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Organized crime as transit crime and what it means for criminal investigation

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Curriculum vitae

Prof. Dr. Kleemans is Full Professor at the VU School of Criminology, Faculty of Law, VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands (Chair: Serious and Organized Crime and Criminal Justice). He is programme leader of the research programme Empirical and Normative Studies of the Faculty of Law and conducts research into organized crime, including drug trafficking, human smuggling, human trafficking, fraud and money laundering, social organization, embeddedness, and the interaction between offenders and the criminal justice system. Until 2013, he was – next to being full professor at VU University Amsterdam - Head of the Crime, Law Enforcement and Sanctions Research Division (CRS) of the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC), Ministry of Security and Justice, the Hague, the Netherlands. From 1996 to 2013 he coordinated the Dutch Organized Crime Monitor (OCM), a systematic, continuing research programme of WODC, Erasmus University Rotterdam and VU University Amsterdam into the nature of organized crime in the Netherlands, based upon intensive analysis of 150 large-scale police investigations. The new data sweep of the Dutch Organized Crime Monitor is on its way now. Edward Kleemans graduated in public administration and public policy (with the highest possible distinction) and earned a Ph.D. (with the highest possible distinction) from Twente University, the Netherlands. He serves o.a. on a committee of the National Academy of Sciences and on several editorial boards of scientific journals.

Abstract

Despite the fact that the media and law enforcement often depict organized crime as Mafia-type groups involved in Mafia-type activities (in particular: extortion, racketeering), organized crime in the Netherlands may be more fittingly be described as ‘transit crime’. Criminal groups are primarily involved in international illegal trade, using the same opportunity structure that facilitates legal economic activities. The major business of organized crime groups in the Netherlands boils down to international smuggling activities: drug trafficking, smuggling illegal immigrants, human trafficking for sexual exploitation, arms trafficking, trafficking in stolen vehicles, and other illegal activities, such as money laundering and tax evasion. The Netherlands can be either a country of destination, a transit country, or, particularly in the case of synthetic drugs, a production country (Kleemans 2007). This presentation will highlight the main aspects of organized crime in the Netherlands, based upon the Dutch Organized Crime Monitor (OCM), a systematic, continuing research programme of WODC, Erasmus University Rotterdam and VU University Amsterdam into the nature of organized crime in the Netherlands, based upon intensive analysis of 150 large-scale police investigations. Furthermore, this presentation explores the significance of transit crime for crime prevention and criminal investigation.