



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Koster, N.N.

Citation

Koster, N. N. (2018, February 1). *Crime victims and the police: Crime victims' evaluations of police behaviour, legitimacy, and cooperation: a multi-method study*. s.n., S.l. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/61143>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/61143>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The following handle holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation:

<http://hdl.handle.net/1887/61143>

Author: Koster, N.N.

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

Issue Date: 2018-02-01

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The central aim of this thesis was to examine what victims value in their contact with the police, by answering the central research question: to what extent, how and why crime victims' evaluations of the police response relate to their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. In doing so, it expands current knowledge on the role police officers might play in crime victims' willingness to cooperate in case of future crime victimization. This is important, because previous studies suggest that particularly repeat crime victims – compared to first-time victims – are less likely to cooperate with the police (López, 2001; Van Dijk, 2001; Tarling & Morris, 2010) and that this might be due to the way crime victims evaluate the police response in their (previous) victimization case (Ipsos MORI, 2003; Shapland et al., 1985; Kidd & Chayet, 1986; Ziegenhagen, 1967). With the studies conducted, the present thesis seeks to reduce repeat crime victims' reluctance to cooperate with the police.

7.1.1 Theoretical framework and expectations

This thesis builds on Tyler's theory of procedural justice (Tyler, 2006, 2011; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Jackson, 2014; Tyler & Lind, 1992), which was adapted to the study of crime victims in relation to the police by the authors based on previous studies among crime victims (De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2012). Concerning the police response, this thesis distinguished between victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance. On the basis of previous work (see Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Lind, 1992), four indicators of a procedurally just treatment by the police were assessed: (1) allowing crime victims to express their views, (2) making neutral and unbiased decisions (i.e. without prejudice); (3) treating crime victims with respect and dignity, and (4) being sincerely motivated to come to the best solution for all parties involved. Based on the group-value model and group-engagement model of procedural justice – which was developed by Tyler and colleagues (see Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Jackson, 2014) – it was expected that crime victims who evaluated the treatment by police officers in a procedurally just manner (i.e. a fair manner), would be more likely to cooperate with the police. According to the group-value model and group-engagement model, a fair treatment by police officers – as representatives of the state – communicates to crime victims that they are valued

and respected as members of society. This makes victims view the police as an organisation that faithfully strives to enforce shared social norms and values in society (i.e. against crime) and therefore as a legitimate organisation. These models suggest that when the police organisation is deemed to be legitimate, it evokes victims' own feelings of moral responsibility to pursue and maintain order in society, for example by cooperating with the police. Besides procedural justice, Tyler and Sunshine (2003) acknowledge that general perceptions of police performance (i.e. the ability of the police to effectively fight crime) may also influence perceptions of police legitimacy. Previous research specifically with regard to the victim's case indeed suggests that crime victims are concerned with the investigative efforts taken by the police to solve the crime and to apprehend the offender or offenders (De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2012). Positive evaluations of police officers' investigative efforts might consequently make victims feel that they and their cases are taken seriously and thus contribute to perceptions of a legitimate police force (De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2012).

7.1.2 Reader's guide

In this concluding chapter, the main findings of the thesis are summarized, discussed and integrated with previous research (section 7.2). Thereafter considerations for theory (section 7.3), the strengths (section 7.4) and the limitations of the current thesis are addressed (section 7.5). Subsequently directions for future research are provided (section 7.6), followed by recommendations for police practice (section 7.7).

7.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN RESULTS

The aim of the current thesis was to examine to what extent 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. To do so, it sought answers to five specific research questions: (1) to what extent is this assumption supported by prior empirical research? (Chapter 2); (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? (Chapter 3); (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? (Chapter 4); (4) how does the police response influence mock victims' perceptions of legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police? (Chapter 5); and (5) why are crime victims' evaluations of the police response related to their willingness to cooperate with the police?

(Chapter 6). These research questions along with the main findings are listed in Table 7.1.

In order to achieve knowledge triangulation, this section summarizes and discusses the main findings of the empirical studies (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) in the current thesis in light of previous literature (Chapter 2) along the lines of the theoretical framework that underlines the current thesis. That is, it starts with (1) discussing the findings with regard to crime victims' evaluations of the police response linked to police legitimacy; (2) it subsequently discusses the findings with regard to crime victims' perceptions of police legitimacy in relation to victims' willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization; and (3) finally, it discusses the findings with regard to crime victims' evaluations of the police response in relation to victims' willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. Each section ends with a reflection of the main findings of the empirical studies with the findings of previous studies, reported in the systematic literature review (Chapter 2). This approach is different from the Dutch summary in which the results are summarized by chapter.

Before these findings are discussed, however, this section starts with outlining the measurement validity of the central concepts in this thesis – crime victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance, perceived legitimacy in terms of perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law, and victims' willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization (Chapter 3). This is necessary to interpret the main findings of the empirical (quantitative) studies.

