Fear of crime: its social construction in the Netherlands

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Though only some surveys on victimisation and fear of crime have been conducted in Greece, they do follow the conventions and measurement practices that are similar to those in the USA, UK and the Netherlands. That is, besides questions on victimization experienced, items on the so-called fear of crime are included, such as "How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark?". The Netherlands have a somewhat longer tradition of victim surveys. From a social construction perspective, this paper discusses the history of 'fear of crime' in the Netherlands and describes how 'fear of crime' has become a social issue in Dutch society. The main purpose of this article is to show that 'fear of crime' is rooted in statistics and surveys by the Dutch government: without statistics, there would be no 'fear of crime' in the Netherlands as we know it today.

In 2005, Greece was included in the EU International Crime Survey (EU ICS), the European follow up of the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) (Van Dijk et al. 2007). Until then, surveys on victimisation were rare and were mainly limited to surveys in greater Athens (Zarafonitou 2008, 2009). These local surveys followed conventions and measurement practices that are similar to those in the USA, UK and the Netherlands. That is, besides questions on victimization experienced, items on the so-called fear of crime are included, such as "How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark?". The Netherlands participate in the EU ICS as well and has a somewhat longer tradition of victim surveys.[1]

This paper discusses the history of 'fear of crime' in the Netherlands and describes how 'fear of crime' has become a social issue in Dutch society. The main purpose of this article is to show that 'fear of crime' is rooted in statistics and surveys by the Dutch government: without statistics, there would be no 'fear of crime' in the Netherlands as we know it today. Following American and English practices, 'fear of crime' became a salient issue in Dutch politics and academia. When looking at the historical development of statistics, it is obvious that the new technical and methodological possibilities gave lots of opportunities for governments and institutions to use statistical figures as source as well as tool. Similar to what Lee (2007) finds in his thorough analysis of the birth of fear of crime and its genealogy in the USA and the UK, the Dutch surveys are political instruments. In the Netherlands, 'fear of crime' receives a lot of attention by state actors and many policy agencies are devoting part of their time and money to the 'reduction' of fear. Also, 'fear of crime', its causes and effects are a salient issue in Dutch (news) media.

In this article the method of approach that has been employed is elaborated on firstly: this research is done from a social construction perspective. After that, the historical roots of crime statistics are briefly pointed out, which demonstrate the pervasive instrumental role these statistical developments already played. Politics, i.e. governments and institutions, were extremely interested in statistics and statistical analysis of social phenomena. Criticism regarding the reliability of these (crime) statistics became more apparent, and issues regarding the dark number, together with achievements in polling and sampling, led to the development of the crime victim survey. Several aspects of society were surveyed, among which were all kinds of opinions and attitudes, which is described in the second section. These early (American) crime victim surveys, as well as surveys on living conditions, often contained the familiar 'feeling safe alone after dark'-item, which was copied internationally and used in the surveys in the Netherlands as well. The most common surveys that were (and still are) administered in the Netherlands are briefly described. Findings from these surveys play a major, and often instrumental, role. Analogue to the USA and UK, it seems that 'fear of crime', no matter to what extent, should be combated in the Netherlands as well.

2. Social construction as research perspective

Similar to Green (1997), in Vanderveen (2006) I have discussed the question how the concept fear of crime did become an inevitable part of the universe in the late 20th century, how concepts have been reified "as if they were something other than human products" (Berger & Luckman 1966: 89). Dutch and English material were systematically collected, consisting of survey and interview questions, raw survey and interview data and literature on 'fear of crime' or the experience and interpretation of safety in relation to crime. The concepts, operationalisations and items were analysed by means of a strategy based on a grounded theory approach. That is, the concepts were constantly compared and grouped into higher order categories. The three core categories or concepts that emerged most clearly and that appeared to be central to 'fear of crime' are (criminal) victimisation, risk (perception) and fear. These three concepts are discussed extensively Vanderveen (2006), focusing on the question what certain concepts mean with respect to their social context. When and why did the concept 'fear of crime' become an issue in research, politics and the media? When did 'fear of crime' become a social problem? Why is 'fear of crime' measured the way it is currently? How are different concepts theoretically related to one another? In these chapters a specific method of approach is employed, by which means the meanings of concepts are analysed. This perspective, which implies the relevance of social and political circumstances in order to understand the meaning and relationships of concepts, is explained briefly here. In general, this seems rather similar to Lee's (2001, 2007) contention regarding the contingent nature of both 'fear of crime' research and the 'fear of crime' concept; in other words, 'fear of crime' is not a pre-discursive social fact. He sketches the history of the discourse of 'fear of crime' in the USA and Britain and carries out a genealogical analysis in which the role of the government is of primary interest. Here, the analytical method of approach is based on a so-called 'social construction' perspective. Such an approach assumes that insight in the meaning of a concept, and related issues of validity, can be derived from its history; the social and political context or scene in which the concept has and still is being used.

The work of Hacking (1999a, 2000) explains social construction and uses this perspective as tool of analysis. Elaborating on his work on

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1. Parts of this article have been published in my book on the conceptualisation and operationalisation of 'fear of crime' Vanderveen (2006). This article is an adaptation and update of chapters from this book.

the 'sociology of concept formation', he argues that the notion of 'social construction' means that something (X) and its meanings are not inevitable, but rather a product of historical events and social forces. This is not to say that since this something (e.g. child abuse in Hacking 1988) is socially constructed, persons are not suffering from it, nor does indicating that X is a social construction help them. Because of the hereto related "great fear of relativism", Hacking recommends to ask what's the point that something is socially constructed. He proposes two major underlying aims in studies that incorporate the idea of social construction, namely the raising of consciousness and to criticise inevitability, the status quo. These aims can be achieved in three different ways, which Hacking presents in the form of three theses of the social construction of X. The first thesis states that X need not have existed, nor need to be at all as it is. X, its existence or character as it is at present, is not determined by the nature of things, it is not inevitable. X has been brought into existence and is shaped by the social context, namely by social events, forces and history. This social context could well have been different, which would have brought about another type of X. The second thesis claims that X is quite bad as it is and the third maintains that we (i.e. society, people) would be much better off if X were done away with, or when X would be at least radically transformed (Hacking 2000).

