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Crime victims and the police: Crime victims' evaluations of police behaviour, legitimacy, and cooperation: a multi-method study

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Data about (repeat) victimization of property and violent crimes in the Netherlands

Crime is a major problem in society as, for instance, indicated by the most recent report of the Security Monitor.¹ According to this monitor, almost 2.5 million citizens in the Netherlands were victimized in 2016 by either a property crime (11.5%) or a violent crime (2.3%). Yet, the Security Monitor does not register how many of these victims were first-time victims or repeat victims.

Dutch studies into the prevalence of repeat victimizations, although rather out-dated, suggest that repeat burglary victimization is a serious issue to tackle in the Netherlands (e.g. Arends, 1997; Eijken & Van Overbeeke, 1998; Hakkert & Oppenhuis, 1996; Kleemans, 2001; López, 2001; Tseloni, Wittebrood, Farrell & Pease, 2004; Wittebrood, 2006). For example, Hakkert and Oppenhuis (1996) reported that 21% of the burglary victims have to deal with another burglary within a year and that these repeat burglary crime victims account for 44% of all (attempted) burglaries (see also Kleemans, 2001; Tseloni et al., 2004). In addition, repeat violent crime victimization may also be an important issue. Hakkert and Oppenhuis (1996), for example, reported that about 43% of victims of violent crime face another violent crime victimization within a year – accounting for 77% of all violent crimes (see also Police Monitor Population, 1999). These figures should be seen as a low estimate, because many victims do not report their victimization.

Crime victims that do report their victimization to the police may play an important role in reducing crime. By providing police officers with important and detailed information on the circumstances of the crime and possibly on the offender, they can help the police officers to investigate and solve the crime and to apprehend the offender (Cirel, Evans, McGillis & Whitcomb, 1977; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997; Skogan & Antunes,

1 The Security Monitor is a yearly recurring study into the safety, liveability, and victimization experiences among citizens in the Netherlands. This monitor is conducted on behalf of the minister of Security and Justice (currently minister of Justice and Security), municipalities and the police and provides insight in the prevalence of crime in the Netherlands, based on citizens' self-reports.

1979). Without crime victims reporting their victimization to the police and offering their cooperation, many crimes go unnoticed and unsolved by the police and the criminal justice system (e.g. Ennis, 1967). In other words, the effectiveness of the criminal justice system depends to a large extent on crime victim cooperation with the police. This is why Hindelang and Gottfredson (1976) referred to crime victims as the gatekeepers of the criminal justice system.

1.1.2 Data about crime reporting of property and violent crimes in the Netherlands

Under-reporting is a problem. Recent Security Monitors (e.g. CBS, 2013; 2014; 2015) indicate that many crime victims do not report their victimization to the police. For example, of all citizens of fifteen years or older feeling victimized in 2015, only 27% had officially reported their victimization to the police. Property crime victims (35%) were more likely to officially report their victimization to the police than victims of violent crime (21%). Information on other forms of cooperation besides reporting crime (e.g. providing the police with information on the suspect or allowing the police to investigate the crime scene) is practically non-existent. However, based on the numbers presented, it is clear that many victims choose not to cooperate with the police after victimization experiences (see also Greenberg & Ruback, 1992). Furthermore, Statistics Netherlands (CBS, 2016) indicated that 19% of those who reported their victimization were unsatisfied with the way the police handled their case. The most prominent contributors to a negative evaluation of the police response were: “problems were not solved” (40.7%), “the police were reluctant” (28.2%), “the police kept me waiting” (20.8%), and “the police gave insufficient information” (14.6%). Previous research suggests that particularly repeat crime victims are less likely to report their victimization to the police (Tarling & Morris, 2010; Van Dijk, 2001) and that this may be influenced by crime victims’ evaluations of previous experiences with reporting their victimization to the police (Ipsos MORI, 2003; Kidd & Chayet, 1984; Shapland, Willmore & Duff, 1985; Ziegenhagen, 1976). This is a serious issue, as previous studies indicate that crime victims have an increased risk to be victimized compared to non-victims (Nicholas, Povey, Walker & Kershaw, 2005; Pease, 1998; Polvi, Looman, Humphries & Pease, 1990, 1991; Van Reemst, Fischer & Van Dongen, 2013). To counter the unfavourable situation that crime victims are dissatisfied with the police response and therefore withdraw from cooperation with the police in case of future crime victimization, several laws and policies have been introduced for police officers to interact with crime victims.

1.1.3 Law and policies for police officers to interact with crime victims

For many years, crime victims were a ‘forgotten party’ in criminal proceedings (Norton, 2007; Walklate, 2012; Wemmers & Cyr, 2006). However, since

the end of the 1960s, more legal, political and scientific attention has been given to the position of crime victims in criminal proceedings throughout the world (e.g. Tobolowsky, Gaboury, Jackson & Blackburn, 2010; Van der Aa et al., 2009). Instigated by the women's movement, increased empowerment of citizens, terrorist attacks in the 1970s, and increased crime rates, crime victims and their rights became more prominent across the world and in the Netherlands. To counter possible negative evaluations of crime victims regarding the police response and the subsequent possibility of not reporting a repeat victimization to the police, specific international and national laws and policies were introduced to guide police officers in their interaction with crime victims. Central aims were to (1) acknowledge the victims' special situation by restoring material and immaterial damage; (2) prevent secondary victimization (i.e. the feeling that victims are victimized again by the way people react to their victimization (see Symonds, 1975); (3) promote emotional recovery; and (4) offer protection of vulnerable victims (Directive 2012/29/EU).

