others engaged in a calm, positive conversation, explaining their choice with remarks like, "I just wanted to know what they were doing." Youths who asked the motor rider for her ID or warned her typically justified their decision by stating that "she was driving dangerously" or "smoking a joint".

6.2.1.2. Police Officers

Police officers addressed these motivations in the discussion on decision making, using the guiding question "Feit of Mening?" (Fact or Opinion?). They emphasized that police decisions should be based on observed behavior rather than external factors such as physical appearance or ethnicity. Building on this, they encouraged reflection on the choices made in the VR scenario, focusing on critical thinking rather than determining whether a decision was right or wrong. For instance, they explained that while a neighbor's complaint may be valid, it is not necessarily a reason to intervene. Most police officers clearly communicated that bias must be avoided and that their decisions should be based on objective facts rather than personal opinions.

When introducing the intervention, most police officers expressed their intention to connect with the youth. They used phrases such as, "We would like to talk to you today about police work." or "We want to establish positive contact with you." However, the introduction placed greater emphasis on discussing police work and showcasing the VR technology rather than highlighting the goal of understanding the youths' perspectives.

Additionally, although the VR tool was introduced as part of police training—for example, with statements like, “These VR glasses are used in police training, and we would like to show them to you”—its purpose in training officers for unbiased decision making was not always clearly stated. It was not clearly framed as a tool to address past police misconduct or structural discrimination.

During the reflection on the youths’ decisions in the VR, the focus was placed on the importance of making decisions based on facts rather than personal opinions. In many cases, however, this was not explicitly linked to issues of police discrimination but rather presented as a broader lesson about implicit bias.

6.2.2. Perceptions and Experiences

6.2.2.1. Youths

Regarding youths’ perception of the police, both negative and positive aspects were mentioned, alongside neutral or indifferent attitudes. These perceptions were mostly shared upon request before the VR phase or afterwards. Before the VR phase, many youths appeared hesitant to share their views, often shrugging their shoulders when asked about their perception of the police. However, after the VR experience, most had something to say about their attitudes or personal experiences, especially when being asked directly.

Many youths expressed a positive attitude toward the police, recognizing them as “crucial for society” because they “catch criminals” and describing them as “good people” who are “very helpful.” Others shared concrete positive experiences, such as one youth telling how police officers had helped their mother in a violent situation. Some acknowledged the role of the police in everyday assistance, such as regulating traffic when traffic lights fail.

After the VR phase, job-related questions also arose. Youths were curious about the profession, asking about intense or exciting experiences, such as “Have you ever shot someone?” or “What was the most intense situation you have experienced?”. Additionally, some asked about the process of becoming a police officer or specific roles within law enforcement, allowing officers to explain the necessary education and training. A few even expressed a concrete interest in joining the police force.

Many youths also reported a negative attitude toward law enforcement, describing the police as “annoying,” “unfair,” “unfriendly,” or “useless”. Some individuals expressed distrust, stating that they “don’t trust them,” “always accuse directly,” and “cost money.” Youths also shared concrete negative experiences. For instance, one student recounted being alone when four police officers approached him in a dominant manner. Another described spending time with friends in a park when two large police cars arrived, and officers proceeded to check the entire group. This behavior was perceived as unfair and unnecessary.

Multiple students reported being stopped and checked based on their appearance, despite believing they “didn’t do anything wrong.” These experiences were more frequently mentioned by youths who appeared to have a migration background, though the issue was also acknowledged by others. One particularly frustrated youth expressed anger, stating that the police “never engage in

dialogue, only accuse and check.” In general, when discussing negative experiences, youths almost always highlighted the lack of a normal conversation before officers displayed intimidating behavior, accused them, or conducted checks.

Many negative associations from the youths stemmed from social media. When asked why they held a negative view of the police—such as describing them as brutal or bad people—many youths explained that they had “seen many videos on social media” or “on the news.” Many of those who expressed negative perceptions had not personally experienced negative encounters with the police but instead referred to indirect experiences, either from social media, news reports, or stories shared by friends who claimed they had been “treated badly.”

6.2.2.2. Police Officers

Police officers responded to the youths’ contributions in different ways. When confronted with negative experiences, many showed sincere interest, asking follow-up questions to understand the details and emotions connected to these situations. For instance, some responded with, “And how did you feel in that situation?” In most situations, officers expressed understanding, acknowledging that such experiences “do not feel nice” or “can seem unfair.” They also provided transparency regarding police procedures, explaining, for example, in which situations assertiveness or dominance may be necessary and that ID checks can be important to establish identities. Throughout the sessions, officers generally remained respectful. They also clearly stated that decisions must always be based on facts rather than opinions or superficial characteristics throughout the intervention.

However, in some situations police officers shifted too quickly into an explanatory approach. In several instances where negative experiences or associations with the police were discussed, officers adopted a more defensive stance, responding with statements like, “But it is necessary” or “This is our job.” While some officers successfully balanced explanations with acknowledgement that, in the situations described by the youths, such actions may have been unnecessary, others quickly became defensive and moved on to other topics.

Moreover, in many cases, the conversations primarily focused on reflecting on the VR experience, decision making, and profession-related aspects, while youths’ associations and experiences with the police were explored to a lesser extent. When youths voiced complaints about past police injustice or misconduct, only in rare cases did officers acknowledge these concerns as part of the purpose of the intervention, which aimed to rebuild trust by addressing these past injustices. Apologies on behalf of the police were almost never made.

Furthermore, there was often insufficient time to establish common ground regarding expectations of police work. Some officers asked for youths’ suggestions on how police should have behaved in certain situations. Suggestions were often responded with understanding and genuine explanations on the realism of the expected behaviors. For instance, one youth complained about the lack of a calm, constructive conversations before accusing, dominating and checking individuals in youth-police interactions. The police officer could explain that sometimes these behaviors are necessary,

but that the youth was justifiably demanding an initial calm conversation if possible, leading to mutual understanding. However, agreements that were reached or other contributions made by the youths were not documented in any way.

6.2.3. Different Foci

The focus of each intervention session varied depending on several factors, including location, school type, youth participants, and the police officers involved. At the VMBO school, the sessions were largely focused on youths' perceptions of law enforcement, particularly their negative experiences. In contrast, at the HAVO school, discussions were more general, centering on youth perceptions and questions about the daily work of police officers. At the MBO school in Enschede, discussions revolved around the VR scenario, police decision making, and job-related questions, but youths' attitudes and experiences with the police also played a role.

There were also differences in how police officers engaged in the discussions. Some focused more on the discussions around the VR scenario and decision making processes, others placed greater emphasis on youths' attitudes and experiences. For instance, Operational Experts focused more on the VR reflection and decision making, while youth officers asked more about youths' experiences with the police. This focus was largely shaped by the participating youths themselves—when negative associations were prevalent, discussions centered on addressing these concerns. Conversely, when more neutral or positive views were expressed, there was more opportunity to discuss the VR scenario, police decision making, and job-related questions.

6.3. Quantitative Insights

The data were analyzed using the RStudio Posit Cloud version 4.4.1. In sum, 125 youths' responses were recorded using Qualtrics. Youths with an age below 16 and with missing values were removed. The final dataset for analysis included a sample of 86 participants (48M, 37F, 1O, $M_{age} = 17.26$, $SD_{age} = 1.40$). The analysis focused on procedural justice perceptions, trust in the police, police legitimacy, perceived voice in the interaction, social identity¹ and the willingness to work at the police. Additionally, the role of demographics, previous experiences with the police, and the youths' evaluation of the intervention were investigated. Finally, the dataset included the variables *Age*, *Gender*, *Education*, *Previous Experiences Quantity*, *Previous Experiences Quality*, *Procedural Justice*, *Trust*, *Police Legitimacy*, *Social Identity Netherlands*, *Social Identity Other*, *Social Identity Police*, *Police Work*, *Interaction Quality*, *Intervention Potential* and *Voice*.

6.3.1. Interaction Quality, Intervention Potential and Voice

The questionnaire revealed how the youths perceived the interaction with the police officers. More than 80% indicated they liked or very much liked the encounter with the police and 17% indicated being neutral. Only one youth disliked the encounter ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.73$). The question assessing the participants belief that the intervention can improve the youth-police relationship was responded with

¹ The variable *Social Identity Other* was excluded from the analysis due to participants' difficulty understanding the term "ethnic community" and its lack of statistical relevance.

“Yes” by more than 60%. 35% indicated that the intervention could “Maybe” be beneficial, while the rest, four youths, do not believe in the intervention’s potential to enhance the youth-police relationship ($M = 2.56, SD = 0.59$). With regards to whether the youths felt they could express themselves during the intervention, 64% agreed or totally agreed, 35% were neutral and only one youth disagreed ($M = 3.79, SD = 0.72$).

6.3.2. Correlations

The correlational analyses revealed several interconnected relationships between demographic variables, prior experiences, social identity, and perceptions of the police (see Appendix 8). Age was negatively associated with Procedural Justice ($r = -.24$) and Voice ($r = -.24$), indicating that older participants perceived lower levels of fairness and felt less heard during the intervention. Gender was negatively correlated with Previous Experiences Quantity ($r = -.24$), with women reporting fewer prior police encounters than men.

Participants who perceived higher levels of Procedural Justice reported greater Trust ($r = .75$), Police Legitimacy ($r = .63$), Social Identity Netherlands ($r = .46$), Social Identity Police ($r = .63$), and interest in Police Work ($r = .40$). These correlations suggest that youths who felt the police acts fairly, displayed more trust in the police, perceived them as more legitimate, identified more with the Dutch society and the police and expressed greater interest in Police Work. Trust was similarly associated with Police Legitimacy ($r = .63$), Social Identity Netherlands ($r = .50$), Social Identity Police ($r = .65$), and interest in Police Work ($r = .41$). Police Legitimacy, in turn, was positively linked to Social Identity Netherlands ($r = .48$), Social Identity Police ($r = .52$), and interest in Police Work ($r = .33$).

Voice during the intervention positively correlated with Procedural Justice ($r = .40$), Trust ($r = .47$), Police Legitimacy ($r = .42$), Social Identity Netherlands ($r = .36$), Social Identity Police ($r = .38$), and interest in Police Work ($r = .39$). These correlations suggest that participants who felt they could express themselves during the intervention perceived the police as generally more just, trusted the police more, perceived them as more legitimate, identified more with the Dutch society and the police and expressed greater interest in working at the police.