All three theses and the very notion of 'social construction' share a general precondition for social construction theses. This precondition holds that in the present state of affairs, X is taken for granted, X is unchanging and X appears to be inevitable. For example, Clark's book on sexual assault within the social context of 18th and 19th century England starts with "It seems to be a fact of life that the fear of rape imposes a curfew on our movements; a fact that if we stay at home we will be safe, but if we venture out alone we face the strange rapist in the dark alley." (Clark 1987: 1). By investigating the social and historical context, she concludes that sexual violence is real, but that rape used as warning is a historical creation. She argues that the protection that is offered by the warning or the myth, in exchange for obedience is illusory, more danger exists in one's home than on dark streets and rapists are male acquaintances, friends as well as strangers. Therefore, her analysis of 'rape as a warning' seems to be an example of the third thesis that Hacking distinguishes, i.e. 'rape as a warning' is quite bad as it is and we, or more specifically: women, would be much better off if 'rape as a warning' were done away with. An example of the first thesis is Green's study (1997), which describes a "history of accidents" and traces the contemporary concept of accident back to history by investigating how it was called, i.e. classified and conceptualised then. The main question concerns the essential characteristics to be labelled as such in a certain period, the conditions that made the current classifications possible and thus when it became possible to speak of accidents.

The background of this article is the proposition that the concept 'fear of crime', and the categorisation, classification and ideas related to this concept (e.g. "men have less fear of crime") are socially constructed, which means that this concept refers to a network of social relations and that it is employed to serve certain ends. The concept 'fear of crime' does not exist in a vacuum, but inhabits a social setting which Hacking (2000) calls the matrix. Within this matrix the idea and concept 'fear of crime' is formed. Thus, the social construction of 'fear of crime' refers to the idea of 'fear of crime' (in its matrix) that is meant by those who employ this concept, how 'fear of crime' is a result of historical events and social processes, how 'fear of crime' became an issue or even a problem. This does not mean that what is named 'fear of crime' cannot be a 'real' social problem, or that people do not worry about crime. To suggest that something is socially constructed, is not to say that it is non-existent, not a problem or that it should not be influenced or measured. Scientific research findings are socially constructed in the sense that social processes influence the factual results and how they are used to provide support for a theory (Sargent 1997).

In other words, social construction similar to the first thesis or way that is described by Hacking (2000) is applied here. It is posed that 'fear of crime', its meaning(s) and related issues, are a product of historical, cultural and social circumstances or contexts. Other contexts would have brought about another type of 'fear of crime', its meaning (or name) would have been different then. As shown in Vanderveen (2006), the antecedents of the discourses on 'fear of crime have made the concept appear as an inevitable one; a history of 'fear of crime' starts with its birth. Or maybe even with its (grand) parents. Without statistics, surveys and the (governmental) need for knowledge on attitudes and opinions, the concept 'fear of crime' would not have been born.

3. The rise of statistics and surveys

During the research process, it became clear that the discourses on victimisation, risk perception and 'fear of crime' shared similar roots or antecedents, which have led to the current habits of conceptualisation and measurement. These antecedents have made the concept appear as an inevitable one: without statistics, surveys and the (governmental) need for knowledge on attitudes and opinions, the concept 'fear of crime' would not have been born. Lee (2001) too notes statistics and surveys as the primary conditions of 'fear of crime' as we know it.

When looking at the huge amount of surveys performed, it seems that government, institutions and researchers have little doubt about the necessity of survey research in the field of safety, fear, crime and risk. The necessity and existence of acquiring knowledge about opinions and attitudes is unquestioned or even evident. But when did people or more specifically, the government, start to obtain knowledge about misfortunes like accidents or deaths by certain causes. What about attitudes regarding these misfortunes? In general, knowledge about attitudes, ideas, feelings, opinions et cetera is considered societally significant, especially when it is crime-related (see for example Chevigny 2003). Because of the development of statistical knowledge and techniques, the quantitative measurement of these kind of attitudinal knowledge became possible. However, this development has been closely interwoven with governmental choices, institutions and funding.

3.1 Statistical opportunities

Originating from a long development in history, in the early nineteenth century the possibilities of using statistics expanded rapidly (Hacking 1975; Pearson & Pearson 1978).[2] From the 15th and 16th centuries on, the state becomes gradually governmentalised. That is, the government started to govern on the basis of rational calculations, technical analyses, procedures and tactics (Foucault 1991). Categorising and counting social phenomena in the formation of knowledge about society began to form the basis of discussion as well as policy decisions of institutions (Duncan 1984; Porter 1996).[3] Better yet, the statistics were introduced as pure, incontrovertible

[2]. Along with the development of statistics, several techniques to analyse the numbers expanded as well, going 'beyond' frequencies and percentages (e.g. Van Bemmelen 1958; Koren 1918), for example by applying Pearson's correlation (e.g. Macdonell 1902).

