

Summaries

Justitiële verkenningen (Judicial explorations) is published six times a year by the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security in cooperation with Boom juridisch. Each issue focuses on a central theme related to judicial policy. The section Summaries contains abstracts of the internationally most relevant articles of each issue. The central theme of this issue (no. 4, 2021) is *Subversive criminality in the Netherlands*.

Contract killings and the extension of excessive violence

Barbra van Gestel

This article describes the recent developments in the nature of the phenomenon of contract killings by organized crime groups in the Netherlands. The crude and sloppy methods by hitmen of today can be explained in part by the inexperience of hitmen combined with the wide availability of heavy automatic firearms. However, the witnessed coarser methods of hitmen can also be attributed to the methods of the principals. Interviews and case reports illustrate a crude, intimidating approach by the principal and a sliding scale in the extension of deadly violence to a broader target group. The shift in deadly violence to wider circles outside the criminal underworld is a new development in the Netherlands. Contract killings of persons who are not involved in organized crime place a great amount of pressure on criminal trials. Attempts are made to influence participants in legal proceedings right up to the court hearings, both through the actual murder of actors and through threats and instilling fear within magistrates, lawyers, the media, and law enforcement.

Organized crime offenders: Characteristics and involvement mechanisms

Vere van Koppen

The complexity of organized crime activities as compared to most common crimes makes that the offender types and involvement mechanisms differ from what has been described in traditional life-course studies. This article addresses two different involvement mechanisms for organized crime: family ties and work ties. Those who become involved through family or close friends are more likely to

have an early start in crime, to intentionally search for opportunities for crime, and to situate themselves in a context where these opportunities are common. Those who become involved through work ties are more likely to have a late start in crime and to have no preconceived plan to involve in crime, but they are faced with an opportunity. Both types of offenders are interesting as crime groups benefit from a certain degree of heterogeneity, providing access to different contacts, knowledge, and skills.

**The ‘disposable army’ of ‘higher’ organized crime groups.
Understanding relationships and resilience in the underworld**

Anna Sergi

This article considers the concept of ‘disposable army’ as a recent addition to the agendas of some policing units countering organized crime in the Western world. The idea of a disposable army comes from counterterrorism and national security languages, but it also echoes studies on disposable youth, their delinquency and vulnerability. The author sketches the main lines of arguments on both the securitisation of organized crime and the vulnerability of disadvantaged and disposable children and young people. Also, she reflects on the concept of disposable army in organized crime by presenting starting observations for a research agenda on this subject and by pointing out how unpacking this concept, and its implications, indeed means to understand how relationships, values, and resilience work in the so-called ‘underworld’.

Laundering the proceeds of crime. Facts, myths and unsuitable research questions

Edwin Kruisbergen

This article starts with a brief exploration of the juridical and criminological meaning of money laundering. Subsequently, the author discusses two contributions that gained momentum in the Dutch debate on money laundering. This concerns, firstly, the statements of Roberto Saviano, an Italian journalist who claims that the Dutch tax regulations facilitate organized crime. Secondly, the author discusses Unger’s application of the so-called Walker model to estimate the size of money laundering in the Netherlands (and worldwide). Finally, he argues that, due to the limited, current level of empirical knowledge on criminal money flows, a question such as ‘How much money is

laundered in the Netherlands?', is in fact not suited as a research question.

Getting the ball rolling: The bottom-up approach to strengthen the fight against serious and organized crime in the Netherlands

Karin van Wingerde, Victor van Santvoord, Roland Moerland, Lieselot Bisschop and Hans Nelen

To strengthen the approach to tackle serious and organized crime in the Netherlands, the Dutch government made additional financial resources available in the form of € 100 million incidentally and a structural reinforcement of € 10 million per year between 2019 and 2022. The funding was allocated through a bottom-up call for projects. Projects with a specific focus on drug-related crime, experimenting with new forms of governance, and projects stimulating public-private partnerships were eligible to apply for funding. In this way, the government aimed at stimulating a broad societal movement and increase resilience against serious and organized crime. This article reports the findings of an ongoing project that evaluates the implementation process of these initiatives and aims to identify best, good, and bad practices and successful collaborations between a wide variety of public and private partners. This project uses an action research approach which allows for providing feedback on the implementation process, while observing what happens in practice.

Keeping drug crime under control. The efforts of 25 years

Manja Abraham and Toine Spapens

In international organized drug crime, the Netherlands is an important transit country (especially for cocaine and, to a lesser extent, heroin and other drugs) and an important production country (of cannabis and synthetic drugs). Drug production and trafficking have serious consequences for society. For example, in addition to possible health damage due to drug use, criminal money flows become intertwined with the regular economy. There is also an increase in new perpetrators, facilitators and bystanders who become involved in illegal activities, murders, and other violence due to conflict between criminal groups and dumping waste from drug production. Organized drug crime increasingly has a far-reaching and subversive impact on the Netherlands and its rule of law. The murders of journalist Peter R. de Vries and lawyer Derk Wiersum are painful recent examples. Despite

these severe consequences, the approach to organized drug crime has long been what we can retrospectively call 'modest', 'naïve', 'incidental', and 'fragmented'.