Previous Experiences Quantity was negatively related to Procedural Justice ($r = -.33$), Trust ($r = -.37$), Police Legitimacy ($r = -.30$), and Voice ($r = -.23$), indicating that participants with more prior police encounters viewed the police more negatively and felt less heard. Conversely, Previous Experiences Quality was strongly positively associated with Procedural Justice ($r = .76$), Trust ($r = .72$), Police Legitimacy ($r = .55$), Social Identity Netherlands ($r = .44$), Social Identity Police ($r = .70$), and interest in Police Work ($r = .49$), suggesting that positive experiences with the police foster more favorable perceptions and stronger identification with both Dutch society and the police.

Higher ratings of Interaction Quality during the intervention were associated with Procedural Justice ($r = .58$), Trust ($r = .52$), Police Legitimacy ($r = .36$), Social Identity Netherlands ($r = .32$), Social Identity Police ($r = .45$), and interest in Police Work ($r = .47$). Similarly, participants’ belief in the intervention’s potential to improve youth-police relationships was positively correlated with Procedural

Justice ($r = .30$), Trust ($r = .33$), Police Legitimacy ($r = .29$), Social Identity Netherlands ($r = .38$), and Social Identity Police ($r = .37$). These correlations indicate that youths who report a high interaction quality and feeling heard during the intervention perceived the police as generally more just, trusted the police more, perceived them as more legitimate and identified more with the Dutch society and the police. Additionally, those who perceived high interaction quality during the intervention also expressed greater interest in working at the police.

6.3.3. Intervention Effects

6.3.3.1. Procedural Justice, Trust and Legitimacy and Interest in Police Work

Paired sample t-tests were conducted to assess changes in perceptions of procedural justice, trust in the police, police legitimacy and willingness to work for the police. The analyses revealed no significant change in procedural justice, $t(85) = 1.40$, $p = .17$, trust in the police, $t(85) = -1.31$, $p = .20$, police legitimacy, $t(85) = -0.18$, $p = .86$, or interest in Police Work, $t(85) = 1.24$, $p = .22$, following the intervention. These findings suggest that the interventions did not significantly influence participants' views on procedural justice, trust in the police, police legitimacy, and willingness to work for the police.

6.3.3.2. Social Identity

Paired sample t-tests were conducted to assess changes in participants' identification with the Netherlands ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.78$) and the police ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.76$). These analyses revealed a significant increase in Social Identity Netherlands, $t(85) = 2.72$, $p < .05$, but a significant decrease in Social Identity Police, $t(85) = -3.85$, $p < .05$. This suggests that the intervention may have strengthened participants' sense of national identity while weakening participants' identification with the police.

6.4. Qualitative Insights - Youths

Following the intervention, the youths were asked to "Name at least one aspect you liked and one you didn't like about the encounter with the police." This open assessment revealed detailed qualitative feedback, offering insights into both its strengths and areas for improvement. Generally, the feedback revealed largely positive evaluations. In total, out of 86 participants, 82 responded the question. Hereby, 72 responses contained positive aspects, while 27 contained criticism regarding the intervention. Hence, 84% of responses included positive feedback, while only 31% contained criticism. Some responses did contained aspects that were unrelated to the intervention could not clearly be identified as positive or negative. The entire list of responses can be found in Appendix 9.

6.4.1. Positive Aspects

6.4.1.1. No Criticism

Ten youths reported not having any criticism. For instance, one participant reported, "Actually, I liked everything and found it educational, there was nothing I didn't like, the police were very friendly" and another said, "I just found it fun, didn't really have any bad points"

6.4.1.2. Perspective Taking

Eleven participants mentioned the exchange of perspectives as a positive aspect, with eleven participants highlighting it. One youth remarked, "I see how the police make choices and now

understand their side." Another participant shared, "I found it interesting to hear their side of the story." Additionally, one youth reported, "It's different to see them in a classroom instead of on the street." Another participant reported, "I really liked the philosophical law perspective." The VR also played a role in this context with one participant stating, "I quite liked the VR because now we have more experience on how the police act than before." One youth highlighted the conversations' potential to exchange perspectives, describing a "calm conversation where you put yourself in another's shoes and understand their opinions."

6.4.1.3. Educational Value

Twenty individuals noted the educational value as positive aspect in their response. For instance, one participant mentioned "the insights into police work", another highlighted "interesting information" and multiple youths liked the "explanations" and "learning new things". One youth reported that it is "Nice to talk to someone who is actually a police officer, (they) find it an interesting field" and another explained that they "really liked it because (they) also want to join the police".

6.4.1.4. VR Experience

The most frequently mentioned aspect was the VR, with 20 participants specifically identifying it as a positive element. Many described it as enjoyable and engaging, using words like "fun" and highlighting features such as "the tasks", "the scenario," and the ability to "experience a case," "fully engage in the case," and "make your own choices."

6.4.1.5. Conversation

Nine participants specifically referred to the conversations as positive. For instance, youths reported having "nice conversations" and that "the questions were fun" while other mentioned the police officers' "stories". One participant highlighted that the officer "has normal conversations with the youth".

6.4.1.6. Police Officers

Twelve youths directly mentioned the police officer as positive. They described them as "friendly", "pleasant" and "social" One person also highlighted the "funny jokes from the officers" and another that they "explained in a nice way". One youth also liked "That the police calmly addressed the youth". One striking statement was a youth reporting "That they were white was not nice, but that they were still reasonable was nice."

6.4.2. Negative Aspects

6.4.2.1. Duration and Monotony

The most frequently mentioned criticism contained comments about the sessions' duration and monotony, with 12 participants mentioning either of the aspects. Five youths described the intervention as "too long", while another found it "too short". Two participants disliked "a lot of talking" and two others criticized "sitting for a long time".

6.4.2.2. VR Limitations

Five participants criticized the VR. Three youths disliked the “fixed choices”, “few choices” and “quality” of the VR. One person noted “having to make so many choices” and another believed the “VR was not necessary”.

6.4.2.3. Conversation, Language and Setting

Three participants would have liked “more time to ask about the profession”, and another criticized that the police officers “didn’t really talk about their daily work as police officers”. Two youths mentioned the group setting. One shared that they felt “uncomfortable to address (the VR case in) a larger group of young people”. Another disliked that some “youths resisted”. Two youths had difficulties with the language, reporting “difficult words” as a negative aspect of the dialogues.

6.5. Police Officers Perception

After the intervention, police officers were asked to evaluate the PPCI. Nine out of ten participating officers completed the questionnaire. Eight officers said they “Liked” or “Liked very much” interacting with the youths, while one officer reported they “Did not like” the interaction. Regarding whether meetings like this could improve the relationship between young people and the police, all officers answered with “Yes.”

In their overall feedback, three officers explicitly described the intervention as “very useful”, “good”, or “nice”. Another described that it was “Very nice to engage and connect with youth in this way.” One police officer reported, “Excellent. You always depend on the dynamics in a group, but the fact that they got a positive experience with the police present in this setting is already a plus.” Another highlighted that “the glasses are a tool for engaging in conversation with young people” and that “level 2 of MBO is an ideal target group for this kind of conversation.”

Three police officers also shared some difficulties. One police officer stated, “Could have been put in a format. This may also be due to my preparation, but I found it too general and unclear.”. Another one mentioned it was “Quite difficult to make contact with the youth (as) they seemed fairly uninterested, but through targeted questions I got better contact.” Finally, one police officer suggested that “perhaps more time in pre- and post-conversation would be helpful in connecting during the conversation.” The entire list of responses can be found in Appendix 10.

7. Discussion

The Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) was designed and tested in 16 sessions across multiple cities in the Netherlands, involving 10 police officers and over 130 youths. The PPCI aimed to improve youth-police relations through positive contact and meaningful dialogue, incorporating VR technology. The analyses revealed relevant insights into the dynamics behind youth-police relationships and whether the Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) may be a useful tool to improve these. On this basis, the discussion informs future research, intervention design and law enforcement strategies.

7.1. The Role of Experiences in Youth-Police Relationships

The analyses revealed strong associations between the quantity and quality of previous experiences, perceptions of procedural justice, trust, legitimacy and identification with the Dutch society and law enforcement. The correlational findings of this study align with a broad range of research conducted in the context of procedural justice theory, social identity theory, and legal socialization, as elaborated in section 4.1.

7.1.1. Frequent Negative vs. Positive Contact

Frequent negative police contact was consistently associated with poorer perceptions of procedural justice, diminished trust, lower legitimacy, and reduced identification with both Dutch society and the police. Youths from structurally disadvantaged communities are particularly vulnerable to such experiences, characterized by increased police presence, perceived unfair treatment, and discrimination. According to Procedural Justice Theory, repeated negative interactions reinforce feelings of exclusion and marginalization, impairing identification with societal norms and values as described by Social Identity Theory and the Group Engagement Model (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Bradford, 2012; Bradford et al., 2014; Murphy et al., 2022; Chan et al., 2023). Consequently, these youths exhibit less trust in law enforcement and perceive the police as less legitimate, ultimately resulting in decreased compliance with laws and reduced cooperation with police officers.

In contrast, youths reporting positive police interactions demonstrated enhanced perceptions of procedural justice, trust, legitimacy, and stronger identification with society and law enforcement. Procedurally just, positive experiences can foster the internalization of societal and criminal justice norms, supporting youths' moral obligations to cooperate with and comply with law enforcement (Hinds, 2009; Maguire et al., 2017; Peyton et al., 2019; Fix et al., 2022). The findings of this study and previous research suggest that positive and constructive encounters between citizens and police officers can serve as "relational repair," mitigating the adverse impacts of past negative interactions (Leroux & McShane, 2017; O'Brien & Tyler, 2019; O'Brien et al., 2019, 2020; Geller & Fagan, 2019). Thus, promoting positive, procedurally just youth-police contact may interrupt the negative cycle, leading to improved relationships, increased cooperation and compliance, and ultimately reducing the frequency and severity of negative interactions.

7.1.2. Implications

The findings of this intervention in conjunction with the findings of previous research underscore the importance of fostering positive interactions between young people and law enforcement. The strong relations between participants' previous interactions with the police, procedural justice perceptions, trust in the police, perceptions of legitimacy, and their identification with the police and the Dutch society identified in this study highlight the potential of positive interactions to mitigate the adverse effects of frequent and negative encounters on feelings of inclusion and perceptions of the police. As a result, this study suggests that law enforcement strategies must aim to foster positive, collaborative engagement with young people, particularly among those with low socioeconomic status

and migration backgrounds. To enhance trust and legitimacy, law enforcement must actively reduce disproportionate and negative contact—such as ethnic profiling—while simultaneously fostering positive engagement.