[3]. Also, from the seventeenth century on, new concepts and techniques were developed in the study of the "combination of observations" (Stigler 1986: 11), like probability, induction, statistical inference and likelihood tests,

facts and became eagerly welcomed by the Napoleonic state and Britain (Emsley 1999). When in the 1660s a book on the 'London Bills of Mortality' was published, the statistical study of social problems began (Cullen 1975; David 1998). This is described by Cullen (1975) as a science of society tied to the notion of quantification of social phenomena, and Hacking (1975: 102) denotes 'statistics' as the systematic study of quantitative facts about the State.[4] The use of statistics expanded rapidly, printed numbers became increasingly important, which also eroded determinism and instead increased the awareness of possibilities of social control (Deflem 1997; Hacking 1990). Quantifications were used to justify specific interventions (Hacking 1990; Taylor 1998b). Figure 1 pictures this process schematically.

In the nineteenth century, social scientists began to analyse the aggregated data, starting with Quetelet who published criminal or 'moral' statistics in 1827 (Beirne 1987; Salas & Surette 1984; Stigler 1986; Taylor 1998a). In 1810, the British Home Office began publishing crime statistics, since 1830s on a regular basis. Examples from the British Home Office can be found in the National Archives with numerous documents from the Public Record Office archives, such as hand-written figures from the Home Office that show a comparison of the amounts of various crimes, like murder, burglary and robbery, in 1880 with the annual averages for 1875 to 1879 (HO45/10424 R19175), and an even earlier example that compares the number of criminal offenders in 1826 with 1825 (HO44/17 f.1).[5]
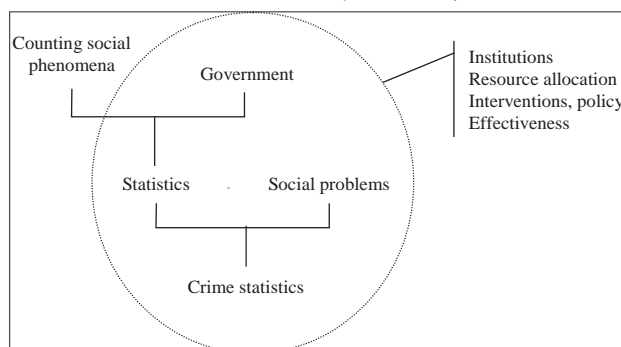

Figure 1. Schema of statistical development regarding 'counting and controlling' social issues.

According to Cullen, the British national crime statistics were born out of the issue of capital punishment, which during that time was topic of campaign and debate (Cullen 1975: 13). He describes the role of British governmental departments and committees in the use and publication of social statistics in period 1832-1852, as well as the development of private statistical societies, like the Statistical Society of London in 1834, which is now called the Royal Statistical Society (Hacking 1975) Cullen has little doubt about the political nature of statistics and refers to "improvement by numbers" (page 149). With urbanisation, not industrialisation, as a leading motive, the statistical movement was concerned with the moral effects of urbanisation on the working class. As Koren (1918) describes, several other countries, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain as well as Ireland and Scotland, Hungary, India, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States all established departments, or bureaus, of statistics

that started publishing 'moral', 'criminal' or 'judicial' statistics in the nineteenth century. Statistics were used to provide support for public health reforms and education, in particular to fight poverty (Wohl 1983). For example, Florence Nightingale had very much faith in the value of statistics and quantification as a means to reveal higher laws of anticontagionism in order to fight disease and illness (David 1998; Freedgood 2000). Freedgood (2000), in her account of the Victorian notion of risk, explores the 'count and control' ideas in the Victorian Era. She concludes that the increasing ability of bureaucracy (institutions) to collect large numbers meant that reassuring regularities could be discovered and published. Counting, i.e. the numbers as well as the theory, would "explain and tame the apparent disorder of so much of British society" (Freedgood 2000: 69). The principles and regularities derived from statistics make social problems manageable and knowable (Foucault 1991; see also Lee 2001, 2007).

The political nature of statistics appears from the figures on crime as well. In many countries, the emergence of official crime statistics in the nineteenth century made the construction of national 'pictures of crime' possible, enabling to view this picture or phenomenon as a national problem requiring a national solution (Emsley 1999). For the United States, the picture was related to the State-region (Cummings 1918; Deflem 1997; Gettemy 1918). Since the States of the USA all have sovereign jurisdictions of crime control, without one particular body of criminal law, institution or procedure that relates to the United States as a whole, many difficulties arise in drawing together national statistics on crime and correction. Although from 1850 to 1890 the Bureau of the Census collected statistics on prisoners in connection with each decennial Census of Population, it was not before 1926 that the Bureau of the Census made the first nationwide collection of criminal data (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1997). The second nationwide collection of crime figures began in 1930. This time, the Federal Bureau of Investigation collected summary reports from many police departments on serious offences known to the police, as well as arrests made by the police (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1997).[6]

In the Netherlands, the Central Bureau of Statistics (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek - CBS) began collecting official police figures on crime, in addition to census data on the Dutch population they already collected (Maarseveen, Gircour & Schreijnders 1999; Verrijn Stuart 1918). In 1939, Kempe and Vermaat published a study in which criminal statistics, derived from police figures, of two provinces were presented, together with factors supposed to correlate or cause crime, like church visits, illegitimate children, the use of alcohol, living circumstances, police capacity and also issues concerning surveillance due to impassable roads (Kempe & Vermaat 1939). Van Bemmelen (1958) used official crime statistics from the CBS as well, while briefly describing the 'dark number' issue (Van Bemmelen 1958: 41-43, 250-253).