1.1.4 Laws and policies in Europe

In 1983 the first European treaty was enacted to provide minimum provisions for crime victims of intentional crimes of violence who suffered bodily injury or impairment of health and for relatives of persons who died as a result of such crimes. In this European Convention on the compensation of victims of violent crimes, the committee established the minimum norms for victims to get financial compensation funded by states. In 2001, the European Union Framework Decision on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings was adopted. In this Framework Decision, rules at the supranational level were codified concerning the legal position of victims of member states, which were up to then only codified in guidelines, such as the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Recommendation of the Council of Europe. This Framework Decision has several pillars, amongst others the right to be respected and recognised at all stages of the criminal proceedings (including the police investigation phase) and the right to receive information, particularly information about the progress of the case. Victims' rights continue to be developed and the successor of the European Union Framework Decision, the European Union Directive on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime² explicitly states:

2 Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. The directive had to be implemented by 16 November 2015 (see article 27). See <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012L0029&from=EN>

“In order to encourage and facilitate reporting of crimes and to allow victims to break the cycle of repeat victimization, it is essential [...] that competent authorities are prepared to respond to victims’ reports in a respectful, sensitive, professional and non-discriminatory manner. This could increase victims’ confidence in the criminal justice systems of Member States and reduce the number of unreported crimes.” (p. 64)

According to this statement, criminal justice authorities (including police officers) are compelled to treat victims “in a respectful, sensitive, professional and non-discriminatory manner” (p. 64) during direct interactions, as it is assumed that this may enhance victims’ perceptions of confidence in the criminal justice system and subsequently enhances crime reporting by crime victims. Implicitly it is assumed that enhanced trust in the criminal justice system makes victims more willing to cooperate with the police and therefore more likely to report their (repeat) victimization resulting in a reduction of crimes that go unreported.

1.1.5 Laws and policies in the Netherlands

The first guidelines for the treatment of crime victims by criminal justice authorities in the Netherlands were introduced in 1986. Based on the recommendations of the Committee on violent sex crimes and the Committee on judicial policy and victims, administrative guidelines for the police and public prosecution were introduced to improve the position of victims of violent sex crime in pre-trial stages of criminal proceedings (guideline Beaufort and guideline Vaillant I; *Staatsblad*, 1986, 33). A year later, these guidelines were applicable to victims of all felonies (*Staatsblad*, 1987, 64). Amongst others, these guidelines instructed police officers to treat victims in a correct way, to inform crime victims about the procedure following the report, and to keep victims updated about the progress of investigative actions. These guidelines were adopted in the Directive for the Care of Victims (amended in 1999) and in the Act for the improvement of the position of victims in criminal procedure (enacted in 2011). Since then, police officers are bound to offer a respectful treatment to crime victims by national Criminal Procedural law regulations (art. 51a clause 2 CP jo. art. 288a clause 2 CP). In addition, since the enactment of the Police Act in 1993 – revised in 2012 – police officers have the legal task to offer help to those in need (art. 3 Police Act). In the recent vision document (Ministry of Security and Justice, 2013a) the Dutch government has formulated specific policy goals to do justice to crime victims. These policy goals include: (a) offering victims a strong position in criminal proceedings; (b) protecting victims where needed; (c) offering support to victims to recover from the consequences of victimization; (d) offering victims possibilities to recover from the consequences of victimization in financial, practical and emotional terms; and (e) recognizing victims’ status and making sure that victims are fairly treated and informed about their case (p. 23). These policy goals are aimed to result in positive evaluations from crime victims with regard to governmental organisations that support crime victims (such as Victim

Support the Netherlands and the Dutch Violent Offences Compensation Fund) and the criminal justice system. Particularly with regard to the police, guidelines have been proposed to improve the crime reporting process and to improve victims' willingness to report crimes to the police (Inspection Security and Justice, 2012). The central elements emphasized are correct treatment of crime victims by police officers and informing crime victims about the developments in their case after reporting a victimization. Particularly since the reorganisation of the National police force into 10 regions in 2013, the police strive for a more uniform reporting process that covers victims' needs as much as possible. Currently, a proposition for implementation of the EU Directive on establishing minimum standards of the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime has been adopted by the House of Representatives and approved by the Senate.³

1.1.6 The process of crime reporting in the Netherlands

Crime victims can generally choose between two ways of informing the police about their victimization: either by visiting the police station in person or by calling the police and let police officers visit them. When the police is called to come to the victim, it may be that the crime is on-going or recently terminated and that police officers need to provide first aid to settle the situation. After the crime victim has told what has happened, the police officers offer the choice to officially report the crime. If the victim chooses to do so, an official report is made by the police. That report is the victim's official request to the police to investigate the crime and should represent the victim's story on what has happened; it needs to be signed by the victim. A copy of this report should be offered to the crime victim. In order to meet victims' potential needs concerning recognition and careful treatment (including information provision; Ten Boom & Kuijpers, 2008) police officers need to ask victims whether they want to be updated on the proceedings in their case and whether they would appreciate victim assistance by Victim Support the Netherlands. Victims should also be informed about the termination of the police investigation; whether the investigation resulted in a dismissal (either because the event could not be regarded as a criminal act or because there were not enough investigative leads) or whether the investigation resulted in a suspect being referred to the prosecution for further examination.

