Annual Report 2020

Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement



Contents

Introduction	5
About NSCR	7
Research program	9
Output	11
Collaborations & Agreements	13
Short news	15
What works in policing: towards evidence-based policing in the Netherlands	19
Scientifically strengthen police research and practice	21
PhD trajectories in the research program What works in policing	25
COVID-19 research	29
One year of social distancing behaviour in Amsterdam	29
Negative effect of the curfew on movement relatively small	30
Face mask-wearing and face-touching	30
Stay home, stay safe?	31
NSCR expertise: Video analysis	35
Systematic video observation and analysis of human conflict	35
Video analysis of peer relationships	37
Sources of Income	39
How do people decide who to intervene towards in street conflicts?	41
First Dutch Encyclopaedia Empirical Legal Studies	43
Suspect with mild learning disability has difficulty obtaining the right care and reoffends	45
Wildlife crime and wilderness problems	49
Securing protected areas	51
Problem-oriented policing adapted to wildlife protection	53
Cybercrime	59
NSCR researchers receive ESC Best Article of the Year Award	59
Victim of online crime sees little use in reporting to the police	61
Our online behaviour is much more unsafe than we think	63
3 years after #MeToo	67
Staff (in fte) 2020 average	71
Organisation	73



Introduction

More research, more employees and more resources

n 2020, the NSCR experienced a strong growth: more research, more employees and more resources. To give you an idea: the 2020 budget was 30% larger than that of 2019. This growth was a logical consequence of our renewed strategy in 2019. In line with the results of the SEP evaluation (2016) and the portfolio evaluation (2019), efforts have been made to sharpen the focus and increase the volume in order to achieve the ambitions formulated in the mission.

In 2020 we have organised our research program differently: no longer a series of thematic clusters in which researchers interdisciplinary collaborate. Instead, we have research groups, led by a program leader. Initially we had four research groups in line with our four central research questions. With the arrival of our large police program, we have five research groups. These five research groups develop

and implement their own research within the broad NSCR program. Obviously, there is also a lot of collaboration between these five research groups.

New long-term programs for fundamental research with a high valorisation value for policy and practice have been developed in the field of policing and victimology; areas in which the NSCR was hardly active until recently. This was made possible by a number of (societal) organisations and their substantial investments, such as the Ministry of Justice and Security, National Police, Victim Support Fund and Victim Support Netherlands. And we are talking about another program to be financed by external partners.

Central research questions

- Who commits crime and why?
- Where, when and how is crime committed?
- What are the consequences for victims and society?
- How does society respond to crime?

In terms of income the NSCR was once again successful in 2020, despite Corona! Or maybe we should say: partly thanks to Corona. Various Corona-related research projects could be tackled with financial support by ZonMw, municipalities and security regions (see some of the highlights in this annual report).

The growth of the NSCR also has consequences for our housing. The current accommodation — Initium building at the VU campus — was already quite small, but with the increasing number of employees, adequate housing has become more urgent. The fact that Corona made its appearance in 2020 and the (forced) working from home, made

this topic a little less instant. It goes without saying that housing will once again be prominently on our agenda with the relaxation of the Corona measures.

Finally – and perhaps this foreword should have started with it – just like everyone and all organisations in the Netherlands, Corona has had a major impact on our actions and state of mind. Remarkably, it has had a limited impact on our work. We continued our research, and adjusted to it if necessary. There was some delay, but it was fairly limited. The decline in the number of publications we feared did not materialise in 2020. Hence a heartfelt word of thanks and also compliments to all employees of the NSCR!

Amsterdam, October 2021

Peter van der Laan Director a.i.





About NSCR

NSCR conducts fundamental scientific research into crime and law enforcement. Our research is substantively innovative, methodologically state-of-the-art and contributes to the solution of major societal issues in the field of security and justice.

NSCR operates at the intersection of theory, practice and policy. We focus on traditional and new manifestations of crime, testing existing theories and developing new investigative tools.

In order to play a significant role within national and international academic research, we set ourselves the following objectives:

- NSCR aims at fundamental, interdisciplinary research into the interaction between crime and law enforcement, with an emphasis on longitudinal studies.
- NSCR carries out academic research independently and in collaboration with scientific institutions and publishes about this in academic media.
- In collaboration with other universities and institutions, NSCR is developing a national and international network of academic researchers by organising national and international congresses, seminars, symposia, workshops, and lectures on the latest insights.
- NSCR plays an active national and international role in public opinion forming.
- NSCR trains young researchers.



Research program

Our research program is based on four leading questions: Who commits crime and why? Where, when and how is crime committed? What are the consequences for victims and society? How does society respond to crime? Those four research questions form the basis for our research groups. In addition, we set up a fifth research group in 2020 that conducts research into evidence-based policing.

Our researchers conduct joint research from various disciplines on various themes. Frequently, our research is not about just one leading question, but several questions are combined. For example in research into (re)victimization in criminal or civil proceedings, in research whether prison sentences actually increase the risk of recidivism, or in research into conflicts in public spaces and the bystander effect.

Who commits crime and why?

NSCR has a long-standing tradition in the study of perpetrators' criminal careers. At what point in life do offenders start offending, and when and how escalate their criminal careers? We focus on the explanation of patterns: what factors influence starting, escalating and desisting from crime?

Evidence-based policing

The research program What works in policing: towards evidence-based policing in the Netherlands aims to provide scientific interpretation and substantiation for an evidence-based police practice and to analyse (new) issues for the police (function). It examines how police actions work, in what circumstances those actions work and for whom and by whom it works. Read more about our evidence-based policing program on page 19.

How does society respond to crime?

After a crime has been committed, a variety of things may happen: the victim may report the crime to the police (or not), the crime may be linked to a suspect (or not), a suspect may be found guilty (or not), and convicted offenders may end up being incarcerated (or not). NSCR studies all these aspects of the aftermath of crime and our societal response to crime and punishment.

Where, when and how is crime committed?

One of the key questions of NSCR research focuses on where, when and how crimes are committed. Why does crime concentrate in certain locations rather than in others? Is it because offenders happen to know these locations, as they are close to their home, job or (previous) school? Data from crime scenes and activity patterns of perpetrators and victims provide insight into the underlying choice behaviour of perpetrators.

What are the consequences for victims and society?

The NSCR conducts research into which risk factors are associated with victimization. How can victimization be prevented and how can victims be assisted and supported? We look at the effectiveness of interventions and procedures, to the extent to which victims get what they deserve, to the societal responses to victimization and to new forms of vigilantism. In addition, we study the consequences of victimization: the short-term and long-term effects on the well-being and health of victims, labour market participation, and the intergenerational transfer of crime and victimhood. The NSCR cooperates with ao the Victim Support Fund (Fonds Slachtofferhulp).

Output

Peer-reviewed publications	56
Non-peer-reviewed publications	45
Total 101 of which Open Access	39
PhD Theses	2
Books	5
Book chapters	16
Publications aimed at professionals	20





Collaborations & agreements

Collaborations with research institutions

NSCR collaborates both nationally and internationally with a large number of scientific research institutions. Various NSCR researchers are associated with a university or university of applied sciences, as a professor or lecturer. In addition, professors and researchers from scientific research institutions around the world regularly work as a fellow at NSCR.

