

Research Programme INTERVICT 2011-2015

**Examining injustice: homogeneity and heterogeneity in the experience of and reaction to
victimisation by crime**

"Even a dog knows the difference between being stumbled over and being kicked"
Justice Holmes (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., The Common Law (Boston: Little, Brown, 1881),

Section A: Ideas and themes: underlying notions in the research programme

1. Introduction

In its second five years term, INTERVICT faces the challenge to strengthen the coherence of its research agenda and enhance its contribution to theory-formation in victimology. The reasoning in this paper is informed by three main notions. First of all the reasoning should take into account INTERVICT as it is now: the second research programme is a continuation of the work we are undertaking at the present and planning to do in the next five years. The consideration that '*INTERVICT as is*' should be visible in the plan also applies to the staff.

Second the five year plan has to provide guidance for what we want to achieve in the coming years, while allowing a sufficiently broad scope for new developments. Simply put: it has to strike a balance between *pointing us in the right direction, without laying out a detailed roadmap*.

Finally, content-wise, the research programme should adhere to the overall *mission* of the institute embedded within the broader mission of the university and to the central choice to primarily consider *victims of crime and abuse of power*.

2. INTERVICT's mission: Victim Empowerment

INTERVICT'S mission statement is *working towards a comprehensive, evidence and practice based body of knowledge of victim empowerment and support*. Our previous research programme underlined that INTERVICT promotes and executes interdisciplinary research that can contribute to a comprehensive, evidence-based body of knowledge on the empowerment and support of victims of crime and abuse of power. Victim support and empowerment remain therefore central themes in our next five year research plan. Victim empowerment can be defined *as the sum of measures which can assist victims in minimising the negative consequences of their experiences and optimising the positive ones*, which means that the research programme should ultimately contribute to the improvement the lived experience of victims of crime and abuse of power and should not restrict itself to negative outcomes.

The vagueness of the definition of victim empowerment suggests that an element of the new research programme should be the investigation of the concept 'victim empowerment', its added scientific and societal value or even its possible counterproductive features.

3. The centrality of victimisation by crime and abuse of power

The victim in INTERVICT'S focus refers primarily to victims of crime and abuse of power. Victims equal wronged persons. The experience of injustice and being wronged and the related responses of moral indignation and retribution are a distinctive feature of victimisation by crime

(Darley & Pittman, 2003; Duff, 2003). The injustice suffered can impact the harms experienced by direct and indirect victims of crime in both a quantitative (the injustice increases the ill-effects of the harm) and/or a qualitative sense (the injustice changes the experience or the desired response). It makes good pragmatic sense to stick to this choice. INTERVICT is well-embedded in the Tilburg Law School, and a large portion of its staff has a background in criminology or criminal law or have research interests that relate to crime and its victims. It is also what sets INTERVICT apart from many other academic institutes that primarily focus on victims in general, such as medical or trauma centres.

However, the choice itself is far from obvious and deserves further reflection and examination. Victimization can also be viewed from a psychological perspective and therefore INTERVICT is partially embedded in the School of Social and Behavioural Science. Where criminologists/criminal lawyers tend to view victimisation by *crime* as victimology's main field of inquiry, the study of victimisation in clinical psychology considers *potentially traumatic events* as key (see Bonanno, Mancini and Westphal, 2011), a concept that includes a wider range of negative life events, but also excludes certain forms of, in particular, non-violent crime. Social psychologists will view a wider group of *norm transgressions* (from violations of trust to adultery) to be of interest (see for instance the literature on forgiveness (Worthington, 2005) and revenge (Tripp et al, 2007)). Economists are prone to see no relevant difference between victimisation by crime and any other *insurance risk* (e.g. Mulder, 2009).

4. Defining victimisation

The differences in defining victimization are important for the future research programme in two ways. First of all, as will be discussed further under section 6, it makes good sense to review victimisation by other events than crime, for the precise reason of understanding what is peculiar about the experience of victimisation by crime. A staple question in research projects reviewing 'other' victims, such as those of natural disasters or medical errors, should be the way in which the findings impact the body of knowledge relating to victims of crime. What are the fundamental differences and communalities? Explorative research by INTERVICT suggest that communalities might be larger than presumed because persons harmed by non criminal incidents exhibit a tendency to respond as if they have been criminally victimised (Van Dijk, Klerx, 2009). This expansion of the criminal sphere should be understood in the context of the emerging Risikogesellschaft where 'shit' never just happens (Beck, 1992; Boutellier, 2002).

