

# The effect of prior victimization on bystander intervention into crime.



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**Abstract.** *Bystander intervention into crime can be of great importance for reducing the harm. Statistics reveal that approximately 25% of Dutch residents has been a victim of crime in 2018. Scientific research has shown that a victimization experience does have a lot of consequences for a lot of life domains. This study aims to find out how a prior victimization might influence one's willingness to intervene into crime and which mechanisms might be at work. This leads to the following research question: "How does prior victimization influence someone's willingness to intervene into crime?". A distinction is made between two distinct pathways: indirect intervention (calling the police) and direct intervention (disrupting the scene yourself). Based on data from the LISS panel collected in the Netherlands in 2011 hypotheses were tested. Results demonstrated that victimization does have a significant direct effect on both direct as well as indirect intervention, but the expected mediating mechanisms of police satisfaction and guardianship were not significant. Further research does have to investigate which other mechanisms might be at work instead of these.*

**Keywords.** *Victimization; police satisfaction; guardianship; indirect intervention; direct intervention.*

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## Table of content.

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Introduction .....</b>                | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Theoretical framework .....</b>       | <b>5</b>  |
| Prior work .....                         | 5         |
| Theories & Hypotheses.....               | 6         |
| Indirect intervention pathway .....      | 6         |
| Direct intervention pathway .....        | 8         |
| Conceptual model .....                   | 9         |
| <b>Data &amp; Methods .....</b>          | <b>10</b> |
| Data.....                                | 10        |
| Independent variable.....                | 11        |
| Dependent variables.....                 | 11        |
| Control variables.....                   | 15        |
| Methods .....                            | 15        |
| <b>Results .....</b>                     | <b>16</b> |
| Descriptive statistics .....             | 16        |
| Regression analyses .....                | 17        |
| Indirect intervention pathway .....      | 18        |
| Direct intervention pathway .....        | 20        |
| <b>Conclusion &amp; Discussion .....</b> | <b>22</b> |
| Conclusion .....                         | 22        |
| Discussion.....                          | 23        |
| <b>References .....</b>                  | <b>25</b> |

## **Introduction.**

The National Dutch Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2018) shows that more than 26% of all people in the Netherlands has been a victim of any type of crime in 2018. The percentage is 27.7% for men and 25.9% for women and with regard to diverse age categories the percentage is highest among people from 15 to 25 years old (34.4%). These numbers are the result of the Veiligheidsmonitor, a questionnaire which is conducted two times each year among Dutch citizens. A great amount of literature shows that a victimization experience does have an impact on a lot of life domains (Hanson, Sawyer, Begle & Hubel, 2010). Victimization is for example known to be affecting the fear of crime and opinions of people (Fox, Nobles & Piquero, 2009). This implicates that their attitudes with respect to the police and their capability to solve criminality problems is also affected (Koenig, 1980; Greeson, Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2014; Hickman & Simpson, 2003). The question hereby is whether the prior police experience of victims might indeed decrease their willingness to intervene in a criminal situation.

On the other hand there is some evidence which suggests that victimized people are expected to be more willing to intervene because of their prior experience (Huston et al., 1981). This last perspective is not clearly supported in the present literature, but this possible division between direct and indirect intervention with respect to victimization experiences is calling for the need to investigate this topic a bit further into one study. It raises the question whether prior victimization influences someone's willingness to intervene and which factors might matter for this. By investigating this topic this thesis adds to the growing field of victimology. This discipline is adding to our understanding of the contexts and consequences of victimization by placing the focus on the victims of crime instead of on the offender.

The importance of bystander intervention is perfectly shown in the well-known rape and murder of Kitty Genovese (Huston, Ruggiero, Conner & Geis, 1981). Kitty was raped and murdered in 1964, while tens of people witnessed this and did nothing to help the victim. Although the case of Kitty is a very dramatic example, bystander intervention can also be helpful in less heavy crime scenes. An online news article perfectly shows how the intervention of a witness prevents two thieves from stealing a bag from children (AD.nl, 2017). But when someone notices something strange on the street, reporting this to the police can also be helpful (Bickman, 1984). If the police wants to solve a crime problem information and action from the citizens is often needed. This indicates that indirect intervention in a criminal scene by a bystander is needed in order for the police to be able to find the offender (Bickman, 1984). An

American study did show that of all violent crimes approximately 66% happened in the presence of a bystander (Planty, 2002). The study further shows that in 36% of the cases the actions of the third party helped to make the situation better. These findings are confirmed in a later wave of this study (Hart & Miethe, 2008). Thus, we can conclude that bystander intervention into the criminal scene is of great importance, because they can help to make the situation better. But evidence indicates that people do not intervene very often in situations where help is needed (Hart & Miethe, 2008). This thesis tries to uncover possible mechanisms which influence someone's willingness to intervene or not, by taking victimized people as a focus group for reasons explained above.

This brings us to the conceptualization between two types of intervention, as mentioned above (Reynald, 2010; Hart & Miethe, 2008). First there is direct intervention which means that someone is actively disrupting a crime-related event and assisting the victim whenever they see it happening. On the other hand there are indirect interveners who notify the police about something they witnessed. This thesis is considering these two types of intervention as separate pathways, because the theoretical framework, as noted below, implies distinct mechanisms with different outcomes for each of them.

