RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION STUDY IN BELGIUM

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EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN SECURITY AND CRIME PREVENTION
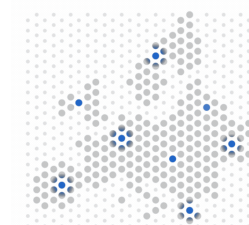
THURSDAY, 30 MAY 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Background:

- Increasing number of BINs/PLPs

- Lack of (evaluation) research on BINs/PLPs in Belgium

- Parliamentary questions on the effectiveness of BINs/PLPs

- Scientific study commissioned by the Directorate-General for Security & Prevention – Federal Public Service Home Affairs

Scope:

- Provinces of Flemish Brabant and Walloon Brabant

- 12 experimental and 12 control areas

Objective:

- To gain a better understanding of the functioning and effectiveness of BINs/PLPs by studying the relationship between the presence of a BIN/PLP and safety (in a broad sense) in the neighborhood, based on a mixed-method experimental design (using a research design that approaches a *randomized controlled trial*, i.e., the 'gold standard')

Research questions:

1. What is the impact of the presence of a BIN/PLP in the neighborhood on **objective safety** (i.e., recorded crime)?

2. What is the impact of the presence of a BIN/PLP in the neighborhood on **subjective safety** (i.e., the feeling of safety)?

3. What is the impact of the presence of a BIN/PLP in the neighborhood on **(in)formal social control**?

4. What is the impact of the presence of a BIN/PLP in the neighborhood on **relationships between neighborhood residents and the police**?

5. What is the impact of the presence of a BIN/PLP in the neighborhood on **information flow between neighborhood residents and the police**?

➔ Always consisting of a quantitative (the degree of 'improvement') and a qualitative (causes and motives) sub-question

METHODOLOGY

Mixed-Method Experimental Design:

•*Maryland Scientific Methods Scale*: approaching level 4

•Stratified sampling for the selection of experimental areas

•Matching control areas based on cluster analysis and geographical analysis

Quantitative Part:

•Secondary data analysis of police crime data

•Secondary data analysis of BE-Alert data

•Primary data analysis of population survey with standardized questionnaires

Qualitative Part:

•Focus groups with (assistant) BIN/PLP coordinators
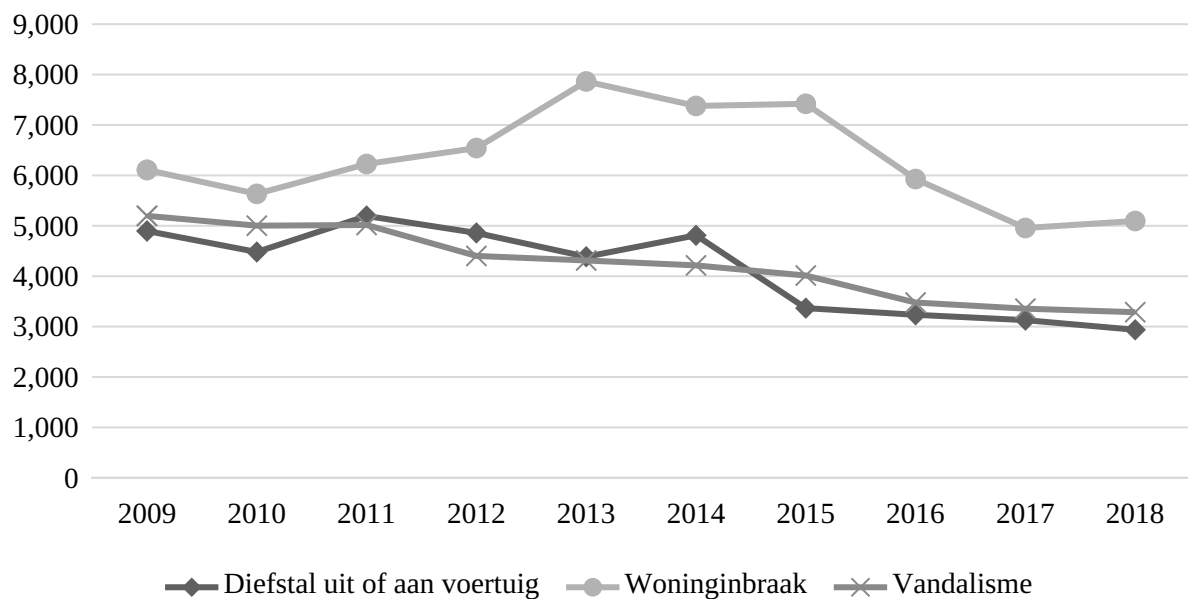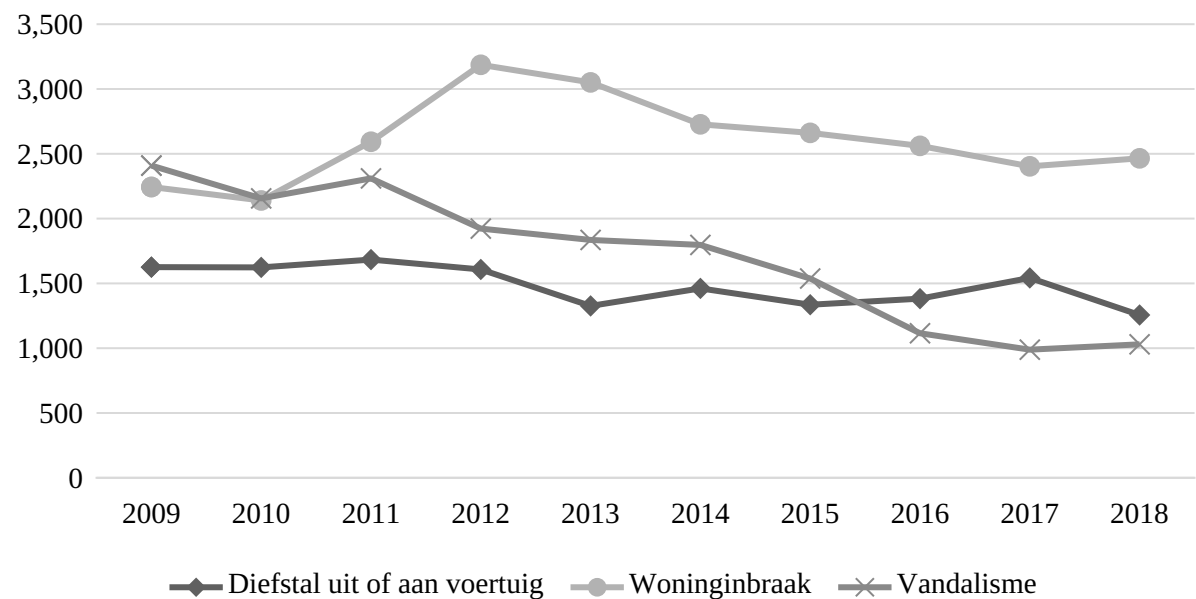
•Focus groups with police officers