Thus, since the nineteenth century, in several countries it became common practice to collect statistics on crime, accidents et cetera to check whether (in line with popular belief) crime was increasing or how crime changed (Deflem 1997; Godfrey 2003; Robinson 1933; Wilkins 1980). Besides that, people analysed and interpreted the statistics by not only showing regularities from year to year, but also by explaining these patterns with other variables, like Quetelet and Gatrell had done earlier (Beirne 1987; Emsley 1999; Stigler 1986). For example, Wichman used crime statistics to show that education and the social situation in general were important in explaining increasing crime rates. Also, she noted that crime increased during crisis pe-

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which enabled the "measurement of uncertainty" (Bernstein 1998; David 1998; Hacking 1975).

4. In the seventeenth century, the statistician Conring already argued that the State must have the facts on which decisions can be based and act rationally (Salas & Surette 1984).

5. These examples can be found on http://learningcurve.pro.gov.uk/candp/crime/g07/g07cs2.htm .

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6. See for more information the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data [NACJD] as well as the CD-ROM of the U.S. Bureau of the Census; especially Series H952-1170 on crime and correction and Series H971-986 that provide data on homicides and suicides from 1900 till 1970.

riods, like World War I (Van Bochove 1999). The crime figures were used for controlling costs and the general finances as well (Emsley 1999). Consequently, the police and special institutions got the task to provide statistical knowledge, like the number of murders and thefts within a certain region. Obviously, these statistics increasingly became political instruments (Best 2001; Chevigny 2003; Morris 2001; Porter 1996; Taylor 1998a, 1998b). Haggerty's (2001) analysis of the production and publication of official criminal justice statistics by a national statistical agency (i.e. the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics) provides overwhelming evidence of the instrumental uses of statistics, by showing the 'micropolitical considerations' of the many agencies involved in the production of official statistics about crime and criminal justice. For example, he describes the influences on the decisions regarding the studies that are done, the agencies that control the official data, the counting rules, the way the measures are standardised and how statistical facts are communicated to the public. (Haggerty 2001).

In sum, as pictured in Figure 1 the governments in the USA, UK, the Netherlands and other Western societies took an interest in the counting of social phenomena, and statistics on all kinds of social issues were used to make an argument, to justify specific interventions and to increase the general awareness of possibilities of social control. Statistical analyses have become more and more technically advanced and more common. Institutions, governmental departments and committees were concerned with 'counting and controlling' and with 'explaining and taming'. Statistical regularities were used to develop interventions, make policy and allocate resources, for example concerning crime. In addition to statistics, another datasource became common in many societies: the survey. "

3.2 Surveying society: criminal victimisation and the police

The survey as a source of information became established in the 1940s and 1950s. Three sectors in society in particular used the survey as a tool, namely the government, the academic community and business (O'Muircheartaigh 1997). These three sectors have developed their own distinct frameworks and terminologies, based on different disciplines like statistics, sociology and experimental psychology. Thus, three lines in the historical development of survey research can be distinguished; firstly the governmental and therefore official statistics, secondly academic or social research and finally the strand of commercial, advertising or market research (O'Muircheartaigh 1997). Likert, in a reprint from a 1951-article, elaborates on the sample survey as a tool of research and policy information (Likert 1968). He proposes various origins, like the polls, which aroused much public interest in their results, consumer market research and methodological origins in mathematical statistics and the field of attitude measurement. According to Likert, the sample interview survey would have a great future, in which he was right; public opinion research creates a totally different perspective of phenomena (Osborne & Rose 1999). Although it took sometime before the increasing criticism regarding the reliability of the official crime statistics was met by making a victim survey (Decker 1977; Inciardi & McBride 1976), see Figure 2. The victim survey consists of a questionnaire that is administered to a sample of the population, asking questions on personal victimisation experiences of several offences like theft and burglary. Although mainly concerned with evading the dark number of official (police) figures and enhancing comparative analysis of official figures and survey rates, it paved the road for the idea that not only the people's victimhood could be measured, but their ideas and feelings regarding crime as well (see Figure 2).

In the 1960s, public opinion surveys administered in the United States began asking about crime and related themes (Harris 1969). For example, the Harris Poll in 1964 asked whether "juvenile delinquency and crime" were a problem or not (Harris 1964), the Harris Poll in 1969 asked respondents whether they "keep a weapon or instrument of protection by your bed when you go to sleep" and the famous items on the stranger who rings the doorbell and how safe they felt when they walked in their neighbourhood during the day. Two more items were added regarding their "worry about wife or husband when they are away from home in the evening" and "worry about children when they are away from home in the evening" (Harris 1969). In 1967, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) conducted the first nationwide study of victimisation in the United States. Again, the historical roots show the political relevance of 'fear of crime'. This survey was conducted for a governmental commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (Hindelang 1974).This survey asked people from 10,000 households about criminal victimisation over the twelve months prior to the interview (Hindelang 1974). Moreover, more surveys were administered in the United States, which were (partly) aiming at the measurement of experiences and the fear of criminal victimisation. Around 1970, the focus of the study of crime extended to the impact of crime on the victim, the costs of crime and losses of the victim.
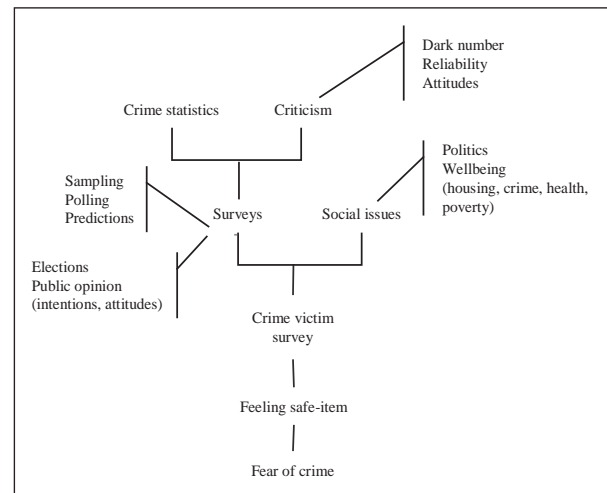

Figure 2. Schematic presentation of development of 'fear of crime'-notion in surveys.