NSCR participates in the Amsterdam Law and Behavior Institute (A-LAB), an interfaculty collaboration of the VU University Amsterdam. We also cooperate with Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Open University (OU), University of Amsterdam (UvA), Leiden University (UL), Maastricht University (UM), Tilburg University (UT), Utrecht University (UU) and the Hague University of Applied Sciences (HH). It is expected that the University of Groningen will be added to this list.

Framework agreements with societal partners

NSCR has a framework agreement with the Victim Support Fund (Fonds Slachtofferhulp). This agreement makes it possible to conduct high-quality scientific research while at the same time making a socially relevant and practically useful contribution to the care of victims. In addition, we have a framework agreement with the National Police and the Ministry of Justice and Security since 2020. The research program What works in policing: towards evidence-based policing in the Netherlands will run for five years, with the option to extend for another five years.

With these framework agreements we can conduct long-term and extensive research programs in new or undeveloped areas. NSCR thus contributes – visible and measurable – to the improvement of the Dutch research and knowledge position in the field of crime and law enforcement.



Short news

NWO Veni and two Vidi's for NSCR researchers and fellows

Vidi | From the Past Back to the Future: Intergenerational legacies of mass atrocities

Dr Barbora Holá | Senior Researcher NSCR Empirical Legal Studies

Mass atrocities committed during genocides, wars and state repressions have profound consequences on people who directly experience them and on generations to come. This project examines how legacies of mass atrocities transfer across generations, and what role transitional justice mechanisms, such as criminal trials and lustrations/vetting, play in such intergenerational transmission.

Vidi | Can improving public attitudes towards the police prevent crime?

Dr Amy Nivette | Utrecht University | Fellow NSCR Evidence-based policing Can a single contact with the police change how people perceive them? Can a Tweet damage trust in police? Will this also influence someone's criminal behaviour? This project introduces a novel method of measuring everyday encounters with police, revealing to what extent these experiences influence individual perceptions and criminal behaviours.

Veni | Choosing the good side: factors that lead to non-criminal hacking

Dr Marleen Weulen Kranenbarg | VU University Amsterdam | Fellow NSCR Cybercrime In contrast to criminal hackers, non-criminal hackers actively help in securing IT-systems. By examining lifecourse characteristics of non-criminal hackers, as well as situational and cultural factors, this study will show why non-criminal hackers choose to stay on the good side of the law and use their skills in cybersecurity.

Marie Rosenkrantz Lindegaard professor by special appointment at University of Amsterdam

Marie Rosenkrantz Lindegaard has been appointed professor by special appointment of Dynamics of Crime and Violence at the University of Amsterdam's (UvA) Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The chair was established on behalf of the NSCR. Rosenkrantz Lindegaard will combine the professorship with her role as senior researcher at the NSCR. In her research, she focuses on criminology, artificial intelligence and the use of video data recorded with public cameras. The aim is to find interactional and situational explanations for crime and violence that will help developing and improving prevention programmes. Read more about the research of Rosenkrantz Lindegaard on page 29.

Arjan Blokland appointed visiting professor at Aalborg University

On 1 December 2020, Arjan Blokland gave his inaugural lecture on studying corporate crime through a life-course lens. Blokland is a senior researcher at the NSCR, and professor at Leiden University. His research interests involve the evolution of delinquency and crime across the life span and the desired and collateral effects of interventions aimed to curb criminal development. Blokland has introduced the criminal career and life-course approach to several other research fields, including sex offending research, organized crime research and, most recently, the study of corporate crime.





What works in policing: towards evidence-based policing in the Netherlands



Scientifically strengthen police research and practice

The National Police, the Ministry of Justice and Security and NSCR have entered into a framework agreement for a five-year research program: What works in policing: towards evidence-based policing in the Netherlands. The program aims to provide scientific interpretation and substantiation for an evidence-based police practice and to analyse (new) issues for the police (function). The research is developed and carried out by NSCR, with the cooperation of the National Police, the Police Academy, universities from the Netherlands and abroad, universities of applied sciences and other knowledge institutions.

he research program is in line with the Strategic Research Agenda for the Police, and examines how police action works, in what circumstances those action work, for whom, and by whom it works. NSCR uses advanced scientific methods and the latest, current insights and theories, applied to the Dutch context. The program takes research into police actions to a higher scientific level and will deliver high quality, internationally peer-reviewed publications.

Police and Ministry of Justice and Security

The police and the Ministry of Justice and Security want to be prepared for the future and therefore stimulate the development of the police organization.

Liesbeth Huijzer, Police Management: "We want to gain fundamental insight into the effect of our actions and the contribution this makes to the safety of our society. The NSCR research program promises to generate this knowledge in close collaboration with the police and the Ministry of Justice and Security. We look forward to gain new knowledge together."

Traditionally, security and crime have been studied from different angles and disciplines. In this program, these disciplines will work together from different universities (of applied sciences). The specific expertise of the Police Academy is also involved. The program strives for answers to the questions of the police by means of innovative,

high quality and long-term scientific research. Police officers are also explicitly invited to help, the police organization benefits from this. This unique collaboration is in line with the police's aim to form new security coalitions and to be open and transparent about the work and the organization. In addition, scientists can use this to make an independent judgment about police actions.

Monique Vogelzang, Director-General of Police and Security Regions, Ministry of Justice and Security: "With the police, we want to contribute to the safety of citizens. We want to learn from that commitment, what are its effects, and does it ultimately benefit our citizens? We need scientific research to explore this. It is great that we are working together with the police and the Police Academy to let NSCR research precisely those fundamental questions in the coming years."

NSCR: results of research directly relevant and usable for practice

Particularly in the field of crime and law enforcement, the obvious question is what science can contribute to policy and practice. NSCR conducts

fundamental scientific research into explanations for crime, but also into social responses to crime (approach and sanctions). That is why the results of research are directly relevant and usable in practice. By working closely together with the police and the Ministry of Justice and Security, a better understanding of the issues and problems they face is created. On the other hand, the parties involved learn through thorough multi-year research what helps in solving these problems. In addition, this collaboration is important for the young researchers who are educated, because they are challenged to link their scientific work to practical issues.

Peter van der Laan, Director a.i. NSCR:

"With this framework agreement, independent scientific research into the police function is given an enormous boost. It shows courage of both the ministry and the National Police – when the police is facing major challenges – to say to NSCR: Develop a reserach program and surprise us with ideas, innovations and thorough research. I am sure that the results of our research will contribute to a well-functioning police force."



The initiators of this research program explicitly invite people from the police practice, the Police Academy and Dutch universities (of applied sciences) to participate in the conduction of this research program. If you would like to cooperate, if you have an idea or valuable input, please send an email to program leader Stijn Ruiter at ruiter@nscr.nl and / or to the police research coordination via Onderzoekscoordinatie@politie.nl.