Second, the intersection of definitions offers an opportunity to show the added value of victimological research and theory for other disciplines. In what way does the experience of victimisation by crime add to the concept of posttraumatic stress disorder? Does experiencing injustice impact traumatisation? Why is the retributive response ignored in the clinical literature?

In similar vein: in what way does victimisation by crime set it aside from other harms and what does this entail for economic theories of victimisation? Are punitive damages solely based on considerations of deterrence or also on retribution?

A number of research projects aim to determine the importance of victimological research for other source disciplines, through research projects that attempt to review the importance of the experience of victimisation by crime to key questions in these disciplines. Besides economics, (traumatic) stress and anxiety theories the topics include organisational justice and political attitude.

5. The victim in the criminal justice system

The experience of injustice, or wrong, is also the rationale behind the public nature of victimisation by crime. Victimisation by crime is not solely a private matter, but involves the state and its actors as well, with criminal law concerning itself with wrongful acts (Duff, 2003). This choice not only defines an important research subject for INTERVICT, namely victims in the criminal justice system, but also positions Intervict vis-à-vis those colleagues who would wish to abolish criminal justice or deny the centrality of wrongfulness in the study of victimisation by crime (e.g. Hulsman, 1986; Christie, 1977, Walgrave, 2008).

Our current and future research incorporates legal and social scientific victim-related research in the criminal justice system. The legal research has a strong empirical focus and both legal and social scientific research into the position of victims within (national and international) criminal justice systems is theoretically informed by the same concepts: access to justice, therapeutic jurisprudence, procedural justice, restorative, organisational and transitional justice.

Access to justice refers to the actual possibilities of individual subjects to advance their interests in legal procedures (Genn, 1999). Therapeutic jurisprudence is a concept referring to the therapeutic value of legal decisions in various legal domains, both in a positive and a negative sense (e.g., Wexler and Winick, 1996). The central thesis of procedural justice is that the satisfaction with and acceptance of governmental decisions and the extent to which governmental norms are adhered to, relate not only to the perceived quality of the outcome of governmental decisions (distributive justice) but also to the way these decisions are reached (procedural justice) (Tyler, 1990; 2006). Restorative justice may be defined as 'every action that is primarily oriented toward doing justice by repairing the harm caused by crime' (Walgrave, 2008). Organisational justice is defined as an individual's perception of and reactions to fairness in an organisation (Greenberg, 1987). Transitional justice focuses on how to address the legitimate claims for justice of victims and survivors of horrific abuses in a way that treads the delicate balance between averting a relapse into conflict or crisis on the one hand, and on the other hand consolidating long-term peace based on equity, respect and inclusion – which often requires considerable institutional reform and systematic change (Mani 2005).

Borrowing from these different perspectives, INTERVICT should deepen and broaden the body of empirical knowledge both on the experiences of being wronged by crime and on the therapeutic impact of conventional and innovative criminal justice arrangements. Other INTERVICT studies explored the value of state compensation for victims; finding that such compensation is appreciated for moral rather than for purely economic reasons and does not substitute for retribution (Mulder, 2010). These and related issues should be addressed systematically in a series of studies supplementing cross-national socio-legal research using cross sectional designs with experimental psychological research. To ensure accumulation of knowledge special attention should be given to the development and use of standardised measures of victim satisfaction.

Increasingly the international level is the playing field for the development of victims' rights: for instance, see the victims' rights provisions in the Statute of the International Criminal Court, the draft UN Convention on Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power and the latest initiative to draft an EU Directive on Crime Victims. The former is of particular interest, also because of the types of crime and victimisation which the International Criminal Court considers and the way this impacts the preferred judicial reaction. The latter two draw more heavily on the experience gleaned from the national level. However, the victim has acquired a privileged position in the mandate of the EU. Victims of crime provide a platform for further unifications in criminal justice in Europe, and potentially globally as well. This suggests that research combining victimology with for instance political science, public administration studies and legal philosophy is of great scientific interest but also of equally great importance in advancing the position of victims across Europe.