RESULTS

Crime figures:

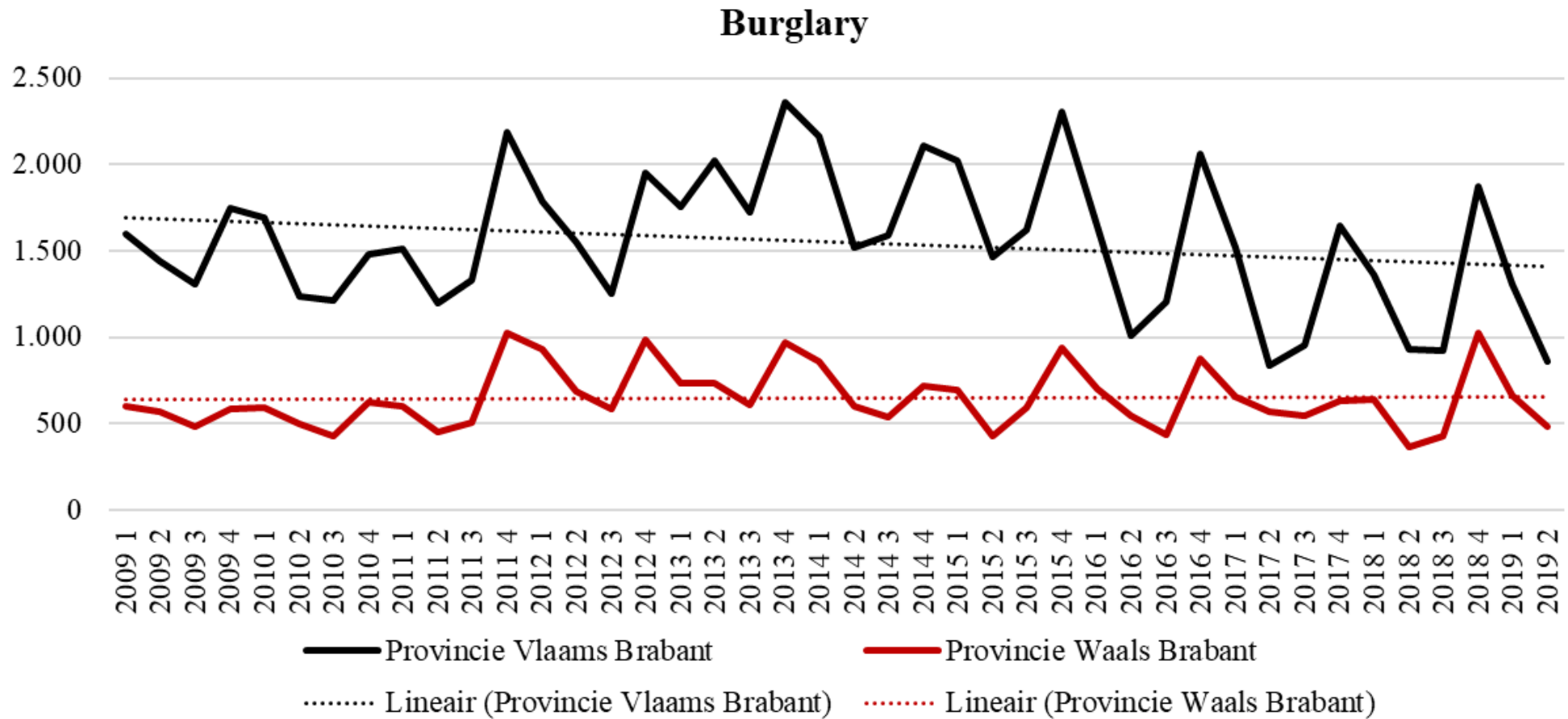Overview of police-recorded crimes per year for the considered crime phenomena