PhD trajectories in the research program What works in policing

Citizen at the counter

One of the few contact moments between citizens and government is when a citizen reports at the police desk. The problems with which citizens report often lead to the filing of a report and this is also the starting point of criminal law. But, is the citizen's problem always best off in criminal law? For example, there may actually be a care problem behind it. Or maybe it is better to opt for mediation. In this project we take a closer look at what the problems of citizens are, what expectations citizens report and how the police at the counter can respond to them. What are their options? Do they have the right tools to make a proper diagnosis? We examine to what extent the work of the police can best match the expectations of citizens.

From declaration to clarification and prosecution

This research is in line with the project *Citizen at* the counter. A citizen who reports a crime gives "an order to the police". Whether or not there will subsequently be a criminal case depends on all kinds of factors related to the characteristics. of the case. For example, when a bicycle theft is reported, there is usually no investigation and it is unlikely that the case will be clarified. But sometimes there are enough leads and a case fails anyway. In this project we are researching where, when and why things fail. To what extent does this depend on the characteristics of the case itself? Are there differences between base teams, districts and units, and how do they arise? You can think of differences in expertise, capacity or prioritization. We examine which buttons you can turn to organize the flow of cases as well as possible.

Violence by and against the police

The police are allowed to use force in certain situations and have different means to do so. Conversely, citizens also use violence against the police. In this research, we analyse situations of violence by and against the police on the basis of camera images, one of the expertise of the NSCR. There is already a lot of research into police and violence, but this research has usually been carried out on the basis of the reports or memories of those involved, and that is difficult to systematize. By analysing footage from CCTV and body cams, we can unravel violence situations from second to second. In this way we can determine to what extent differences in actions determine the outcome. When does a conflict escalate and when does it de-escalate? Within this project we work closely with NSCR fellow Christophe Vandeviver and PhD student / NSCR guest researcher Isabo Goormans (both University of Ghent). They conduct research into differences in the use of force between police officers and whether so-called network effects occur due to the way in which police officers work together in couples. After all, colleagues can influence each other when using violence as well as being the target of violence.

Increase in youth organized crime

Some young people become involved in organized crime and are even recruited for it. In this project we investigate different facets of the problem. What are the risk factors for getting involved in organized crime? How do young people who do and do not give in to this differ? How can the police and partners take effective action against this? What are the police doing now and what could be improved? We also examine to what extent social networks and family relationships play a role in joining a criminal organization.





Police vehicles on the spot

Police work is partly reactive and partly proactive. In addition to providing emergency assistance quickly following a report in the control room, the police are also present on the street to reduce and prevent problems. International experimental research has shown that with scarce resources it is wise not to drive around randomly, but to concentrate police deployment mainly in places with relatively many problems. To be able to work optimally proactively and reactively, a balance is needed between arrival times for emergency aid and driving around problem areas. The aim of this project is to work with a mathematician from NWO Institute CWI (Center for Mathematics and Computer Science) to find out how the presence on the street can be arranged in such a way that the proactive and reactive task are optimally combined.

Police and procedural justice

Based on theory and empirical research within the criminal justice system, we know that a sanction (what happens) sometimes has less influence on people and whether they comply with the rules than the procedural course (the way in which it happens). The just application of the rules and a good explanation seem more important than the punishment itself. The role of procedural justice has been studied a lot in prisons, but we still know very little about the role of the police in this. How does the interaction between a suspect and the police proceed, for example in the event of an arrest or questioning? How does a suspect feel treated? To what extent does this treatment determine the suspect's cooperation? And what is the long-term influence on the suspect's behaviour?



COVID-19 research

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSCR has carried out research into compliance with measures to prevent the spread of the virus. By means of observation and video analysis, among other things, we are conducting (field) research into the curfew, face masks, social distancing and the number of people on the street. This program into behavioural research is led by Prof. Marie Rosenkrantz Lindegaard. Below we highlight a few research projects.

One year of social distancing behaviour in Amsterdam

To mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Dutch government enforced that citizens should keep 1.5-meter distance from strangers in public. NSCR researchers evaluate compliance with this directive by drawing on more than 40.895 hours of video recordings of public space captured by 57 municipal public surveillance cameras in Amsterdam through the first year of the pandemic - from March 2020 to January 2021. The study has two main findings. First, a direct relationship was found between the number of people observed on the street and 1.5-meter contact moments. This finding high-lights the importance of crowd management of public spaces for facilitating social distancing compliance. In addition, it also appears that people started to keep more distance from each other as soon as the first COVID-19 infections took place in the Netherlands. Even before the 1.5 meter distance rule was introduced. And while the 1.5-meter distance rule was well adhered to around the time of its implementation (March 23, 2020), compliance declined rapidly in the following weeks.

Second, relatively many people were observed between spring and late fall 2020, while the two lockdowns that preceded and succeeded this period coincided with lower numbers, indicating compliance with stay-at-home measures.

Negative effect of the curfew on movement relatively small

Drawing on video footage from municipal public space cameras in Amsterdam, NSCR investigated behavioural compliance with a curfew installed as a Covid-19 mitigating measurement in a period of lockdown. The study results were as follows: with the introduction of the curfew, the number of people on the street in the period 21:00 to 03:00 decreased, indicating that people complied with the measurement. Adding to this finding, around one-third of the people observed during the curfew were visually evaluated to have a legitimate reason to be on the street (e.g., walking with dog, bike delivery service). The negative effect of the curfew on movement was relatively small in magnitude, suggesting that this measure may only have a limited effect in a situation where society is already under lockdown. Finally, some evidence was found, albeit fragile, that the curfew was followed by a slight increase in the number of people in the period 15:00 to 21:00. Although this should be interpreted with caution, this result indicates some displacement effect, by which people chose to go outside before the curfew when they cannot go outside after 21.00.

Face mask-wearing and face-touching

There were many myths about face masks and risk behaviour in the Netherlands. NSCR killed one by showing that mask-wearing has no effect on social distancing behaviour and no effect on face-touching behaviour. Most countries in the world have recommended or mandated face masks in some or all public places during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, mask-wearing has been thought to increase people's face-touching frequency and, thus, the risk of self-inoculation. Across two studies, we video observed the face-touching behaviour of members of the public in Amsterdam and Rotterdam during the first wave of the pandemic. Secondary outcome analysis of the two studies - separately and with pooled datasets - found a robust negative association between mask-wearing and hand contacts with the face and t-zone (i.e., eyes, nose, and mouth). Our results alleviate the concern that mask-wearing has an adverse face-touching effect.

Stay home, stay safe?

Extent, nature and seriousness of domestic violence during the Corona crisis

The NSCR has started a two-year research program into domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, there is close collaboration with Avans University of Applied Sciences and social partners, such as the various Safe at Home regions (Veilig Thuis regio's), the National Safe Home Network (Landelijk Netwerk Veilig Thuis) and the Blijf Groep. This research is led by Dr Veroni Eichelsheim and funded by ZonMw.

omestic violence and child abuse are a wide-ranging and complex problem. Every year, Safe at Home organizations, the regional advice and reporting centers for domestic violence and child abuse, receive

approximately 131,000 reports of domestic violence. Although victims can contact Safe at Home directly, professional reports are mainly made on the basis of the reporting code for domestic violence, by the police (66%) or other professionals (consultation

centers, schools, care providers). Victim surveys suggest that the actual number of domestic violence cases is many times higher.

