

## Summaries

*Justitiële verkenningen* (Judicial explorations) is published four 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. 3, 2023) is *The Research and Documentation Centre and 50 years of research*.

### **Fifty years of victimology from a history of science perspective**

*Jan van Dijk*

In this article the author describes how the rise of victimology as an independent discipline is intrinsically linked to the growth of the victims' movement in the late 1970s. He argues that the success of this movement was based on the confluence of two powerful social forces, the universal rise of common crime across the Western world and the equally ubiquitous political demand for more democracy in all sectors of society. In his view, victimological reforms such as extensive victim support were readily adopted in the Netherlands because they aligned with an engrained national tradition of pragmatism in criminal policy.

### **Forty years of research on unaccompanied foreign minors in the Netherlands**

*Monika Smit*

Since the early 1980s, empirical research is being conducted in the Netherlands into minors from outside the European Union who seek refuge here without their parents. The research focused on various topics such as the asylum policy, the reception and guidance, and the integration of the minors. This contribution discusses the studies and their results, as well as the role of the Research and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Justice and Security (WODC) in research into this target group.

### **Empirical legal studies. An impression and reflection**

*Catrien Bijleveld*

Empirical legal studies (ELS) is a flourishing new branch of legal research, that poses questions about the law, uses empirical data to

answer those questions, that are legally relevant. In this article the author briefly describes what ELS entails and discusses a number of examples from administrative, private and criminal law. The author ends with some reflections on what the future may hold for ELS.

### **Legislative research**

*Gert Jan Veerman*

Considering legislation as the juridical vehicle of policy measures (by Government and Parliament), empirical legislative research primarily implies policy research. Many subjects and items are possible in this field: the legislative process (agenda-building, struggling parties (power, interests)), the causes or necessity of legislative activities (societal support, economic motives), working and effectivity of legislative acts. The RDC started in the seventies with just a few prognostic studies, nowadays many evaluation studies are executed. Research specifically directed at legislation as such hardly exists. Some theoretical models for legislative research were developed of which criminological models are more elaborated and validated than the sociological ones. These aspects are described in this contribution. One may be skeptical about the impact of the results of scientific social research in relation to the Legislative Body (methodological restraints, the political nature), nevertheless these results contribute to 'The Pond of Knowledge' and are available for use by the many people involved with legislation.

### **Scientific research into organized crime and investigation methods in the Netherlands**

*Edward Kleemans*

This article describes the most important developments in research into organized crime and (special) investigation methods in the Netherlands. Starting with a description of favorable conditions for scientific progress in this research field, the article elaborates upon the following new insights: transit crime versus racketeering; criminal networks (instead of criminal pyramids); enablers and the role of the licit environment; and early starters, late starters, and recruitment of youngsters. The article concludes with the unpredictability of political agenda setting and the necessity of long-term investments in research and knowledge development.

### **Biocriminology and forensic mental health care: controversy – revival – integration**

*Katy de Kogel*

One of the areas the Research and Documentation Centre has been strongly connected with over the past fifty years is biocriminology. The development of biocriminology in the Netherlands has had a turbulent history with ups and downs. It is described how in the past fifty years, biocriminology in the Netherlands has developed from a no-go area into a thriving area with many lines of investigation. However, research that explicitly focuses on interaction effects between biological and social factors using appropriate methods is still relatively scarce. Yet, this is seen internationally as an important area of growth because it could contribute significantly to criminological theory as well as to prevention and intervention in practice. The Research and Documentation Centre could well contribute to such research in the future because of its unique data position and its biocriminological expertise.

### **Fifty years of youth crime and juvenile justice research**

*Peter van der Laan*

Thanks to fifty years of research, knowledge about youth crime and its dealing with has grown significantly. The precise extent of juvenile crime cannot be determined, but more is known about prevalence and development, nature and severity of crimes committed, and offender characteristics. The situation is stable. A multitude of risk and protective factors are associated with criminal behavior but explaining (predicting) remains difficult. Also, much is known about dealing with youth crime. Periodic overviews show that reluctance is an important and stable characteristic of the application of criminal justice to juveniles. The number of young people being prosecuted has fallen sharply. Many community service orders are imposed and fewer custodial sanctions. The influence of research on practice and policy and legislation is difficult to determine, as is the effect of, among other things, behavioural interventions on recidivism. This is partly due to the largely absence of experimental studies. More fundamental and experimental research could change this.

### **Recidivism research in the Netherlands: a short history and a view on the future**

*Gijs Weijters*

The Research and Documentation Centre has a long history of research into recidivism and criminal careers. This paper describes this history. To the end, the author discusses what exactly recidivism entails and how research into recidivism has been conducted in the Netherlands. Therefore, the author first focuses on descriptive studies, and secondly on evaluation studies in which recidivism is used as an outcome measure. Finally, this paper discusses the directions in which research into recidivism will have to focus on the coming years in order to better meet the wishes of policy makers and to provide more insight into the effectiveness of judicial policy.

### **Pearls in the sand. How the Research and Documentation Centre opens its treasure chest for government, science and society**

*Gerty Lensvelt-Mulders*

In this contribution the author describes the Research and Documentation Centre mission-vision on the way to 2033, based on two themes. First the change in the name of the WODC: the D for Documentation will be changed in the D for Data. This only saves one word, but it has significant consequences for the strategy and position of the WODC. Secondly there will be a new subtitle: 'Knowledge Institute for the Rule of Law'. What it means to be a knowledge institute for the rule of law and how the WODC will contribute to the enhancement of the rule of law, will be described in this contribution to the special edition of *Justitiële verkenningen* in honour of the 50th anniversary of the WODC. It is the mission of the WODC to enhance her impact in three ways. By stimulating evidence-based working for policy makers, by enhancing the cooperation with other research institutions and dissemination of the research in scientific publications, and by enhancing the findability of the research results for a wide range of people working for a just, resilient and safe society.