Table 7.1 Research questions and main findings per chapter

Chapter	Research question(s)	Method	Main findings
Chapter 2	(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?	Systematic literature review of 15 studies	• Fifteen studies were included in the review that examined one of the relationships between crime victims' perceptions of the police response, perceived legitimacy, and cooperation; • Most studies were of cross-sectional nature; • Studies displayed considerable differences in operationalization of victims' evaluations of procedural justice and perceived legitimacy; • None of the studies examined the theoretical framework as a whole; • Partial support for the application of Tyler's theoretical framework on crime victims.
Chapter 3	(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?	Structured survey Real crime victims Wave I (N = 417)	• Victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance represent a single construct and victims' perceptions of trust in the police, perceived obligation to obey the law, and willingness to cooperate represent distinct constructs. • Future research should examine whether victims' evaluations of the police response (in terms of procedural justice and police performance) enhances perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law and subsequently willingness to cooperate with the police.
Chapter 4	(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?	Structured survey Real crime victims Waves I (N = 417) and II (N = 201)	• Evaluations of the police response for victims of violent crime are indirectly related to willingness to cooperate with the police, via perceived obligation to obey the law; • Findings hold over time • The relationship between victims' evaluations of the police response and perceived trust in the police is reciprocal.
Chapter 5	(4) 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 1 (N = 75) and 2 (N = 414)	• Willingness to cooperate was lower when the police were unfair and did not perform investigative actions compared to the control condition; • Willingness to cooperate was not higher when the police were fair and performed investigative actions compared to the control condition; • The relationship between police behaviour and cooperation is mediated by perceived trust in the police, but not by perceived obligation to obey the law.
Chapter 6	(5) 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)	• Both property crime victims and victims of violent crime appreciated fair treatment • Emotionally expressive crime victims appreciated it when police officers took a clear-stance against the crime; • Rapid case handling was particularly important to property crime victims while victims of violent crime expected the police to find the offender to make it clear to the offender that such law-breaking behaviour was not tolerated; • Lack of police performance in the eyes of victims of violent crime made them feel abandoned by the police, resulting in less willingness to cooperate and feelings of vigilantism.

7.2.1 Measurement validity of central concepts in the current thesis

Based on the data of Wave I of the structured survey study, Chapter 3 provided insight into the measurement validity of the central concepts in the current thesis – crime victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance, perceived legitimacy in terms of perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law, and victims' willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. Insight into the measurement validity of these concepts was necessary prior to examining the interrelationships between those concepts to prevent examining interrelations between theoretical one-dimensional concepts which are empirically multidimensional or between theoretically distinct concepts which are not distinct empirically. This could result in misleading findings (Byrne, 2012; see Gau, 2011). The aim of this chapter was to examine whether all theoretically distinct concepts were indeed empirically distinct from each other (e.g. whether victims' evaluations of procedural justice were empirically distinct from victims' evaluations of police performance) and whether all theoretically unidimensional concepts were empirically unidimensional as well (e.g. whether perceived legitimacy was empirically a single concept with two indicators – perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law).

Using confirmatory factor analyses – an analytic approach in which researchers are able to test multiple theory-guided models to examine which model suits the data best – it was shown that victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance, although theoretically distinct, were empirically indistinct concepts in the used dataset. The correlation between these two concepts was very high, suggesting that victims may not distinguish between their judgments of procedural justice and police performance when evaluating the police response in their case. As both fair treatment by police officers and police officers' investigative actions take place simultaneously, it might be that victims evaluate the police response as a whole (see Van den Bos et al., 1997). Another explanation might be that crime victims evaluate police officers' investigative efforts as an indicator of being taken seriously (De Mesmaecker, 2014) and therefore investigative efforts might be regarded as an element of procedural justice (e.g. trustworthiness or respect), rather than as a distinct concept. This seems to align with Brathwaite and Yeboah's (2004) approach to include items reflecting victims' evaluations of procedural justice and police performance in one scale.

Concerning perceived legitimacy, confirmatory factor analyses revealed that perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law represent two distinct dimensions of perceived legitimacy and should therefore be treated as separate concepts in statistical analyses. Although Tyler (2006, p. 47) suggested that researchers could choose to treat these concepts as a combined measure or as two separate measures of perceived legitimacy, these concepts are found to be both theoretically and empirically

distinct concepts in crime victims (for theoretical discussion see Jackson & Gau, 2016; for empirical studies among the general public see; Reisig et al., 2007; Tankebe, 2013; Gau, 2011; 2014).

Concerning crime victims' willingness to cooperate with the police, confirmatory factor analyses suggest that this is empirically a single concept. This finding aligns with previous research among crime victims (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014) and the general public (e.g. Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

7.2.2 Crime victims' evaluations of the police response and of police legitimacy

Findings regarding the relationship between crime victims' evaluations of the police response and police legitimacy in terms of perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law revealed a consistent pattern throughout the empirical studies (Chapter 4, Chapter 5 [Study 2], and Chapter 6). All studies suggested a positive relationship between these two concepts.

Evaluations of the police response (in terms of procedural justice and police performance) were positively associated with both indicators of perceived legitimacy for both real victims of property crime and victims of violent crime and over time (Chapter 4) and for mock victims of violent crime (Chapter 5). Furthermore, there seems to be a reciprocal relationship between real victims' evaluations of the police response and perceived trust in the police. That is, not only were victims' evaluations of the police response at a previous moment related to perceived trust in the police at a latter moment, but victims who initially held positive perceptions of trust in the police, were also more likely to evaluate the police response in a positive manner over time (Chapter 4). Additionally, the police response seems to have a causal effect on both indicators of police legitimacy and particularly an inadequate police response could have detrimental effects on perceived legitimacy (Chapter 5). This could be explained by the message victims received from a fair or an inadequate response. Crime victims who evaluated the police response as fair were likely to think that the police were there for them and shared the same norms and values against committing crime (i.e. perceived legitimacy: Chapter 6). In contrast, crime victims who evaluated the police response as unfair or inadequate were likely to question the utility of the police and their stance against crime committing. Adequate police performance was particularly important for crime victims who felt deeply harmed by the offence and/or the offender (Chapter 6).

