



## Scientific research and relevant scientific publications

*Terminological concepts and definitions are used here presuming the previous files at this webpage ‘(I) The object of the JSL-research’ and ‘(II) The type of research of the JSL’ have already been consulted.*

### (III)

## The research movement under which the JSL research is classed

### Introduction and major developments over the past decades

#### *Introduction*

Since 1980 the so-called Reaction Pattern Research (RPR) has been carried out and internationally oriented, first by the department of Orthopedagogy of the University of Groningen and after by the JSL Foundation. During this periode researchers from several other universities (in Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Slovakia, Canada, the United States, Mexico and New Zealand) and from ambulatory and residential judicial youth institutes in the Netherlands (especially Den Engh at Den Dolder and the Salvation Army), have taken part in this research. Most of these researchers have grouped together in an international research network, the AASL (Scientific network for collaborative research into Attitudes and behavior of Adolescents with regard to Social Limits). The collaboration within this network has led to periodic conferences for researchers and has yielded a great number of scientific publications among which several Ph-d studies which are more or less related to the RPR. And various graduate students have dedicated their investigations and MA theses to this research.

In the first place the RPR is in search of *patterns in the attitude* according to which children (4-11 years of age) and juveniles (about 12-20 years of age) respond to laws and rules in society. What patterns occur in these juveniles' *knowledge* concerning the reaction options, in their *tendency* towards certain reaction types and in their *motivations for that tendency*? For a distinction between the various reaction and motivation types the reader is referred to the information concerning the object of the JSL research (Scientific research, part I).

At this moment the RPR also investigates how *rearing affects those patterns in the attitude* of these children and juveniles.

Therefore, when researching the *nature of children's and juveniles' morality*, the RPR does *not* choose for a *youth criminological* approach (of the 2 or 3 last decades) that searches for the risk factors in the juvenile's environment to account for the development of lawbreaking behaviour, but it primarily aims at the mutual correlation between two types of frames of

reference: the *social-psychological* one in combination with the *pedagogical* one. Here the focus is on children's or juveniles' attitudinally responding to laws and societal rules together with the influence of rearing on it. The RPR has knowledge of the *developmental psychological* point of view where different stages in the moral development make up the frame of reference, or of the *personality psychological* approach where the intra-psychic component of personal emotions such as shame, anger, sorrow or fear during moral decisions or morally loaded actions is the object of study, but it does not primarily use these frames of reference as its orientation and interpretation frameworks.

Finally, so far mainly an *exploratory* nature can be attributed to the RPR. Particularly through *survey* designs data are collected that with the help of the latest SPSS versions are databased and statistically processed.

### ***Relevant literature***

- Ott, W. & Rink, K. (1999). Preface. In Walter Ott & Ko Rink (eds.), *Youngsters between freedom and social limits*, Volume II (pp. xi-xiii). Aachen: Shaker Verlag.
- Rink, K., Ott, W., Schlee, J. & Wittrock, M. (2000). Vorwort. In Ko Rink, Walter Ott, Jorg Schlee & Manfred Wittrock (eds.), *Youngsters between freedom and social limits*, Volume III (pp. xv-xvii). Oldenburg: Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg.
- Rink, K. (2002). The pedagogical approach of the Reaction Pattern Research (RPR). In Walter Ott & Ko Rink (eds.), *Youngsters between freedom and social limits*, Volume IV (pp. 19-54). Maastricht: Shaker Publishing.

### *The most important developments in the Reaction Pattern Research (RPR) over the last decades*

In the previous period the RPR went through three stages of development. Here the research set-ups of these stages will be briefly outlined. The results will also be given in a nutshell. For more information concerning the research set-up and the way of collecting and processing data the reader is referred to the literature relevant for the stages in question.