Miller (1973) focused on 'fear of crime' of victims and of those aware of the risk on victimisation. In that year, the National Crime Survey, after some years of preparation, was developed further.[7] Changes in attitudes and habits could be derived from "attitude data" and could be used in planning programs, as Gignilliat (1977: 186) suggests. The 'attitude data' consisted of the responses on questions about the "change in frequency of crime in neighborhood", "change in frequency of crime in U.S.", whether crime had an "effect on activities of people in neighborhood", "effect on activities of people in general", "effect on activities of respondent" and an "effect on travel to areas of city during day" or during the night. Also, questions were asked on the "perceived safety in neighborhood", compared to other neigh-

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7. The surveys were part of the National Crime Panel (NCP) Program, which is sponsored by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Again, the political background of the survey is clear. Gignilliat (1977: 183) notes: "NCP's goal is to help criminal justice agencies improve their effectiveness by providing a new source of detailed information about the victims of crimes, numbers and types of crimes reported and not reported to police, and uniform measures of selected types of crimes".

bourhoods, during the day and during the night (Gignilliat 1977). Not only crime was seen as a social problem, 'fear of crime' itself became a problem for the community as well and became a research subject in itself (see Vanderveen 2006 and Lee 2007). Following this tradition, the linking of personal victimisation incidents with the experience and interpretation of safety, the British Crime Survey (BCS) was for the first time conducted in 1982. The BCS is very similar to the victim surveys as applied in Scotland (SCS), Australia (ACSS), the United States (NCVS), Canada (GSS) (Hough & Mayhew 1983).

In the Netherlands, the sample survey was introduced after the Second World War (Van Bochove 1999). Van Bochove (1999) claims the number of Dutch household surveys increased rapidly not only because of the funds that became available, but also because the government needed more information on social phenomena. Yet, systematic studies of public opinion or of attitudes regarding crime or sanctions were missing and not much literature was available on the victim or on victimology (Kempe 1967). This changed in 1973 when the first criminal victimisation survey was carried out, which was to a certain extent copied from the American victim surveys. Respondents were asked not only about their experiences with crime, but also about safety measures and reactions to crime (Fiselier 1978). Just like Anglosaxon predecessors, this survey mainly aimed for a more reliable estimation of the occurrence of crime, by surpassing the police statistics and thus avoiding the 'dark number' issue (Figure 2). Besides that, Fiselier acknowledged the possibilities of the victim survey for research on for example the costs of victimisation. Moreover, he noted that crime can be viewed as a social problem, which causes that crime does not only pertains to victims of crime, but instead that everybody has to do with crime (Fiselier 1978).

The Dutch Ministry of Justice and its research department, WODC, found the victimisation experiences relevant and conducted a few surveys from 1974 till 1979 (e.g. Buikhuisen 1975; Vanderveen Van Dijk & Steinmetz 1979). In these surveys, no items related to 'fear of crime' were included, unlike the survey that specifically aimed at gauging the opinions and feelings of the population on the issue of crime (Cozijn & Van Dijk 1976: 1). This survey, like the victimisation surveys, had definite political origins. When the Dutch Lower House (Tweede Kamer) discussed the Budget of the Ministry of Justice for the year 1974, a working group for the prevention of crime (Stuurgroep Preventie Criminaliteit) was established. The survey was conducted at the request of this working group.

In the report by Cozijn and Van Dijk (1976), four legitimisations are noted to explain why the study of these opinions and feelings is relevant. First, the authors state that the government should know whether the public thinks problems concerning crime should have priority over other problems. Second, they suggest that the public opinion determines the boundaries of the reform (humanisation) of penal and criminal justice. Next, by studying opinions and feelings, the government can observe trends. Being ignorant of certain feelings in the society might lead vigilantism, i.e. to situations in which people take the law into their own hands, so as to prevent vigilantism. To illustrate their argument, the authors point to some criminal cases in which the public prosecutors ask for long sentences, referring to the unrest in society. A final legitimisation concerns wellbeing, which can be affected by feelings of fear and behavioural constraints (Cozijn & Van Dijk 1976). The contents of the survey, which were conducted with a representative sample, are very similar to the American surveys. Questions referred for example to thoughts about crime, has the likelihood of becoming a victim increased the past two years, feeling safe at home and in the street, avoiding places because of fear of becoming attacked or robbed and preventive measures that were taken. Another survey from that time paid attention to the public's

opinion as well, in relation to police and the tasks of the police. For example, one item stated that "when there wouldn't be police, you wouldn't feel safe" (Junger-Tas & Van der Zee-Nefkens 1978). So in the 70s, some surveys were conducted that were quite similar to the American victim surveys, yet no attention was paid to 'fear of crime' on a regular basis. This changed in 1981, when the ESM (Enquête Slachtoffers Misdrijven), a survey of crime victims, was administered annually till 1985 and bi-annually from 1985 till 1993. Thus, responses on the question "Are you afraid when you're at home alone at night" are available since 1982 from the CBS. The ESM was transformed into the ERV (Enquête Rechtsbescherming en Veiligheid), a survey on legal protection and safety. In 1997, this survey was combined with a survey on health and living conditions and changed into the POLS (Permanent Onderzoek Leefsituatie), labelled as a survey on the Quality of Life.

