

Summary

INTERVICT, the International Victimology Institute Tilburg, affiliated with Tilburg University, conducted a secondary analysis of a relatively substantial sample of persons (N=1859) who had reported a crime to the police in various Dutch police regions. These persons were interviewed via telephone by *Research voor Beleid* (RvB) about one and a half years following their reporting to the police. Portions of these reporters engaged in follow up contacts with the public prosecution service (N=488), the judiciary (N=329) and the Netherlands Victim Support (N=164). A common theme was the reporter's assessment of the functioning of the criminal justice system and victim support. For all agencies these assessments were made in terms of school grades, varying in range from 0 to 10. An important hypothesis underlying such studies is the notion that lower grades are at least indicating mismatch between *demand* – the more or less explicit expectancies of reporters / victims – and the *supply* offered by these agencies. The representativity of the findings reported by RvB was seriously questioned by INTERVICT. Analyses revealed that victims with an allochthonous origin, higher educated and younger victims, and victims who were repeatedly victimized were generally underrepresented. Victims of violence were moreover underrepresented relative to the public prosecution service, the judiciary and the Netherlands Victim Support.

Quantitative analyses, particularly analyses of variance, correlation and regression analyses, were conducted from a victimological and a psychology and law perspective. The relation of *all* currently available variables with satisfaction was explored. Analyses revealed that grades (satisfaction with agency) were associated with satisfaction about agency treatment, and with satisfaction about the information provided by these agencies. In view of the cross sectional design of the study these associations cannot be interpreted causally. The conclusion that better treatment will yield better grades thus cannot be inferred, and needs independent testing on the basis of randomized controlled trials. The only conclusion warranted is that satisfaction measures were substantially associated. A second important conclusion flowing from these analyses was that grades were associated with outcome related variables (distributive versus procedural justice). Reporting posttraumatic stress symptoms (intrusions, impairment) explained unique variance, that is controlling for all other variables, in satisfaction with the police, the prosecution service, and the trial. Obviously, victims with these chronic symptoms are clearly in need of emotional support. Regression analyses on victim support conspicuously revealed that not receiving emotional support while needing it was associated with more negative perceptions of the functioning of the Netherlands Victim Support.

Facilitating the prevention of material and immaterial follow up damage is an important victim expectancy. From a victimological perspective analyses were confined to the relation between grades and respectively repeat victimization and an elevated risk of serious coping problems due to that victimization. These analyses revealed a quite distressing picture of victim satisfaction with these various agencies. Such a picture specifically emerged for victims who were repeatedly victimized and for victims at risk of serious chronic coping failure. Repeat victims were significantly less satisfied with the police and the public prosecution service. High risk victims were significantly less satisfied with the police, the public prosecution service, the judiciary and the Netherlands Victim Support. Low school grades were specifically concentrated in this latter group. A grade of 5 or lower, indicating insufficient police performance, was given by 18% of low risk victims; in the high risk group this percentage was lifted to 43%. Particularly among high risk victims extremely low

satisfaction scores were concentrated: 13.4% of these victims scored a 1 (versus <3% among low risk cases). About 30% of high risk victims presenting with insufficient grades reported a score of 1, while an additional 40% gave a score of 2, 3, or 4. These latter victims moreover, significantly more often used opportunities for criminal justice participation, e.g. had a conversation with the public prosecutor, or were present at trial. Finally, these victims were significantly more dissatisfied with verdicts.

The report concludes with a number of suggestions to enhance the position of crime victims. Suggestions include the implementation of a structured, evidence based system of risk assessment, aimed at identifying early victims at risk of repeat victimization, and victims at risk of chronic coping failure. Satisfaction studies may additionally profit from engaging in theory driven, that is, examining protocol led treatments matching identifiable and measurable victim needs, exit polls.