6. Reviewing homogeneity and heterogeneity in the experience of victimisation

The research focus outlined above presumes that results will pertain to victims in a general sense. Crime, however, is a complicated concept and covers a wide variety of human intentions and behaviour of which the essence is difficult to capture. Some behaviours considered to be crime are clearly a social construction, while others are universally considered to be of a criminal nature (e.g. Robinson and Darley, 2007, Brahm, Kahan and Hoffmann, 2010). Victimisation by crime displays a similar variety. It can be a life-altering, shattering experience or a temporary inconvenience. That calls into question the similarity of the mechanisms, needs, reactions and opinions of those experiencing these crimes. Is there much reason to presume concurrence in the experience of a victim of bicycle theft and those bereaved by homicide, just because they are both victims of crime? In similar vein: victims pre-existing personal (psychological) characteristics will influence the impact of crime, even in a qualitative sense, and likewise their views on criminal justice and choice of mode of participation (Lens, Pemberton & Groenhuijsen, 2010).

On the other hand caution is needed to avoid making the opposite mistake. Differences between crimes do not necessarily imply differences in the way people respond and react to them

(Letschert, Staiger, Pemberton, 2010). Viewing types of victimisation in isolation of others hampers the extent to which findings concerning one type of victimisation, say human trafficking, can provide fruitful insights into others.

Heterogeneity and homogeneity in the experience of victimisation by crime should be a matter of empirical inquiry. Discussed already was the need to compare experiences of victims of criminal incidents with those of non criminal ones, including disasters such as environmental catastrophes, traffic accidents, different forms of deprivation or medical mistakes.

Second it implies a closer integration of topical work on experiences of different types of victims. Over the first five years we have reviewed, amongst others, the experience of victims of stalking, intimate partner violence, workplace aggression, fraud, internet crimes, cybercrimes, international crimes, terrorism, mass sexual violence, medical errors, identity theft etc.. Combining these results and if possible the integration of these findings, with a particular eye to how this translates to adequate (legal and social) responses to these experiences, has, however, not been done systematically (see, however, Van Dijk and Klerx). As a matter of priority we should attempt to do so on an academic level, while new topical research projects should as a matter of course include reflection about what the results reveal concerning victimisation in general.

Finally, we should continue our investigation of the underlying personal, psychological and situational characteristics which explain personal differences in the experience of victimisation and as a logical consequence, the preferred (psycho-social and legal) reaction.

The extent to which integration is possible is likely to be constrained by differences in scientific perspectives, which also encompasses disciplinary and methodological divides. Section 7 will suggest some avenues for doing multidisciplinary research, but it is also worthwhile to acknowledge that it is not possible to fully overcome these differences.

7. Developing a multidisciplinary victimology

At the present time, victimology – at least the specific study of victims of crime -¹ has not advanced much from its origins as ‘a wayward sub-discipline of criminology’ (e.g. Rock, 2007). A lot of research has been done and much has been learned, but the theoretical development has been piecemeal, with the main theories (such as victim precipitation or lifestyle-exposure model/ routine activities) still wearing their criminological background on their sleeve. Research on the impact of victimisation such as traumatic stress is perhaps more developed but stands clearly in the theoretical traditions of mental health research. A stronger research focus on the experience of being wronged and the mitigating effects of criminal justice interventions on some of these experiences will open avenues for specific victimological theory formation. Another avenue will be tighter integration of the findings concerning homogeneity and heterogeneity in the experience

¹ Theory and research into PTSD has advanced quite a great deal in the same period, but much of that development has happened outside rather than within victimology.

of victimisation by crime. Other than that investing in inter- or multidisciplinary research – either by the transplant of theory and/ or research methods from one discipline to another, or by using a variety of disciplines to construct new theories/ research designs concerning victims of crime- should offer a worthwhile contribution. Indeed conducting multidisciplinary research is part of our mission statement.