Overall, it seems that the police response and how it is evaluated has important consequences for perceived police legitimacy by crime victims, particularly when the police response is inadequate and/or negatively evaluated.

Reflection of main findings in light of previous research and the current thesis' theoretical framework

The findings of this thesis are in line with the findings of previous studies which consistently reported a positive relationship between victims' evaluations of the police response and perceived legitimacy despite differences in operationalization of the concepts and differences in policing styles across different countries (Chapter 2). These findings are also in line with expectations based on Tyler's theoretical framework of procedural justice. Based on this framework, it was expected that crime victims who evaluated their treatment by police officers as fair would be more likely to view the police organisation as a legitimate institute, because it communicates to them that they are respected and valued members of society and that the police as an organisation can be trusted to faithfully uphold the norms and values in society (see Tyler, 2011; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). In addition to a fair treatment, crime victims seem to be concerned about police officers' investigative actions as well, because it makes them feel that they themselves and their cases are being taken seriously (De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2012). This seems to be generally true for victims of both property crime and violent crime (Chapter 4; see also Chapter 5 [Study 2]), but particularly for victims who feel deeply harmed by the offence and/or the offender (Chapter 6).

7.2.3 Crime victims' perceptions of police legitimacy and their willingness to cooperate

Findings regarding the relationship between crime victims' perceptions of police legitimacy in terms of perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law and victims' willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization were mixed throughout the empirical studies in this thesis (Chapter 4, Chapter 5 [Study 2], and Chapter 6). For real crime victims – particularly for victims of violent crime – was perceived obligation to obey the law, but not perceived trust in the police (Chapter 4 and Chapter 6), associated with victims' willingness to cooperate with the police. Yet, mock victims' willingness to cooperate with the police was associated with perceived trust and not with perceived obligation to obey the law (Chapter 5, [Study 2]). Willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization was not associated with any of the indicators of perceived legitimacy for victims' of property crime (as a separate group). Combined with victims of violent crime, perceived obligation to obey the law was associated with willingness to cooperate over time for property crime victims as well (Chapter 4).

These differences may at least be partly explained by (a) the sample (mock victims vs. real victims) and (b) the motives to report (norm reinforcing vs. financial compensation). First of all, mock victims had not really experienced the violent crime that was described in the scenario, but instead

were asked to identify themselves with the victim. Moreover, most participants were never victimized at all. Although the scenario was deemed plausible and participants said that they could easily place themselves in it, participants may have had difficulties to experience similar feelings of distress as real crime victims (of violent crime) might have. Therefore, they may have answered the questions as 'ordinary' citizens. In studies among citizens in general, perceived trust in the police and not perceived obligation to obey seems to be the main driver of willingness to cooperate. Experiencing a real violent crime may make victims feel personally targeted and therefore more aware of the social norms and values in society. This may evoke a deeper sense of what is right and what is wrong and the need to bring one's own behaviour in line with society's rules (e.g. cooperating with the police: see also Chapter 6). This might explain why perceived obligation to obey the law was associated with victims' willingness to cooperate for victims of real (violent) crimes, but not for mock victims and why perceived trust in the police was associated with willingness to cooperate for mock victims, but not for real victims.

Secondly, the differences between property crime victims (as a separate group) and violent crime victims may be explained by the motives to cooperate. While some property crime victims thought it was their 'civic duty' to report their victimization to the police, the main reason for reporting was often to get financial compensation by insurance companies (Chapter 6). As this is not directly related to the police or society's norms, it may explain why neither perceived trust nor perceived obligation to obey the law was associated with willingness to cooperate for property crime victims (as a separate group: Chapter 4). Yet, for crime victims of violent crime, it was important that the police would find the offender and let him or her know that such criminal behaviour is not tolerated (Chapter 6). If the police failed to do so in the eyes of the victim, he or she would question the legitimacy of the police, refrain from further cooperation, and think about taking the matter in their own hands (Chapter 6), which might explain why a relationship was found between perceived obligation to obey the law and willingness to cooperate with the police in the future for victims of violent crime (Chapter 4).

Reflection of main findings in light of previous research and the current thesis' theoretical framework

Mixed findings on the relationship between perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate were found in previous studies as well (Chapter 2). One study reported on victims of property crime and victims of violent crime together (Kochel, et al., 2012), two studies reported its findings for victims of property crime as a separate group (Kääriäinen & Sirén, 2011; Murphy & Barkworth, 2008), and all three studies reported on trust in the police only. One of these studies found no significant relationship for victims of property crime who were victimized in the 12 months preceding

the interview and concluded that financial motives may have outpaced the influence of other factors such as perceived trust in the police (Kääriäinen & Sirén, 2011). The other two studies found a positive relationship between perceived trust in the police and willingness to cooperate (Kochel, et al., 2011; Murphy & Barkworth, 2014). However, these study identified victims if the respondents had ever been victimized, which implies that the victimization experience may not have been as recent on average as it was in this thesis. It could be that the relationship between perceived trust and willingness to cooperate is more similar to that of citizens in general (i.e. a positive relationship instead of no significant relationship), as the victimization is less recent.