Formal regulations on how to treat victims during criminal proceedings on both the international and national level seem to assume that crime victims who evaluate the police response in their case in a positive manner are more likely to trust the police (e.g. Inspection Security and Justice, 2012; Directive 2012/29/EU).

3 https://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/34236_implementatie_richtlijn

1.1.7 Perceived trust in the police and perceived police legitimacy

The concept of perceived trust in the police deals with expectations about police functioning that may be disappointed (Luhmann, 1988). Perceived trust in the police may be formed through direct interactions with individual police officers (Gilmour, 2008; Tyler, 2006, 2011). Evaluations of such direct interactions could result in more favourable perceptions of trust or less favourable perceptions of trust (disappointment). If the level of perceived trust in the police has been damaged due to negatively evaluated behaviour of individual police officers, victims may choose to withdraw from cooperating with the police in the future (see Luhmann, 1988; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

Perceived trust can be considered as a vital component of perceived police legitimacy (Tyler, 2006, 2011). However, whereas perceived trust may also relate to individual persons, perceived legitimacy is a characteristic on an institutional level (e.g. the police organisation; Tyler, 2006). Rooted in the classic work of Weber (1978), legitimacy of the police includes citizens' understanding and acceptance of police authority (Tyler, 2006, 2011). In other words, the police possess legitimacy if they adhere to society's norms and values, if they are trusted by the public and if the public accepts that they have a duty to obey the authority of the police and the law even when they personally disagree. As such, perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law can be considered to be essential conditions for police legitimacy (Tyler, 2006, 2011). While no information is available on citizens' perceptions of legitimacy or perceived obligation to obey the law in the Netherlands, European comparisons have been made on citizens' perceived trust in the police.

Schaap and Scheepers (2014) examined differences in institutional trust in the police among 26 European countries based on European Social Survey (ESS) data. Their findings showed that perceived trust in the police in the Netherlands is relatively high compared to other European countries (especially compared to Eastern European countries). While Schaap and Scheepers (2014) have not reported on differences in levels of perceived trust in the police for victims and non-victims, previous research suggests that crime victimization decreases one's trust in the police (e.g. Ashworth & Feldman-Summers, 1978; Aviv & Weisburd, 2016; Koenig, 1980). Also based on ESS data, Van der Veer, Van Sluis, Van de Walle and Ringeling (2013) revealed that 74.6% of the citizens in the Netherlands expressed that they trusted the police in 2010 and that this percentage is rather stable since 1998. Their study also reveals that citizens who were victimized in the 12 months prior to the interview expressed lower levels of perceived trust in the police compared to citizens who were not victimized during that period ($M = 5.9$ vs. $M = 6.3$). Yet, their study does not reveal whether those victims contacted the police following their victimization. Therefore, no information is available whether these lower levels of trust may be caused by victims' negative evaluations of the police response in their case.

The aforementioned European and national regulations that guide police officers in interactions during criminal proceedings seem to assume that crime victims who evaluate the police response in their case in a positive manner are more likely to trust the police and to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization (e.g. Inspection Security and Justice, 2012; Directive 2012/29/EU). However, this underlying assumption is largely based on theorization and research among citizens in general and has not yet been validated by empirical research among crime victims. To examine its validity among victims of crime, it is necessary to explore whether this assumption can be extended to this group based on empirical research among crime victims. Given the acknowledgment that particularly crime victims' *evaluations* of the police response may have important implications for their trust in and cooperation with the police, the current thesis focuses on crime victims' *evaluations* of the police response, rather than actual police behaviour.

In the following sections, the research questions of the current thesis are presented (section 1.2), followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework used for this thesis (section 1.3). Then the theoretical and empirical contribution of the current thesis (section 1.4) and the methods used in this thesis are described (section 1.5). Lastly, this chapter presents the outline of the current thesis (section 1.6).

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current thesis seeks to explore to what extent can empirical research among crime victims validate the assumption that victims who feel positive about the police response in their case are more willing to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization than victims who feel less positive about the police response. The central research question to be addressed is the following:

To what extent, how, and why are crime victims' evaluations of the police response related to their perceptions of the legitimacy of the police organisation and their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization?

Addressing the central research question, the current thesis lies at the intersection of criminology and victimology. On the one hand it tries to gain more understanding of how victims experience the criminal justice system and how this may influence the fight against crime, which is an important issue studied in the field of criminology (e.g. Sutherland & Cressey, 1960; Reid, 1976). On the other hand, it is embedded in the field of victimology – often referred to as a sub-discipline of criminology – as it seeks to understand how victims' personal lives are impacted by the victimization and by interactions with the criminal justice system following the crime (e.g. Carmen, 2012).