#### *First RPR stage Group directed research*

The RPR was started because experience (1970-1975) made it clear that at that time it was impossible for objective diagnostics to map out as neutrally as possible the attitude of juvenile delinquents towards laws and rules. As a result it was impossible to establish in a neutral manner to what extent these juveniles deviated from a psychometrical standard picture and consequently it was likewise impossible to devise and carry out a neutral way of coaching (like special rearing or treating) to undo any deviations. In this respect the management in the institutes in question was highly dependent on the individual appraisals of the various staff members. In terms of diagnostics and methods individuality reigned as a result of which, within the context of implementing the law, no justice was done to the required transparency of motives and to equal treatment of the juvenile delinquents involved. Juveniles could be differently treated by different staff members with respect to the same attitude or the same behaviour. At the same time individual juveniles did not get a way of rearing or treatment that effectively linked up with the necessity to eliminate or compensate their individual developmental shortcomings in especially the social-moral area.

This experience led to the RPR questions whether it was feasible at all to make an inventory of juveniles' attitude towards laws and rules and, as a next step, it was possible to make a standard picture. In order to answer these questions the RPR first of all conducted group directed research. When with groups of so-called normal juveniles (i.e. without registered behaviour problems and registered judicial contacts) the beginning of the making of a standard picture was possible and there appeared to be a difference in attitude towards laws and rules between these groups and groups of individuals with registered behaviour problems and/or judicial contacts, then an instrument for individual diagnostics might be developed.

During the group directed research three types of groups were approached:

- groups of detained, so clearly judicial juveniles (JJ);
- groups of juveniles with registered behaviour problems (RP); and
- so-called normal juveniles between the ages of 12-20 attending secondary schools; with these groups a beginning was made to create a standard picture (SP) of juveniles' attitude towards laws and rules.

The Standard Reaction Instrument (SRI) was submitted to these groups. This questionnaire consists of a number of parts. Part 2 is relevant for the making of a standard picture and for the comparison between the types of groups. This second part contains 10 critical incidents, i.e. events that may occur in the juvenile's life and perception and require a response to a law or a societal rule. For instance, 'You're in a supermarket, you've got only one errand to do and you're in a hurry; there is no-one at the checkout ...' For each incident the juveniles have to answer three questions:

- a What could one do in a situation like that? (this question takes stock of the reaction options the juveniles know, their so-called '*known reactions*').
- b What would you do in a situation like that? ( the answer to this question makes it clear which reaction type the juvenile in question *is inclined to actively engage in*, what his so-called '*self-willed reaction*' is).
- c Why would you do that? (this question provides insight in the *motivations for the self-willed reactions*).