Next to POLS, a major source of statistical data is the PMB (PolitieMonitor Bevolking). This so called Police Monitor of the Population was introduced in 1990 and has been administered bi-annually since 1993 and is commissioned by the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and the police divisions (e.g. Huls et al. 2001). Familiar items, on avoiding places because of crime, not opening the door at night and forbidding children to go to a particular place, are included. Similar items, in addition to questions about neighbourhood problems and social cohesion, were included in yet another survey (GSB), a survey conducted in the bigger cities of the Netherlands, connected with policy with respect to these cities. The survey was used to compare the cities on several performance indicators.

In 2005, the Home office, the Ministry of Justice and the CBS signed an agreement that was aimed to streamline the various existing surveys on crime and insecurity (POLS, PMB and the GSB). The different surveys should be integrated into a single Safety Monitor, which would be conducted annually (Pauwels en Pleysier 2008; Oppelaar en Wittebrood 2006). After a transitional period, the Dutch safety monitor (Veiligheidsmonitor) was administered in 2008. This survey consists of fixed and optional components. The national government is responsible for the nationwide admistration of the integrated VM; the different police forces and municipalities, when they decide to join, cover local monitors. A new (national) agency was created to coordinate and supervise the VM centrally and while this is done by this agency, the cost of fieldwork (data collection, sampling) is charged to the local level. Municipalities can choose from the optional components, in order to meet the own local context and needs (Versteegh and Van den Heuvel 2007). Findings from the VM enables the comparison between police forces and municipalities. Press releases with respect to findings find their way to the Dutch national and local media. In these press releases and media coverages, victimization rates and indicators of fear of crime are always present. It is impossible to think of Dutch media, policy and politics without 'fear of crime'.

Next to national comparisons, international comparisons are possible as well. Since 1989, surveys, the Netherlands participated in the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS). This was developed in the late eighties and has been used four times now, in 1989, 1992, 1996 and 2000 (Van Kesteren, Mayhew & Nieuwbeerta 2000). Over time, more countries became involved and in 2000 the ICVS has been administered in more than fifty countries all over the world, which makes the amount of data on criminal victimisation and aspects regarding the experience of personal safety overwhelming. The 'feeling safe when walking alone'-item is included, as well as for example an item on the perceived risk of becoming a victim of burglary. Since 2004-2005, the Netherlands, as well as Greece and other (future) European member states, participate in the European Crime and Safety Survey (EU ICS). The EU ICS is organized by, among oth-

ers, Gallup-Europe and Unicri (United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute) and co-financed by the European Commission.

All these surveys and the agencies related to them show how surveys, and the fear of crime, have become an unquestioned social fact. Without the historical developments in statistics and probability theory, the numerous surveys on the local, national and international level (e.g. in the UK, USA, the Netherlands) would not have been conducted. Though the victim surveys were originally developed to counter criticism concerning the reliability of (crime) statistics, i.e. dark number issues, the surveys contained questions on attitudes regarding crime as well. As such, the development of the crime victim survey since the 1960s, and its cross-national expansion, is a result of the developments in public opinion and election polling, technical advancement in sampling techniques and an overall increasing interest in intentions and attitudes of the general public. From this period on, the item 'feeling safe after dark' has been used (Figure 2). This item, and related items on 'worry' and 'stranger ringing the doorbell', soon became known as relating to 'fear of crime'. The item came first, the concept appeared on the stage later. From the 1970s on, not only crime was seen as a social problem, but 'fear of crime' itself became a problem; also, it became a research subject. Besides measures to decrease crime, measures to decrease 'fear of crime' were taken and evaluated, up until now (e.g. Hening & Maxfield 1978; Cordner 2010). Criticism rose together with the increasing development and use of statistics and surveys (e.g. Sanders 1999; Lupton & Tulloch 1999). In response to that criticism, several conceptual and methodological improvements have been made (see for example Gray, Jackson & Farrall 2011). Despite these changes, the overall conclusion is that 'fear of crime' has certainly grown since its birth, but the surrounding discourse, nor its basic indicators, hasn't changed that much: si.

The first Dutch crime victim surveys are based on the earlier American crime victim surveys and the different variants on national and local level have been copied ever since. Also, the internationally famous items, some of which are used in almost every survey, were originally intended and/or used as a sort of public opinion poll-question. Statistics are used instrumentally; Best (2001) notes that people who present statistics have a reason for doing so; they want something, just like the media who repeat the statistics in their publications. Especially in social science statistics "can become weapons in political struggles over social problems and social policy" (Best 2001: 10). Quantitive findings on fear of crime are used in politics and policy, most often in the context of a specific political agenda.

4. Fear of crime in politics and policy

The victim surveys and the figures on fear of crime derived from them, are used in policy making (e.g. see Grogger & Weatherford 1995), financial decisions and international comparisons. Victim surveys have proven to be important instruments in politics and cutting costs (Baer & Chambliss 1997; Body-Gendrot 2001; Kuttschreuter & Wiegman 1998). Several actors, for example politicians and police officers, point to the results concerning 'fear of crime', derived from public opinion polls and surveys. Appeals to public opinion have become central in political discourse, since public opinion provides the ultimate ground of legitimacy for a specific political and legislative agenda (Zaret 2000). Politicians and policy makers often refer to public opinion, and the fear of crime, to legitimise a policy measure. Measures that attempt to reduce fear are proffered as guarantees of security, as "assurance that an established order will prevail", similar to vigilantism and "like any other form of policing" (Johnston 2001: 968–969). A higher 'fear of crime' means that more actions should be taken, whereas a

lower 'fear of crime' means that the policy measures have worked indeed and should be sustained, increased or toughened. In other words, 'fear' is the legitimation of surveillance, punishment and punitive laws (Altheide 2002). Altheide (2003: 53) concludes his article on the discourse of fear in the mass media in relation to terrorism as follows: "Fear is perceived as crime and terrorism, while police and military forces are symbolically joined as protectors."