Large-scale systematic study

At the time the first corona measures were announced in the Netherlands, NSCR researchers tried to monitor how social service agencies, reporting agencies and other organizations dealing with (reports of) domestic violence, have anticipated the measures in their daily practice and what changes they have observed. This research started as an oral questionnaire. Later, this project, with the help of the various participating organizations, developed into what it is today: a large-scale systematic study into the prevalence, nature and severity of domestic violence at the time of COVID-19.

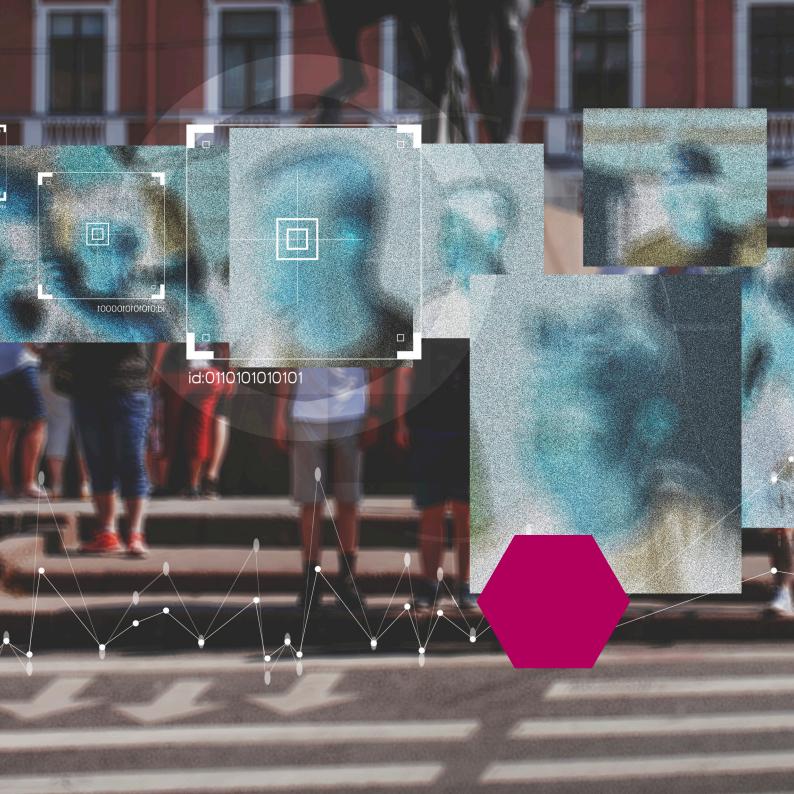




Results and more information

www.nscr.nl/stay-home-stay-safe (in Dutch).









Video analysis of peer relationships Rich data, but a lot of work

In the recently established Workgroup Observational Research on Peers (WORP), scientists share best practices on peer relationship research using video analysis. Evelien Hoeben, criminologist at NSCR, is founder and member: "Video is a great way to do situational research, but it's not easy."

ideo makes it possible to perform very precise conversational and behavioural analyses. As technology keeps getting better and easier to use, more and more research is done this way. The WORP meets every three months to exchange experiences. Hoeben: "We are a multidisciplinary working group with educationalists, psychologists, criminologists and sociologists from currently - five different research institutes (EUR, UU, UvA, VU and NSCR). Other areas of expertise are of course very welcome."

What is the advantage of video analysis, for example in your research?

"I research how adolescents encourage and persuade each other to engage in risky behaviour,

such as substance use and crime. I do this on the basis of, among other things, video recordings made specifically for this project in secondary schools. During video analysis you can see and hear exactly what is said or done and what happens next. As a result, you know what the immediate cause is for certain behaviour. A questionnaire, for example, is always completed retrospectively. And afterwards people cannot remember word-for-word how a conversation went. They are also usually unaware of non-verbal signals from conversation partners, which can influence their behaviour. But there are also other reasons to use video analysis: for example, two colleague workgroup members are conducting research into pre-school children, which you can hardly submit a questionnaire to."

The camera often makes people selfaware, how do you ensure that the material is still authentic?

"The realization that the camera is rotating usually diminishes quickly. After five minutes, children often forget that it is there, and that is actually the case for most adults. Sometimes young people involve the camera in their conversation, which is nice to see. Then they dance for the camera or stick their tongue out. At the same time, their mutual behaviour - which is what matters to me - remains the same. They are focused on each other and possibly on the camera, instead of a third person who is observing."

An enormous amount of data must be available from video material.

"Video analysis does indeed produce very rich data. The question is: how do you do justice to all that data? You are dealing with a chain of mutual reactions and behaviour. You have to code that properly in order to really be able to use it. In the working group, we are investigating how we can make full use of that data. We share experiences with drawing up coding schemes or we discuss

the advantages and disadvantages of the different analysis methods. Sometimes we also exchange very practical information: how long does it take to train a new coder? Or we share literature about a particular method or analysis. We are still figuring out what we can learn from each other."

Is video analysis the future?

"Certainly. But it still takes a lot of time. First you have to design a coding scheme and then you have to properly familiarize the coders. This is an important part, because all coders must interpret the same behaviour in the same way. All in all, this can take weeks to months and only then can you start the actual analysis of the data. I recently heard from a colleague who spent a day and a half coding a ten-minute video. Only for the non-verbal behaviour! I am also involved in research into the development of automatic detection software. This shows that in practice it is already difficult to recognize a person in a video, let alone that an algorithm can grasp complex communication patterns. Behaviour is difficult to capture in automated coding."



Do you specialize in peer relationships (children, young people and adults) and do you conduct research using video analysis? Then you can register for the Workgroup Observational Research on Peers. Send an email to EHoeben@nscr.nl or visit LinkedIn.

Sources of income In 2018, 2019 and 2020

Income 2018-2020 in k€	2018	2019	2020
NWO	1.973	2.245	2.316
VU Amsterdam, cash & in-kind contributions	573	547	551
Direct funding	2.546	2.792	2.867
Fonds Slachtofferhulp	0	0	206
Stichting Slachtofferhulp Nederland	o	0	4
National Police	o	0	202
Program funding	o	0	412
NWO	403	417	764
Other subsidy providers	164	156	273
Research grants	567	573	1.037
Contract research	444	253	572
Other	217	127	113
Total	3-774	3.745	5.001
Expenditure 2018-2020 in k€	2018	2019	2020
Personnel costs	3.128	2.951	4.121
Other costs	639	630	623
Total	3.767	3.581	4.744



How do people decide who to intervene towards in street conflicts?

NSCR researchers Peter Ejbye-Ernst, Marie Rosenkrantz Lindegaard and Wim Bernasco investigated how regular people decide who to intervene towards when they try to stop a conflict. In order to analyse this, they used CCTV footage of real-life conflicts from the streets of Amsterdam. It seems that people who try to de-escalate a conflict have certain preconceptions in the way they handle conflicts.

magine that you are walking down a street and two individuals start to fight. Many of us want to believe that we would intervene and help in this kind of situation. But helping can be challenging - fights are often fast paced and can appear chaotic. There is oftentimes not a clear division between who is the victim and who is the perpetrator. This means that after deciding to do something we still have to make sense of the situation and figure out who to intervene towards – we have to decide who we try to stop.