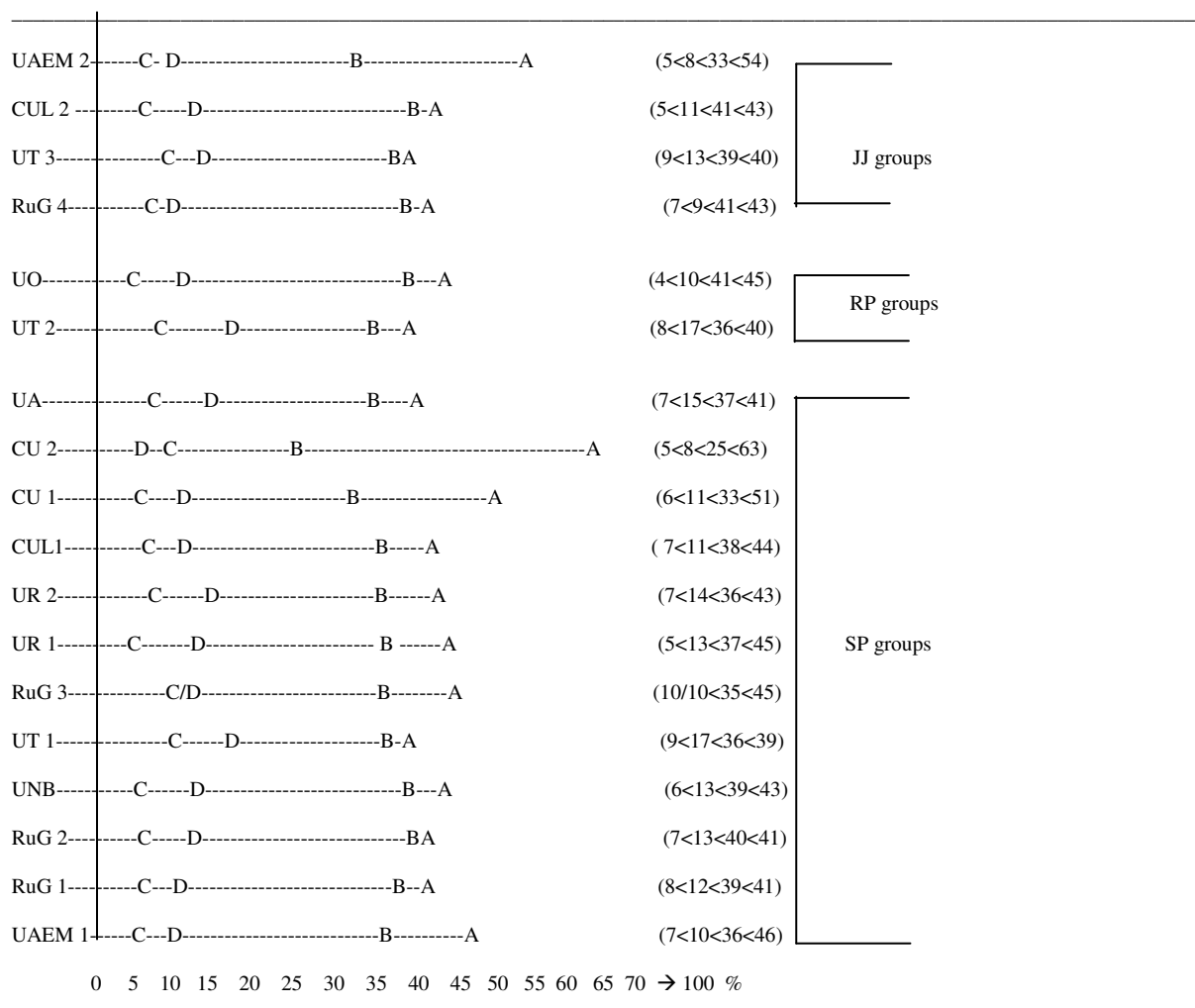
Table 1 gives a survey of the universities taking part in the group directed research, of the researchers carrying out the research (with reference to their most important research publications) and the sizes of their research groups (=n).

Table 1 First RPR stage; participating universities and researchers and sizes of the research groups

<i>Universities</i>	<i>Researchers</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>SP groups</i>		
-Groningen University, Holland (RUG 1)	Rink, Vos, Van Lokven & Slagveer (1989)	1294
-RUG2	Schuurs (1997); Smrkovski, Rink	166
-New Brunswick University, Canada (UNB)	Latchford (1997); Ott (1997)	473
-Tartu University, Estonia (UT 1)	Petersell (1997); Kenkmann, Kôrgesaar & Peterseel (1997); Petersell, Aavik, Ouemaa, Kenkmann & Kôrgesaar (1999)	82
-RUG 3) (ethnic groups in Holland)	Sanches (1997a); Sanches (1997b)	379
-Rostock University, UR 1: East Germany (Rostock)	Wittrock & Dickscheit (1997); Dickscheit (1998)	355
-UR 2: West Germany (Oldenburg and environs)	Dickscheit & Wittrock (1999)	342
-Catholic University of Leuven, Flanders, Belgium (CUL 1)	Grietens & Hellinckx (1997); Grietens (1999)	390
-Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia (CU 1)	Potocarova & Krankus (1999)	69
-CU 2 (Gypsies)	Potocarova & Krankus (1999)	57
-Auckland University, New Zealand UA (chiefly Samoa youngsters)	Barclay (1999); Barclay & Everts (2000)	62
-Autonomous University of the State of Mexico (UAEM1)	Oudhof (2003)	293
<i>RP groups</i>		
-UT 2	Petersell (1997); Kôrgesaar, Kenkmann	78
-Oldenburg University, Germany (OU)	Holste (1994); Neukäter, Wittrock	39
<i>JJ groups</i>		
-RUG 4	Vos (1991)	241
-UT 3	Petersell (1997); Kôrgesaar, Kenkmann	24
-CUL 2	Grietens & Hellinckx (1999)	85
-UAEM 2	Oudhof (2003)	99