Additionally, this study found that youths who had a positive experience during the intervention were more likely to believe that such initiatives could enhance youth-police relations. These findings align with previous research indicating that positive encounters strengthen public support for community policing (Leroux & McShane, 2017). Hence, promoting positive, procedurally just police-youth engagement is not merely beneficial for shaping attitudes towards law enforcement but also enhancing participation in initiatives aimed at citizen involvement.

Prior community oriented policing initiatives often lacked the inclusion of these vulnerable groups. This study demonstrates the feasibility of the Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) in proactively reaching these groups and facilitating positive, meaningful exchanges between police officers and youths without extensive resources. As the first widely implemented intervention centered on participation, reconciliation, and procedural justice, the PPCI presents a potential approach for addressing these issues in the long term. To strengthen community-police relations, such structured dialogues should be systematically integrated into law enforcement strategies, particularly to re-engage with young people from marginalized communities and promote mutual understanding. Adopting such initiatives can thereby contribute to social cohesion and social safety, by promoting the integration of vulnerable groups in law enforcement, facilitating positive contact and enhancing cooperation between these groups.

7.2. Identification with Dutch Society

The significant increase in participants' identification with the Netherlands aligns with the broader goals of Community Oriented Policing (COP) and Procedural Justice Theory (PJT). These approaches can foster a sense of belonging and inclusion among citizens, particularly those from marginalized groups, thereby promoting social cohesion and facilitating policing (Roche & Hough, 2018; Murphy et al., 2022). The Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) was designed based on principles of participation, reconciliation, and procedural justice.

The study by Bemer and Schalker (2021) indicate that these groups strongly desire to be taken more seriously by authorities and advocate for greater consideration of their perspectives and needs. Similarly, van Steden et al. (2021) emphasize that young people from structurally disadvantaged communities and those with migration backgrounds are underrepresented in community policing efforts. Furthermore, findings from KIS (2018) reveal that youths believe the police should take a more proactive role in improving youth-police relations in the Netherlands.

In this context, various factors are relevant to understanding how the PPCI may have contributed to an enhanced sense of identification with Dutch society, namely participation, procedural justice, legal education and positive intergroup contact.

7.2.1. Participation and Procedural Justice

The PPCI successfully enabled participation from marginalized groups, such as young people from lower educational backgrounds and those with migration backgrounds. By approaching these groups and actively engaging them in a positive, non-enforcement setting—while also listening to their perspectives—the intervention may have enhanced their identification with Dutch society. Similarly, police officers largely adhered to principles of procedural justice during their encounters with the youths. Decades of research have demonstrated the importance of procedural justice in citizen-police interactions for fostering identification with society (e.g. Murphy et al., 2022; Chan et al., 2023), especially among young people and those with migration backgrounds. Such interactions should allow citizens to express their perspectives (voice), ensure unbiased and transparent decision making (neutrality), treat individuals with dignity and presume goodwill (respect), and demonstrate a genuine commitment to community needs (trustworthy motives) (Tyler, 1990).

During the dialogues, officers generally took care to treat the young people with dignity and respect by acknowledging each person's experiences, asking follow-up questions about their feelings, and maintaining a calm, non-judgmental tone—even when youths shared negative encounters. They aimed to convey trustworthy motives by explaining that the purpose of the sessions was to build understanding rather than enforce rules, often showing genuine curiosity about the youths' perspectives on police work. The principle of transparent, neutral and unbiased decision making was highlighted particularly in the VR reflection. During these reflections officers explained that they must take decisions based on observable facts rather than appearances, underscoring how real-world policing must avoid snap judgments or profiling. Finally, the PPCI addressed the principle of voice by explicitly encouraging youths to share personal experiences. Aligning with Procedural Justice Theory (Tyler, 1990) and the Group Engagement Model (Tyler & Blader, 2003), displaying these behaviors during the dialogues may have contributed to youths feeling more like accepted and valued members of society, thereby enhancing their identification with Dutch society.

7.2.2. Legal Education

Legal socialization describes the process through which individuals develop their understanding of and respect for the law and legal institutions. Experiences with legal authorities and educating citizens about their legal rights and obligations are key factors in promoting positive legal socialization (Tyler & Huo, 2002; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Tyler & Trinkner, 2017; Perez et al., 2020; Cheon et al., 2023; Pradanna & Irawan, 2024). Many youths highlighted the educational aspects of the intervention, particularly the insights into police decision making and the legal principles guiding law enforcement. For example, the VR scenario allowed participants to experience the complexities of police work, emphasizing that officers must base their decisions on facts rather than personal opinions. In addition, the vast majority of sessions included a presentation (see Appendix 11) about youths' obligation to carry and show their ID when requested by a police officer, as well as police officers' legal obligation to base their decisions on facts, not superficial characteristics like ethnicity or gender.

Legal socialization and identification with society are closely related, reinforcing each other, and both significantly influencing perceptions of the police (Tyler & Huo, 2002; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Tyler & Trinkner, 2017; Perez et al., 2020; Cheon et al., 2023). By educating youths about their rights and the responsibilities of law enforcement, the PPCI may have helped demystify the legal system, thereby positively influencing legal socialization. A better understanding of police officers' behavior—particularly the transparency on obligatory neutrality and unbiased decision making—may have reinforced the idea that the legal system must protect and serve all citizens. This, in turn, may have fostered a sense of inclusion in the Dutch society. The process of legal socialization is especially important for young people from marginalized communities, who often have limited access to legal education (Geller & Fagan, 2019; Bea & Poppe, 2021; Marotta, 2022).

7.2.3. Positive Intergroup Contact

Additionally, positive intergroup contact can play a crucial role in fostering a shared identity. According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), when individuals engage in positive interactions with members of an outgroup, they are more likely to perceive themselves as part of a larger, inclusive social category. In line with this, research investigating the effects of citizen-police dialogues has found that meaningful engagement can improve mutual attitudes and cooperation. A shared national identity can help reduce prejudice, mitigate intergroup conflict, and promote social cohesion by reinforcing a sense of belonging and mutual respect (Mazerolle et al., 2013b; Lee et al., 2017; Leroux & McShane, 2017; Perez et al., 2021; Nuño et al., 2022; Marder & Kurz, 2023). While most studies found that a shared social identity with law enforcement mediates the effect of procedural justice – as suggested by PJT and the GEM – this study suggests that youth-police dialogues may have an independent effect on youths' national identification, regardless of its impact on procedural justice, trust and legitimacy.

7.2.4. Implications

In conclusion, the PPCI's guiding principles emphasizing positive contact, participation, legal education and procedural justice likely contributed to youths' increased identification with Dutch society. Strengthened national identification—encompassing a heightened sense of belonging—has far-reaching benefits. It fosters social integration, encourages cooperation with law enforcement, and enhances overall societal cohesion. Importantly, when young people from structurally disadvantaged communities feel a greater sense of belonging, it can positively impact their well-being, compliance with laws, and cooperation with law enforcement.

These findings underscore the potential of procedurally just youth-police dialogues in promoting youths' identification with Dutch society. However, it remains unclear whether the discussed factors actually accounted for the increase in national identification. While participation, procedural justice, legal education, and positive intergroup contact are plausible explanations for the observed increase in youths' identification with Dutch society, other factors might also have influenced these outcomes. For instance, social desirability bias may have encouraged participants to report higher identification

following the interaction with authority figures like police officers. Therefore, future research should investigate whether perceived participation, procedural justice and legal education explains an increase in national identification following the youth-police dialogues.

7.3. Identification with the Police

The observed decrease in youths' identification with law enforcement requires careful consideration, as it seems counterintuitive, contradicting expectations based on positive intergroup contact, procedural justice theory, legal socialization and the observed enhanced identification with Dutch society following the intervention.

7.3.1. Discussing Grievances

One possible explanation lies in the specific nature of the dialogue facilitated during the intervention. While the PPCI aimed to foster positive interactions, it also created a space for participants to voice grievances and share negative experiences with law enforcement. This open dialogue, while essential for building mutual understanding, may have inadvertently heightened participants' awareness of existing tensions and reinforced their perception of the police as an outgroup.

The discussions often brought up police officers' dominant and intimidating behavior, with youths expressing frustration over being immediately accused or subjected to unnecessary identification checks rather than being approached with a simple conversation. Engaging in these discussions may have activated perceptions of power asymmetry and feelings of powerlessness, strengthening an "us and them" dynamic rather than fostering identification with law enforcement. In line with that, studies showed that discussions on unfair behavior reported by peers and social media can undermine perceptions of the police (Jones & Skarlicki, 2005; Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Graziano, 2019). While providing young people with the opportunity to express their opinions on law enforcement may have enhanced their feelings of inclusion in Dutch society, it might inadvertently have created distance in their identification with the police.

7.3.2. Experiencing Police Authority

Additionally, the VR scenario used in the intervention may have contributed to this distancing effect. By immersing participants in the role of a police officer, the VR experience allowed them to exercise authority over virtual individuals. Given that research suggests VR experiences can elicit realistic emotional responses, this hands-on exposure to police authority may have intensified participants' awareness of the power imbalance between law enforcement and citizens. This experience of exercising authority might have reinforced the perception of social distance between youths and the police.

In other words, the sudden transition from being in control (as an officer) to being "subjected" to real-life authority could highlight the user's lack of power in reality, making the difference feel even more pronounced than before. This effect is not examined in research yet, providing a path for future investigation. A proposed term is Power Reversal Effect, describing the potentially heightened perception of authority after shifting from the authority position back to the subordinate position.

7.3.3. Lack of Common Ground

Last, the dialogues during the intervention did not sufficiently emphasize shared goals, agreements, or similarities between police officers and youths, which could have fostered a sense of identification with law enforcement. Research on intergroup contact theory and youth-police dialogues suggests that highlighting commonalities between groups can reduce prejudice and enhance mutual identification (Allport, 1954; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; KIS, 2018, 2022). By focusing primarily on grievances and power imbalances, the conversations may have missed opportunities to reinforce the idea that both groups ultimately share a common interest in community safety, fostering mutual respect or other topics unrelated to law enforcement. Emphasizing common ground could have helped perceive police officers as part of their ingroup rather than as a distant outgroup.

In summary, conversations about police misconduct and the firsthand experience of police authority in the VR scenario may have activated an ingroup-outgroup mentality, contributing to a decline in identification with law enforcement. The lack of highlighting common ground likely failed to counteract the social distancing effect from police officers caused by these conversations. However, this shift may be context-dependent rather than permanent. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests that social identities are fluid and shaped by situational factors.