Only one study reported on the relationship between perceived obligation to obey and willingness to cooperate (Kochel, et al., 2011). This study used a heterogeneous group of victims of property crime and victims of violent crime and reported no significant relationship (Kochel, et al., 2011). However, no information is available on the distribution of victims of property crime or violent crime in the sample. An uneven distribution (i.e. a lot more property crime victims compared to victims of violent crime) could perhaps explain why no significant relationship was found in this study between perceived obligation to obey and willingness to cooperate with the police. Furthermore, this study reported not only on obligation to obey the law, but also obligation to obey the police and legal authorities in a composite scale. Moreover, all three studies used only one indicator of perceived legitimacy (i.e. either perceived trust in the police or perceived obligation to obey) instead of on both indicators, leaving it up to question what the results would be if they had included both indicators in their models.

The findings of this thesis are partly in line with expectations based on Tyler's theoretical framework of procedural justice. Based on this framework, it was expected that perceived legitimacy (and thus both indicators) positively influenced victims' willingness to cooperate with the police. Although it has been suggested that people are more likely to cooperate with an organisation they can trust (Tyler & Jackson, 2014), Tyler (2006) suggests that perceived obligation to obey the law is a more direct measure of perceived legitimacy than perceived trust in the police. It seems that the relationship between perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police depends on the type of crime victims suffered from (violent crime vs. property crime) and whether individuals were really victimized or not.

7.2.4 Crime victims' evaluations of the police response and their willingness to cooperate

Findings regarding the direct relationship between (crime victims' evaluations of) the police response and their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization were mixed throughout the quantitative empirical studies in this thesis (Chapters 4 and 5). A direct relation-

ship was found for real victims of property crime (as a separate group: Chapter 4) and for mock victims of violent crime (Chapter 5). However, for real victims of violent crime (as a separate group) and when they were combined with real property crime victims, no direct relationship was found (Chapter 4).

Interestingly, in the analyses of the current thesis where no direct relationship was reported, an indirect relationship between victims' evaluations of the police response and willingness through perceived obligation to obey the law was found (Chapter 4 for victims of violent crime and prospectively for victims of both types of crime). It thus seems that a direct relationship was mediated by perceived obligation to obey the law for these victims: positive evaluations of the police response made them more willing to cooperate, because it had a norm reinforcing impact on them (Chapter 6). Particularly an inadequate or negatively evaluated police response had detrimental effects on the willingness of (mock) victims of violent crime to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization (Chapters 5 and 6). This was especially true for real victims of violent crime who felt that the police failed to perform adequate investigative activities. Instead of cooperating with the police, these victims thought about vigilantism.

In the studies where a direct relationship was found, this relationship was not (Chapter 4 for property crime victims) or only partly mediated by perceived trust in the police (Chapter 5 [Study 2]). It may be that property crime victims are generally positive of the police response and likely to report their victimization (Chapter 6). However, their willingness to cooperate seems to be mainly because of insurance reasons rather than because of their views of police legitimacy (Chapter 6). This may explain why a direct relationship was found, but no indirect relationship via perceived legitimacy for real victims of property crime (as a separate group: Chapter 4). For mock victims of violent crime (who may not have experienced similar feelings of distress as real victims of violent crime) results were similar to results that were found among the general public. People in general are more likely to cooperate with organisations they trust, which might explain why the direct relationship between the police response and willingness to cooperate was partly mediated by perceived trust in the police for mock victims of violent crime: Chapter 5 [Study 2]). Yet, there may be other explanations why the general public would cooperate with the police that were not included in the model, such as a feeling of moral alignment with the police, which may explain why the direct relationship was only partly and not fully mediated by perceived trust in the police.

Reflection of main findings in light of previous research and the current thesis' theoretical framework

Mixed findings on the direct relationship between evaluations of the police response and willingness to cooperate were found in previous studies as well (Chapter 2). These studies included both victims of property and

violent crime (Xie, et al., 2006), victims of violent crime only (Conaway & Lohr, 1994), or a specific type of violent crime: domestic violence (Hickman & Simpson, 2003; Johnson, 2007) and focused either on procedural justice (Hickman & Simpson, 2003; Johnson, 2007) or police performance (Conaway & Lohr, 1994; Xie, et al., 2006) instead of a combination. One of these studies reported a negative relationship (Hickman & Simpson, 2003) and the other three reported a positive relationship. However, no potential mediators were included in these studies. Therefore, it is unknown whether perceived obligation to obey the law would have mediated the direct relationship that was found in these studies, if it had been included.

The findings of this thesis are partly in line with expectations based on Tyler's theoretical framework of procedural justice. Based on this framework, it was expected that (victims' evaluations of) the police response would have a direct relationship with willingness to cooperate with the police that could be mediated by perceived legitimacy in terms of perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law (Tyler, 2011; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). It seems that the direct relationship between (evaluations of) the police response and willingness to cooperate with the police depends on the inclusion of potential mediators, type of crime victims suffered from (violent crime vs. property crime), and whether individuals were really victimized or not.