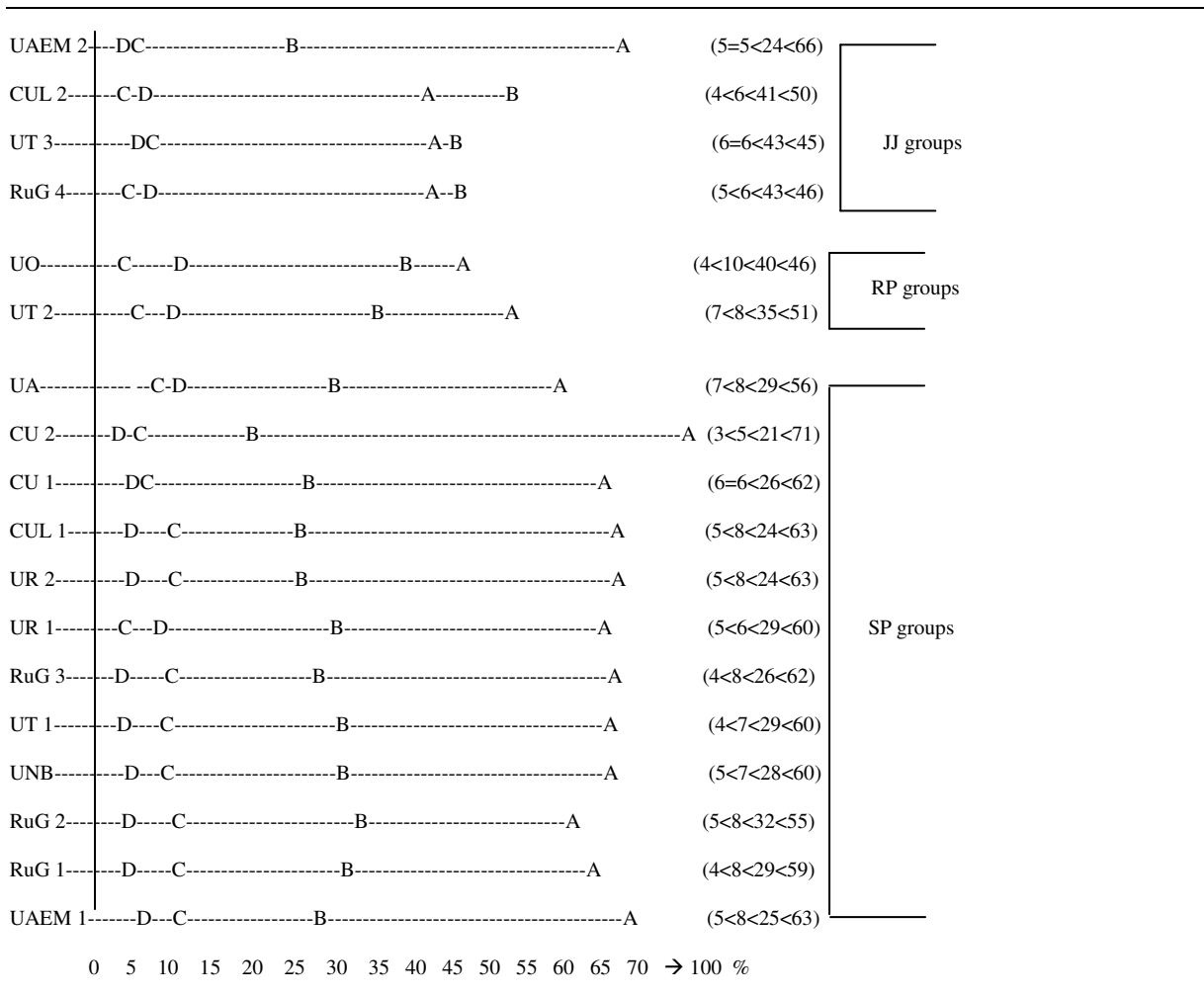
Tables 2, 3 and 4 show, in a descriptive way (%), the results of the group directed researches for the known and self-willed reactions respectively and for the motivations. In each table a distinction of the results for the three types of groups is made.