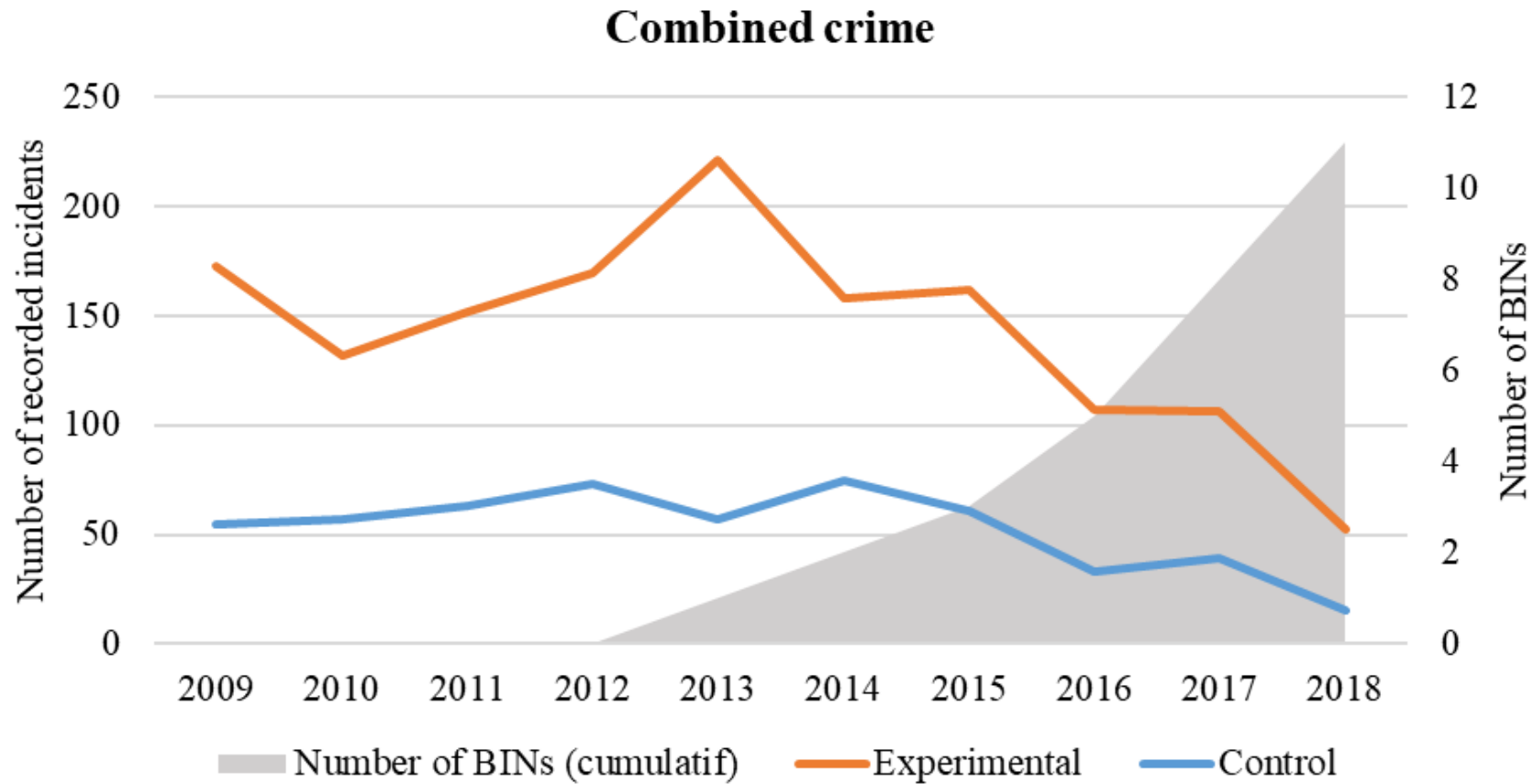
Crime figures:

Police-recorded residential burglaries at the provincial level per quarter

Crime figures:

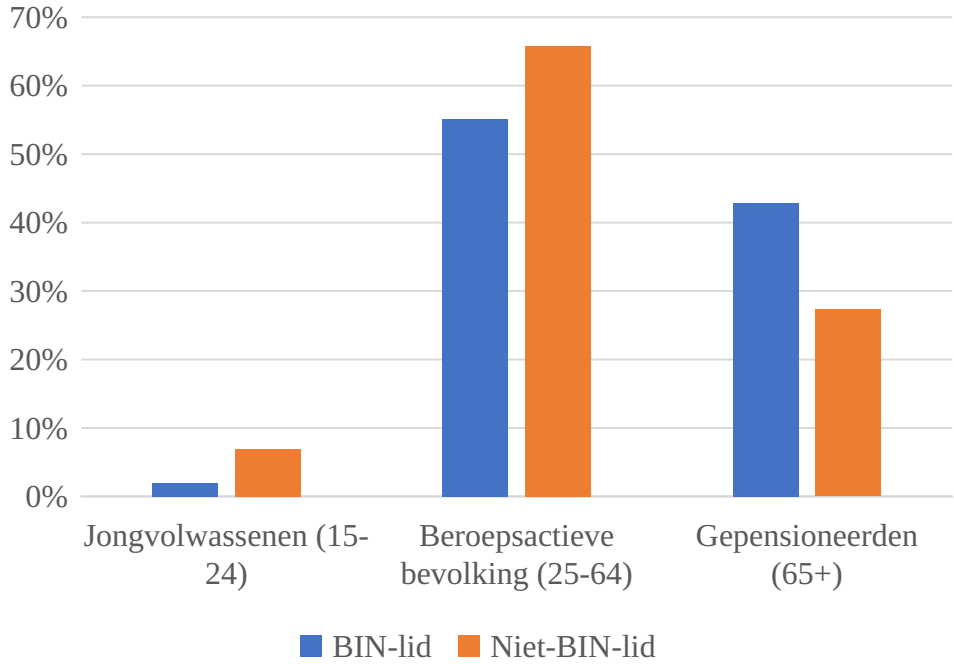Police crime statistics and percentage changes for the paired experimental and control areas per year for all three crime types together
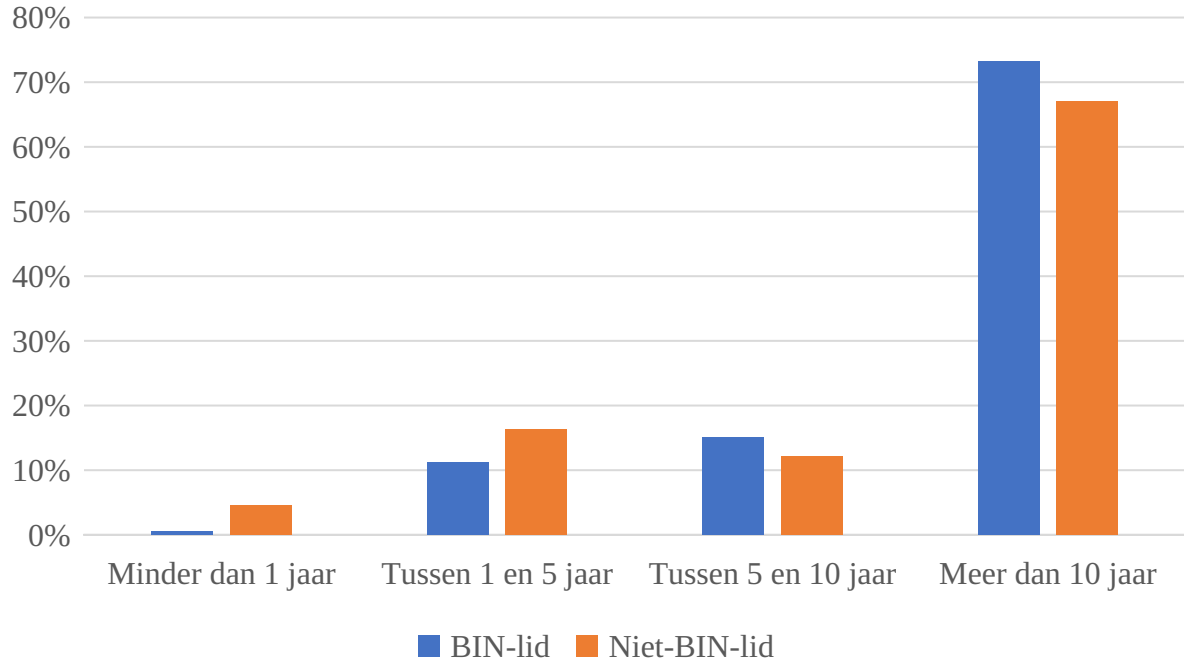

Combined crime

Survey:

Background characteristics significant differences between BIN members and non-BIN members

Survey:

Differences in scale constructs by whether or not living in an area where a BIN is active

Legend: ■ BIN-gebied (e) (n=628) ■ Niet-BIN-gebied (c) (n=375)