Therefore, long-term studies are needed to assess whether the identity shifts remain or reverse over time. Investigating the permanence of the effects and better understanding its underlying mechanisms is crucial. Reduced identification with law enforcement can undermine trust and perceptions of legitimacy, which, in turn, may hinder cooperation with the police and legal compliance (Murphy et al., 2022). This finding outlines paths for future research, investigating whether conversations about police grievances and authority may invertedly undermine youths' identification with the police and how this effect can be prevented. Additionally, given the discrepancy in the intervention's effects—showing an increase in identification with Dutch society but a decrease in identification with the police—future research should investigate how structured youth-police dialogues on police work influence both identification with Dutch society and identification with law enforcement.

7.4. Effects on Procedural Justice, Trust and Legitimacy

The analyses did not reveal significant changes in youths' perceptions of procedural justice, trust, and legitimacy following the intervention. The absence of significant changes in youths' perceptions may be attributed to several factors.

7.4.1. The One-Time Nature

First, perceptions of the police are often deeply rooted and shaped by long-standing experiences, societal narratives, and media portrayals. Changing these perceptions may require more than a single intervention, especially in contexts where youths have frequent negative interactions with law enforcement. Research suggests that trust and legitimacy are built over time through consistent, positive experiences, and a one-time intervention may not be sufficient to significantly alter attitudes (Tyler, 1990; 2006; Jackson & Bradford, 2010a; Paluck et al., 2017). Therefore, future research should examine

how repeated structured youth-police dialogues influence attitudes over time. Longitudinal studies could assess whether multiple interventions foster stronger and lasting improvements in perceptions of the police.

7.4.2. *Baseline Levels*

Second, the baseline perceptions of procedural justice, trust, and legitimacy in this study were already relatively high. This may have limited the potential for significant improvement, as there was less room for change compared to contexts where initial perceptions are more negative. Studies have shown that interventions are often more effective in improving attitudes among individuals with lower baseline perceptions of procedural justice, trust or police legitimacy (Mazerolle et al., 2013b; Lee et al., 2017; Peyton et al., 2019; Perez et al., 2021). The largely positive perceptions of the police in this study may be attributed to youths providing socially desired responses. However, this may also be attributed to a lack of sensitive setting in the testing of the PPCI. Therefore, future research should predominantly test the intervention in settings where youths hold lower perceptions of procedural justice, trust or police legitimacy to assess whether the effects are stronger in such contexts.

7.4.3. *The Lack of Reconciliation and Voice*

7.4.3.1. *Reconciliation*

Reconciliation can be a powerful tool for repairing relationships between citizens and law enforcement. This implies acknowledging past misconduct and demonstrating a commitment to change (O'Brien & Tyler, 2019; O'Brien et al., 2019, 2020). Without explicit efforts toward reconciliation, interventions risk being perceived as attempts to enhance law enforcement's reputation rather than genuine efforts to improve fairness in policing (Mazerolle et al., 2013).

The PPCI did not consistently emphasize reconciliation. The way the intervention was introduced often focused on police work and the VR police training rather than highlighting the intent to improve youth-police relationships through mutual perspective taking. While the VR scenario provided an opportunity to immerse in the police officer's perspective and reflect on decision making, it was not clearly framed as a tool to tackle issues like ethnic profiling or structural discrimination. As a result, participants may not have connected the intervention and the VR with broader efforts to enhance fairness in policing. Furthermore, when youths brought up concerns about discrimination or unfair treatment, some officers reacted defensively rather than acknowledging these experiences. This approach may have unintentionally reinforced skepticism toward law enforcement's intent to change.

Without clear reconciliation efforts, youths may have viewed the intervention as more about educating them on policing rather than progressing in how law enforcement approaches young people. This could explain why no significant changes were observed in procedural justice, police legitimacy, and trust. Future interventions should investigate whether applying reconciliation practices may enhance the effects of the intervention.

7.4.3.2. Voice

Allowing citizens to express themselves during police encounters is a core element of procedural justice. When individuals feel that their voices are heard and their concerns are taken seriously, they are more likely to perceive law enforcement as fair and legitimate and trust them more (Tyler, 1990, 2006; Mazerolle et al., 2013a; Murphy et al., 2013). While the police officers did ask youths for their views of the police, the focus was often on explaining police work rather than engaging deeply with youths' perspectives. Additionally, officers did not document or follow up on youths' contributions. For example, there was no explanation of how their contributions would be processed or acted upon.

While procedural justice dialogues generally improve trust, police legitimacy, cooperation and compliance, if citizens perceive the efforts as insincere or ineffective, it can lead to greater dissatisfaction. Some studies suggest that ineffective community policing efforts may fail to meet citizen expectations, leading to disappointment and further erosion of trust (Mazerolle et al., 2013b). The findings of this study show that two-thirds of participants felt they could express themselves during the intervention. However, the fact that one-third did not feel this way, coupled with the lack of documentation or follow-up on youths' contributions, may have limited the impact of providing a platform for expression on perceptions of procedural justice, police legitimacy, and trust.

7.4.3.3. Implications

In sum, the insufficient emphasis on the principles of reconciliation and voice may have limited the PPCI's impact on youths' perceptions of procedural justice, police legitimacy, and trust. This observation aligns with prior research examining the effects of procedural justice dialogues on such perceptions and the factors that may undermine their effectiveness (O'Brien & Tyler, 2019; O'Brien et al., 2019, 2020; Mazerolle et al., 2013b). The briefing component of the intervention did not adequately prepare officers to address negative experiences or associations with policing in a reconciling manner, nor did it sufficiently convey the interventions' emphasis on exploring youths' attitudes. Additionally, some police officers did not read the briefing before the intervention. The lack of preparation may have led to inconsistencies in the implementation and the failure to sufficiently address principles of reconciliation and voice.

As a result, future structured dialogues must prioritize thorough preparation, equipping officers with the knowledge and tools necessary to address these principles effectively during youth-police interactions. This is critical to avoid unintended consequences, such as reinforcing distrust and skepticism, while increasing the likelihood of fostering positive perceptions of procedural justice. Ultimately, this refined approach may promote greater cooperation with the police and compliance with laws by enhancing trust in the police and their legitimacy.

7.5. Final Evaluation

7.5.1. Strengths

The development and evaluation of the Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) have provided valuable insights into its feasibility for fostering positive exchanges between young people and

police officers, the dynamics of their relationship, and the intervention's impact on key aspects shaping that relationship. The PPCI overcame structural barriers often faced by community oriented interventions, such as targeting vulnerable groups, a lack of institutional support, low participation rates, and limited empirical evaluation.

The intervention was supported by the Dutch National Police's anti-discrimination initiative, Police for Everyone, which played a pivotal role in promoting the PPCI, providing resources, and recruiting participants. Conducted 16 times across multiple cities in the Netherlands, the PPCI engaged 10 police officers and over 130 youths, making it the largest structured, dialogue-based intervention aimed at improving youth-police relations in the country. The University of Twente also supported the initiative, ensuring adherence to ethical and academic standards in the design, execution, and evaluation of the intervention. Furthermore, conducting the interventions in schools aligns with the principles of community policing, emphasizing the importance of enhancing officer familiarity through proximity and approachability to reduce barriers to contact. It also highlights the value of institutional cooperation in building networks that facilitate positive citizen-police interactions.

The PPCI demonstrated its feasibility in fostering constructive exchanges between law enforcement and marginalized groups, particularly young people from lower educational backgrounds. By enabling participation, reconciliation, and procedurally just interactions through structured dialogues supported by VR technology, the PPCI introduced an innovative approach to improving youth-police relations, both in the Netherlands and internationally.

The empirical assessment allowed for a thorough evaluation of the intervention's impact on youths' perceptions of the police. Participant feedback provided valuable insights for refining the intervention and underscored the interconnectedness of police encounter frequency and quality with perceptions of procedural justice, trust, police legitimacy, and social identity, as suggested by prior research. Notably, the intervention significantly increased participants' identification with Dutch society, likely due to its emphasis on youth participation, adherence to procedural justice principles, and provision of legal education. Overall, the development and testing of the PPCI demonstrated the importance and feasibility of facilitating positive engagement between law enforcement and young people through structured dialogues enhanced by VR technology.

7.5.2. Limitations and Future Steps

Despite these strengths, several limitations must be acknowledged to inform future initiatives aimed at enhancing youth-police relations. The PPCI did not significantly alter youths' perceptions of procedural justice, trust, or police legitimacy. This may be attributed to insufficient reconciliation practices, limited opportunities for participants to express themselves, and a lack of common ground established between police officers and youths. These factors, compounded by discussions on law enforcement grievances and the experience of police authority in the VR environment, may have contributed to a decline in youths' identification with the police. Additionally, the one-time nature of

the intervention and the high initial levels of positive perceptions of the police among participants may have limited its overall impact on youths' attitudes toward law enforcement.

These findings and interpretations align with previous research and offer valuable guidance for future youth-police interventions and research. First, the structure and officer briefing process should be refined to ensure the adequate and appropriate application of reconciliation practices. More time should be dedicated to exploring youths' opinions and establishing mutual agreements between youths and police officers. A tool could be developed to document youths' contributions and agreements, ensuring their perspectives are preserved and underscoring officers' trustworthy intentions. This refined approach, emphasizing reconciliation, opportunities for self-expression, and the establishment of common ground, may mitigate adverse effects from discussions about grievances and police authority while enhancing the PPCI's potential to positively influence youths' perceptions of law enforcement.

Moreover, future efforts to improve youth-police relations would benefit from repeated interventions in more sensitive settings—those with initially lower perceptions of law enforcement. This approach could increase the intervention's potential impact by addressing deeply rooted attitudes among marginalized groups through sustained engagement. Research also suggests that involving youths in the development of such interventions can help better meet the needs and desires of the target group while fostering a sense of ownership, thereby enhancing the intervention's effectiveness in improving relationships (KIS, 2018).

Another limitation was the selection bias among participating police officers. The voluntary nature of participation meant that only officers already motivated to engage with youths took part. While this likely contributed to positive interactions, it excluded officers with more skeptical or negative views of young people from marginalized communities. As a result, this initial version of the PPCI did not address potential negative attitudes or skill gaps among police officers regarding positive and constructive youth engagement. However, addressing these issues is crucial for promoting a broader organizational shift in how law enforcement interacts with these groups. Future implementations should aim to include a more diverse range of officers while ensuring proper training to maintain positive engagement.