Thus, British and American studies demonstrate that 'fear of crime' is often used instrumentally and as a political symbol in politics. Obviously, its historical roots, which are similar to other statistics and surveys on social issues, already provide an argument of its instrumental role (see Haggerty 2001; Lee 2007). Statistics and surveys could rapidly increase because of governmental institutions and funding. The pervasive instrumental role that the (crime) statistics and crime surveys played, including the items on 'fear of crime' has described previously; statistics are thought to enable politicians and policy makers to 'count & control', or to 'explain and tame'. The instrumental role is for example reflected by the attention that 'fear of crime' receives from state actors or (semi-)governmental institutions, in for example the USA, UK as well as in the Netherlands. Several policy agencies are investing time and money to the "reduction" of fear, leading to many policy measures and practical implementations that, in some cases, subsequently are evaluated in studies that attempt to check the effectiveness of policy interventions. Such policy measures are mostly connected to a political agenda concerned with 'law & order' and 'zero tolerance'. In 1969, Harris already gives a detailed outline of the growing calls for tougher action in terms of policing, disciplining and punishing criminals, a discourse and political agenda that uses 'fear of crime' to a large extent. For example, crime and 'fear of crime' are said to be a "public malady", for which politicians should "seek its cure" (Harris 1969: 17-18). The fear of crime, more than the fact of it, guaranteed that some kind of action would be taken, for the public demand had to be met.

Findings from surveys on fear of crime do not suggest specific political reactions: in itself, they can trigger either punitive or non-punitive reactions. Yet, several studies indicate fear of crime is used primarily to argue for punitive, repressive measures. Scheingold (1984) for example argues that the initial precondition of a politics of law & order is a public perception that crime threatens the social order, although other threats to society and other personal insecurities are relevant as well. All this paves the road for 'campaigning on crime', on the one hand depicting appealing portrayals of crime, less abstract and more direct, and arousing anxieties, on the other hand providing a rather simple solution to the problem, namely more punitive crime control measures. He states that politicians are served by 'fear of crime' and crime as a symbol; if one takes a get-tough stand, then crime is a good issue when campaigning (Scheingold 1984). Also, 'fear of crime' works out well for law enforcement officials, the result of public concern is frequently that more resources are directed to agencies of criminal process. Besides these two groups, private security organisations profit from 'fear of crime' as well, as do organisations arguing for the necessity of legal firearms ownership (Łoś 2002; McDowall & Loftin 1983). The private security industry, law enforcement institutions, politics and the press all comment on levels of fear of crime, which are generally denoted as being high or too high.

When 'fear of crime' had just started to exist as measurable concept, Harris already commented on the political uses of 'fear of crime'. The choice whether punitive and/or non- punitive solutions are promised in response to the crime problem is a political one. Often, the solutions offered are punitive. For example, the Republican Richard Nixon, who later became president of the USA, issued his first policy position paper titled 'Toward Freedom from Fear' Harris (1969: 73-74) notes:

The proper response to crime, according to Mr. Nixon, lay not in cleaning up the slums, where it was bred, but in locking up more malefactors. "If the conviction rate were doubled in this country", he explained, "it would do more to eliminate crime in the future than a quadrupling of the funds for any governmental war on poverty.

The famous 'broken windows thesis' of Wilson and Kelling (1982) also contributed to the idea that deterrence measures and especially the strict control of minor offences, or incivilities, would reduce fear and crime (see Burke 1998; Harcourt 1998; Herbert 2001). More in general, several authors point out that various contemporary Western societies show an increasing punitiveness and emphasis on crime control (Beckett 1997; Beckett & Sasson 2000; Garland 2000, 2001). Newburn (2002) analyses the USA as a direct source of the law & order policies, and suggest 'zero tolerance' is probably the best known example of imported crime control in the UK (Newburn 2002). He notes that it is not only policies that are transferred across the Atlantic, but more so "elements of terminology, ideas and ideologies" that are often "phrases that have both powerful symbolic value and also act as an incitement to law and order" (Newburn 2002: 174). These phrases are exemplary for symbolic politics, e.g. 'three strikes and you're out', 'war on crime', 'war on drugs' and more recently the 'war on terrorism' as well as the metaphor of 'broken windows' introduced by Wilson & Kelling (1982, Burke 1998). In the Netherlands, these kind of metaphors and war rhetoric are used in political and public debates as well (e.g. Van der Woude 2007: 163).

Thus, analogue to the cross-national expansion of the crime victim survey, including the item on 'feeling safe', similar slogans are used in Dutch politics, policy and media. Garland's (2001) culture of control does not only hold for the UK and the USA, but seems applicable to the Netherlands as well (Downes & Van Swaaningen 2007; Pakes 2006). Pakes (2005) too examines the changes in Dutch criminal justice governance and concludes that tolerance to deviance is no longer a driving force in penal policy. With a hardening view of criminals and more in general a punitive shift, especially towards non-Dutch offenders, the Dutch-style crime complex is clear. Van Swaaningen (2005) distinguishes different themes in the Dutch safety discourse on the local and national level. Fear of crime, and feelings of safety and insecurity became a "major political advisor"(p. 291) and even "the compass of safety policies" (p. 295). The argument of Pakes and Van Swaaningen are advanced and demonstrated in two recent studies. Van der Woude (2010) and Koemans (2010) systematically conducted empirical analyses of the discourse on terrorism and on ASBO's respectively. Van der Woude (2010) examined hundreds of texts from public, political and legislative discourse to compare and explain the legislator's response to domestic and international terrorist threats in the 1970s and the post- 9/11 period. She demonstrates how the social and political sphere has changed and how this change has affected both public and political discourse resulting in extremely punitive demands. Reference to the public's fear of crime were, in contrast to the present, not made. In the post- 9/11 period however, fear of crime is often used to introduce, legitimize and defend far-reaching measures (Van der Woude 2010).

