

## 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. 6, 2018) is *Fear of crime*.

### **The need for a new impulse in fear of crime studies**

*Marnix Eysink Smeets*

The security landscape has changed rapidly. New or revived threats have emerged, such as terrorism and cybercrime, bringing new or revived fears and anxieties as well. Actors in security policy feel a need to address these fears, but do not know how. Can the criminological subdiscipline of fear of crime studies provide the knowledge and understanding that is needed? A quick scan of the state of the art in this research domain, gives two reasons why it cannot: (1) fear of crime studies have yielded much knowledge on operationalization, measurement and determinants of fear of crime, but far less in mechanisms, trends, effects and influenceability, whereas insight in the latter issues is what is mostly needed in security policy; and (2) fear of crime studies are still mainly focused on the 'traditional' fear of crime, while fear of new crimes and threats remains under-researched. A shift of focus in fear of crime studies is urgently needed.

### **Unsafety as a diverse concept**

*Lonneke van Noije and Jurjen Iedema*

There is no such thing as *the* feeling of unsafety. The trend in feelings of unsafety is measured using a standard question that has figured in the successive *Safety Monitors* (*Veiligheidsmonitors*) for many years: 'Do you occasionally feel unsafe?' This general question formulation elicits information on how uneasy the Dutch feel about safety. The nature and burden of this unease may vary greatly among them. The authors' analysis shows that crime-specific measures of fear of victimization differ fundamentally from both cognitive assessments (risk perception) and general measures of feelings of unsafety. Hence, peo-

ple who occasionally feel unsafe do not automatically think or fear that they will fall victim to crime and vice versa. Consequently, the authors identify four main constellations of subjective safety which emerge in different population groups, some more burdened by fear of victimization than others. The authors argue that policy should at least seek to reduce the most serious problems. They propose personal fear of victimization as an alternative for general feelings of safety.

### **In search of the roots of fear of crime. No neighborhood is the same**

*Remco Spithoven*

The aim of this article is to search for a more focused approach of fighting back against 'the fear of crime'. It is based on a study of the backgrounds of risen levels of fear of crime in twelve neighborhoods in the regions of Utrecht and Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Eight central themes could be identified in the stories of 240 respondents: specific locations, avoidance behavior, social stability, social quality, superdiversity, negative neighborhood images, burglary, and societal pessimism. Despite the fact that these central themes appeared in the overall analysis, every neighborhood showed another mix of factors explaining risen levels of fear of crime. This means that policies to reduce 'the fear of crime' should focus on specific, local explanations and should always be tailor-made.

### **Ethnic diversity and fear of crime in the neighborhood**

*Iris Glas and Roel Jennissen*

Living in a multicultural environment may be accompanied with an increased fear of crime. Residents may become alienated in a very diverse environment and withdraw themselves in their own social world. This 'hunkering down' may ensue feelings of unsafety. However, social scientists have done hardly any research on whether citizens who live in a multicultural environment in Western Europe actually feel more unsafe. This study seeks to contribute to fill in this knowledge gap. The authors' research reveals that residents are more likely to feel unsafe in neighborhoods with a high degree of ethnic diversity. The aforementioned correlation is the most noticeable in neighborhoods consisting of people on medium incomes.

### **Do it yourself? Strategies to feel safer in urban nightlife**

*Jelle Brands and Janne van Doorn*

This study investigates the strategies people themselves use to deal with situations in which they fear crime. The authors see people as social agents who hold agency and (also) manage their own safety, instead of viewing people as powerless victims. Previous studies have emphasized people's agency, often through a focus on avoiding dangerous spaces. Building on insights from the fear of crime literature that approaches fear of crime as situational, the authors illustrate how spaces in which people worry about crime can also be transformed (through action) into safe(r) spaces. The article focuses on the context of urban nightlife areas. Thirty students living in Utrecht, the Netherlands were interviewed. Results show that students perform a range of strategies to cope with their fear, including situational avoidance, arranging companionship, increasing alertness, and reasoning. In the discussion the authors reflect on how the application of such strategies is related to (erosion of) 'mobility' and individual freedom of movement.