The current thesis focuses specifically on victims of so-called high impact crimes: (attempted) burglary and violent crime (Ministry of Security and Justice, 2013b). What is meant by the term ‘crime victim’ may depend on the perspective taken. From a legal perspective, crime victims are citizens who have suffered pecuniary damage or other disadvantage as a direct result of a criminal act (see art. 51a clause 1, CP). A sociological perspective on crime victims is broader and may include animals, the environment, the society, or persons who were exposed to something that can be interpreted as a crime (see Lindgren & Nikolić-Ristanović, 2011). Furthermore, from a psychological perspective, crime victims are those persons who interpret an event that has happened to them as a criminal act (see Lindgren & Nikolić-Ristanović, 2011). The current dissertation focuses on crime victims who felt directly victimized by another person and subsequently reported this event to the police. Implicit in this conceptualization is that these citizens felt that they were harmed by another person and suffered in any way as a direct result. As police officers are usually the first and only representatives of the criminal justice system to interact with crime victims (Smit & Harrendorf, 2010), this thesis specifically focuses on interactions with the police, rather than on other criminal justice actors. To answer the central research question, five specific research questions were formulated:

- (1) To what extent does prior empirical research support the assumption that crime victims’ evaluations of the police response lead to improved perceptions of the legitimacy of the criminal justice system and subsequently enhanced (willingness for) cooperation with the police?
- (2) What is the empirical structure of victims’ evaluations of the police response (in terms of procedural justice and police performance), perceived legitimacy (in terms of trust in the police and obligation to obey the law), and willingness to cooperate with the police?
- (3) How are crime victims’ evaluations of the police response related to perceived legitimacy and to willingness to cooperate with the police; does it differ between victims of different types of crime, and do these relationships hold over time?
- (4) How does the police response influence mock victims’ perceptions of police legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police?
- (5) Why are crime victims’ evaluations of the police response related to their willingness to cooperate with the police?

This thesis explores its central question by first examining what is already known about the relationships between victims’ evaluations of the police response, perceived legitimacy, and cooperation based on previous quantitative studies among crime victims (research question 1) and secondly by exploring these relationships among crime victims in the Netherlands using multiple research techniques (i.e. observational survey, experimental vignette design and qualitative in-depth interviews; research questions 2 to 5). The next section discusses the theoretical framework that guides the current thesis.

1.3 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The current thesis is guided by the well-established theoretical framework of procedural justice as developed by social psychologist Tom Tyler and colleagues with specific regard to interactions with the police (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006, 2011; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). This framework helps understand how cooperation with the police can be motivated among citizens in general. According to this framework, fair treatment by police officers during direct interactions is the key element to motivate cooperation (Tyler, 2006, 2011). Yet, most citizens never directly interact with the police (e.g. Eith & Durose, 2011). Perhaps as a consequence, the framework largely focuses on *citizens' perceptions of the police in general* (i.e. *expectations*; see Gau, 2014) and not on *evaluations of a specific interaction*. To tailor this framework more to crime victims and their evaluations of the police response in their case, the current thesis also builds on previous qualitative victimological research among crime victims in specific (De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott, Thomas & Ogloff, 2012). Below I will first describe the theoretical framework for citizens in general. Then I will apply that framework to crime victims with regard to the police response in their case and lastly I will discuss the conceptual and methodological limitations of the framework that will be addressed in the current thesis.

1.3.1 Citizens

Tyler's framework assumes that cooperation among citizens can be motivated if police officers treat citizens fair during direct interactions (Tyler, 2006, 2011). Moreover, Tyler suggests that fair treatment by police officers enhances citizens' perceptions of police legitimacy and subsequently makes them more willing to cooperate with the police. In other words, his framework hypothesizes that evaluations of procedural justice are indirectly related to cooperation with the police, via perceived police legitimacy (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2011). Besides evaluations of procedural justice, evaluations of police performance are recognized to be an important determinant of perceived police legitimacy (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; see Figure 1.1 and box 1.1 in which the concepts are defined).

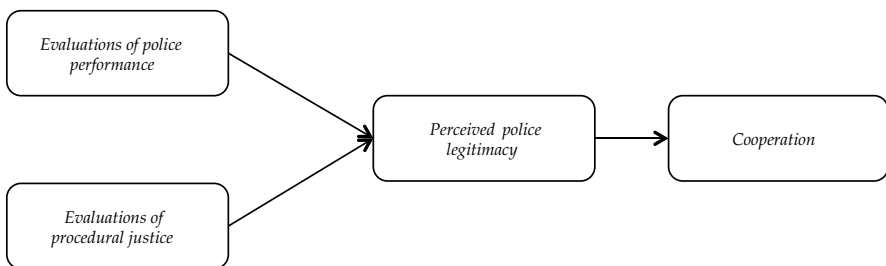


Figure 1.1 Graphical depiction of the current thesis' framework, based on Tyler's theoretical framework on procedural justice

Box 1.1 *Definitions of central concepts*

Evaluations of procedural justice: judgments of the quality of treatment by police officers and the quality of decision-making by police officers (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003).