Video footage of real-life conflicts from the streets of Amsterdam

In order to investigate this, NSCR researchers analysed video footage of real-life conflicts from the streets of Amsterdam, collected in collaboration with the Municipality of Amsterdam and the Dutch Police. This footage allowed them to investigate how real-life conflicts play out and see how real people make decisions in the heat of the moment. Many of these decisions are quick and can be difficult to recollect afterwards. The use of video footage thus offers a glimpse into a world otherwise difficult for researchers to access.

Preconceptions in who people intervene towards

Based on the analysis of the videos, they found that people who try to de-escalate a conflict have certain preconceptions in who they intervene towards - and this is after the researchers have controlled for the aggressiveness of the conflict parties. First, they see that the people who intervene are more likely to try to stop someone they know rather than strangers. If their friend is getting involved in a conflict with a stranger, they are thus more likely to stop their friend than the stranger. Furthermore, the people who intervene in a conflict also have a gender preconception. In a conflict between a man and a woman, where they have both been equally aggressive towards each other, they are more likely to try to stop the man than the woman.

Peace keeper might be able to de-escalate conflict, but is not necessarily fair

When a fight breaks out there is rarely police or other professional guardians present to handle the conflict. Previous research argues that ordinary people present in the situation are another resource for conflict de-escalation. In this study, the researchers argue that these ordinary peace keepers might be able to de-escalate the conflicts, but that they are biased in the way they handle the conflicts. They take responsibility for their friends and try to stop them from continuing to engage in the conflict. They also find that these ordinary people have a gender bias in the way they intervene. While these interveners thus might be a resource for conflict de-escalation, they are not necessarily fair in the way they act.



Publication details and further reading

Ejbye-Ernst, P., Lindegaard, M.R. & Bernasco, W. (2020). A CCTV-based analysis of target selection by guardians intervening in interpersonal conflicts. *European Journal of Criminology*.

First Dutch Encyclopaedia Empirical Legal Studies

Researchers from the NSCR, University of Groningen, WODC and VU University have compiled the first Dutch Encyclopaedia for Empirical Legal Studies (ELS). This encyclopaedia provides a systematic overview of what has been done on ELS over the past 25 years, what the findings from these studies mean for law, and of pressing empirical questions in the field of law.

ore and more often, legally relevant questions are answered in various areas of law, such as family law, liability law, law of evidence or (international) criminal law, using empirical research. Such empirical legal research focuses on the assumptions on which the law is based, the way in which that law functions in practice and the effects of the law.

Implications for legal practice

The Dutch Encyclopaedia Empirical Legal Studies provides a systematic overview of the state of affairs within the various sub-areas of law, and of the extent to which the empiricism of law has penetrated and influences the formation of law itself. In 34 chapters, various authors describe the findings from the empirical legal research that has been carried out in their field of law in the Netherlands over the past 25 years and the implications for legal practice. They also indicate where future research should focus.

Assumptions in legislation and case law further examined

The chapters show that there is a great need for factual knowledge about legal practice. How often is an appeal lodged and in what kind of cases? Are miscarriages of justice related to how police interrogations are conducted? What role do expert reports play in the judgment of the judge? Are victims satisfied with compensation in cash or do they have other wishes? Assumptions based on legislation and case law are also discussed. Think of the need that would exist among victims to speak at the hearing about, among other things, guilt and punishment of the suspect. Or the assumption that reports of suspects are always correct. Empirical research into these assumptions can help improve legal practice. Finally, the need for meta-analyses of empirical-legal research is mapped out. The Dutch Encyclopaedia Empirical Legal Studies thus forms a reference point for what has been done on ELS in the Netherlands in the past 25 years and a benchmark for the years to come.



Publication details and further reading (in Dutch)

Bijleveld, C., Akkermans, A., Malsch, M., Marseille, B. & Smit, M. (2020). De Nederlandse Encyclopedie Empirical Legal Studies. Boom Juridisch, Den Haag.

Suspect with mild learning disability has difficulty obtaining the right care and reoffends First life-course study into young people with MLD

The life course study Lifelong Obstacles from the NSCR reveals that two-thirds of suspects with a mild learning disability (MLD) reoffend. This group is often confronted with a gradually growing set of problems in various areas and experiences difficulties in finding appropriate care. The study calls into question whether the criminal justice system is the most effective route for suspects with an MLD.

ifelong Obstacles is the first life course study in the Netherlands into young people with an MLD who have been in trouble with the law in their youth. How do they get on in life ten years after completing a youth rehabilitation order? Legal documentation reveals that two-thirds of the

study population (N=120) reoffends. The chances of this are greatest in the first two to three years after completing the youth rehabilitation order. The reoffenders frequently commit a property or violence offence, after which a prison sentence is usually imposed.

The NSCR and the University of Amsterdam developed a practice-oriented training to enable professionals to recognize an MLD in clients earlier in the criminal justice system: LVBeeld; van discussie naar herkenning. Een training met beelden van Licht Verstandelijk Beperkte (LVB)en niet-LVB-jongeren voor professionals werkzaam in het forensische domein.

Young people with MLD suffer from multiple problems and build up debt

The study reveals an imbalance between the government "order" to participate in society and the autonomy desired by young people with an MLD, as well as their ability or inability to cope. Gradually, a multiple set of problems arises in areas of life such as living, working, finances, mental health, drug use and leisure time, but also in contact with the police and the prosecution service. As a result of these factors, a large proportion of the study population builds up debt. Although people with an MLD are regularly in contact with various welfare organisations, it still proves difficult to find the help that matches their specific needs. The outcomes of the help provided are not always positive. The risk of care being discontinued is high, and the help provided is often interrupted by periods of imprisonment.

Impact of an MLD possibly underestimated

Supervisors of MLD rehabilitation clients find their work with this group hard going. Similarly, people with an MLD find it hard to be supervised. Overestimating the possibilities and high or excessive expectations play a role on both sides. Organisations possibly also underestimate the impact of having an MLD. If the probation supervision has not proceeded adequately, it proves unclear what the public prosecutor will subsequently decide with respect to imposing a conditional sentence. The impact this has on the criminal career of the client also remains unclear.

Is the criminal justice system the right approach for suspects with an MLD?

Finally, the life course study provides indications for a correlation between contact with the criminal justice system and an increase in the set of multiple problems. This therefore calls into question whether the criminal justice system is the most effective route for suspects with an MLD. In the coming year, NSCR will start a study into possible alternatives.



Publication details and further reading (in Dutch)

Teeuwen, M., Bruggeman, M., Dirkse, M. & Malsch, M. (2020). Levenslange obstakels: een levensloopstudie naar licht verstandelijk beperkten in het strafrecht en in de zorg. (Lifelong obstacles: a life course study in mild learning difficulties in criminal law and in care.)