A number of divides could, as a priority, be bridged by interdisciplinary research:

- *The contribution of justice to theories of trauma or risk.* See section 3.
- *Connecting the research concerning victims within and outside the criminal justice system:* practical, policy and scientific developments within and outside the criminal justice system have happened independently, while there are many potential cross-linkages.
- *Combining psychology and criminology: in theory and method.* In his 2002 inaugural address Winkel noted that bringing together the source disciplines of victimology - in his terms psychology and law-related disciplines, such as criminology – was one of the main challenges in the further development of victimology. In the first five years of Intervict's existence this notion has proved fruitful, with various researchers drawing heavily on psychological theory and constructs in the examination victimological phenomena. Intervict is particularly well suited to this task, as a large part of its (senior) staff has a background in or affinity with psychological research and a proven capability of applying this knowledge in a criminal justice setting.² This cross-over between criminology and psychology applies to the construction of theory, but also to the transdisciplinary use and further development of method. The latter can apply to methods of research, i.e. the use of research designs from one discipline for research questions in another setting, but also to the methods of intervention, i.e. using knowledge of psychological therapeutic techniques for the further development of criminal justice instruments or vice versa.
- *From the lab to the field and back.* Social and neuropsychological justice research is conducted in the lab, using student or clinical samples. The same is true for similar research in behavioural economics. These studies are invariably strong on internal, but poor on external validity. A worthwhile avenue for research lies in the confirmation/ falsification of lab-research in field studies, eg cross sectional designs measuring the impact of Criminal Justice interventions.

² This also distinguishes Intervict from other academic centres flying in the area of victimology, who as a rule either are solely focused on psychological phenomena (centres studying traumatic stress) or rely more exclusively on criminology.

Section B: Strands and clusters: the components of the research programme

8. Examining injustice: three research strands

In the previous sections we outlined the contours of a new five years research programme that is sufficiently grounded in our current work and a sincere attempt to significantly advance the development of victimology. The programme would be informed by our mission '*Working towards a comprehensive, evidence based body of knowledge of victim empowerment*' and the central choice to primarily consider victims of crime and abuse of power.

Following from this we can discern three main strands in our research:

- *A. Victims in the criminal justice system.* This involves the study of victims in criminal justice processes, in the domestic sphere, within the European union and within International Criminal Law with an aim to describe and evaluate the use and effects of criminal justice for victims of crime, and to provide victimological input in the further development of criminal justice at the national and international level.
- *B. Homogeneity and heterogeneity in the experience of victimisation.* This involves the study of victims with different personality characteristics, of different events, including the comparison of crime with other negative life-events, with a particular view to discern the factors that differentially impact the experience and consequences of victimisation.
- *C. Developing a multidisciplinary victimology.* This involves the examination of victimisation from different scientific perspectives, bringing theoretical knowledge, research designs and methods of intervention relevant to the study victimisation together, with an eye to the further development of victimology as an academic enterprise as well as a source for the empowerment of victims in practice.

These strands will be further subdivided in to research clusters, although we should note that these divisions are porous: many of our previous, current and future research projects could be placed in different research clusters, while it is the specific overall assertion of this research programme that much is to be gained from interaction between different projects, clusters and research strands. It should be noted moreover that the brief overview in the following sections cannot do justice fully to all the research questions covered by the projects

9. Research strand A: Victims in the criminal justice system

This research strand is further divided into three research clusters:

A1. The national level.

The upsurge of the victim of crime is without a doubt one of the most important developments in Dutch criminal justice over the past decades and there is good reason to assume further

strengthening of this position in the coming years. There is considerable momentum in the development of legislation, policy and practice concerning victims' rights and victim assistance. These developments have often been fuelled by academic research into the position of victims of crime, with victimological findings implicating developments from compensation matters in the 1980s, through to changes in the practice of the victim impact statements in 2011. Indeed, the recent introduction of the victim into the code of criminal procedure - the Act Strengthening the Position of Victims – was largely based on the recommendations of academic research.³

However academic knowledge of the position of victims in criminal justice is still patchy in places. For certain instruments, like the use of the right to judicial review, even the most basic descriptives are unknown, say the frequency of use, let alone that more in-depth assessments are available, concerning its impact, the characteristics of participating victims and its suitability vis-a-vis other alternatives.⁴ Empirical evaluation of other areas often does not transcend satisfaction surveys, ignoring the shortcomings of this type of research as well as more recent and psychologically enriched approaches to study the benefits and shortcomings of justice procedures for victims of crime. Finally much can be learned from legal and empirical inquiry into the intersection between criminal law and other fields of law, like tort law, family law and administrative law.