Quality of treatment: the way police officers deal with citizens and is characterised by the opportunity given to citizens to express their views (i.e. 'voice' element of procedural justice) and by approaching citizens in a respectful manner (i.e. 'respect' element of procedural justice; Tyler & Lind, 1992).

Quality of decision-making: the way in which police officers make their decisions is characterised by the absence of bias and prejudice (i.e. 'neutrality' element of procedural justice) and by a sincere motivation to reach the best solution for all parties involved (i.e. 'trustworthiness' element of procedural justice; Tyler & Lind, 1992).

Evaluations of police performance: judgments of the effectiveness of the police in fighting crime (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

Police legitimacy: the belief of citizens that the police organisation and its representatives can be trusted to faithfully uphold the norms and values in society and therefore the perception that one is morally obliged to engage in socially acceptable behaviour (see Tyler, 2011; Tyler & Jackson, 2014).

Cooperation: any actions taken by citizens to help the police in fighting crime, whether that may be direct cooperation (e.g. reporting one's victimization to the police or helping the police to find a suspect) or indirect cooperation (e.g. participating in neighbourhood initiatives to fight crime; see Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

Tyler and colleagues' group-value model and group-engagement model seek to explain why procedural justice relates to perceived legitimacy and cooperation (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003). According to these models, people want to belong to society and value group membership. These models suggest that a procedurally just treatment by important group representatives may provide citizens with self-relevant information about their standing in a group. Police officers may be regarded as important representatives of society as they are responsible for faithfully upholding society's norms and values encoded in the law (Fleming & McLaughlin, 2012; Tyler, 2006, 2011). Following Tyler's framework, police officers may convey messages about one's status and value in society by treating citizens in a procedurally just manner (Tyler, 2001, 2006; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). In other words, being treated in a procedurally just manner by police officers may communicate positive information about one's status and value in society.

A procedurally just treatment signals inclusion and communicates to citizens that they are valued and respected as members of society bolstering their attachment to society. This in turn shows citizens that the police as

an organisation pursues society's norms and values in a justifiable manner and encourages citizens' intrinsic and moral motivation to help maintain order in society, for example by cooperating with the police, because it is the right thing to do (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). At the other side of the spectrum, a procedurally unjust treatment signals exclusion and communicates to citizens that they are unworthy of a respectful and fair treatment, which would have negative consequences for their attachment to society. Such treatment would result in citizens developing negative attitudes towards the police organisation and as a consequence they might be unwilling to cooperate with the police in the future (see Tyler, 2011).

Police performance may also convey messages about the police organisation's ability to faithfully uphold the norms and values in society which makes people feel that one is morally obliged to engage in socially appropriate behaviour (i.e. legitimacy; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). If the police organisation is effective in fighting crime, it communicates that the organisation is able to effectively pursue the norms and values in society and that it would be beneficial for citizens to cooperate with the police (Tankebe, 2009a). In contrast, if the police organisation is ineffective in fighting crime, it communicates that the organisation is unable to effectively pursue the norms and values in society and that it would not be beneficial for citizens to cooperate with the police.

Although both police performance and procedural justice are argued to influence police legitimacy, they are important for different reasons. Whereas police performance is related to legitimacy and cooperation because of instrumental motives (i.e. to get concrete results), procedural justice is related to legitimacy and cooperation out of intrinsic feelings of moral responsibility (e.g. out of civic duty). It has been argued that the latter is a more prominent determinant of perceived police legitimacy among citizen in general (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006, 2011). While these assumptions have received considerable empirical support, theorization in this area has mostly focused on general evaluations of procedural justice and police performance (i.e. not with regard to a specific case or encounter) among the general public.

1.3.2 Tyler's theoretical framework applied to crime victims

Specifically applied to crime victims and their cases, evaluations of procedural justice cover victims' perceptions that they feel fairly treated by police officers during direct interactions. That is, whether victims feel that the police officers offered them an opportunity to express their views, that the police officers were neutral and unbiased in their decision-making, that the police treated them with dignity and respect and that the police officers were sincerely motivated to pursue the best possible solution for all parties involved (see Tyler & Lind, 1992). Specifically applied to the crime victims' cases, evaluations of police performance do not relate to the perception that the police are effective in combating

crime as it has been often operationalized in studies on general perceptions of police performance among citizens in general (see Reisig, Bratton & Gertz, 2007). Instead, evaluations of police performance with regard to the victim's case relate to the judgment that crime victims feel that the *police officers adequately performed investigative actions as to investigate and solve the crime* (Elliott et al., 2012; Murphy, 2009). In this sense, judgments of procedural justice and police performance may be interrelated, as they are evaluations of actions that often happen simultaneously (see Van den Bos, Vermunt & Wilke, 1997). In addition, police performance judgments depend to a great extent on whether police officers communicate to crime victims (which could be considered a part of procedural justice) about the performed investigative actions. If police officers conduct certain investigative actions, but not inform crime victims about those efforts, crime victims may think that police officers have not performed those actions. This may result in negative evaluations of both procedural justice and police performance. In essence, positive evaluations of both procedural justice and police performance in the crime victim's case seem to be important to victims as this communicates to them that they and their cases are being taken seriously (De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2012).