Wildlife crime and wilderness problems



Securing protected areas The decision-making of poachers and rangers

What influence do the choices of poachers and rangers have on the protection of nature reserves? NSCR Wildlife Crime researcher Nick van Doormaal examined the interaction between poachers and rangers to predict how poachers are likely to respond to a patrol strategy. Based on this, he developed various methods to improve these strategies. His PhD defense was on Friday 18 December.

espite considerable effort to reduce the harm, poaching continues to be a serious threat to many wildlife populations around the world. Strong and robust security of protected areas is an essential element of long term conservation success. Formal law enforcement, such as rangers patrolling a protected area, is a common security strategy used to detect and deter poachers. This dissertation explores the question, how does the decision-making of poachers and rangers influence security of protected areas? To do this, we used a multi-disciplinary approach built on insights from criminology, wildlife conservation, and artificial intelligence.

Understanding poaching problems

This dissertation focuses on the context in which poachers and rangers make decisions using a rational choice perspective. This perspective assumes that an individual has preferences among the available options that allow them to make the most optimal decision. While the rational choice perspective was originally developed for understanding the decision-making of urban offenders, this dissertation shows it can also be used for understanding poaching problems in protected areas.

Predict how poachers might respond to a particular strategy

By breaking down the poachers' crime journey, we were able to better understand why certain decisions were made leading up to a poaching event, but also when trying to escape the protected area. This made it possible to determine the similarities and differences between the two which is rather rare in environmental criminology. A better understanding of the interactions between poachers and rangers can contribute to developing and evaluating patrol strategies. This is because we could better predict how poachers might respond to a particular strategy. This information is beneficial to law enforcement managers to strategically deploy ranger teams.

Methodologies to better understand, design, and evaluate patrol strategies

We highlight that managing and deploying law enforcement resources more strategically is just as important as increasing the number of resources. This is especially true if operations are affected by corruption, because this is unfortunately still relatively common among law enforcement rangers. In this dissertation, we developed several methodologies to better understand, design, and evaluate patrol strategies, for example to understand the detection probability of poacher snares, by using computer simulations, but also to better understand incursion behaviour of rhino poachers. These methodologies can also be adjusted for other regions and other types of wildlife crimes.

Promotor: Stijn Ruiter

Co-promotor: Andrew Lemieux



Publication details and further reading

Van Doormaal, N. (2020). Securing Protected Areas: The Decision-making of Poachers and Rangers. NSCR/Utrecht University.

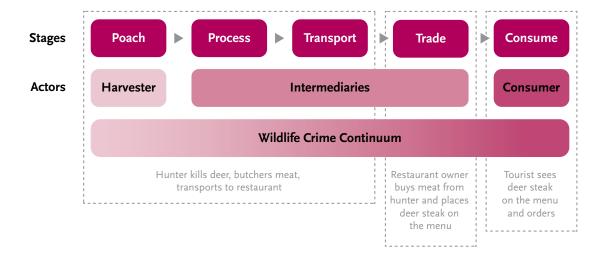
Problem-oriented policing adapted to wildlife protection

The recently published guide Problem-Oriented Wildlife Protection, written by NSCR researcher Andrew Lemieux and Panthera researcher Rob Pickles, explains how the ideas and principles of problem-oriented policing can be adapted to wildlife protection problems and how a wildlife authority could start a problem-oriented project of its own.

fficers for a national wildlife authority, may experience déjà vu while on the job. They arrest poacher after poacher but the poaching threat is not decreasing. They get called out to deal with crop raiding animals, but despite culling and translocation, each year there are more callouts. Probably they are not alone in thinking 'if we had more patrol teams ... or faster response vehicles ... or more money for operations, we could solve our problems'. Instead, they have a restricted budget and the public expects them to deal with a broad range of wildlife problems, some of which use a lot of time and resources but do not seem to change.

Balance between science and practice, law enforcement and conservation

How wildlife officers might address these problems differently is the focus of this new guide, released by the <u>Center for Problem-Oriented Policing</u>. Written by Andrew Lemieux (NSCR) and Rob Pickles (Panthera), *Problem-Oriented Wildlife Protection* explains how the ideas and principles of problem-oriented policing can be adapted to wildlife protection problems. They also show how a wildlife authority could start a problem-oriented project of its own. Problem-oriented policing was developed to help police officers find ways of reducing crime



without substantial additional resources. A problemoriented approach (a) supports ground-up initiatives addressing the context of a specific problem, (b) encourages innovative solutions beyond the criminal justice system, and (c) promotes collaboration within and beyond your agency. The development of the guide relied on input from 21 reviewers with backgrounds in criminology, law enforcement, conservation science and conservation practice. This led to major shifts over time as Lemieux and Pickles tried to find a balance between the worlds of science and practice, law enforcement and conservation.

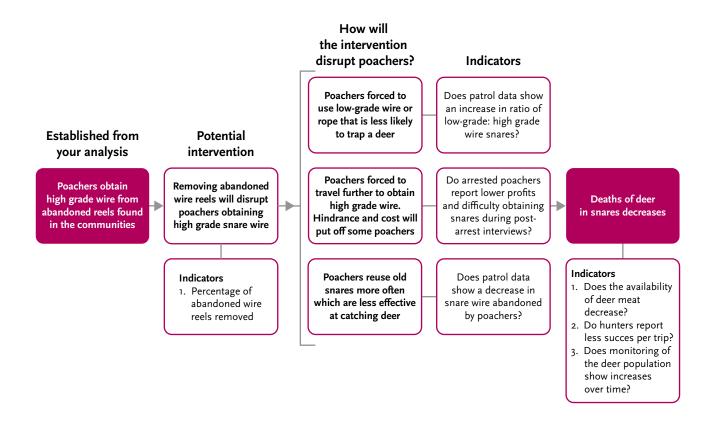
Difficult questions to answer in wildlife crime prevention

The goal in writing this guide was to facilitate the uptake and use of proactive, information-led wildlife crime prevention initiatives that do not rely on law enforcement alone. The guide also describes how to develop case studies when using this approach to build a strong empirical base to determine 'what works'; a notoriously difficult question to answer in wildlife crime prevention. The guide explains by breaking down complex problems into more specific issues, and using

targeted interventions, it will be easier to design metrics that truly measure impact. The figures below show how the actors involved in bushmeat trade might be mapped out along the wildlife crime continuum and how one might measure the impact of a specific intervention targeting one of those actors.

Finding ways to understand what works is critical

Given the lack of resources for wildlife protection around the world, including in the EU, finding ways to understand what works and share lessons learned is critical. The guide explains this can be done internally within organizations, or externally through forums such as the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing and scientific papers.



Word of encouragement

The final paragraph of the guide ends with a word of encouragement: For readers who are ready to take on a problem-oriented project after reading this guide, we wish you all the best. Take comfort in the old adage, 'problem solvers are made not born'. You and your colleagues are likely to run into frustrations along your road to success. Learn from the ups and downs of your project, and share these experiences with others, so we can all learn together. The value of a collection of problem-oriented case studies on wildlife prevention should not be underestimated. These small projects will help move us towards a better understanding of what works and what does not work in wildlife protection.

This article contains edited passages and figures from the guide Problem-Oriented Wildlife Protection.