Taken together the focus of this research cluster is to gain a more complete and empirically grounded understanding of the (changes in the) position of victims within criminal justice, which acknowledges and explores the possible cross-linkages with other fields of law.

A2. The European Union and comparative victimology.

Since the millennium the role of the European Union in the development of victims' rights has increased. There was the adoption of the Framework Decision on the standing of the position of victims in criminal proceedings in 2001, the Compensation Directive in 2004, referral to victims of crime in a number of topical framework decisions and directives (terrorism, human trafficking and sexual exploitation) and since the Treaty of Lisbon and the Stockholm programme the development of an EU directive, to be adopted in 2012.

The latter is likely to have repercussions towards victims' rights at the national level and for that reason alone is an important topic of study.⁵ More generally the increasing role of supranational, European decision making in the development of victims' rights stresses the necessity for comparative victimology, contrasting the criminal justice systems of different members of the European Union.⁶ Finally the peculiarities of the policy field of victims of crime question the extent to which EU-mechanisms derived from other very different areas of public policy apply. In

³ Wet versterking positie slachtoffers. The research in question was the project *Strafvordering 2001*, see specifically Groenhuijsen and Kwakman, 2002.

⁴ Indeed new developments may –see for instance the experience in the United States – be based on anecdotes and calls for law and order rather than good evidence, which emphasizes the necessity of gathering and critically examining this evidence.

⁵ This should also include inquiry into the interplay between the policies from different international bodies, including the UN and the Council of Europe.

⁶ And indeed beyond the EU.

its scope, subject and requirements of enforcement the area of victims rights is quite different from the more common, economically-driven areas in which the EU has competence. The 'policy creep' inherent in the application of the single market analogy to the field of victims of crime is a good reason for reservations, but also stresses the importance of viewing the developments concerning victims of crime in the wider study of policy-making at the European level.

In sum the focus of this research cluster is to examine the development of EU-policy concerning victims' rights, its implications for policies at the level of the member states through comparative victimological studies. It does so cognizant of the peculiarities of victims rights from the perspective of EU-policy making.

A3. International crimes and victimology

Both international criminal law and victimology have their roots in World War II, but for the better part of the past 65 years have gone their separate ways. It took the development of the International Criminal Court for international criminal law to start to recognize the importance of sufficient attention to victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, while the development of specific victimological body of knowledge concerning the aftermath of these crimes is a relatively recent endeavour.⁷

Given the relative youth of this field of study, coupled with the obvious complexities in the (empirical) examination of victims' experiences and needs in societies that are grappling with the aftermath of international crimes it is no small wonder that much still has to be learned. A key element of the Intervict research programme over the next years is therefore the development of victimological approaches to the (aftermath of) international crimes. As priorities this will include a tighter incorporation of victimological knowledge derived from studies of 'ordinary crime', a more in-depth analysis of the consequences of cultural, historical and political variance in the populations experiencing these crimes as well as mapping the added value of viewing international criminal justice as an element of social repair. This will not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the experience of victims of international crimes, but also further existent knowledge of the possibilities of balancing and maybe combining the strengths of (international) criminal justice procedures with other legal and quasi-legal (truth commissions) avenues to react to wrongdoing in post-conflict societies.

A first step in the development of this perspective is a series of conferences and coinciding publications (edited volumes, see already Letschert, Haveman, De Brouwer & Pemberton, 2011) in which scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds review the function and effects of criminal justice procedures and transitional justice mechanisms in societies torn by mass political violence. This will be complemented by a series of empirical studies into the relationship between

⁷ It should be noted here that this statement more accurately reflects victimology in reference to criminology (see also Hagen & Rymond-Richmond, 2009, Haveman & Smeulers, 2008), rather than psychology, where a large literature has already developed concerning holocaust survivors,, genocide, torture and war crimes .

victimised populations' perceptions of justice and their assessment of the fairness and effects of criminal justice procedures intended to deal with mass victimisation.