Recent work by Koemans (2010) also stresses the use of the public's feelings of safety in the political debate on social incivilities or so called antisocial behavior. She analysed political discourse and examined policy documents and white papers on measures to tackle antisocial behavior. In addition, she also interviewed several members of parliament and members of the city councils of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. One of the rationales for taking measures she identifies is the assumed link between disorder and crime; reference is often made to a cycle of antisocial behavior, fear and crime:

The often cited idea by the respondents is that ASB should be tackled because left unattended it leads to crime. Many respondents state that if minor incidents of ASB are left untouched, disorder can provoke fear, and fear in itself helps to create the physical and social environment in which real crime can develop. 'When people observe that ASB is not addressed, people will feel afraid and withdraw from public spaces; "they will not intervene when they observe crime", as one MP stated.' (Koemans 2010: 484)

Another rationale she identifies in defense of a tougher approach on anti-social behavior is the idea that anti-social behavior negatively influences the quality of life; anti-social behavior "is a serious problem that makes people miserable and fearful. Regardless of their political background the politicians say that ASB makes people feel unhappy and unsafe" (p.485). In general, this research demonstrates how British rhetoric and more punitive measures were incorporated in Dutch politics and policy. The Dutch government explicitly aimed to get more police on the street, a tougher enforcement of existing and new rules and introduce tougher measures if necessary (Koemans 2010; see also Koemans & Huisman 2008).

This development of increasing punitiveness and emphasis on crime control is strengthened by the events in the USA on September 11, 2001, the series of bombings in trains in Madrid (March 11, 2004) and in the Netherlands by the murder on politician Pim Fortuyn (May 6, 2002) and on filmmaker Theo van Gogh (November 2, 2004) (see also Van Swaaningen 2005). Language and symbols are important in politics and policing, especially when crime, risk and safety are involved. 'Fear of crime' appears to be a powerful phrase, and it is used as a symbol in American, British and Dutch politics. Survey findings on fear of crime are used for a purpose.

5. Fear of crime politicised

In this paper, the history concerning 'fear of crime' in the Netherlands has been discussed. Following American and English practices, 'fear of crime' became a social issue in Dutch society. American and English victim surveys and their items, were copied in Dutch surveys. Analogue to the USA and UK, findings from these surveys play specific instrumental role: whether 'fear of crime' is increasing or decreasing, the findings are used to legitimize law & order policies. In Greece, the victim survey has been introduced more recently. Greece has participated in the EU ICS, a victim survey that shares several similarities with the victim surveys from the early beginning. Findings from these surveys may indicate different things. Jackson (2004: 963) points out that fear of crime can is an expression of broader attitudes and values as well as an experiential phenomenon, pointing out someone's own sense of vulnerability and worry in a specific situation. He concludes that crime is "a lightning rod – a metaphor for social problems in the local community and to wider society". Survey data on fear of crime can give us a better understanding of fear as an expression and as a reflection of one's own ideological position (see Farrall, Jackson & Gray 2009). In addition, empirical studies on how survey findings, on victimization rates and fear of crime, are actually used in political and social discourse, provide more insight in ideology and politics of a society. As Lee (2001 e.d.) demonstrates 'fear of crime' has been used as argument in favour of a politics of law & order and 'zero tolerance' (Lee 2001). The literature on Dutch discourse suggests the same thing: reference is made to 'fear of crime', whether it is increasing or decreasing or unchanged, to legitimize law& order policies. Van Swaaningen (2005) problematises this use of fear as compass in (community) safety policies. In the Netherlands, it has led to a change in police priorities: not only crime, but non-criminal acts (urban nuisanc-

es) are fought against. On the local level, like in the city of Rotterdam, this has developed into "banishment modern style", a "temporary or permanent exclusion of offenders or potential offenders from certain places or functions". Needless to say, these 'banishment policies' and measures are not directed randomly to all people in Dutch society. Van Swaaningen (2005: 303) concludes:

> Banishment is the new metaphor of this politics of public safety and the fears of the law-abiding citizen are the driving force behind it. The popularity of politicians increasingly depends on 'tough' statements on crime and insecurity. In this sense we attempt to govern through crime. If the process of politicians shouting each other down on 'who is the toughest?' continues, it is to be feared that crime control is becoming a fight without a social face, of which the most disadvantaged and powerless groups in society become the victims.

As noted before, the Netherlands are not alone in this developmental trajectory with respect to the discourse of law & order and the fear of crime. Neither are the Netherlands unique in its use of survey measures on crime, punitiveness and fear of crime. In general, it seems that "Policy measures are constructed in ways that appear to value political advantage and public opinion over the views of experts and the evidence of research" (Garland 2001: 13). Greece might be no exception to this observation. Cheliotis and Xenakis (2010) focus on punitiveness and incarceration rates in Greece, which appear to be risen, like they did in other Western countries. However, they argue that "broad-brush cross-country comparisons" may not do justice to explain, though similar at first glance, developments in "states of the semi-periphery, given their very different social and economic trajectories". It is hard to disagree with that, especially with many European countries in transition and an international and national political agenda that is filled with issues like the financial crisis and immigration. This necessitates a critical analysis of the political uses of public opinion and survey data even more.

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