Table 2 First RPR stage; the known reactions (%)



The SP groups were the beginning of a standard programming of the known reactions. For with these SP groups the frequently occurring and therefore dominant sequence programming is: A > B > D > C. ‘Negotiating’ (C) gets a low score here. The JJ groups and the RP groups show the same sequence programming as the dominant sequence programming of the standard picture.

Table 3 First RPR stage; the self-willed reactions (%)



For the self-willed reactions the SP groups yield the provisional standard sequence programming: A > B > C > D. And here again the scores on the self-willed reaction ‘Negotiating’ (C) are low. The sequence programming of the RP groups deviates from that of the dominant of the SP groups: B > A > D > C. The sequence programming of three out of four JJ groups strongly deviates from the provisional standard picture for the self-willed reactions: B > A > D ≥ C. In the contrary the UAEM 2 group shows likeness to the CU1 group.

Table 4 First RPR stage; the motivations for the self-willed reactions (%)

UAEM 2	d-----b-----a-----c	(12<20<29<39)	JJ groups
CUL 2	d-----b-----a-----c	(5<23<33<39)	
UT 3	d-----b-----c-----a	(7<22<28<42)	
RuG 4	d-----b-----c-----a	(9<22<30<39)	
UO	d-----b-----c-----a	(3<23<34<41)	RP groups
UT 2	d-----b-----c-----a	(10<20<28<43)	
UA	d-----b-----c-----a	(7<18<30<38)	SP groups
CU 2	d-----abc	(7<30<31<32)	
CU 1	d-----bc---a	(7<29<30<34)	
CUL 1	d-----b-----a-----c	(7<20<29<43)	
UR 2	d-----b-----c---a	(6<23<34<37)	
UR 1	d-----b-----c---a	(5<22<34<38)	
RuG 3	d-----b-----c---a	(11<20<32<37)	
UT 1	d-----b-----c-----a	(9<22<27<43)	
UNB	d-----b-----ca	(11<19<35<36)	
RuG 2	d-----b-----a-----c	(7<21<28<43)	
RuG 1	d-----b-----c---a	(13<20<31<36)	
UAEM 1	d-----b-----a-----c	(8<17<33<42)	

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 → 100 %

For the motivation the SP groups yield the provisional sequence standard programming:  $a > c > b > d$ . The sequence programming of the RP groups does not deviate from this dominant sequence with the SP groups. The same is true of two of four JJ groups. It was mentioned above that the motivations that are I-directed (a) and here-and-now-oriented (c) have a low level of abstraction and those that are oriented on the other/society (b) or on the future (d) know a high level of abstraction.

These results combined with their further statistical analyses lead to the following summarised conclusions of the *group* directed RPR as presented here.

A *Regarding the provisional standard picture*

1 The knowledge of the possible reaction options of the so-called ‘normal’ juveniles, when confronted with laws and rules, show a dominant sequence programming, viz.  $A > B > D > C$ .

At a descriptive level there may be differences (%) for each reaction type between the SP groups (maybe because of differences in their cultural background?), but their dominant sequence programming is the same.