Categories: Sociaal vertrouwen, Informele sociale controle, Perceptie freq. crim. ***, Risicoperceptie, Mijdgedrag ***, Relatie met de politie **
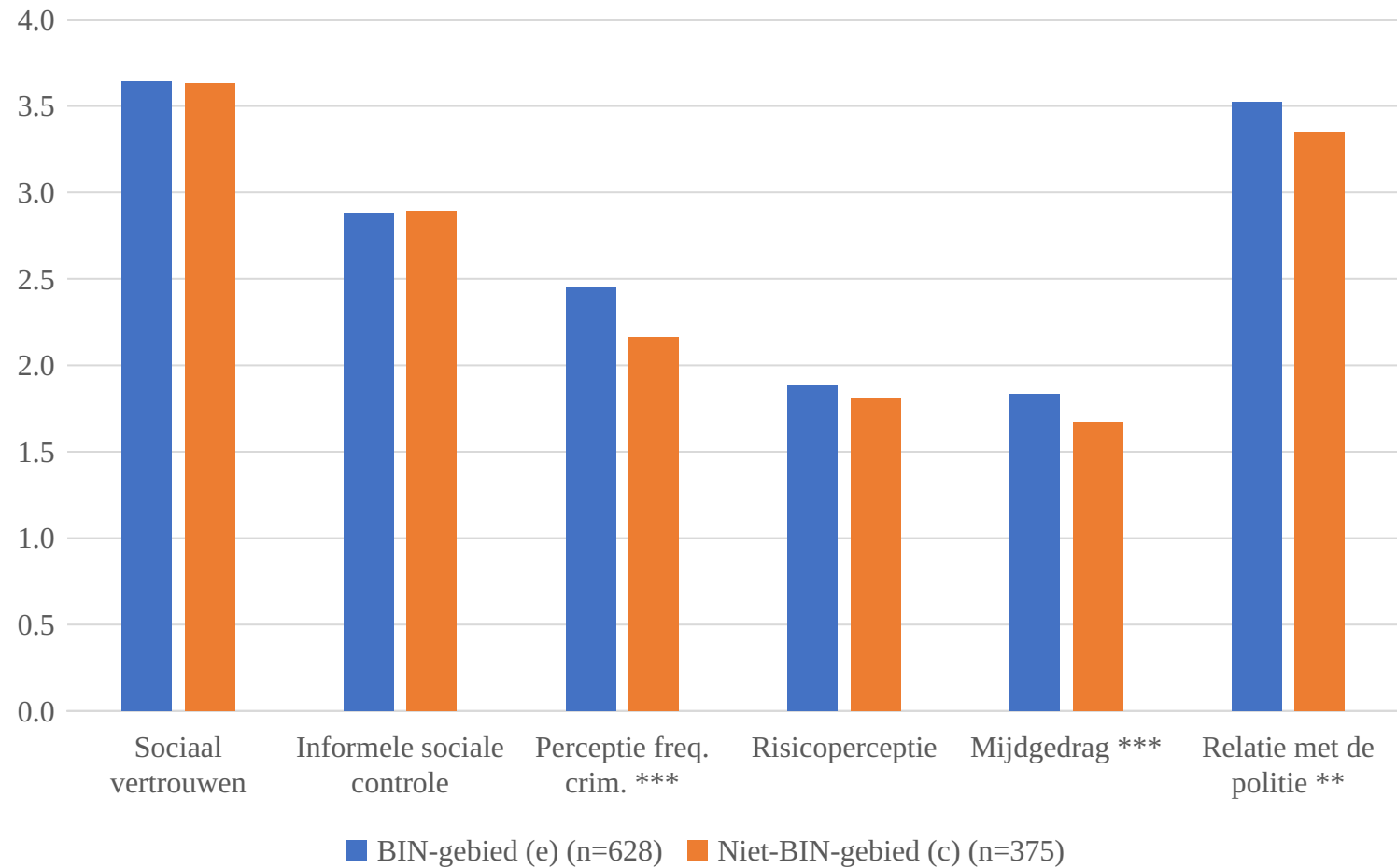
Survey:

Differences in scale constructs by self-identification as a BIN member

BIN-lid (n=205)   Niet-BIN-lid (n=798)
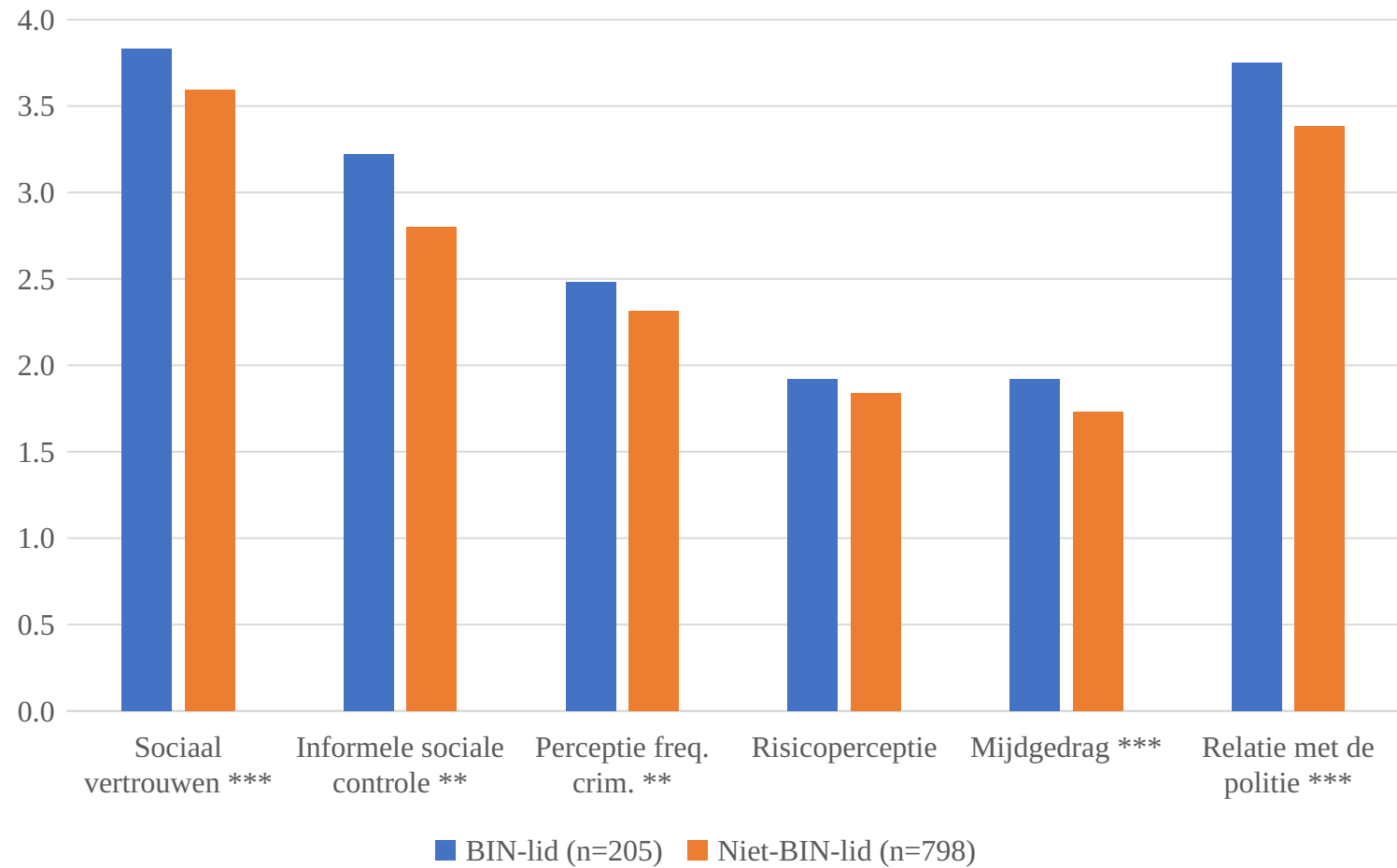
Survey:

Comparison of perceived and expected effects of the BIN
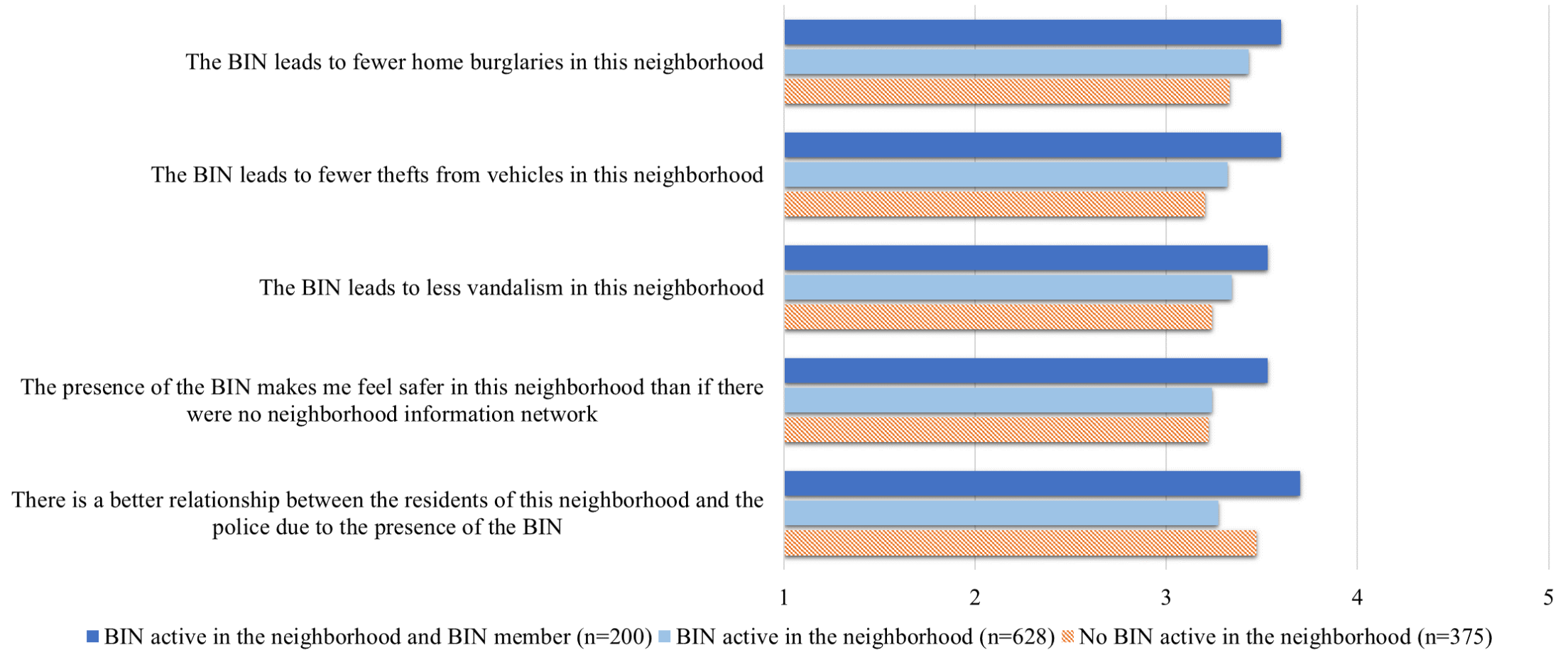
Focus groups:

- Representativeness (Flemish Brabant <-> Walloon Brabant)
  - Insufficient reach of French-speakers in Brussels' suburban municipalities (Flemish Brabant)
  - Representation of both young families, elderly people, and non-native speakers (Walloon Brabant)

- Digital neighborhood prevention initiatives
  - Hardly any digital neighborhood prevention for official BIN communication
  - Advantages recognized by (assistant) coordinators and police officers

- Objective safety
  - Increased informal social control and willingness to report
  - Intensified neighborhood contacts in BIN area

- Subjective safety (Flemish Brabant <-> Walloon Brabant)
  - Mostly positive perceived in Walloon Brabant
  - Reporting of 'backfire effect,' i.e., an increase in feelings of insecurity

Focus groups:

- Perceived disorder
  - No preventive effect regarding nuisance phenomena; not included in the charter either
- Collaboration
  - The relationship between BIN/PLP and police zones is positively evaluated
  - BIN/PLP can help bridge the gap between citizens and the police
  - Room for improvements regarding periodic consultation moments and feedback
  - Importance of the role of the neighborhood police officer
- Non-Native Speakers (Flemish Brabant vs. Walloon Brabant)
  - Low participation of non-native speakers in BIN operations
  - English-speaking expats in the Brussels periphery (Flemish Brabant); bilingual Flemish people in Wallonia (Walloon Brabant)
- Size of BIN/PLP
  - Preference for small to medium-sized BINs/PLPs

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & DISCUSSION

Impact on **objective safety**:

•Decrease in figures not easily attributable to BIN/PLP

•Higher crime levels in BIN/PLP areas leading to the establishment?

Impact on **subjective safety**:

•More feelings of insecurity reported in BIN/PLP areas

•Neighborhood residents do expect a positive effect

Impact on **(in)formal social control**:

•No difference between BIN/PLP areas and non-BIN/PLP areas

•BIN/PLP members: more informal social control compared to non-BIN/PLP members

Impact on **relationships between neighborhood residents and police**:

•Residents of BIN/PLP areas know the neighborhood officer better than residents of non-BIN/PLP areas (and BIN/PLP members know him/her even better)

•More positive attitude towards police work in BIN/PLP areas than in non-BIN/PLP areas (and BIN/PLP members even more positive)

Impact on **information flow between neigborhood residents and police**:

•No overarching policy

•Varying degrees of satisfaction with information flow

Other conclusions:

- Information needs: fragmentation of information (cf. online platforms)

- Representativeness and non-native speakers (difference Flanders-Wallonia?)

- Size of BIN/PLP: functional and geographical

- Evaluations of individual BINs/PLPs

- Police capacity issue

- In-depth evaluation also necessary in the (mid)long term:
  - Declining trend in police crime data converges with control areas
  - Increasing feelings of safety a long-term process?
  - First signs visible: relationship and cooperation with the police

