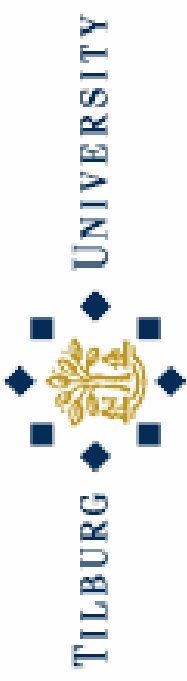




CROSS-BORDER CRIME  
COLLOQUIUM



TILBURG UNIVERSITY

REASONING PATHS IN

# OC ASSESSMENT REPORTING IN THE NETHERLANDS

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- What **purposes** are served by the assessment of organized crime ?
- Do past and current Dutch assessment approaches meet the demand for (validated) **knowledge** ?

- OC assessment is about obtaining **knowledge** of organised crime (but not as an end in itself)
- Being a qualified form of information, knowledge has to meet certain requirements of **reliability** and **validity**
- The **rules of thumb** concerning validity and reliability are formulated and discussed most profoundly within the context of science theory (e.g. in epistemology).
- But the 'inner logic' of the what we call knowledge applies to all areas of daily life.
- epistemological axioms transcend the field of pure academia and applies to any kind of knowledge, hence also to the field of **OC assessment**.

## Three basic questions:

- **Is what you say in your report true?**
- **How do you know all this?**
- **How do I know you are right?**

- **'Classical' empirical science paradigm (in natural sciences):**  
ideal validation method:  
duplication of the results by exact **repetition** of the experiment  
**test-retest procedure**
- In human sciences and especially OC assessment this is not possible
- Alternative: 'peer-to-peer' review  
those who derive claims and conclusions from (raw) data set must **provide insight** in how these claims and conclusions relate to the data
- In other words: give insight into the **reasoning path**

## What **purposes** are served by (reporting on) the assessment of organized crime ?

- Providing information, transferring knowledge
- To whom?
  - police and other law enforcement agencies / units
  - politicians
  - policy makers
  - the public
  - fellow researchers
- For what purpose?
  - knowledge as an end in itself?
  - to evaluate crime policy.
  - to improve crime fighting (techniques)
  - for strategic purposes: to make tactical decisions

## Different audiences: different demands

Public: layman audience

has to and does trust the OC reports  
'they are the experts'  
should be able to trust the OC reports  
but can it?

Politicians:

To a somewhat lesser degree the same as with the  
public + rather prone to verification of (pre)existing  
belief systems

Experts:

are or should be more critical and more demanding  
than the public and politicians.

The academic (expert) community serves as a  
watchdog through critical discourse

## Dutch OC assessment reports?

- 1990 WODC / P.C van Duyne
- 1992 Ministry of Justice
- 1995 P.C van Duyne
- 1996 **Fijnaut Research Group** (for the Parliamentary Inquiry Comm)
- 1998 WODC **Organised Crime Monitor I**
- 2002 WODC Organised Crime Monitor II
- 2002 National Police Intelligence Division (classified)
- 2004 National Police Intelligence Division: Eastern Europe
- 2004 National Police Intelligence Division: **OC Threat Survey**
- 2006 WODC Organised Crime Monitor III [forthcoming]



## Topics Dutch OC assessment reports

see hand-out: **broad spectrum**

### Crime Types in Dutch OC assessment reports

see hand-out: **broad spectrum**

### Research methodology in Dutch OC

**assessment reports** see hand-out

Explanation of research method: **yes**, to some extent

Explanation of reasoning path: **no** (only conclusions)

## Conclusions

- richness of independent studies
- richness of topics addressed
- Richness of crime types included
- As information communiqué's the reports serve well

However,

- Poor scientific justification
- Especially where it concerns the reasoning path
- Therefore peer-to-peer review impossible
- (but, with a few exceptions)

## Recommendations

Scientific '**emancipation**' of OC assessments:

In general: more awareness of the demands of 'academic' validity (which are not from the 'alien' world of academics, but apply to every day life and OC assessment as well!)

- Conclusions based on proper hypothesis falsification
- More transparency with regard to reasoning path ( e.g. Rebscher and Vahlenkamp, Germany 1988)
- More emphasis on quantitative data
- When possible: longitudinal studies (e.g. BKA annual reports)