

## Summaries

*Justitiële verkenningen* (Judicial explorations) is published six times a year by the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice 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. 2, 2017) is *Crime in the Dutch province of Noord-Brabant*.

### **Subversive Brabant**

*P. Klerks*

Various forms of organized crime are concentrated in the Dutch province of North Brabant, bordering Belgium. In this essay it is argued that specific historic, geographic, social economic, cultural and social psychological factors created an enduring window of opportunity in which criminality can flourish. Brabant is portrayed as a marginalized province that suffered from war, exploitation by the central government, rural gangs, a lack of law enforcement, extreme poverty as well as from discrimination because of its mainly catholic population. Against this background the population developed a mentality of solving problems on their own. Their survival strategies implied not only legal activities like agriculture and small-scale production in private houses, workplaces and factories, but also smuggling and illegal alcohol production. In more recent times the production of synthetic drugs, growing cannabis and transport criminality became widespread.

### **The approach of antisocial behavior and the culture of marginal neighborhoods**

*P. Tops*

'Volksbuurten' (marginal neighborhoods) in Brabant emerged from poverty and backwardness, but have developed their own way to deal with it. 'Deviant behavior', including forms of illegal and criminal activity, is important in there. That behavior gradually gets sustainable features. These neighborhoods are usually the result of conscious and active government policy; in particular the approach of 'antisocial behavior' in the forties and fifties of the last century has been impor-

tant. In this article the author first sketches the outlines of this particular 'volksbuurten' culture, to focus then on the history of a particular street in one of those neighborhoods and its culture around 1960: the Ruisvoornstraat in Tilburg. Knowledge of the history of these neighborhoods is one of the keys to understanding the specifics of the history of Brabant and its partial intertwining with a culture of acting illegally and criminally.

### **Cultural heritage and criminal problem: On the subculture of 'travelers'**

*R. Witte and H. Moors*

Within the Province of Noord-Brabant, the 'traveler community' possesses a specific position, coloring the developments in crime throughout the region and being a main focus for major concern among policymakers and professionals. The authors reflect on the historical development of the 'traveler community' and their perceived subculture as well as on state response to these developments. Along this, the attempts of social work to contribute to social climbing of 'travelers' outside criminality in the 1980s and 1990s are portrayed. The contribution rounds up with some reflections on the present call for a 'multi-agency approach' towards organized and undermining crime in which again, and increasingly so, the importance of the so-called 'soft side of crime prevention and repression' is underlined.

### **Criminal family networks in North Brabant: Generation effects in organized crime**

*H. Moors and T. Spapens*

This article on intergenerational transmission of crime in families is based on a study of seven families of which at least one member held a key position in an organized crime group. The authors retrieved information on at least three generations (preceding and succeeding this key member's generation) to investigate whether transmissions occurred, and if so, how these might be explained. Throughout the generations the majority of family members indeed have criminal records. However, it seems to be less easy to transfer criminal leadership in organized crime from one generation to the next. Leading a criminal group seems to demand qualities that are not transferred easily. Successful successors appear to be able to establish their own networks within the deviant subcultures from which they stem. This also

explains the persistence of criminal behavior: both men and women select their friends and partners from these closed communities and seem to prefer for their social and love relationships those who have already developed substantial criminal track records. Organized crime families in North Brabant took advantage of criminal opportunities that were presented to them over the years. Particularly XTC production, starting in the 1990s, allowed them to step up their criminal activities from the local to the global level. In addition, they may have capitalized on a moral economy with sentiments of subordination present in the province of North Brabant, dating back to the seventeenth century, which resulted in a more reserved attitude towards authorities than in other parts of the Netherlands. Finally, law enforcement agencies have been generally slow to respond to developments in criminal opportunities that benefited these seven families.

### **Synthetic drug waste dumpings in Noord-Brabant**

*Y.M.M. Schoenmakers and S.L. Mehlbaum*

Synthetic drug waste dumpings are a growing concern in the Netherlands, particularly in the southern region. During the production process of ecstasy (MDMA) and speed (amphetamine), large quantities of chemical residue are released, that the illegal manufacturers need to get rid of. According to police statistics the chemical waste is mostly dumped in barrels in rural areas, and recovered as such by authorities. However, an unknown quantity of synthetic drug waste is also directly being discharged into sewer, soil or natural surface waters. The phenomenon embodies environmental crime as well as organized crime. From the viewpoint of environmental crime, both ecological and social harm are evident. The article also illustrates the operations of serious organized crime groups behind the scenes.

### **The displacement of illegal drug markets from the Netherlands to Belgium. Perception or reality?**

*F. De Middeleer and B. De Ruyver*

Recent figures indicate that certain drug markets, or at least parts of it, shift from the Netherlands to Belgium. However, it is still unclear whether it is a displacement of some parts of the illicit drug markets or whether it should be seen as a diversification of certain parts of some illicit drug markets in terms of spreading of risks and taking profit of new opportunities. In this respect, this article contributes to an ongoing

ing research (DISMARK) by providing an overview of drug policy measures most recently taken by the Netherlands, from a Belgian point of view, and by trying to link these developments to drug-related trends in Belgium. It is clear that both countries will have to invest in a common approach of their common drug problems. However, it is not yet possible to draw any profound conclusions on the actual displacement of illicit drug markets.