- 2 The so-called ‘normal’ juveniles’ tendency to certain reaction types also shows a dominant sequence programming, viz.  $A > B > C > D$ . Here there are also differences (%) for each reaction type between the SP groups, but the dominant sequence programming for these groups remains the same. In this group directed standard picture of so-called ‘normal’ juveniles the high tendency towards law-breaking behaviour (B) and the low tendency towards negotiating (C) are striking.
- 3 Finally, the ‘normal’ juveniles’ motivations also show a dominant sequence programming, viz.  $a > c > b > d$ . Differences (%) for each motivation type between the SP groups occur. Their dominant sequence programming, however, applies for practically all groups.
- B *Regarding the comparison between the provisional standard picture on the one hand and the results of the JJ groups and the RP groups on the other*
- 1 At a statistically significant level the juveniles with behaviour problems (GP groups) differ hardly or not at all from the provisional standard picture as regards knowledge and motivations. This is also true of the detained youngsters (JJ groups).
- 2 The juveniles with behaviour problems (GP groups) and especially three out of four detained juveniles (JJ groups) differ from the provisional standard picture at a statistically significant level with respect to:
- Their weaker tendency towards overstepping limits (A); and
  - Their stronger tendency towards law-breaking behaviour (B).
- In addition, these groups showed a weaker tendency towards negotiating (C) and a stronger tendency towards backing off from tense situations (D) than indicated in the provisional standard picture.
- The JJ group UAEM 2 doesn’t show this tendency regarding especially the A and B reaction types. With respect to this A and B oriented willed reactions the UAEM 2 group is more similar with the SP group of the CU. These UAEM 2- results are discussed at the moment. (Is this group different from the other JJ groups in respect of the extent of delinquency? Is it possible that the extent of delinquency as a condition for conviction by a judge in a more collective oriented culture differs from that in a more individual oriented culture?).

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*Second RPR stage  
Development of the Attitude scale Social Limits (ASL)*

The results of the first RPR stage were an encouragement to take the next RPR step: to development of a diagnostic instrument to map out diagnostically the attitude of individual juveniles (about 12-20 years of age) towards laws and rules (social limits) as objectively as possible.

The *development* of this diagnostic instrument, the ASL, lasted *approximately* 5 years and knew 4 phases.

- 1st phase: construction of the first version;
- 2nd phase: making the instrument reliable;
- 3rd phase: the standardisation of the instrument; and
- 4th phase: making the instrument ready for use.

The progress of this development has been described in detail in several scientific publications and elaborately accounted for in the *ASL Manual*.

The *research team* that carried out the development was made up by:

- C.J. Boersma, MA (executive researcher)
- H.C. Lutje Spelberg, PhD (psychometric adviser)
- J.E. Rink, PhD, Prof. (research co-ordinator)
- R.C. Vos, PhD (methodological adviser)

This development team received recommendations from an international *scientific supervising committee* whose members were

- Sandra Latchford (MA), associate professor, University of New Brunswick, Canada
- Manfred Wittrock (PhD), professor, University of Oldenburg, Germany
- Hans Grietens (PhD), professor, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
- Tjalling Zandberg (PhD), professor, University of Groningen, the Netherlands

The development of the ASL was *funded* by the Dutch Ministry of Justice , particularly through Den Eng, a judicial youth institute in Den Dolder. Additional financial support was obtained from the Northern Institute For social scientific Research (NIFR).

The ASL is a questionnaire containing 28 *critical incidents* in which the above-mentioned 9 *social limits* have been taken into account. After studying literature of a religious, political and philosophical nature these limits have been selected on the basis of the extent of wide acceptance.