The improved briefing, structure, and implementation of the intervention should be accompanied by a refined empirical assessment. The empirical analysis in this study revealed several areas for adjustment to gain a more precise understanding of the dynamics underlying youth-police relations and the intervention's impact. For instance, mutual empathy may play a significant role in intergroup contact, complementing assessments that focus primarily on law enforcement. Additionally, the discrepancy in identity shifts—where youths' identification with society increased while their identification with the police decreased—highlights the need to better understand the mechanisms driving these changes. Future research should investigate the roles of perceived participation, reconciliation, legal education, and common ground in shaping the intervention's impact on youths' social identity. Furthermore, the items assessing youths' identification with non-Dutch national

communities could not be utilized. A refined empirical assessment should incorporate measures to determine youths' migration backgrounds or socioeconomic status, enabling the identification of differences across societal groups. Longitudinal studies and more extensive qualitative assessments would also strengthen the evaluation by capturing long-term attitudinal changes and minimizing socially desirable responses in self-reported measures.

8. Conclusion

Fostering positive interactions between law enforcement and young people, particularly those from marginalized communities, is essential for promoting social cohesion and public safety. This study demonstrated the importance of structured youth-police dialogues in improving mutual understanding and engagement. Following the principles of participation, reconciliation, and procedural justice, the Positive Police Contact Intervention (PPCI) provided a platform for meaningful exchanges between police officers and youths, integrating VR technology as a tool to enhance perspective taking and discussion.

The PPCI successfully addressed common barriers to community oriented interventions, such as the inclusion of marginalized groups, limited institutional support, low participation rates, and the lack of empirical evaluation. The dialogues centered on three core themes: (1) police decision making, (2) youths' perceptions and experiences with law enforcement, and (3) profession-related topics. Participants particularly valued (1) the VR experience, (2) exchanging perspectives with police officers, and (3) the educational aspects of the intervention. Correlational analyses revealed strong associations between police encounter frequency and quality, procedural justice perceptions, trust, legitimacy, social identity, and career interest in law enforcement. Notably, identification with Dutch society significantly increased, suggesting that the intervention's emphasis on participation, procedural justice and legal education may have reinforced feelings of social inclusion, thereby promoting the national identity.

However, the PPCI did not lead to significant changes in perceptions of procedural justice, trust, police legitimacy, or career interest in policing. The one-time nature of the intervention, high baseline levels, and the limited integration of reconciliation practices and room for expression may have constrained its impact. Additionally, identification with law enforcement decreased, likely due to discussions on police misconduct and the experience of exercising police authority in the VR scenario, which may have heightened awareness of power imbalances and reinforced social distancing.

Future initiatives should prioritize improved intervention structure and briefing for police officers, long-term implementation in more challenging settings, and a refined empirical evaluation. Based on the strengths and limitations identified in this study, a revised version of the intervention (PPCI 2.0) will be developed and tested as part of the Dutch National Police's anti-discrimination initiative, Police for Everyone (Politie voor Iedereen). This study provided theoretical and practical insights to inform future research and intervention development, suggesting the potential of structured dialogues in strengthening youth-police relations.

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Appendix 1

AI Statement

During the preparation of this work, I used ChatGPT for language revision. After using this tool/service, I thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed, taking full responsibility for the final outcome.

Appendix 2

Criteria for Youth-Police Dialogues (Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving, 2018)

CHECKLIST BIJ DE AANPAK

Het vertrouwen vergroten tussen jongeren en politie



Waarom moeten interventies voldoen die het vertrouwen tussen jongeren en politie vergroten? Welke voorwaarden en criteria zijn daarbij van belang? Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving heeft dit inzichtelijk gemaakt. Dat is gedaan op basis van een literatuurstudie, gesprekken met diverse maatschappelijke organisaties, betrokkenen en de politie, en een survey onder 55 jongeren met een migratieachtergrond.

ALGEMENE CRITERIA	AANBEVELINGEN TER STIMULERING VAN ACTIEVE BETROKKENHEID DOOR JONGEREN	CRITERIA ALS JE DIALOGOMETHODE INZET
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Neem gelijkwaardigheid als uitgangspunt in de interventie.2 Breng de omgevingsfactoren en specifieke achtergronden van de jongeren en politie in beeld.3 Laat het doel van de interventie aansluiten op de realiteit en ervaringen van de jongeren en de politie.4 Creëer een gemeenschappelijk uitgangspunt waar beide partijen achter kunnen staan.5 Kies voor een activiteit die aansluit op de interesse van de beide partijen en het doel van de interventie.6 Sluit aan op de taal van de beide partijen, vooral die van jongeren.7 Zorg voor diversiteit bij de deelnemers.8 Evalueer, onderbouw en verduurzaam de interventie.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Betrek jongeren in alle fases van een interventie (van ontwikkeling tot uitvoering).2 Laat jongeren op verschillende niveaus participeren.3 Creëer eigenaarschap onder de jongeren.4 Neem jongeren serieus en respecteer hun mening.5 Politie, neem initiatief!6 Beloon en/of compenseer deelname van jongeren.7 Stem de interventie af op de leeftijd en ontwikkelingsfase van de jongeren.8 Maak de resultaten concreet en zichtbaar.9 Bereik de jongeren in hun eigen leefomgeving.10 Maak gebruik van rolmodellen.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Ontmoet in 'vredetijd'.2 Zet kennis in om vooroordelen te verminderen.3 Zie goede voorbeelden niet als de uitzondering op de regel.4 Hanteer een positieve sociale norm over de jongeren en de politie.5 Werk samen zonder competitie.6 Werk op basis van vrijwillige deelname.7 Wek empathische gevoelens op.
TIPS EN ADVIEZEN BIJ HET VERBETEREN VAN DE BEELDVORMING OP SOCIAL MEDIA		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Bied een positief (alternatief) geluid.2 Houd controle over de berichtgeving.3 Negatieve filmpjes? Verklaar en bied context.4 Let op de toon van de boodschap: humor helpt.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5 Plaats berichten die prikkeling veroorzaken.6 Hanteer een sociale norm in je bericht.7 Bedenk vooraf goed door wie het bericht wordt verspreid.8 Meet het effect van de inzet van social media.	

Deze checklist bundelt de belangrijkste bevindingen uit de handreiking van KIS. Download de volledige handreiking voor een uitgebreidere uitleg van de criteria en tips en adviezen.

Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving is een programma van het Verwey-Jonker Instituut en Movisie
T 030 230 32 60 E info@kis.nl I www.kis.nl



Appendix 3

Police Briefing

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**UNIVERSITY
OF TWENTE.**



De Positieve Politie Contact Interventie (PPCI): De relatie tussen jeugd en politie verbeteren met VR-technologie

Briefing

Het doel van deze interventie is om de relatie tussen jongeren en de politie te verbeteren. Dit wordt bereikt door middel van een gezamenlijke Virtual Reality (VR) ervaring en een gesprek tussen politieagenten en jeugddeelnemers.

Voor de interventie:

- **Aankomst en opstelling:** Kom aan op de afgesproken locatie op de geplande tijd. De onderzoeker heeft de interventielocatie al ingericht, inclusief de VR-apparatuur en alle benodigde materialen.
- **Initiële vragenlijst:** Vul bij aankomst het eerste deel van de vragenlijst in. Dit duurt ongeveer 5 minuten. Om de vragenlijst in te vullen, scan de QR-code die ter plaatse wordt verstrekt. Sluit het tabblad niet totdat dit op het scherm wordt aangegeven.

De interventie:

Leg kort de procedure uit. Noem het volgende:

Eerste deel vragenlijst, VR-ervaring, gesprek, tweede deel vragenlijst.

Dan kun je beginnen met de interventie:

Fase	Opmerkingen
Vragenlijst 1	Vraag de jongere om het eerste deel van de vragenlijst in te vullen via de verstrekte QR-code. Belangrijk: Zorg ervoor dat de jongere deze vragenlijst zonder enige verstoring invult.
VR-fase	Introduceer de jongere aan de VR-training, die een stop-and-search scenario simuleert. Gedraag je als een vriend en helper, wekkend een gevoel van nieuwsgierigheid en plezier terwijl je helpt met de VR-opstelling.
Gesprek	<p>VR-ervaring: Na de VR-sessie begin je een gesprek over de ervaring van de jongere met de VR-training. Begin met de vraag waarom de jongere een bepaald individu als verdacht koos in het VR-scenario. Bespreek hoe politiebeslissingen op straat worden genomen, waarbij de nadruk ligt op gedrag in plaats van uiterlijk.</p> <p>Ga dan over naar een breder gesprek over de relatie tussen jongeren en de politie:</p> <p>Relatie Jongeren-Politie: Stel vragen zoals: "Hoe ervaar je over het algemeen de interacties tussen jongeren en de politie?" en verken zowel de positieve als negatieve aspecten van deze relatie. Moedig de jongere aan om suggesties voor verbetering te geven.</p> <p>Aantekeningen maken: Maak tijdens dit gesprek aantekeningen om oprechte interesse te tonen en om de antwoorden van de jongere te documenteren.</p>
Vragenlijst 2	Na de discussie vraag je de jongere om verder te gaan met het tweede deel van de vragenlijst. Belangrijk: Zorg ervoor dat de jongere deze vragenlijst zonder enige verstoring invult.

Na de interventie:

Na het voltooien van alle jongerensessies, vul je het tweede deel van je vragenlijst in.

Opmerking: Je hoeft dit tweede deel van de vragenlijst slechts één keer in te vullen, nadat je alle interacties met jongeren hebt afgerond.

Belangrijke punten om te onthouden:

- **Blijf natuurlijk:**
Hoewel er gestructureerde elementen in de interventie zitten, probeer de interacties zo natuurlijk en conversatief mogelijk te houden.
- **Positieve houding:**
Handhaaf tijdens de interventie een positieve, respectvolle houding en ga op een manier met jongeren om die deze benadering weerspiegelt.

Dank u voor uw deelname aan deze belangrijke initiatief om de relatie tussen de politie en jongeren in onze gemeenschappen te verbeteren. Uw inspanningen zijn cruciaal voor het succes van deze interventie. Als u vragen of zorgen heeft, aarzel dan niet om contact met mij op te nemen via de verstrekte gegevens.

Welkom!

Ben je **16-25 jaar oud** en wil je een **VR-spel** spelen? Volg dan deze stappen:

1

Vragenlijst

Scan de QR-code om de vragenlijst te openen. Sluit het tabblad niet voordat de hele sessie is afgelopen.

2

VR-spel

Na de vragen kun je het VR-spel spelen! De politieagent, helpt je hierbij. Veel plezier!

3

Gesprek

De politie is geïnteresseerd in je ervaring met de VR en de politie. Nadat je het spel hebt afgerond, kun je aan de tafel plaatsnemen. Aarzel niet om ook negatieve ervaringen met de politie te delen!

4

Vragenlijst

Ga verder met de vragenlijst die je eerder hebt gestart. Als je klaar bent, laat dit dan aan de agent weten.