10. Research strand B: Homogeneity and heterogeneity in the experience and consequences of victimisation

This research strand also consists of three research clusters. More so than in research strand A, the key questions of individual projects within the clusters will vary, from prevalence studies concerning a particular form of victimisation, to longitudinal studies aiming to ascertain the influence of personality traits on coping with the consequences of victimisation.

Each of these individual goals is highly important in their own right. From the view of the overall research programme, it is together that the projects will offer further insight into the similarities and key distinctions within the population of victims of crime, and wider, in comparison to the experience of other negative life-events. Cluster B1 then will offer insight into the impact of variety of personal characteristics on the experience of victimisation. Cluster B2 explores the differences and similarities between victimisation by different types of crime, while Cluster B3 examines the differences and similarities between criminal victimization and the experience of other negative life events.

B1. Vulnerable groups

A host of personal characteristics may interact with the experience of victimisation. Important traits in this regard are the victims age (with both victimisation of children and the elderly being relevant topics of study), disability (both mentally and physically), minority and/ or cross-border status, sexual orientation (which may both play a role in victimisation by hate crime) occupation (with certain jobs entailing greater risks of victimisation) and gender. In legal documents it is common practice to define the aforementioned groups under the heading of *vulnerable* victims. These traits may impact the risk of victimisation, the consequences of crime, the needs of victims and also the types of crime experienced (see under B2). Depending on the trait in question examining of the interaction between these traits and victimisation may necessitate including insights from different fields, for instance developmental psychology, psychopathology, cultural sociology, gender studies and management and organisation sciences.

The research programme 2011-2015 particularly prioritizes victimisation of *children and young persons*, victims with *severe mental health problems*, *occupation-related* victimization and victims with *minority status*, while much of the research concerning victims of domestic violence (see under B2) has a strong *gender*-related component. Proposals for other types of victimisation (f. i. victimisation of the elderly) are in preparation and/ or consideration.

B2. Crime types

Victimisation by crime comes in a large number of shapes and sizes and its impact can range from a mild inconvenience to a life-shattering and altering experience. Terrorism, human trafficking, identity theft, intimate partner violence, stalking, child abuse, fraud, bullying, crimes against humanity and other international crimes; the list of crime types that have been or are still subject to inquiry by Intervict is long and growing. Crimes may vary in their form and impact of consequences for victims, the extent to which the harm done can be restored, the extent to which they are commonly one-off events or repeated or even chronic experiences. They may have transnational features, may be more or less amenable to preventative efforts, pose a risk to the whole population or to certain segments of the population only and may rank higher or lower on the political agenda. They may have been the subject of sustained academic interest or relatively unexplored topics of study, while the crime type may also influence or even largely determine the disciplinary lens through which it is viewed. Small wonder then that research questions for projects concerning victimisation by different crime types reveal a good deal of variety, which although necessary complicates exchange of findings between crime types.

In the research programme 2011-2015 *domestic violence*, crimes in *cyberspace*, *child abuse*, *human trafficking* and *international crimes* will be prioritized, the latter under research cluster A3.

B3. Other negative life events

The key subject of study within Intervict is the victim of *crime*. However as noted, people experiencing a host of other negative life events may also be termed victims. Depending on the scientific perspective employed other forms of victimisation are equally valid fields of examination. In addition there is often a fine line between crime and torts, for instance in victimisation arising from traffic accidents, environmental damage and (man-made) disasters. In many individual instances of these events, the extent to which the inherent negligence or recklessness involved may or may not amount to crime is a largely a definitional matter, which often does not reflect the experience of the victims involved.⁸ It is in the comparison of victimisation by crime with the experience of other negative life event that the peculiarities of criminal victimisation may be drawn out, while the similarities allow fruitful exchange of research findings, (psychological) interventions and justice responses.

In the research programme 2011-2015 key topics of study in this regard will be the psychological consequences of *disasters*, the experience of people suffering the consequences of *medical malpractice* and the complexities of viewing *environmental harm* through the lens of victimisation by crime.

⁸ This is further complicating by the processes of social construction of crimes as recognized by criminal law

11. Research strand C: Toward a multidisciplinary victimology

The final research strand consists of two research clusters. C1, 'Bridging disciplines' is focused on the development of victimological theory, while C2 is mainly concerned with methods of victimology. The term method here may refer to the use of advanced and/ or novel research designs, but also to research concerned with the evaluation or construction of methods to support, help, treat, assist or protect victims.