Following Tyler's theoretical framework, positive evaluations of procedural justice and police performance enhance perceived police legitimacy. In other words, by treating victims in a procedurally just manner and by adequately performing investigative efforts (and communicating those efforts to crime victims), police officers may convey the message that victims are important and worthy citizens of society and that officers pursue the values and norms in society (i.e. that crime is not tolerated). Positive perceptions of police legitimacy, in turn, enhance victims' intrinsic and moral feelings of responsibility to pursue and maintain social order in the community and thus their cooperation with the police. To summarize, crime victims who perceive the police organisation as legitimate – because they feel that they have been fairly treated by police officers and because they feel that police officers had adequately performed investigative effort in their case – are more willing to cooperate with the police.

1.3.3 Limitations of Tyler's theoretical framework on procedural justice for the current thesis

Tyler's theoretical framework on procedural justice – although well-established – continues to be developed and it is not without criticism and limitations. Some of these issues may be particularly relevant to the current thesis.

Applicability of Tyler's theoretical framework to victims of crime

Tyler's theoretical framework focuses on citizens in general and not specifically on crime victims. However, most citizens have very few superficial

or no direct interactions with police officers (e.g. Eith & Durose, 2011). To examine whether police officers might be able to counter the unfavourable situation that crime victims seem to be less likely to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization, it is needed to explore whether Tyler's theoretical framework can be applied to crime victims who have had direct interactions with the police following their victimization.

Conceptualization of procedural justice, police performance and police legitimacy

The conceptualization of procedural justice, police performance, and legitimacy is fiercely debated, and without a well-agreed upon definition of these concepts, researchers in this area tend to use different operationalizations (see Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012; Hough, Jackson, & Bradford, 2013; Reisig et al., 2007; Tankebe, 2013; Tyler & Jackson, 2014; see Jackson & Gau, 2016 for an overview).

First, it remains to be seen whether evaluations of procedural justice and police performance are empirically distinct with regard to crime victims' evaluations of the police response in their case. Research among the general public typically focuses on perceptions of effectiveness of the police to fight crime on a general level (e.g. How effective are the police in fighting crime in your neighbourhood?; see Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). In such a general sense, perceptions of police performance are argued to be conceptually and empirically distinct from perceptions of procedural justice (Reisig et al., 2007). However, with regard to crime victims and their cases, both the way victims feel treated by the police (procedural justice) and the efforts police officers take to investigate and solve the crime (police performance) may inform them that they and their cases are being taken seriously (De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2012). Therefore, it is needed to explore whether evaluations of procedural justice are empirically distinct from evaluations of police performance with regard to the victims' cases.

Second, it remains to be seen whether the elements of perceived legitimacy – perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law – represent empirically distinct concepts among crime victims. The concept of perceived legitimacy has traditionally been operationalized in terms of perceived trust in the police and/or perceived obligation to obey the law and/or the police (Reisig et al., 2007; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Jackson, 2014; see Jackson & Gau, 2016 for an overview).⁴ Whereas perceived trust in the police relates to the perception that the police are committed to enforcing social norms and values within society and motivate coopera-

4 A number of different operationalizations have been proposed to measure perceived legitimacy, possibly due to a lack of consensus on the definition of legitimacy (Gau, 2011). Recent operationalizations include moral alignment with the police and/or the law (e.g. Jackson et al., 2012; Murphy & Cherney 2012), but perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the police and/or the law seem to remain central elements within legitimacy operationalizations.

tion via positive expectations on how the police act in general, perceived obligation to obey the law relates to the pressure felt to engage in socially appropriate behaviour (see Jackson & Gau, 2016). It is necessary to explore whether perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law are empirically distinct among crime victims as well.

Cross-sectional nature of studies

Most studies on the relationships between evaluations of procedural justice, police performance, perceived legitimacy, and cooperation are based on cross-sectional data. Such data does not allow any conclusions on the temporal order in which these concepts occur. For example, it has been theoretically assumed that positive evaluations of procedural justice enhance perceived police legitimacy over time, but this has not yet empirically been examined for crime victims with regard to their case. In addition, no studies are available that examined whether perceived trust in the police may colour evaluations of how the police handled the victim's case.

Observational research

Tyler's theoretical framework is almost exclusively explored by using observational data (cf. Mazerolle, Bennet, Davis, Sargeant & Manning, 2013; Wheller, Quinton, Fildes & Mills, 2013). Such data does not allow any conclusions on the causal mechanisms implied by the framework. Therefore, it is needed to examine whether procedural justice and police performance influence perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police in victimization situations using experiments.

Heterogeneity among populations

Most research among crime victims with regard to their evaluations of procedural justice and police performance in relation to perceived legitimacy and cooperation do not distinguish between victims of different types of crime. Yet this may be important to understand under what conditions and circumstances proposed relationships may differ between victims of different types of crime (see Laxminarayan, 2012).