Wil je meedoen?
Scan deze QR-code alstublieft:



Appendix 5
Youth Questionnaire

Variable	Question
Age (o)*	Q1
Gender	Q2
Education	Q3
Previous experiences:	
Quantity	Q4
Quality	Q5
Procedural Justice	Q6, Q7, Q8
Trust	Q9
Police Legitimacy	Q10, Q11
Social Identity:	
Netherlands	Q12, Q13
Other	Q14, Q15
Police	Q16, Q17
Police Work	Q18

VR Phase and Conversation	VR Phase and Conversation
Interaction evaluation:	
Quality	Q19
Feedback (o)	Q20
Relationship	Q21
Voice	Q22
Procedural justice 2	Q23, Q24, Q25
Trust 2	Q26
Police Legitimacy 2	Q27, Q28
Social Identity 2:	
Netherlands	Q29, Q30
Police	Q31, Q32
Police Work	Q33

* (o) = Open question

Welkom!

Dit onderzoek wordt gedaan door mij, Tobias Siepenkort, onder begeleiding van Peter de Vries en Bas Böing van de Universiteit Twente. Ik wil onderzoeken of Virtual Reality (VR) en een gesprek tussen jongeren en politieagenten de relatie tussen jeugd en politie kan verbeteren.

Vrijwillige deelname

Deelname is geheel vrijwillig. Je kunt je op elk moment terugtrekken zonder opgaaf van reden, er zullen geen negatieve consequenties zijn als je dat doet.

Wat deelname inhoudt

- Een korte online vragenlijst voor en na deelname aan de VR-sessie.
- Een VR-sessie met politieagenten.
- Een kort gesprek over de VR en de politie.

Het hele proces duurt ongeveer 30-60 minuten.

Mogelijke risico's

- Het gebruik van VR-technologie veroorzaakt soms bewegingsziekte of ongemak veroorzaken. Als je je tijdens de VR-sessie onwel voelt, kun je onmiddellijk stoppen.
- Sommige vragen of interacties kunnen over gevoelige onderwerpen gaan. Sla vragen over waar je je niet prettig bij voelt.

Vertrouwelijkheid

Alle informatie die je geeft is strikt vertrouwelijk en zal in een rapport volledig anoniem beschreven worden. Deze informatie wordt alleen voor onderzoeksdoeleinden gebruikt en veilig opgeslagen. Niemand anders dan de onderzoekers kan zien wat jij geantwoord hebt.

Vragen

Indien je vragen hebt, kun je contact opnemen met de onderzoeker ter plaatse of via de volgende contactgegevens:

Tobias Siepenkort. E-Mail: t.siepenkort@student.utwente.nl

Door op de onderstaande knop te klikken en de vragenlijst in te dienen, bevestigt je dat je de verstrekte informatie hebt gelezen en begrepen en dat je vrijwillig akkoord gaat met deelname aan dit onderzoek.

Veel plezier!

Q1: Hoe oud ben je?

Text

Q2: Wat is je geslacht?

Man

Vrouw

Non-binair / derde gender

Wil ik niet zeggen

Q3: Welke opleiding volg je momenteel?

VMBO (Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs)

HAVO (Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs)

VWO (Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs)

MBO (Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs)

HBO (Hoger Beroepsonderwijs)

WO Bachelor's Degree

WO Master's Degree

PhD / Doctoraat

Anders

Q4: Hoe vaak ben je de afgelopen 12 maanden in contact geweest met de politie?

Nooit

Eén keer

2-3 keer

4-5 keer

Meer dan 5 keer

Q5: Hoe zou je in het verleden je algemene ervaring(en) met de politie beoordelen?

Zeer negatief

Negatief

Neutraal

Positief

Zeer positief

Q6: De politie behandelt mensen met waardigheid en respect.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q7: De politie neemt eerlijke beslissingen.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q8: De politie baseert haar beslissingen op feiten, niet alleen op haar eigen mening.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q9: Ik vertrouw de politie.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q10: De politie heeft het recht om mensen te vertellen wat ze moeten doen.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q11: De politie doet meestal wat past bij mijn gevoel voor goed en fout.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q12: Ik beschouw mijzelf als onderdeel van de Nederlandse samenleving.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q13: Ik ben er trots op dat ik deel uitmaak van de Nederlandse samenleving.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q14: Daarnaast beschouw ik mijzelf ook als onderdeel van een andere etnische gemeenschap (bijvoorbeeld de Turkse, Marokkaanse, Surinaamse, of andere).

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q15: Ik ben er trots op dat ik deel uitmaak van deze andere etnische gemeenschap.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q16: Ik voel mij verbonden met de politie in mijn gemeenschap.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q17: Ik vind dat de politie mensen zoals ik vertegenwoordigt.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q18: Het is best mogelijk dat ik in de toekomst bij de politie werk.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Hartelijk dank!

Sluit de website niet af.

Dit was de eerste vragenronde. Je kunt je nu richten tot de politieagenten en beginnen met de VR-Game.

Daarna willen de politieagenten graag weten hoe je de VR hebt ervaren en wat je van de politie vindt.

Daarna beantwoord je een tweede vragenronde.

Open na de VR-Game en het gesprek dit tabblad opnieuw en ga verder.

Heb je het **VR-spel en het gesprek voltooid?**

Druk op doorgaan.

Q19: Hoe leuk vond je de ontmoeting met de politieagenten?

Heel erg niet leuk gevonden

Niet leuk gevonden

Neutraal

Leuk gevonden

Heel erg leuk gevonden

Q20: Noem minstens één aspect dat je leuk vond en één dat je niet leuk vond aan de ontmoeting met de politie.

Text

Q21: Denk je dat bijeenkomsten als deze de relatie tussen jongeren en de politie kunnen verbeteren?

Ja

Misschien

Nee

Q22: Tijdens de ontmoeting met de politieagenten had ik het gevoel dat ik mezelf kon uitdrukken.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q23: De politie behandelt mensen met waardigheid en respect.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q24: De politie neemt eerlijke beslissingen.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q25: De politie baseert haar beslissingen op feiten, niet alleen op haar eigen mening.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q26: Ik vertrouw de politie.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q27: De politie heeft het recht om mensen te vertellen wat ze moeten doen.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q28: De politie doet meestal wat past bij mijn gevoel voor goed en fout.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q29: Ik beschouw mijzelf als onderdeel van de Nederlandse samenleving.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q30: Ik ben er trots op dat ik deel uitmaak van de Nederlandse samenleving.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q31: Ik voel mij verbonden met de politie in mijn gemeenschap.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q32: Ik vind dat de politie mensen zoals ik vertegenwoordigt.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q33: Het is best mogelijk dat ik in de toekomst bij de politie werk.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Druk alstublieft op de pijl voordat je het tabblad sluit.

Bedankt voor je deelname!

Jouw antwoorden zijn belangrijk, ze helpen ons de relaties tussen jongeren en de politie te verbeteren.

Neem contact met ons op

Als je vragen of opmerkingen hebt, neem dan contact met ons op:
E-Mail: t.siepenkort@student.utwente.nl

Dit onderzoek is goedgekeurd door de Commissie Ethiek van de Universiteit Twente. Als je bezwaar hebt tegen dit onderzoek of hoe het is uitgevoerd, neem dan contact op met de Commissie Ethiek van de faculteit Behavioral, Management and Social Sciences aan de Universiteit Twente via ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl.

Als je vragen hebt over de behandeling van persoonlijke informatie, neem dan contact op met de Data Protection Officer: dpo@utwente.nl.

Tenslotte heb je het recht jouw gegevens in te zien, te verwijderen of aan te passen; geef dit aan bij de onderzoeker.

Nogmaals bedankt voor je deelname!

Appendix 6
Police Questionnaire

Variable	Question
Age (o)*	Q1
Gender	Q2
Work experience:	
Duration	Q3
Area	Q4
Youth Contact:	
Frequency	Q5
Quality	Q6
Youth Attitude	Q7
Interaction Confidence	Q8
Social Identity Youths	Q9, Q10
Youth Training	Q11, Q12

VR Phase and Conversation	VR Phase and Conversation
Interaction evaluation:	
Quality	Q13
Relationship	Q14
Feedback (o)	Q15
Youth Attitude	Q16
Interaction Confidence	Q17
Social Identity Youths	Q18, Q19

Welkom!

Dit onderzoek wordt gedaan door mij, Tobias Siepenkort, onder begeleiding van Peter de Vries en Bas Böing van de Universiteit Twente. Ik wil onderzoeken of Virtual Reality (VR) en een gesprek tussen jongeren en politieagenten de relatie tussen jeugd en politie kan verbeteren.

Vrijwillige deelname

Deelname is geheel vrijwillig. U kunt u op elk moment terugtrekken zonder opgave van reden, er zullen geen negatieve consequenties zijn als u dat doet.

Wat deelname inhoudt

- Een korte online vragenlijst voor en na deelname aan de VR-sessie.
- Een VR-sessie met de jongeren.
- Een kort gesprek over de VR en de politie.

Het hele proces duurt ongeveer 30-60 minuten.

Mogelijke risico's

- Het gebruik van VR-technologie veroorzaakt soms bewegingsziekte of ongemak veroorzaken. Als u u tijdens de VR-sessie onwel voelt, kun u onmiddellijk stoppen.
- Sommige vragen of interacties kunnen over gevoelige onderwerpen gaan. Sla vragen over waar u u niet prettig bij voelt.

Vertrouwelijkheid

Alle informatie die u geeft is strikt vertrouwelijk en zal in een rapport volledig anoniem beschreven worden. Deze informatie wordt alleen voor onderzoeksdoeleinden gebruikt en veilig opgeslagen. Niemand anders dan de onderzoekers kan zien wat u geantwoord hebt.

Vragen

Indien u vragen heeft, kunt u contact opnemen met de onderzoeker ter plaatse of via de volgende contactgegevens:

Tobias Siepenkort.

E-Mail: t.siepenkort@student.utwente.nl

Door op de onderstaande knop te klikken en de vragenlijst in te dienen, bevestigt u dat u de verstrekte informatie hebt gelezen en begrepen en dat u vrijwillig akkoord gaat met deelname aan dit onderzoek.

Veel plezier!

Q1: Hoe oud bent u?

Text

Q2: Wat is uw geslacht?

Man

Vrouw

Non-binair / derde gender

Wil ik niet zeggen

Q3: Hoeveel jaar werkt u al als politieagent?

Text

Q4: Op welke gebieden bent u voornamelijk werkzaam geweest tijdens uw politiedienst?
(bijv. stedelijk / voorstedelijk / landelijk / gemengd)

Text

Q5: Hoe vaak komt u in uw werk in contact met jongeren?