More so than with the other strands, projects under C will have considerable overlap with the themes under A and B. Interdisciplinary theory development concerning victims in the criminal justice system will by definition concern research strand A, while for instance the development of risk assessment tools (an element of C2) may concern particular types of crime, and therefore have overlap with strand B.

C1. Bridging disciplines

The added worth of an independent academic discipline of victimology, rather than victim studies being a sub-area of different disciplines, relates to the extent to which the theory, findings and insights from these disciplines can be fruitfully combined and the extent to which in return this endeavour provides new insights for the source disciplines themselves.

As noted above research into the added value for the source disciplines may benefit from the understanding that disciplines vary in the scope of their research subject: the victim of crime versus the economic subject dealing with the possibility of incurring an insurance risk, the individual suffering a potentially traumatic event and/ or a norm transgression. The intersection between these different definitions offers a fruitful arena for research and reflection. In what way does criminal victimization impact economic calculation before and after the fact and what consequences does this have for insurance theory? Does the experience of wrong, of moral injury, impact traumatic experiences, in both a quantitative and qualitative sense? And in what way is the experience of criminal victimization relevantly different and/ or similar to other norm transgressions?

Victimology's main source disciplines are law (criminal law, criminology) and (social and clinical) psychology-related, and this divide is also visible in the main areas of practice and policy relevant to criminal victimisation. Moreover, like criminology, victimology often has to straddle the line between the deductive reasoning inherent to the field of law and inductive empiricism involved in social science. Much of the work under theme A will implicitly or explicitly involve combining these approaches.

A theoretical cross-over between the source disciplines is not only of academic significance but also a necessity for understanding and improving services to victims of crime. The emergence of concepts such as restorative justice and therapeutic jurisprudence necessitate a more psychologically advanced understanding of justice processes, while the insight that victim participation in criminal justice processes may be a function of traumatic complaints, while

influencing the course of traumatic recovery as well emphasizes the importance of exchange between disciplines. The laboratory work in social psychology on justice processes is advancing at a rapid pace, but criminological research will augment this body of knowledge with much needed external validity. The recent developments in moral psychology and neuroscience may impact fundamental notions of victimology and integration of the findings from these fields into the victimological knowledge base is an urgent matter.

Other disciplines have also much to offer. Inclusion of work from political science and public administration is important to adequately grasp the developments on the level of the EU and in the burgeoning field of international criminal law, as noted above, but also may feature in the further understanding of victims' punitiveness and opinions about criminal justice and/ or the differential development of victims' rights between countries. Modern ethical theory and moral philosophy may further understanding of key features of victims' rights, such as respect, dignity, recognition and empowerment.

Taken together the projects under C1 will allow us to further understanding of what victimology has to offer to the source disciplines that form its academic foundation, and will contribute to the inter- and transdisciplinary theory-building within victimology

C2. Methods of victimology

Until relatively recently the golden standard for victimological research were the crime victim surveys. These cross-sectional, self report surveys still form an important backbone of victimological knowledge, particularly pertaining to prevalence, patterns and trends of victimisation, but have been supplemented by a larger array of designs: longitudinal research, (one person) RCT's, meta-analyses, social network research, research syntheses, experimental designs, the use of implicit measures, focus group designs and realistic evaluation to name but a few. The 2011-2015 research programme seeks as a priority to include more advanced designs of research.

The assistance provided to victims of crime has long been derided for being merely 'tea and sympathy'. This was a somewhat hyperbolic assertion in the past, but is pertinently inaccurate today. Therapeutic techniques, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, neurofeedback and EMDR all have proven impact on the development of traumatic complaints. Risk-assessment using victim characteristics (including protective factors) is valuable to prevent further victimisation and afford victims insight into the ways in which they might protect themselves. A particularly intriguing avenue uses educational devices, such as video-feedback to prevent perpetration and victimisation of violence in the family and in particular child and infant abuse. The 2011-2015 research programme seeks to contribute to the development of tools and instruments of victimology in practice, by evaluating current options and developing new ones, based upon academic understanding of victimisation.