For each critical the youngster in question has to answer in writing the following questions:

- what could one do in a situation like that?  
(aiming at the *knowledge* of the reaction options)
- what would you do in a situation like that?  
(aiming at the *tendency* to actively engage in a certain reaction type)
- why would you do that?  
(aiming at the *motivations* for this tendency)

In order to code (the ‘knowledge’ and the ‘tendencies’) and feed the results through SPSS the same reaction typology is used for the ASL as for the SRI (see above): adjusting (A), overstepping (B), negotiating (C) and retreating from the situation (D). The motivation typology, however, saw a reduction of the number of types as compared with the typology used with the SRI. For reasons of reliability the SRI distinction between being oriented towards I (a), towards the other/society (b), the here-and-now (c) and the future (d) has been replaced by the following typology:

- motivations with a low abstraction level (a): these are mainly I and here-and-now oriented;
- motivations with a high abstraction level (b): these are mainly oriented towards the other/society or the future/consequences of one’s acting.

In addition to information about the results of the development of the ASL the ASL Manual also contains a *code book* with guidelines on the way the written responses of the juveniles, before feeding them through the SPSS, should be coded in the several reaction and motivation types. Beside this Manual a *computer programme* to compute the final scores can be obtained from the publisher.

There is an ASL version for *boys* and one for *girls* (ages app. 12-20 years).

The ASL is suitable as an instrument to investigate to what extent in the *juvenile’s attitude* there exist risk factors with respect to potential limit overstepping behaviour. That risk is determined by comparison to the psychometric norm picture. Because of the ‘young age’ of the ASL the researchers have established the risk borderline with caution, i.e. ‘high’. In the future this borderline needs to be stated more precisely.

The ASL does not measure any risk of criminal behaviour as that behaviour is caused by outside factors in combination with factors inside the attitude of the juvenile himself. The ASL aims at the latter cluster of factors. Law-breaking behaviour is caused by both clusters together.

The ASL can be used to measure the progress or *results of rearing* or treatment; e.g. through a pre and post test design.

In terms of prediction the quality and validity of the ASL are being further investigated (see JSL research).

***Relevant literature***

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*Third RPR stage**In search of statistical correlations between rearing on the one hand and the attitude of juveniles with respect to social limits on the other*

The first stage legitimised the development of an individual diagnostic instrument, the ASL, in the next stage. With the help of the ASL it has been possible so far to determine deviations from the more definitive individual-oriented standard or psychometric norm picture regarding juveniles' attitude towards social limits and to point out changes in it as results from rearing or treatment.

The question that logically asked for an answer in the third stage was: can rearing or treatment affect the attitude in question and consequently deviations, if any, in that attitude? An affirmative answer would be desirable, both in terms of prevention (at schools or when advising parents) and of cure (in e.g. judicial residential centres).

In order to find such an answer two ways are open:

- By means of an experimental design one may try to find out to what extent a certain approach as a combination of social techniques is an effective independent variable? Ethical, legal and especially methodical objections in the ambulant or residential setting of (judicial) (health) youth care would turn such an attempt in youth care into a quest for the realism of an illusion – and therefore pointless. Should one withhold from children/juveniles rearing/treatment they need? Should one treat juveniles placed in a judicial youth institute differently? Should one use a control group in youth care, which is, strictly speaking, methodically desired?

- Through *surveys* one may try to investigate whether rearing is different in:
  - families with juveniles without registered behaviour problems and judicial contacts;
  - families with juveniles with registered behaviour problems, but without registered judicial contacts; and
  - families with juveniles with registered judicial contacts.

When, in spite of (cultural) differences in circumstances, the same differences between rearing in these three types of families keep occurring and these differences in rearing co-occur with the same differences between the attitude towards social limits of the juveniles belonging to these three types of families, then correlations can be supposed to exist between rearing and the attitude in question. In that case it should be statistically investigated what aspects of rearing show these correlations with what aspects of this attitude.

Or again: it should be statistically investigated what correlations with what (combinations of) knowledge, tendencies or motivations result from the emphasis on certain (combinations of) rearing tasks, styles and attitudes. In the long run such statistical analysis should answer the question to what rearing aspects attitude deviations are related and to what rearing aspects an attitude that is in accordance with the psychometric norm picture of juveniles without registered behaviour problems and without registered judicial contacts. The latter correlations may be used as material for programmes in the preventive and curative field.