Nooit

Zelden

Af en toe

Vaak

Zeer vaak

Q6: Hoe zou u in het verleden uw algemene ervaringen met jongeren tijdens politiewerk beoordelen?

Zeer negatief

Negatief

Neutraal

Positief

Zeer positief

Q7: Ik vind het leuk om in mijn werk met jongeren om te gaan.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q8: Ik heb er vertrouwen in dat ik effectief met jongeren kan omgaan.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q9: Ik voel mij verbonden met de jongeren in mijn gemeenschap.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q10: Ik identificeer mij met de jongeren in mijn gemeenschap.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q11: Hoeveel training heeft u gekregen in de omgang met jongeren?

Geen

Minimaal (0-10 uur)

Gemiddeld (10-30 uur)

Uitgebreid (30-50 uur)

Meer

Q12: Hoe effectief denkt u dat uw training is geweest in het voorbereiden op de omgang met jongeren?

Helemaal niet effectief

Iets effectief

Neutraal

Redelijk effectief

Zeer effectief

Dit was de eerste vragenronde. Hartelijk dank! Sluit de website niet af.

U kunt u nu richten tot de jongeren en beginnen met de interventie. Daarna vragen we u een tweede vragenronde te doorlopen.

Ben u klaar met alle jongeren? Ga dan alsjeblieft verder.

Q13: Hoe leuk vond u de interactie met de jongeren?

Heel erg niet leuk gevonden

Niet leuk gevonden

Neutraal

Leuk gevonden

Heel erg leuk gevonden

Q14: Denkt u dat bijeenkomsten als deze de relatie tussen jongeren en de politie kunnen verbeteren?

Ja

Misschien

Nee

Q15: Wat vond u van deze VR-interventie? Wees s.v.p. zo eerlijk en uitgebreid mogelijk.

Text

Q16: Ik vind het leuk om in mijn werk met jongeren om te gaan.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q17: Ik heb er vertrouwen in dat ik effectief met jongeren kan omgaan.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Helemaal eens

Q18: Ik voel mij verbonden met de jongeren in mijn gemeenschap.

Helemaal oneens

Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Q19: Ik identificeer mij met de jongeren in mijn gemeenschap.

Helemaal oneens
Oneens
Neutraal
Eens
Helemaal eens

Druk alstublieft op de pijl voordat u het tabblad sluit.

Bedankt voor uw deelname!

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Nogmaals bedankt voor uw deelname!

Appendix 7

The Intervention Days

In total, the PPCI was conducted 16 times in schools and youth institutions across Enschede, Hengelo, Zwolle, and Culemborg, involving 10 police officers and over 130 youths. The minimum age requirement of 16 was communicated to school facilitators in advance to ensure the majority of participants' data could be included in the analysis. However, younger individuals who had already joined or expressed interest were not excluded. The lead researcher accompanied every intervention day. On all intervention days, except one, the lead researcher and the participating police officers met one hour prior to the intervention. For the sake of anonymity, names of schools and youth institutions will not be mentioned.

Day 1: Enschede (MBO)

The first intervention day was held at an MBO school in Enschede. Two police officers, including an Operational Expert (Operationeel Expert) and a Neighbourhood Officer (Wijkagent), conducted the intervention as part of the civics class (Les Burgerschap). The session lasted 1.5 hours, as approved by the school principal. Both the principal and another teacher were present throughout the intervention. One of the officers prepared a presentation (*see Appendix 4*), which was used during the session. The presentation covered topics such as the police's authority to check citizens' identification and the prohibition of using race, ethnicity, ancestry, or appearance as grounds for selecting individuals for checks. This intervention day consisted of one session with approximately 14 youths.

Day 2: Hengelo (Youth Institution)

The second intervention day took place at a youth institution in Hengelo. This center focuses on promoting young people's social integration by offering various daily activities, as well as preventing and monitoring criminal behavior. Two police officers—an Operational Expert and a Neighbourhood Officer—led the session in one of the indoor activity rooms. Unlike the school setting, participation was voluntary, with individuals invited to join upon arrival. Two social workers were present throughout the session and had previously estimated the number of youths likely to attend. Due to the open nature of the youth center, some youths arrived later than planned, while others left during the intervention. The same presentation used in Enschede was delivered, supplemented with interactive elements, such as assessing the youths' attitudes toward the police. This intervention day included one session with approximately 10 youths.

Day 3 and 4: Zwolle (VMBO)

The third and fourth intervention days were conducted at a VMBO school in Zwolle. A team consisting of an Operational Expert (Operationeel Expert), a Brigadier, and an additional officer led the first session. The intervention took place in a classroom and lasted 1.5 hours, with the teacher present throughout. The intervention was repeated at the same school, this time led by the Operational Expert and two youth officers (Senior GGP Jeugd). The teacher facilitating the session selected the students to

ensure a diverse group. Both intervention days consisted of one session each, with approximately 14 youths per session.

Day 5: Culemborg (HAVO)

The fifth intervention day was held at a HAVO school in Culemborg. A youth police officer and a general area-bound officer (Generalist GGP – Gebiedsgebonden Politie) led the session. The structure of this intervention differed from previous ones, as students participated in small groups of 2 to 6 rather than in a larger session. This intervention included four sessions with a total of 12 youths.

Day 6 and 7: Enschede (MBO)

The final two intervention days took place at an MBO school in Enschede as part of a Themaweek (Career Week), where professionals from various fields introduced their work. An Operational Expert and a Neighbourhood Officer led the sessions, with a Youth Officer joining later in some sessions. The Neighbourhood Officer was only present on the first day. The intervention was structured as a full-day event with multiple sessions, each lasting approximately one hour. The same presentation from the previous Enschede sessions was used. These intervention days included four sessions each, with approximately 10 youths per session.

Appendix 8

Correlation Table

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. Age	17.26	1.40																				
2. Gender	0.44	0.50	.02																			
3. Education	3.62	0.87	.23	-.07																		
4. Experience Quantity	1.90	1.13	-.01	-.24	-.11																	
5. Experience Quality	3.44	0.93	-.18	-.19	.11	-.16																
6. Procedural Justice	3.66	0.72	-.24	.07	.10	-.33	<i>.76</i>															
7. Trust	3.97	0.95	-.15	.00	-.00	-.37	<i>.72</i>	<i>.75</i>														
8. Police Legitimacy	3.63	0.72	-.04	.02	.06	-.30	<i>.55</i>	<i>.63</i>	<i>.63</i>													
9. Social Identity NL	4.06	0.78	-.01	.00	.08	-.17	<i>.44</i>	<i>.46</i>	<i>.50</i>	<i>.48</i>												
10. Social Identity Other	2.80	1.07	-.10	-.19	.10	-.15	-.19	-.09	-.10	-.04	-.07											
11. Social Identity Police	3.27	0.76	-.08	.07	.01	-.18	<i>.70</i>	<i>.63</i>	<i>.65</i>	<i>.52</i>	<i>.55</i>	-.00										
12. Police Work	3.64	1.31	-.05	.06	.25	-.19	<i>.49</i>	<i>.40</i>	<i>.41</i>	<i>.33</i>	<i>.29</i>	.03	<i>.44</i>									
13. Interaction Quality	4.12	0.73	-.08	.14	.18	-.19	<i>.49</i>	<i>.58</i>	<i>.52</i>	<i>.36</i>	<i>.32</i>	.10	<i>.45</i>	<i>.47</i>								
14. Intervention Potential	2.56	0.59	.10	-.10	.06	-.20	<i>.31</i>	<i>.30</i>	<i>.33</i>	<i>.29</i>	<i>.38</i>	-.06	<i>.37</i>	.08	.07							
15. Voice	3.79	0.72	-.24	-.02	.15	-.23	<i>.28</i>	<i>.40</i>	<i>.47</i>	<i>.42</i>	<i>.36</i>	.10	<i>.38</i>	<i>.39</i>	<i>.34</i>	<i>.28</i>						
16. Procedural Justice 2	3.74	0.70	-.21	.04	.04	-.23	<i>.56</i>	<i>.71</i>	<i>.74</i>	<i>.53</i>	<i>.45</i>	-.10	<i>.70</i>	<i>.41</i>	<i>.48</i>	<i>.37</i>	<i>.60</i>					
17. Trust 2	3.88	0.91	-.24	.08	.05	-.35	<i>.67</i>	<i>.67</i>	<i>.81</i>	<i>.57</i>	<i>.42</i>	-.14	<i>.60</i>	<i>.49</i>	<i>.50</i>	.19	<i>.48</i>	<i>.72</i>				
18. Police Legitimacy 2	3.62	0.66	-.21	-.02	-.16	-.24	<i>.39</i>	<i>.48</i>	<i>.62</i>	<i>.64</i>	<i>.36</i>	-.08	<i>.52</i>	.20	<i>.35</i>	.21	<i>.54</i>	<i>.61</i>	<i>.66</i>			
19. Social Identity NL 2	3.90	0.82	-.02	.09	.05	-.15	<i>.45</i>	<i>.39</i>	<i>.50</i>	<i>.44</i>	<i>.76</i>	-.06	<i>.55</i>	<i>.41</i>	<i>.29</i>	<i>.28</i>	<i>.39</i>	<i>.52</i>	<i>.59</i>	<i>.43</i>		
20. Social Identity Police 2	3.49	0.81	-.21	.13	.03	-.13	<i>.56</i>	<i>.56</i>	<i>.64</i>	<i>.45</i>	<i>.54</i>	-.08	<i>.76</i>	<i>.41</i>	<i>.47</i>	<i>.24</i>	<i>.53</i>	<i>.72</i>	<i>.67</i>	<i>.55</i>	<i>.67</i>	
21. Police Work 2	3.74	1.16	-.17	.04	.10	-.20	<i>.45</i>	<i>.36</i>	<i>.33</i>	.21	.19	.00	<i>.42</i>	<i>.81</i>	<i>.36</i>	.06	<i>.39</i>	<i>.36</i>	<i>.50</i>	<i>.28</i>	<i>.35</i>	<i>.44</i>