Quantitative research

Most studies on Tyler's theoretical framework are quantitative of nature (cf. De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2012). Although such studies are informative on the statistical significance and strength of certain relationships within the framework, information on *why* these relationships are as they seem to be cannot be derived from them. To gain more contextual information on the framework's underlying mechanisms, qualitative research in terms of in-depth interviews might be beneficial.

Summary

To summarize, Tyler's theoretical framework and empirical research examining the framework, although a large body and well-established, suffers from several limitations: (1) it is unknown to what extent this framework is applicable to victims of crime with regard to their case; (2) the operationalization and empirical structure of evaluations of procedural justice, police performance and perceived legitimacy with regard to the victims' cases have not yet been explored; (3) there is a lack of acknowledgement of heterogeneity among certain populations; (4) there is a lack of information on the temporal order in which the concepts within the framework occur and whether the relationships hold over time; (5) there is a lack of information on causality of relationships; and (6) there is a lack of contextual information on the underlying mechanisms behind the framework.

1.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE CURRENT THESIS TO LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

The current thesis aims to contribute to the literature and society in several ways. First, the scientific contribution of the current thesis is discussed. The scientific contribution addresses the aforementioned limitations surrounding Tyler's theoretical framework and empirical research in this area. Second, the societal contribution of the current thesis will be described.

1.4.1 Scientific contribution of the current thesis

The current thesis contributes to the literature as it improves our understanding of (1) the applicability of Tyler's theoretical framework on crime victims with regard to their case; (2) the empirical structure of evaluations of procedural justice and police performance, and perceived legitimacy among crime victims; (3) whether the proposed relationships hold for victims of different types of crime; (4) whether the proposed relationships hold over time; (5) the causal mechanisms implied in the framework; and (6) the underlying mechanisms of the framework.

1.4.2 Societal contribution of the current thesis

The current thesis may be of practical relevance to policy makers, police officers who interact with crime victims on a daily basis, and society as a whole for at least two reasons. First, despite the fact that victims are important sources of information for the police and the criminal justice system as a whole, they are still often referred to as the 'forgotten party' in criminal proceedings (Norton, 2007; Walklate, 2012; Wemmers & Cyr, 2006). Although recent initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the position of crime victims in criminal justice systems across the world and in the Netherlands (see Tobolowsky et al., 2010; Van der Aa et al., 2009) most

of such initiatives focus on the court stages of the criminal justice process (e.g. allowing victims to deliver a Victim Impact Statement during trial). As only a small number of the victimization cases will ever proceed to the court stage (Smit & Harrendorf, 2010), it seems relevant to strengthen the position of crime victims in pre-trial phases as well. Initiatives during the investigation phase may be particularly beneficial, as the police are often the first and only representatives of the criminal justice system with whom victims interact (Smit & Harrendorf, 2010). The current thesis may help in identifying which concrete elements are important to crime victims and why this is the case, which can inform policy makers to guide initiatives to strengthen the position of crime victims during the investigation phase as well as help police officers in their daily interactions with crime victims.

Second, the former Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice (now Ministry of Justice and Security) has acknowledged that crimes such as burglary, violent robbery and assault may have a devastating impact on not only the direct victims, but also on their direct surroundings, and society at large (Minister of Security and Justice, 2013b). Therefore, it is one of the Ministry's key priorities to prevent such crimes from happening (Minister of Security and Justice, 2013b). One approach to do so is to increase crime detection rates – the number of crimes in which at least one offender was detected divided by the number of crimes reported to the police per year (Ahlberg & Knutsson, 1990) – which seem to be particularly low in the Netherlands compared to other European countries (see National Audit Office, 2012; Smit, Meijer & Groen, 2004). Increased detection rates might deter potential offenders from committing a crime, preventing citizens from getting victimized and thereby making society a safer place. However, to deter potential offenders by increasing detection rates, police officers need the help of crime victims. After all, many crimes only come to the attention to the police by crime victims and crime victims may be able to share relevant information on the circumstances of the crime and potentially about the offender which may help the police to investigate and solve the crime (Cirel et al., 1977; Sampson et al., 1997; Skogan & Antunes, 1979). Yet, previous research suggests that particularly repeat crime victims – compared to first-time victims – seem to be less likely to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization and that this may be due to the way victims evaluate the police response in a previous victimization case (Van Dijk, 2001; Tarling & Morris, 2010; Shapland et al., 1985; Ziegenhagen, 1976). In order to counter this unfavourable situation, it is important to identify elements within the sphere of influence of individual police officers that may encourage victim cooperation as crime victims have an increased risk to become victimized compared to individuals without victimization experiences (Nicholas et al., 2005; Pease, 1998; Polvi et al., 1990, 1991; Van Reemst et al., 2013). The current thesis may help in identifying such elements, and that information can be used by policy makers to formulate guidelines for police officers helping them to encourage victims' cooperation with the police in case of future crime victimization.