7.2.5 Conclusions

Firstly, this dissertation underlines that crime victims are not only interested in procedural justice, but also in investigative activities that the police may perform to solve their case. Both are important to them: A fair treatment makes them feel valued and respected and performing investigative activities let them know that their case is being taken seriously. Secondly, by using various research methods in this thesis, no conclusive answer can be offered to the question how the police response can influence victims' willingness to cooperate (directly or through perceived trust in the police and/or perceived obligation to obey the law). It seems that an answer to this question depends on the type of crime victims suffered from and whether individuals were really victimized or not. Thirdly, it seems clear that (evaluations of) the police response has important consequences for both perceived police legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. Negative evaluations of the police response and/or an inadequate police response, particularly concerning a lack of investigation activities, could have detrimental effects on both perceptions of police legitimacy and victims' willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. To prevent repeat crime victims from evading the criminal justice system it is, therefore, of utmost importance that the police avoids negative evaluations as much as possible.

7.3 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This thesis was guided by Tyler and colleagues' theoretical framework of procedural justice and the group-value and group-engagement models (Tyler, 2006, 2011; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Jackson, 2014; Tyler & Sunshine, 2003). Specifically applied to crime victims, the current thesis suggests that procedural justice theory might be extended in three ways: (1) inclusion of victims' evaluations of police performance; (2) inclusion of victims' emotions in evaluating procedural justice and police performance; and (3) inclusion of feelings of vigilantism as a potential outcome of evaluations of procedural justice and police performance and perceived legitimacy.

First, although it has been acknowledged that general perceptions of police performance might influence perceived police legitimacy (e.g. Sunshine & Tyler, 2003), most studies focus exclusively on procedural justice. However, research among crime victims suggests that crime victims are concerned with police officers' investigative efforts in their case (Conaway & Lohr, 1994; De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2012; Xie et al., 2006). This was supported in the current thesis and it showed that crime victims in general may not distinguish between judgments of procedural justice and police performance when evaluating the police response. This suggests that police officers' investigative efforts in a crime victims' case may be regarded part of procedural justice, rather than an alternative predictor of police legitimacy and cooperation. In other words, to the four elements of procedural justice (i.e. 'voice', neutrality, respect and trustworthiness; Tyler & Lind, 1992) a fifth element might be included when applying this framework to crime victims' evaluations of the police response in their case: police officers' investigative efforts, or this element could be integrated with the trustworthiness element of procedural justice. The current thesis showed that (victims' evaluations of) procedural justice and police performance together may be important determinants of perceived legitimacy and (either directly or indirectly) of (mock) victims' willingness to cooperate with the police.

Second, perhaps because of the main focus on the general public rather than crime victims, the role of emotions in the framework of procedural justice has, to date, largely been ignored. Findings of the current thesis suggest that victims who expressed that they coped with emotions such as anger, sadness or despair may have different expectations of and different needs from the police than victims who expressed no intense emotions. Results suggest that particularly emotionally expressive crime victims may be more concerned with police officers' investigative efforts and may evaluate these efforts more critically. Falling victim to a crime may cause intense emotions concerning the perpetrator, because the victims' sense of agency might be impaired (see Kunst & Koster, 2016; Pemberton, 2015; Pemberton, Aarten & Mulder, 2017). To restore this sense of agency, crime victims may turn to important group representatives to receive self-relevant information on their status and value. This would make especially the more emotionally

expressive crime victims vulnerably for the way they are treated by police officers. However, the role of emotions on procedural justice and police performance evaluations has rarely been explored in previous studies (see for an exception Kunst et al., 2015).

Third, findings of the current thesis suggest that besides compliance with the law and cooperation with the police, feelings of vigilantism may be also be considered as a potential consequence of (lack of) perceived legitimacy. Perceived police legitimacy entails the perception that the police can be trusted to faithfully uphold the law and that one therefore needs to align her/his behaviour with social norms and values in society (Tyler, 2006, 2011; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). As a consequence, it seems reasonable to infer that perceived police legitimacy is associated with judgments on whether the police are the one and only rightful authority to use force and violence in society or whether citizens may take the law in their own hands in some occasions. Findings of the current thesis suggest that particularly emotionally expressive crime victims who evaluated the police response as inadequate would not only be less likely to cooperate with the police in future crime victimization, but also be more open to feelings of vigilantism. These crime victims were disappointed by the police to such an extent that they questioned the legitimacy of the police organisation and began to fantasize how vigilantism could help them. Yet, studies on predictors of vigilantism (instead of public support for vigilantism) seem to be rare (Silke, 2001; cf. Orth, 2004; Weisburd, 1988).

7.4 METHODOLOGICAL STRENGTHS OF THE CURRENT THESIS

The current thesis has some methodological strengths. Those strengths may have improved our knowledge on the applicability of Tyler's theoretical framework on crime victims' interactions with the police. First, instead of focusing on general perceptions of the police that may reflect expectations of the police, rather than evaluations of police officers' behaviour, the current thesis focused on crime victims' evaluations of the police response with regard to their own case. As crime victims were asked about their experiences with the police shortly after reporting their victimization to the police, memory modification was kept to a minimum. Therefore, the current thesis has provided more information on what value victims place on their contacts with the police. Consequently, this has offered more concrete information on the role of police officers in crime victims' decision on whether or not to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization.

Second, by using structural equation modelling, this thesis studied the research framework as a whole. That is, it was able to examine the (theoretically) subsequent associations between victims' evaluations of the police response, perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate in one model. Although structural equation modelling as an analytic approach has become increasingly common in procedural justice studies among the

general public, it is still rare among studies focused on crime victims (see for an exception Murphy & Barkworth, 2014 who used structural equation modelling to examine the empirical structure of the variables included in the model). By examining the model as a whole, the current thesis has offered more information on the two indicators of perceived legitimacy as mediating variables of the relationship between victims' evaluations of the police response and their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future victimization.