Bold indicates $p < .05$. **Bold Italics** indicates $p < .01$

Appendix 9

Qualitative Feedback Youths

Dutch Original	English Translation
Vr bril wel prima , uitleg was te lang	VR headset was fine, explanation was too long
De vr bril was wel leuk en minder leuk moeilijke woorden	The VR headset was fun, but the difficult words were less fun
Ik vond de filosofie law denkwijze heel leuk maar t duurde me wat lang	I really liked the philosophy law thinking, but it took too long
Was heel veel aan het praten dat we mij mochten kijken om te kijk hoe het kan gaan	There was a lot of talking, that we were allowed to look to see how it could go
Niks was slecht. VR was leuk.	Nothing was bad. VR was fun.
Ik vond het interessant om hun kant van de verhalen te horen. Dat er soms wel wat moeilijke woorden tussen zaten was wat minder.	I found it interesting to hear their side of the stories. The difficult words sometimes were less fun.
Toets is verplaatst en het duurde lang	The test was postponed, and it took long
Leuk: perspectief. Niet leuk, vaste keuzes uit de casus	Fun: perspective. Not fun: fixed choices in the case study
De vragen leuk	The questions were fun
De vr casus vond ik wel erg leuk, het lang zitten was niet zo leuk	I found the VR case very fun, sitting for a long time was less fun
De inkijk in het politie werk.	The insight into police work.
Dat we er wat van geleerd hebben dat we alleen gezeten hebben	That we learned something, that we just sat there
Vond alles leuk	I liked everything
m	
Even netjes voorstellen, we konden uitgebreider praten over hun vak	Proper introduction, we could talk more extensively about their profession
Leuk om een keer iemand te spreken die zelf politie is, ik vind het namelijk een interessante richting. Ik had eventueel wat langer de tijd willen hebben om vragen te stellen over het vak.	Nice to talk to someone who is actually a police officer, I find it an interesting field. I would have liked more time to ask questions about the profession.
ik vond het heel leuk omdat ik zelf ook bij de politie wil en ik heb eigenlijk niet echt een minpunt ik vind dit allemaal gewoon heel erg leuk.	I really liked it because I also want to join the police, and I actually have no negative points. I just really liked everything.
Je bekijkt het vanuit een ander perspectief wat interessant is maar het was wel snel	You view it from a different perspective, which is interesting, but it was fast
Aardig maar niet per se hulpvaardig	Nice but not necessarily helpful
veel gepraat, interessante informatie	A lot of talking, interesting information
Leuke gesprekke	Nice conversations
Het leuke de verschillende keuzes die werden gemaakt... minder leuk de kwaliteit van de VR	The fun part was the different choices that were made... less fun was the quality of the VR
Geen idee	No idea

Neutral	Neutral
Niks	Nothing
Ontmoeten en tijd	Meeting and time
Het zien van de andere kant	Seeing the other side
Uitleg over hun	Explanation about them
Vr bril, en leuke uitleg	VR headset and fun explanation
.	
Ik vond het leuk dat ik kon kijken in hoe politie denkt. Wat ik niet zo leuk vond is dat ik dacht dat ik soms te snel oordeel en dat dat op de politie wordt afgeschoven	I liked seeing how the police think. What I didn't like was realizing that I sometimes judge too quickly, and that gets blamed on the police.
Ik vond alles wel leuk	I liked everything
Ze waren vriendelijk, heb niet een negatief aspect	They were friendly, I have no negative aspect
de vr bril vond ik leuk	I liked the VR headset
Ik kijk hoe de politie keuze maakt en dus begrijp ik nu ook hun kant. Wat ik niet leuk vond was de casus want het was best ongemakkelijk om grotere groep jongeren aantespreken	I see how the police make choices and now understand their side. What I didn't like was the case, as it was quite uncomfortable to address a larger group of young people.
ik vond de vr best wel leuk want nu hebben we iets meer ervaring hoe de politie handelt dan eerst, ik heb geen niet leuk aspect	I quite liked the VR because now we have more experience on how the police act than before, I have no negative aspect
Dat de politie gewoon rustig de jongeren aansprak Dat de jongeren tegen werkde	That the police calmly addressed the youth, and that the youths resisted
Gezellig, geen	Pleasant, none
Vriendelijk	Friendly
Hoe sociaal ze zijn. Dat ze doorvragen als je al antwoord hebt gegeven.	How social they are. That they ask follow-up questions even when you have already answered.
Vriendelijk	Friendly
Kregen veel informatie en vond het heel interessant vooral met de vr bril	Got a lot of information and found it very interesting, especially with the VR headset
De nieuwe dingen leren vond ik leuk ik vond niks niet leuk	I liked learning new things, I didn't find anything not fun
Is anders om hun een keer in een lokaal te zien inplaats van op straat	It's different to see them in a classroom instead of on the street
Wijk agent in hengelo die gewoon vriendelijk zijn en normaal een gesprek met de jongeren aan lan gaan minder leuk dat ik ook wel een paar geïrriteerde politieagenten heb gehad die heel boos werden om helemaal niks	Community officer in Hengelo who is friendly and has normal conversations with the youth, less fun was that I also encountered some irritated police officers who got very angry over nothing
Ik vind het leuk om in gesprek te gaan met de politie, ik heb niets iets waarvan ik denk' dit vond ik niet leuk'.	I like talking to the police, there was nothing I didn't like.
De eerste casus was wat minder leuk de 2e was wel leuk	The first case was less fun, the second was fun
Leuk = goeie gesprekken, niet leuk = duurde lang	Fun = good conversations, not fun = took long

Ik vond alles wel leuk de leuke grappen van de agenten vond ik wel leuk	I liked everything, the funny jokes from the officers were nice
Leerzaam iets te kort	Informative, a bit too short
De manier waarop je mensen kunt aan spreken	The way you can address people
Geen idee	No idea
Vind ik wel leuk om uitleg te krijgen beetje nieuwe dingen leren	I liked getting explanations and learning new things
Vr bril en die casussen was interessant en leerzaam ik vond alles wel leuk	VR headset and the cases were interesting and educational, I liked everything
.	.
Vondt alles leuk	Liked everything
hij vertelde op een leuke manier	He explained in a nice way
De vr bril en niet leuk was er eigenlijk niet	The VR headset, and there was nothing not fun
Ik vond het interessant	I found it interesting
De wijze van gesprek, gewoon een rustig gesprek waar je je een beetje verplaatst en elkaar en de meningen van een ander.	The way of conversation, just a calm conversation where you put yourself in another's shoes and understand their opinions.
Dat je een casus kon mee maken	That you could experience a case
leuk, omdat je met een collega dingen in de gaten moet houden	Fun, because you have to monitor things with a colleague
Mij vast pakken om niks	Being grabbed for nothing
Leuk vond ik dat je meespeelde in ern scenario en minder leuk dat er niet echt is verteld over hun dag als politie	Fun was participating in a scenario, less fun was that they gr
De ervaring met de vr bril en heb niet iets wat ik niet leuk vond	The experience with the VR headset, and I didn't find anything not fun
Alles was leuk, minder is te weinig keuze	Everything was fun, less fun was too few choices
De werkzaamheden en wat ik minder leuk vond is dat ik geen gordel om had	The tasks, and what I liked less was that I didn't have a seatbelt on
dat ze wit waren niet leuk en dat ze nog redelijk waren wel leuk	That they were white was not nice, but that they were still reasonable was nice
Dat je zelf je keuzes moest maken en niet leuk was dat je veel keuses moest maken	That you had to make your own choices, less fun was having to make so many choices
Samen rijden vond ik leuk, ik heb geen aspect wat ik niet leuk vond	I liked driving together, I have no aspect that I didn't like
Ik vond het wel gewoon leuk had niet echt slechte punten	I just found it fun, didn't really have any bad points
Dat de politie mij vroeger veilig hield toen iemand met een mes liep richting mij	That the police kept me safe in the past when someone was approaching me with a knife
Leuk: gewoon de verhalen, niet leuk: niks	Fun: just the stories, not fun: nothing
Aardige man maar niet nodig die vr	Nice man, but the VR was not necessary
Vr bril	VR headset
Ik vond het het wel leuk omdat ik nou wat meer dingen weet	I found it fun because now I know more things
Ik had niet iets wat ik niet leuk vondt maar ik vondt het wel leuk om dingen te leren over situaties	I didn't have anything I didn't like, but I enjoyed learning about situations
Duidelijk en eentonig	Clear and monotonous

Ik vond het leerzaam over de beslissingen maken die een politie agent maakt	I found it educational to learn about the decisions a police officer makes
Ik vindt alles eigenlijk wel leuk , vooral omdat is wel iets is waar ik geïnteresseerd in ben.	I actually liked everything, especially because it's something I'm interested in.
.	.
Eigenlijk vond ik alles wel leuk en leerzaam, er was niks dat ik niet leuk was de politie was zeer vriendelijk	Actually, I liked everything and found it educational, there was nothing I didn't like, the police were very friendly
Dat je leert hoe mensen zijn	That you learn how people are
Duidelijke uitleg maar beetje monotoon	Clear explanation but a bit monotonous
Je krijgt meer inzicht in het beroep	You get more insight into the profession
Vond het wel leuk dat hij helemaal mee ging in de casussen. Echt slechte dingen niet mee gekregen	I liked that he fully engaged in the cases. Didn't experience anything really bad

Appendix 10

Qualitative Feedback Police Officers

Dutch Original	English Translation
Zeer nuttig	Very useful
De bril is een middel om het gesprek aan te gaan met de jongeren. Niveau 2 van het MBO is een ideale doelgroep voor dit soort gesprekken	The VR headset is a great tool to initiate conversations with young people. MBO level 2 is an ideal target group for these types of discussions.
Had van mij meer in een format gegoten mogen worden. Dit kan ook aan mijn voorbereiding liggen maar ik vond het te algemeen een onduidelijk.	I would have preferred a more structured format. This might also be due to my own preparation, but I found it too general and somewhat unclear.
Goed	Good
Redelijk lastig om contact te krijgen met de jeugd. Ze leken redelijk ongeïnteresseerd, maar door gerichte vragen kreeg ik beter contact	Fairly difficult to establish contact with the youth. They seemed rather uninterested at first, but by asking targeted questions, I was able to connect with them better.
Leuk!!	Fun!!
Goed. Wellicht is meer tijd in voor- en nagesprek helpend in de verbinding tijdens het gesprek.	Good. Perhaps spending more time on pre- and post-discussions would help strengthen the connection during the conversation.
Erg leuk om op deze manier in gesprek en in contact te komen met de jeugd.	Very nice to engage in conversation and contact with youth in this way.
Prima. Je bent altijd afhankelijk van de dynamiek in een groep, maar het feit dat zij in deze setting een positieve ervaring opdoen met de aanwezige politie is al een pluspunt	Great. You always depend on the dynamics in a group, but the fact that they are having a positive experience with the police present in this setting is already a plus

Appendix 11

Presentation Used in Enschede



Even wat duidelijkheid

Wat gaan we doen & afspraken:

- Wie zijn wij?
- Vragenlijst
- VR
- Vragenlijst



Politie District Twente