1.5 METHODS

To answer the current thesis' research questions, several methods are employed. To explore the first research question – to what extent does prior empirical research support the assumption that crime victims' evaluations of the police response lead to improved perceptions of the legitimacy of the criminal justice system and subsequently enhanced (willingness for) cooperation with the police – a systematic literature review was conducted. To answer the second research question – what is the empirical structure of victims' evaluations of the police response (in terms of procedural justice and police performance), perceived legitimacy (in terms of trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law), and willingness to cooperate with the police? – and the third research question – how are crime victims' evaluations of the police response related to perceived legitimacy and to willingness to cooperate with the police; does it differ between victims of different types of crime, and do these relationships hold over time? – an observational structured survey study was conducted. To answer the fourth research question – how does the police response influence mock victims' perceptions of police legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police? – an experimental vignette study was conducted. To answer the fifth research question – what value do crime victims place on evaluations of the police response and how does that relate to their willingness to cooperate with the police? – a semi-structured interview study was conducted.

All data were collected by the author of this thesis. For the first empirical study – the observational structured survey study – she had help of six research assistants. These research assistants were Bachelor Criminology students at Leiden University. All data collectors were screened by the police on antecedents and signed a confidentiality statement prior to collecting data in order to protect victims' privacy. In addition, the studies were approved by the former privacy department of the police Hollands Midden (now part of regional unit The Hague). Participants in all studies were informed that participation was voluntary, that their data would be processed anonymously and that they could terminate their participation at any moment during the study; and all participants were asked for an informed oral consent. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, data collectors paid due respect to victims' emotional state, for example by pausing the interview for a moment when needed. In addition, victims were informed about the services of Victim Support the Netherlands if they felt they were in need of (further) emotional support.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE CURRENT THESIS

The main objective of this thesis is to examine what victims' value in their contact with the police which could be helpful to understand how the police may counter the unfavourable situation that repeat crime victims seem to

be less willing to cooperate. Therefore, the current thesis examines to what extent, how, and why victims' evaluations of the police response in terms of procedural justice and police performance relate to their willingness to cooperate with the police and whether these relationships are mediated by perceived police legitimacy. It fulfils its purpose by conducting multiple research methods to come to methodological triangulation and comprehensive information on this issue.

Chapter 2 describes a systematic literature review of previous studies on the relationships between victims' evaluations of procedural justice, police performance, perceived legitimacy and their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization. This chapter provides information on previous quantitative studies examining these relationships and identifies several shortcomings of those studies, some of which are addressed in the empirical research of this thesis.

Chapter 3 uses data from the structured survey study to test the measurement structure of crime victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance, perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police among real crime victims. It is necessary to examine the construct validity of the instrument that measures these concepts and specifically informs whether victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance should be treated as single or as separate concepts in statistical analyses and whether perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law should be treated as single or as separate concepts in statistical analyses.

Chapter 4 uses data from the structured survey study to explore both cross-sectionally and prospectively the interrelationships between victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance, perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police. These interrelationships were examined based on the measurement structure described in Chapter 3. In addition, using cross-sectional data, this chapter also explores whether and how the interrelationships were different for victims of different types of crime (i.e. victims of property crime and victims of violent crime).

Chapter 5 uses data from the experimental vignette study to test whether procedural justice and police performance in response to violent crime victimization influences willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization and whether this relationship is mediated by perceived legitimacy among *mock* victims. In addition, it tests whether adequate procedural justice and police performance had a positive impact on perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate compared to inadequate procedural justice or having no contact with the police.

Chapter 6 uses data from the semi-structured interview study to gain in-depth and contextual information on why crime victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance relate to willingness to cooperate with the police, with due regard to perceived legitimacy. In addition, by including victims of on-going cases as well as cases closed by the police, it explores how the status of the case may shape victims' evaluations of

procedural justice, police performance and their willingness to cooperate with the police.

Chapter 7 provides a general discussion of the findings which are presented throughout this thesis and discusses the policy implications of the current thesis, its limitations, recommendations for future research and methodological strengths of the current thesis.

A schematic overview of the current thesis' outline is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 *Outline of studies in thesis*

| <i>Chapter</i> | <i>Research question(s)</i> | <i>Methods</i> |
|----------------|--|--|
| Chapter 2 | To what extent does prior empirical research support the assumption that crime victims' evaluations of the police response lead to improved perceptions of the legitimacy of the criminal justice system and subsequently enhanced (willingness for) cooperation with the police? | Systematic literature review of 15 studies |
| Chapter 3 | What is the empirical structure of victims' evaluations of the police response (in terms of procedural justice and police performance), perceived legitimacy (in terms of trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law), and willingness to cooperate with the police? | Structured survey Real crime victims Wave I (N = 417) |
| Chapter 4 | How are crime victims' evaluations of the police response related to perceived legitimacy and to willingness to cooperate with the police; does it differ between victims of different types of crime, and do these relationships hold over time? | Structured survey Real crime victims Waves I (N = 417) and II (N = 201) |
| Chapter 5 | How does the police response influence mock victims' perceptions of police legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police? | Experimental vignette study Mock crime victims Studies I (N = 75) and II (N = 414) |
| Chapter 6 | Why are crime victims' evaluations of the police response related to their willingness to cooperate with the police? | Semi-structured interview Real crime victims In-depth interviews (N = 32) |