Publication details and further reading

Lemieux, A.M. & Pickles, R.S.A. (2020). Problem-Oriented Wildlife Protection. Phoenix, AZ: Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, Arizona State University. Interest from practitioners has resulted in the translation of the guide into Bahasa-Indonesia, French, Thai and Bahasa-Malaysia.





Cybercrime

NSCR researchers receive ESC Best Article of the Year Award

NSCR researchers Steve van de Weijer, Rutger Leukfeldt and Wim Bernasco received the ESC European Journal of Criminology Best Article of the Year 2019 Award at Eurocrim, the annual conference of the European Society of Criminology (ESC), in September 2020. Van de Weijer, Leukfeldt and Bernasco received the prize for the article Determinants of reporting cybercrime: A comparison between identity theft, consumer fraud, and hacking in the European Journal of Criminology. In this article, they take a closer look at the characteristics of victims which predict whether someone will report cybercrime or not. In a follow-up study they researched why victims of cybercrime do not report the incident to the police (see below).



Publication details and further reading

Van de Weijer, S.G.A., Leukfeldt, R., Bernasco, W. (2018) <u>Determinants of reporting cybercrime:</u>
A comparison between identity theft, consumer fraud, and hacking. *European Journal of Criminology*.



Victim of online crime sees little use in reporting to the police

Victims of online crime rarely report this to the police and when they do, this often leads to dissatisfaction, according to research by the NSCR and Erasmus University, commissioned by the Police and Science Research Program. Victims more often report the offenses to other organizations such as banks, hotlines or help desks.

n particular, offenses aimed at ICT systems, such as malware, ransomware, hacking and DDoS attacks, are rarely reported to the police. The most frequently cited reasons people give are that they "solve it themselves" and that "the police will not do anything about it." In half of the cases, victims who did report the crime were (very) dissatisfied with the way in which the police handled the report. The most frequently cited reasons for this dissatisfaction are that the police were indifferent and that the problems have not been resolved. It therefore seems important that the police perform expectations management, so that it is clear to victims what is being done with their report and how likely it is that the perpetrator will be tracked down.

Only one in seven victims goes to the police

The study used two samples of 595 citizens and 529 entrepreneurs to investigate which crime and victim characteristics predict the willingness to report after online crime. We also looked at the main reasons for whether or not to report a crime, and what the experiences of victims are with reporting online crime. A vignette study (imaginary situations) investigated how respondents would react in some hypothetical cases of victimization of online crime. Two thirds of the respondents indicate that they would report this. When the same people are then asked how they acted after actually becoming a victim of online crime, it turns out that only one in seven turns to the police.

Report to prevent the perpetrator from striking again

Crime characteristics appear to explain the willingness to report more than personal and company characteristics. Online crime aimed at ICT systems (malware, hacking) is less often reported to the police than an interpersonal crime (online threat, cyberstalking) or forms of online fraud (identity fraud, marketplace fraud). One reason for victims to report online crime is to prevent the perpetrator from striking again (at another person) and because they want the perpetrator to be caught. People are also more willing to report more serious offenses.

Online crime is reported to the bank and helpdesk

In general, the results from the citizen and entrepreneur studies are very similar. This finding, in combination with the limited role of personal and business characteristics, suggests that policies to increase victim willingness to report need not target specific subgroups. Finally, it appears that one in three victims does report online crime to other organizations (banks, hotlines, help desks). This offers opportunities for cooperation between the police and these parties, with the aim of improving the information position of the police. Lack of insight into the scale of online crime makes it more difficult. to spot crime trends and track down perpetrators of online crime. In addition, partly on the basis of reports, it is determined what the police is making money and manpower available for.



Publication details and further reading (in Dutch)

S.G.A. van de Weijer, E.R. Leukfeldt, S. van der Zee (2020). Slachtoffer van onlinecriminaliteit, wat nu? Een onderzoek naar aangiftebereidheid onder burgers en ondernemers. Politie & Wetenschap.

Our online behaviour is much more unsafe than we think

Saying that you behave safely online turns out to be quite different from actually doing it. Research by The Hague University of Applied Sciences and the NSCR shows that Dutch people do not behave safely online. In addition, the more people know about cybersecurity, the less secure they will act online. The results therefore question the effectiveness of merely creating more awareness.

nline crime is common and the impact on victims can be significant. Despite technical measures such as virus scanners and firewalls, much of the victimization can be traced back to people's behaviour. The aim of this research was to map out how the Dutch really behave online. Interventions can be developed on this basis in the future.

Weak passwords, clicks on unsafe links, and sharing personal information

A large part of the Dutch do not appear to behave safely online. A striking feature of this study is the big difference between the self-reported behaviour and the objectively measured online behaviour. The researchers looked at the use of passwords,

saving important files, installing updates, use of security software, alertness during Internet use, online sharing of personal information and handling attachments and hyperlinks in e-mails. The objective measurements show that people's cyber behaviour is less safe than they themselves think. For example, nearly 60% use a weak password, 40% download insecure software and about 30% of the respondents share personal information such as their full name, date of birth and email address. If respondents are offered phishing e-mails, more than 20% click on the hyperlink or copy the URL to the web browser. It also appears that people do not exhibit consistent safe behaviour. For example, when someone deals safely with phishing, this does not mean that someone also chooses a strong password.

Knowledge about cyber security does not always lead to safer behaviour

The respondents in the survey also conducted a test to measure their knowledge of safe behaviour on the internet. People with the most knowledge about cybersecurity are also the most likely to say that they behave safely online. But the objective measurements reveal a different picture: respondents with more knowledge about cybersecurity, on the other hand, more often use a weak password and download unsafe software more often.





Publication details and further reading (in Dutch)

S. van 't Hoff – de Goede, R. van der Kleij, S. van de Weijer & R. Leukfeldt (2019). Hoe veilig gedragen wij ons online? Een studie naar de samenhang tussen kennis, gelegenheid, motivatie en online gedrag van Nederlanders.





3 years after #MeToo The benefits of online disclosure

The sharing of unwanted sexual experiences online provides relief, ensures support from society and create awareness. This is revealed by research from NSCR and VU Amsterdam. The research was co-funded and made possible by the Victim Support Fund (Fonds Slachtofferhulp).

he study Slachtoffers van seksueel geweld en seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag onder de radar (Victims of sexual violence and hidden, transgressive sexual behaviour) focuses on the motivations and expectations of victims when they share their experience of sexual violence and transgressive sexual behaviour publicly and online (online disclosure). The research also examined the responses from society and the effects of that on the victims. Furthermore, the findings were converted into a step-by-step plan with concrete tools for the writing and online sharing of a victim's experience.

Why do victims choose online disclosure?

The key element of online disclosure is processing the victim's experience and providing relief for emotions such as feelings of shame. This can be realised by "writing away" the experience, by breaking the silence and making the taboo around sexual abuse discussable. Another important motivation is the desire to help others. By being able to mean something for another person, negative experiences can be converted into something positive. Finally, victims also list creating awareness and seeking recognition and informal justice (viral justice).

The focus is on the victim's experience and not on the perpetrator

In October 2017, the #MeToo movement arose. This initially focused on film producer Harvey Weinstein but was subsequently picked up on by the general public. E-shaming – taking revenge by shaming a perpetrator online – received a lot of attention in this regard. Contrary to expectation, e-shaming was scarcely found during the study. The perpetrator is hardly ever the focus of online disclosure, instead, the focus is mainly on the victim's experience.