Webinar 07/06/2022

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK4XFxKxIF8
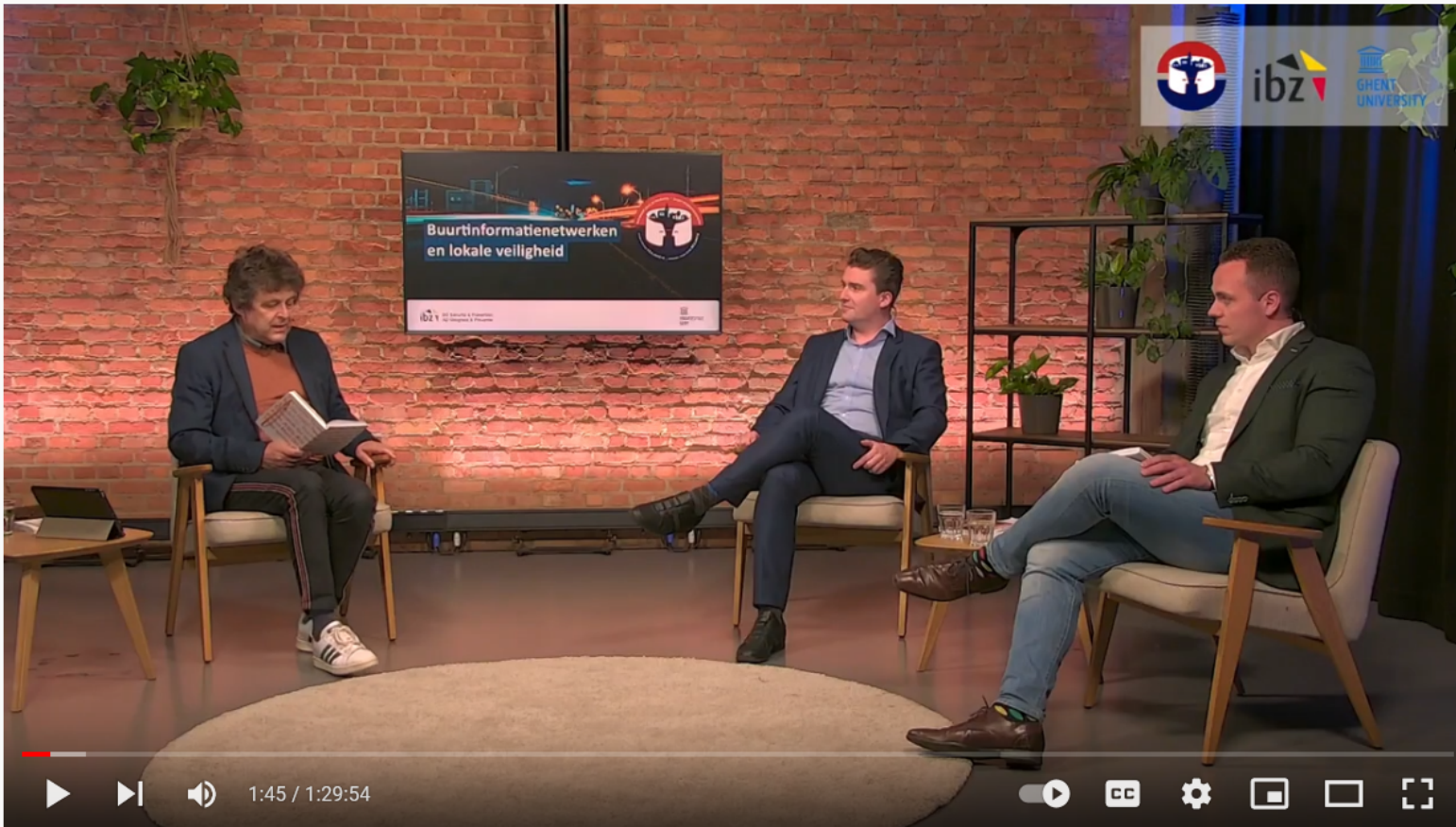
Buurtinformatienetwerken en lokale veiligheid_ webinar 07/06/2022

309 views • Jun 13, 2022

Oude wijn in nieuwe zakken?

Een studie naar de gepercipieerde effectiviteit van buurtinforma-tienetwerken in een veranderende context

Thom Snaphaan, Lieven Pauwels & Wim Hardyns

De komst en razendsnelle evolutie van het internet en sociale media hebben belangrijke gevolgen voor de manier waarop we met elkaar omgaan, communiceren en informatie tot ons nemen. Deze evoluties hebben repercussies voor het politiewerk en ook voor de samenwerking tussen politie en burger. Een van die samenwerkingsvormen tussen politie en burger zijn de buurtinformatienetwerken (beter bekend als BIN's in België; in Neder-land spreekt men van burgerwachten). In deze studie wordt met behulp van semigestruc-tureerde interviews (n=380) in België nagegaan hoe BIN-leden en niet-BIN-leden de effectiviteit van zowel BIN's als informele buurtpreventie-initiatieven percipiëren en evalueren, en welk type van samenwerkingsverband de voorkeur geniet. De gepercipieer-de effectiviteit wordt nagegaan aan de hand van diverse criteria, waaronder objectieve en subjectieve veiligheid, kwaliteit van politiewerk en de relatie tussen politie en burger.

https://docunet.be/detail/Buurtinformatienetwerken-en-lokale-veiligheid

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