Third, one of the studies in this thesis used a prospective design, which revealed a prospective association between crime victims' evaluations of the police response, perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. Furthermore, employing this research design, this thesis was able to examine the temporal order of victims' evaluations of the police response and the perceived trust in the police. Most studies among crime victims use cross-sectional research designs, which are unable to examine the direction of the relationship. By using a prospective design, this thesis showed that a reciprocal relationship exists between crime victims' evaluations of the police response and the perceived trust in the police. That is, crime victims' evaluations of the police response may not only shape victims' perceptions of trust in the police – as is assumed in procedural justice literature – but also that perceptions of trust may shape victims' evaluations of the police response. As these concepts seem to reinforce each other, this might partly explain why studies often report a consistent and strong relationship between evaluations of procedural justice and perceived trust in the police.

Fourth, this thesis used multiple research strategies to examine to what extent, how and why crime victims' evaluations of the police response would be related to their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. Most studies have relied on a structured survey design to examine the interrelationships between victims' evaluations of the police, perceived legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police. While such research designs could offer important information on the interrelationships between those concepts, they are unable to demonstrate whether the relationships are causal, for which an experimental design is needed, as well as their inability to provide a lot of context information about the underlying mechanisms behind these relationships, for which a semi-structured interview design might be helpful. By using an experimental vignette design, the current thesis demonstrated that the police response positively influenced mock victims' perceptions of police legitimacy and their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. By using a semi-structured interview design, the current thesis provided more in-depth information on why victims' evaluations of the police response relate to their willingness to cooperate with the police and how this may be different for different crime victims. Using multiple research designs, the current thesis has offered a more comprehensive understanding on to what extent, how and why crime victims' evalua-

tions of the police response relate to their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization.

7.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT THESIS

When interpreting the findings of the current thesis, some important limitations need to be acknowledged. All empirical studies in the current thesis suffer from characteristics that might make their findings not being readily generalizable to crime victims who reported their victimization to the police in the Netherlands. All studies used self-reported willingness for cooperation with the police. This incorporates the possibility of social desirable responding by participants and we do not know whether victims would actually cooperate with the police in case of future victimization.

First, the structured survey suffers from a low response rate. Out of consideration for the victim, victims were approached by the author or one of her research assistants up to three times on different moments of the day by phone. Although no differences between participants and non-participants were found with regard to type of crime, it could be that crime victims with specific characteristics would be more likely to participate in the current studies (e.g. Dutch background vs. non-Dutch background or older victims vs. younger victims), which may have hampered the generalizability of the study's results.

Second, the time between the waves in the prospective study was only a month. This means that while relationships over time were identified, it was over a relatively short period. In addition, the relationships between victims' evaluations of the police response, perceived legitimacy (in terms of perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey the law) are ideally examined using a three-wave design instead of a two-wave design. A three-wave design would have enabled us to examine the relationships between victims' evaluations of the police response at T1 and perceived police legitimacy at T2 and between perceived legitimacy at T2 and willingness to cooperate with the police at T3.

Third, the experimental study was conducted among university students using a vignette design instead of a field experiment among real crime victims. A violent crime scenario was developed because the structured survey showed that, particularly for victims of violent crime, willingness to cooperate with the police would be associated with at least one of the indicators of perceived legitimacy (i.e. perceived obligation to obey the law). The choice for university students as participants instead of the general public was made out of the consideration that university students might be more familiar with going home late at night than the general public, and thus more familiar with the scenario described. However, as a consequence, findings may not readily be generalizable to the crime victim population which reports its victimization to the police in the Netherlands.

Fourth, the response rate of the semi-structured interview was

extremely low. This may be due to the fact that the researcher was unable to personally contact potential respondents. The police had not offered contact details of potential respondents out of privacy reasons. Therefore, crime victims had to contact the researcher themselves if they wanted to participate and it may be that particularly those crime victims who were extremely positive about the police response or instead extremely negative about the police response were more likely to participate. Nevertheless, the sample included a diverse set of victims regarding age, sex, type of crime, emotional state, status and outcome of the case. In addition, it should be noted that this chapter was not aimed at generalizability of findings, but rather to provide useful contextual information on why crime victims' evaluations of the police response would relate to their willingness to cooperate with the police.

7.6 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A number of suggestions for future research arise from this thesis. Some of these suggestions focus on the measurement of the key concepts in this thesis – the police response, police legitimacy, and cooperation – and on the generalizability of the findings of this dissertation. In addition, the findings from this thesis evoke new questions which could be addressed in future research.

Measurement of crime victims' evaluations of the police response

Concerning the measurement of crime victims' evaluations of the police response, future studies might choose to measure victims' evaluations of the police response (in terms of procedural justice and police performance) in a more concrete way that would allow more objective indicators of these evaluations. For example, future studies might include measures on how much time police officers spent on the crime scene, whether the police searched for witnesses, whether the police searched for fingerprints and whether the police took photos of the crime scene. In addition, future studies might broaden the focus by not only including victims' evaluations of the police response, but also police officers' actual behaviour. This could be realised by using participant observation or analysing recorded interviews by the police during their interactions with crime victims as a research method. This could provide more concrete indications on what kind of behaviour is valued by crime victims.