During the third stage this last way of research was decided on.

In the present stage the following types of projects, focusing on the correlation between the above-mentioned rearing and attitude of juveniles, are going on:

- in families with juveniles without registered behaviour problems and judicial contacts (especially in court);
- in families with juveniles with registered behaviour problems, but without registered judicial contacts;
- in families with detained juveniles and therefore with registered judicial contacts;
- in families with children with a supervision order;
- in families with juveniles without registered behaviour problems and judicial contacts who recognisably practise different beliefs;
- at regular schools for juveniles without behaviour problems;
- at special schools for juveniles with behaviour problems; and
- in (judicial) residential institutes for juveniles.

So far the following (research) institutes have been involved (or were involved).

- In Belgium: Catholic University of Leuven (CUL) and a residential institute for juveniles with behaviour problems.
- In Canada: New Brunswick University, in Fredericton.
- In Germany: the universities of Oldenburg and Rostock.
- In Estonia: Tartu University.
- In Mexico: the autonomous University of the State of Mexico (UAEM), in Toluca.
- In the Netherlands: the Juveniles and Social Limits (JSL) Foundation, the University of Groningen (Department of Orthopedagogy), various secondary schools, the Ministry of Justice (especially judicial residential institutes for youngsters), residential institutes for juveniles with behaviour problems and the Salvation Army.
- In New Zealand: the University of Auckland.
- In Slovakia: Comenius University of Bratislava.

In the research into the correlation between rearing and the attitude of juveniles towards social limits the attitude of especially the ASL developed at the second stage of the RPR is mapped out.

The ‘Questionnaire rearing Tasks for Parents’ (QTP) and the ‘Child Rearing Survey’ (CRS) (In Dutch: ‘Vragenlijst Rapportage Opvoeding’, VRO) play an important part in taking inventory of rearing activities.

The QTP contains 134 items, each of which refers to a rearing activity. Both parents of the juvenile that fills out the ASL have to state for each activity to what extent so far he/she has emphasised this activity when rearing that juvenile.

The rearing activities are manifestations of the ten mentioned rearing tasks. First of all this correlation was extracted from an inquiry among parents. They were asked to indicate by means of which activities they carried out each of the rearing tasks. As a next step relevant literature provided supplemental data as a result of which activities were added to some rearing tasks, but in some cases left out. Finally, a ‘judging group’ decided for each rearing task to include in the instrument those activities that solely showed a high correlation with the task in question.

From the QTP versions have been derived that are suitable for group rearing adults in residential centres and for schoolteachers, respectively the ‘Questionnaire Rearing Tasks for Group leaders/Group rearing adults’ (QTG) and the ‘Questionnaire Rearing Tasks For Teachers’ (QTT).

The CRS consists in part I of general and biographical questions. Part II contains 29 items, 25 of which each refer to an aspect of the rearing attitude, rearing style and the rearing tasks. Per item the rearing adult is asked how often he performed or showed this aspect of rearing during the last six months. 4 of the 29 items ask about the frequency of experiencing problems concerning the child, the rearing adult himself, the daily routine (like getting up, having dinner, making homework etc.) and the living situation.

In part III the judgement of the rearing adult is asked about the rearing during the last half year. How did he perceive the rearing? How contented is he about the rearing? Does he want to change something concerning the rearing? Finally, the rearing adult is asked to depict the causes when the rearing did not take place in the way he wanted it to, arranged by the four most important rearing variables: the child (C), the rearing adult him-/herself (RA), the routine daily activities for the child (like the daily program or rhythm, St) or the rearing situation/the situational context (like the quality of the housing, the financial resources or the relations, Sc). More than one key-word can be chosen from the four lists (one list for each of the mentioned rearing variable). The key-words refer to theories and assumptions derived from the literature about the reasons for or causes of rearing problems.

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