Furthermore, there appears to be little support in Dutch society for e-shaming, irrespective of the type of crime and the consequences for victims and perpetrators.

The importance of the responses to online disclosure

A survey under the Dutch population revealed that, in general, society is not very positive about participation (liking, sharing or responding to) with respect to online disclosure. The group with the most positive attitude towards the online sharing of a victim's experience is younger, active on social media and, to a large extent, feels dependent on social media. An analysis of the actual responses revealed that these are overwhelmingly positive. In the case of positive responses, the victims feel heard, supported, believed and strengthened, which in turn increases their self-confidence. Negative responses, such as victim blaming, incomprehension or disbelief, are painful and give victims a feeling that

they are not taken seriously. This can be experienced as more harmful than the actual victim experience. The lack of response – in more than one-third of cases – also has a negative effect: victims do not feel heard or think that society considers their experience unimportant.

Opportunities and risks of online disclosure of unwanted sexual experiences

People who share their story online, state a number of opportunities in this regard: they have control over what, where and with whom they share something, there is a distance to the readers and it is possible to interact and come into contact with fellow victims. As risks, they state the development of misunderstandings due to a lack of non-verbal communication and, contrary to the abovementioned perceived sense of control, the loss of control over their own story and how others share this on the internet without the victim's permission.

Step-by-step plan for online disclosure at SlachtofferWijzer.nl

Based on the research, a step-by-step plan for online disclosure has been developed. This provides victims of sexual violence with concrete tools for sharing their experiences online. This step-by-step-plan (in Dutch) can be found on the SlachtofferWijzer (Victim Guide) of Fonds Slachtofferhulp (Victim Support Fund).

A guidance-document-for-professionals-and-relatives (in Dutch) has also been developed.

Follow-up study

A follow-up study has now been started. This will include a comparison between victims of sexual violence and transgressive sexual behaviour who share their experience online, and the group of victims that does not do that. This follow-up study will be carried out under the leadership of NSCR and is part of the Victim Research Program, which was partly established by and jointly realised with Fonds. Slachtofferhulp.





Publication details and further reading (in Dutch)

Van den Berg, C.J.W. & Gorissen, M. (2020). Slachtoffers van seksueel geweld en seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag onder de radar; onderzoek naar de achtergronden en effecten van viral justice en e-shaming door slachtoffers van seksueel geweld en seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag. NSCR/VU.



Staff (in fte) 2020 average

	Employed by NWO-I (tenured)	Employed by NWO-I (temporary)	Employed by VU	External	Total
Director	1				1
Research staff	13,44	3,8			17,24
Fellows			1		1
PhD's		11,51	4		15,51
Junior researchers		7,08			7,08
Support staff	4,43	2,87		0,51	7,81
Total	18,87	25,26	5	0,51	49,64

In the context of cooperation with universities and other institutions, a number of employees is attached to the NSCR on the basis of secondment or hospitality agreements etc and working at the institute for one or more days a week.



Organisation

Staff

Joska Appelman MSc Freya Augusteijn MSc

Ida Adamse MSc

Carlijn van Baak MSc

Kim Baudewijns MSc

Manon Bax MSc

Iris Becx MSc

Prof. Wim Bernasco

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Merel Dirkse MSc

Dr Anja Dirkzwager

Meintje van Dijk MSc

Kerith Edwards MSc

Dr Veroni Eichelsheim

Peter Ejbye-Ernst MSc

Dr Nieke Elbers

Prof. Henk Elffers

PhD candidate

Junior researcher

PhD candidate

PhD candidate

Junior researcher

PhD candidate

PhD candidate

Senior researcher

Senior secretary

Senior researcher

Junior researcher

Senior researcher

Financial project officer

Junior researcher

PhD candidate

PhD candidate

Junior researcher

Senior researcher

PhD candidate

PhD candidate

Senior researcher

PhD candidate

Postdoc

Guest researcher

Angeniet Gillissen MSc Institute manager
Bodine Gonggrijp MSc PhD candidate
Marleen Gorissen MSc PhD candidate
Hachim Cherkaoui Hanoun IT Assistant
Matthias van Hall MSc PhD candidate
Laura Hendriks MSc Junior researcher

Koosje Heurter Communications officer

Dr Evelien Hoeben Researcher

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Thomas Hoogenboom Data manager
Soemintra Jaghai-Nejal Financial officer
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Aad van der Klaauw Data protection officer Marleen Kragting MSc **Junior** researcher Robin Kranendonk MSc PhD candidate Janique Kroese MSc PhD candidate Anne-Marie Kuiper Senior secretary Camiel van der Laan MSc PhD candidate Prof. Peter van der Laan Director a.i. Marco Last MSc Grant advisor Dr Andrew Lemieux Researcher

Dr Rutger Leukfeldt Senior researcher
Prof. Marie Lindegaard Senior researcher
Lenneke van Lith MSc PhD candidate
Renushka Madarie MSc PhD candidate
Prof. Marijke Malsch Senior researcher

Asier Moneva MSc Postdoc

Hans Myhre Sunde MPhil PhD candidate

Dr Virginia Pallante Prof. Antony Pemberton Valérie Pijlman MSc Jacob van der Ploeg MSc

Manon Quik

Dr Elanie Rodermond Rieneke Roorda LLM MSc

Prof. Stijn Ruiter Jim Schiks MSc

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Romy Zalmé MSc Esther Zuiderveld Msc

Prof. Frank Weerman

Dr Steve van de Weijer

PhD's awarded

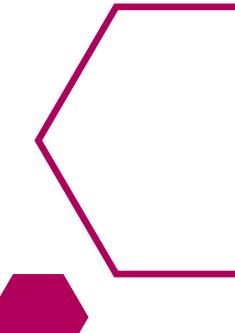
Nick van Doormaal Lisa van Reemst Postdoc

Junior researcher
Junior researcher
Personnel advisor
Researcher
PhD candidate
Senior researcher
Junior researcher
PhD candidate
Guest researcher
Senior researcher

Senior researcher

Researcher
Researcher
PhD candidate
Junior researcher
Junior researcher
PhD candidate
Researcher
Senior researcher

Postdoc
PhD candidate
Junior researcher
Junior researcher



(Inter)national fellows

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Dr Tibor Bosse Radboud University

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Dr Holly Smallbone Griffith University
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Prof. Michael Tonry University of Minnesota

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Dr Janna Verbruggen VU University

Dr Don Weenink University of Amsterdam
Prof. Brandon Welsh Northeastern University

Dr Marleen Weulen Kranenbarg VU University
Dr Ilka van de Werve VU University

Dr Stuart Williams Lilongwe Wildlife Trust

Dr Johan van Wilsem WODC, Algemene Rekenkamer
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Visiting address

De Boelelaan 1077 1081 HV Amsterdam The Netherlands

Postal address

PO Box 71304 1008 BH Amsterdam The Netherlands

Tel: +31 20 59 85 239 E-mail: nscr@nscr.nl Website: www.nscr.nl