Measurement of crime victims' perceptions of police legitimacy

Concerning the measurement of crime victims' perceptions of police legitimacy, future studies might follow recent developments by not only including perceived trust in the police and perceived obligation to obey

the law, but also perceived obligation to obey police directives and moral alignment with the police and/or the law (e.g. Jackson, Bradford, Hough, Myhill, Quinton & Tyler, 2012; Murphy & Cherney, 2012). This may offer more insight into the motivation for victims' willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization.

Measurement of crime victims' willingness to cooperate with the police

Concerning the measurement of crime victims' willingness to cooperate with the police, future studies could include measures of actual behaviour. Because there is a possibility that the share of repeat crime victims in a particular study sample is small, researchers could also include measures of actual cooperation in the current case. For example, whether the victim provided details that would help the police identify the offender, if the offender is known to the victim.

Generalizability

Concerning generalizability of findings, future studies could try to include relatively more participants with a non-Dutch background to make the sample more representative of the national population, for example by offering victims to be interviewed in English or in their native language. In addition, as all studies were conducted in the Netherlands, it is recommended to replicate these studies and examine whether the findings are generalizable to other countries with different legal traditions and styles of policing. Also, future prospective studies could try to examine whether the relationships identified in the current thesis hold over a longer period of time than a month. In addition, future studies could examine whether the relationships found hold for victims of other types of crime (such as sexual crime). Finally, future studies could explore whether evaluations of procedural justice and police performance are causally related to perceived legitimacy and cooperation among victims of crime by using a field experiment (see Wheller et al., 2013).

Expectations and emotional crime victims

Although the qualitative findings of this thesis suggest that crime victims can have different expectations with regard to the investigation activities of the police depending on their emotional reaction to the crime, the type of crime victims suffered from, and, in case of victims of violent crime, whether they know the perpetrator (by name), it is advisable to test whether or not this finding is based on coincidence via quantitative research methods. More specifically, it could be tested whether victims who experience a lot of suffering, were victimized by a violent crime, and know the perpetrator (by name) have higher expectations with regard to the investigation activities than victims who experience less suffering, were victimized by a property

crime, and do not know the perpetrator (by name) and how living up to these expectations (or not) relate to victims' evaluations of the police response, perceived police legitimacy, and willingness to cooperate with the police.

Elements of procedural justice

The qualitative findings of this thesis provide indications that not all elements of procedural justice – 'voice', neutrality, respect, and trustworthiness – may be equally valued by crime victims. For example, some victims seem to appreciate it when police officers take a clear stance against the perpetrator, because it makes them feel supported and strengthened. This implies that some crime victims may appreciate it if police officers are 'biased' if it favours the victim. Whether this is indeed the case, could be tested in future research.

Process versus outcome

The findings of this thesis provide indications that the outcome of the police investigation, in the sense of apprehending a suspect, is not equally important to all crime victims. For example, victims who expressed that they were severely harmed by the crime/offender and victims of violent crime (who know the perpetrator) seem to attach greater importance to apprehending the offender than victims who expressed that they were not severely harmed by the crime/offender and victims of domestic burglary. Previous research among crime victims on the relative importance of outcome-related factors and process-related factors report inconsistent results. A possible explanation for the inconsistent results may be that the outcome of the case is especially important to crime victims under specific circumstances. Future research could be conducted to examine under which specific circumstances the outcome of the case is more or less important to crime victims' evaluations of the police response, perceived police legitimacy, and willingness to cooperate with the police.

Intervention studies

As the current thesis focused on crime victims' evaluations of the police response, it is still unclear what the best way would be to teach police officers how they could respond to crime victims in a correct and respectful manner, how they could demonstrate their impartiality and their sincere motivation to apprehend the offender, how they could inform crime victims about the developments in their case, and how they can explain their reasons for performing investigative activities or not. Police officers can be trained in various ways, for example by use of written information, group discussions, role playing, via an online training module or a combination of these methods. Future intervention studies could provide more information about which method works best.

7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICE PRACTICE

Results of this thesis might offer some guidelines for the development of policy and practice for police officers who interact with crime victims on a daily basis. While victims have often been referred to as the 'forgotten party' (Norton, 2007; Walklate, 2012; Wemmers & Cyr, 2006), recent national and international initiatives have been taken to strengthen the victims' position in criminal proceedings (see Tobolowsky et al., 2010; Van der Aa et al., 2009). However most of these initiatives focus on the court stage of criminal proceedings, such as the right for victims to deliver an impact statement during the trial phase. While such initiatives indeed seem to strengthen the victim's position, it should be noted that many cases do not proceed in the criminal justice system after the police investigation phase (Smit & Harrendorf, 2010). As such, the police might not only be the first, but also often the only representative of the criminal justice system to interact with crime victims. National guidelines in the Netherlands instruct 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 in their case (see Act for the improvement of the position of victims in criminal procedure, 2011; art. 51a Clause 2 CP jo. art. 288a Clause 2 CP). The current thesis' findings seem to underline the importance of these guidelines and may also offer more concrete information on how police officers may offer such a respectful treatment.

