

# Preface

On a warm September day in 2009 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, two of the editors of this volume jointly presented a paper entitled ‘Ratio or Affect in Criminal Decision Making’ at the annual European Society of Criminology Conference, in which they crossed swords on how to deal with affect in criminal decision making. Elffers, who has a background in mathematics, argued within the criminological tradition of Cornish and Clarke’s *Reasoning Criminal*, and held that the standard rational choice model is very well able to incorporate emotions. Van Gelder, who is trained as a psychologist, contended that emotions cannot be accommodated by straightforward cost–benefit analyses in this tradition. It was this confrontation between modern psychological theory and traditional criminological views that led to the idea of organizing an international workshop on the matter. The idea was pitched to Dan Nagin, who had already argued several years earlier in his Sutherland Address that the interaction between cognition and emotion is critical to understanding crime, and Danielle Reynald, who was also willing to join forces in the endeavour. We subsequently invited a number of leading criminologists to participate in the project. To our delight, almost all of them responded enthusiastically to our invitation.

In Spring 2011 the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR) in Amsterdam organized a two-day workshop at the Oud Poelgeest manor in the town of Oegstgeest, the Netherlands. The manor was a fitting location not least because it had once been the home of the eminent Dutch scientist and physician Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738), whose dissertation (1689) dealt with the relation between mind and body *De distinctione mentis a corpore*. Workshop participants had been asked to reflect on the question whether, and if so how, affect could be incorporated within a rational choice model. Perhaps it was Boerhaave’s spirit that inspired the participants, each of whom proposed an empirical study or theoretical piece, to present and defend their ideas in front of an audience of fellow scientists. Discussions on these tentative ideas and plans were at times heated but always constructive, and most participants agreed to pursue their intentions and execute their proposed investigation in the year following the workshop.

Precisely one year later, we reconvened in Oud Poelgeest for a second workshop during which participants presented their results and explained how their

study sheds light on the affect and cognition question. Authors used the input they got during the second workshop to strengthen their papers, after which a formal peer review process followed.

We as editors believe that this intensive two-workshops-plus-peer-review format has resulted in a set of highly interesting and strong papers. We are delighted with the end result and hope that *Affect and Cognition in Criminal Decision Making* will inspire crime researchers to start addressing the interplay of affect and cognition in their work.

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