The current thesis emphasised that crime victims are interested in both a fair treatment by police officers and in police officers' investigative efforts. A fair treatment and performing investigative efforts (and communicating to crime victims about those efforts) is not only ethically just and in line with the mission of the police, but it may also have positive consequences for victims' perceptions of police legitimacy and their willingness to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization. Furthermore, it may prevent vigilantism. This thesis' findings suggest that police officers can try to counter the unfavourable situation that repeat crime victims seem to be less likely to cooperate with the police than first-time victims (López, 2001; Van Dijk, 2001; Tarling & Morris, 2010) by offering a fair treatment and by performing investigative efforts. That is, police officers should (1) give victims the opportunity to express their views on the situation and consider their opinion on how to proceed; (2) be neutral and unbiased with regard to the victims' role (i.e. guilt) in the victimization; (3) treat victims with respect and dignity; (4) should communicate that they are sincerely motivated to come to the best solution for all parties involved; (5) inform crime victims on the developments in their case if they want to be informed; and (6) should clearly communicate on the investigative efforts taken or on the reasons for not taking investigative efforts (see also De Mesmaecker, 2014; Elliott et al., 2011, 2012; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Most of these elements are already implemented in national and international guidelines for the police to interact with crime victims. However, while most of these

regulations focus on procedural justice, the current thesis emphasized that crime victims are interested in police performance as well. Therefore, officers could communicate more about their investigative efforts to make victims feel taken seriously and to make them feel valued and respected as members of society. It is recommended to assign a central point of contact to the victim who is aware of the (proceedings) of the case.

Second, findings of the current thesis suggest that victims of different types of crime can have different expectations with regard to the police response. Virtually all crime victims expect a respectful treatment (i.e. a procedurally just treatment), but expectations with regard to performing investigative activities are more diverse. Although future research is recommended, the police may discuss a victim's expectations on the performance of investigative activities at an early stage. In that way, unrealistic expectations could be tempered by explaining why certain means of investigation cannot be used, what means can be used and/or which steps will be taken to solve the case.

Third, findings of the current thesis suggest that victims who expressed that they felt deeply harmed by the offender and/or the crime may evaluate the police response in a different way than victims who showed less severe emotions. Although the current thesis lacks information on whether emotionally expressive victims were treated in a different manner than victims who had not expressed such emotions or whether emotionally expressive victims only evaluated their treatment by police officers differently, it seems that police officers should offer special attention to those crime victims. While these victims may already receive special attention by police officers trying to prevent victims to develop posttraumatic stress disorder, the current thesis suggests special attention would also be beneficial from a crime detection perspective. For example, it might be important for these crime victims to hear from police officers – as representatives of society's norms and values – that they are not to blame for what has happened to them and that criminal behaviour is not tolerated. Some of these crime victims appreciated it if police officers would not only take a clear stance against the crime, but against the alleged offender as well. This may be understandable, but police officers – especially because they are often the first and only representatives of the criminal justice system who have contact with the victim – should listen to the stories of both parties in an open and unbiased manner in order to discover the truth. Police officers taking a clear stance against the alleged perpetrator could possibly be at the expense of their impartiality. It is therefore advisable to condemn crime rather than the alleged perpetrator when interacting with the victim.

In addition, crime victims who expressed that they experienced intense emotions might be more concerned with police officers' investigative efforts to solve the crime and apprehend the offender than victims who did not report such emotions. Particularly when crime victims knew who had victimized them, it was hard for them to understand why the police would not have a serious talk with the offender. It should be noted that

these crime victims did not express retributive motives, but rather they wanted the police officers to inform 'their' offender that criminal behaviour would not be tolerated. In cases where the police are not able to perform such investigative actions, they should clearly explain why no actions will be taken and reaffirm victims' valuable position in society, for example by underlining the importance of informing the police on their victimization and by taking a clear stance against the crime. This may help to prevent feelings of desolation, despair and vigilantism among these crime victims and may encourage cooperation in case of future crime victimization.

Fourth, the current thesis' findings suggest that crime victims who had contact with the police may offer valuable information on what they value in their interactions with police officers. While national surveys have been conducted to examine victim satisfaction with criminal proceedings and victim services (see Koolen, Van der Heide & Ziegelaar, 2005; Winkel, Spapens, Letschert, Groenhuijsen & Van Dijk, 2006), more concrete information could be gathered by using a so-called Legal System Victim Impact Statement (Wexler, 2008). Such a statement would allow crime victims to evaluate the case handling by criminal justice actors (e.g. the police) in a qualitative manner by listing both elements that they thought went well and elements that could have been done better. Such detailed information could be used to identify concrete aspects that victims appreciate and factors they do not appreciate. Such information could be used in the development of training for police officers. Also, police officers might be able to explain or apologise for elements that were negatively evaluated and thereby improve victims' evaluations of their interactions with the police. This may further help the police to improve the quality of their interactions with crime victims. In developing a template for a Legal System Victim Impact Statement, the current thesis suggests that victims could be asked about aspects of procedural justice and police performance.

Fifth, the importance of crime victims' evaluations of the police response is emphasized in this thesis. Positive evaluations of the police response would contribute to the police's goal of making the Netherlands a safer place to live in, because it makes victims more willing to cooperate with the police in case of future crime victimization than when the police response is negatively evaluated. For this reason, it is recommended to not only formulate key performance indicators in terms of number of investigations conducted, closed cases, or reducing crime, but also in terms of victims' evaluations of the police response in their case. Paying attention to victims in a helpful way not only benefits the individual person and wider society but also the police as an institution.