Thus, while we know that a victimization experience has a great impact on someone's life and bystander intervention can possibly prevent or solve criminality, it is necessary to find out whether prior victimization changes the willingness to intervene and whether this can be determined to their level of police satisfaction and guardianship, as will be explained in detail below. Thus, for this thesis I will investigate whether prior victimization experiences do influence someone's willingness to intervene whenever they witness deviancy. This leads to the following research question: *"How does prior victimization influence someone's willingness to intervene into crime?"*. The formulation of this question implicates that an effect of victimization on willingness to intervene is assumed. This direct effect is thus not the main concern for this thesis, it rather looks at possible mechanisms which might be mediating this relationship.

In this thesis I will first cover what prior work found about this topic. After that I will explain the theoretical framework that leads us to the hypotheses for this study. The next chapter will investigate the data that is used for testing the hypotheses and which methods will be used for this. Next I will present the results of the statistical tests. In the last part I will summarize and discuss the findings.

## **Theoretical framework.**

### *Prior work.*

Next to the role of victimization, which will be described in more detail below, there are also other factors which may play a role in whether or not people are intervening when they witness a criminal act. Studies have indicated that interveners into crime differ from non-interveners on factors like their physical appearance and the trainings they have had (Huston et al., 1981). Furthermore people also need to recognize a situation as a criminal offense in order to be able to intervene (Felson, 2006). But since this paper focuses on victimization as the explanatory factor for intervening I will now discuss what prior studies have found about the effect of victimization on an individual.

In their research about the prevalence and psychological effects of criminal victimization on people in America, Norris and Kaniasty (1994) start with explaining that people in America are ‘more likely than not to become victims of crime’ (p. 111). They illustrate that the psychological effects of violent crimes are strong and long-lasting, their anxiety and phobic anxiety increases over time, while this is not the case for property crimes. By taking into account some personal characteristics before the crime as controls, they could exclude these as explanatory factors for the effects they found. A review of the existing literature about the impact of victimization (Hanson, Sawyer, Begle & Hubel, 2010) reveals as well that it has impact on a lot of life domains and role functioning, and in general also decreases life satisfaction, although findings were not consistent about this. According to their review literature suggests that victimization may increase safety concerns and decrease life satisfaction, but they also show that further identification of mechanisms and additional relevant factors is needed because the results are not robust.

Resick (1987) conducted a study which compared the effects of victimization between sexual related crime (rape) and non-sexual crime (robbery). She concluded that there were not so much differences in the outcomes between the groups, but rape victims did show more dysfunctions and problems with sexual practices, while robbery victims reported more fear of weapons. Also she found that the recovery process was longer for rape victims than for robbery victims. After presenting her results Resick identifies some implications for the way victims experience the criminal justice system. She calls for counseling and respect in the way these people are treated because of their trauma.

The negative consequences which victims might experience as a result of their victimization is called secondary victimization (Orth, 2002). More specifically secondary victimization is about the reactions and attitudes of others towards victims, which makes them suffer for a second time. An example is victim-blaming, but also mistreatment by the justice system can cause additional suffering for the victim.

Next to the concept of secondary victimization, those who have been victimized also have a higher chance on a subsequent victimization (Wittebrood & Nieuwebeerta, 2000). The study was conducted in the Netherlands and revealed that in the past 25 years more than 65% of the Dutch people has been a victim of at least one type of crime. Using a longitudinal approach the authors state that these patterns of repeated victimizations are mostly due to heterogeneity in this group; this groups differs with respect to personal characteristics which make them more attractive for offenders. This is mostly due to their routine activities. When a certain group is vulnerable for becoming a victim, this will be the same in a subsequent situation if they did not change these routine activities (like being a student).

As a result of the findings described above victimization is expected to have an effect on the attitudes and behaviors of people in a next crime related situation and thus also their reasons to be willing to intervene or not when witnessing something, which we will discuss next.

### ***Theories & hypotheses.***

In this next section diverse theoretical perspectives will be discussed which together create the hypotheses which will be tested in this paper.

#### *Indirect intervention pathway.*

Diverse studies indicate that a victimization experience changes the attitudes of that particular individual towards the police, although most of them do not specify why this is the case (Kusow, Wilson & Martin, 1997; O'Connor, 2008; Payne & Gainey, 2007). Garofalo (1977) for example found that those who were victimized more times and more serious had more negative attitudes towards the police. In addition Koenig (1980) as well finds that the police was rated less favorable when people had experienced a criminal victimization in the past year. This study furthermore mentions that these attitudes were even less positive when people had observed

immoral police practices like impoliteness, unfair treatment or taking sides. In their book FitzGerald et al (2013) as well state that dissatisfaction among crime victims is the cause of perceived lack of fairness, interest and effort with regard to the police officers they met. The concept of secondary victimization, as noted above, is in accordance with this. Victims might be victimized additionally by the criminal justice system through injustices after their initial victimization, which is likely to be influencing their attitudes towards the police in a negative direction. This might be the mechanism which explains why victimized people have less satisfactory attitudes towards the police; they might have experiences that others don't have, like the improper practices mentioned above. This leads us to the first hypothesis for this paper:

*H1. Those who are victimized before have less satisfaction with the police.*

The social learning theory states that a certain behavior is more likely to be repeated in the future if it is positively rewarded or experienced in the past, which is called operant conditioning (Akers et al, 1979). It implicates that people learn behavioral patterns through the reactions of others in their environment whenever they show that behavior. Applied on victimizations and contacts with the police in the past, this implies that people who have had dissatisfying experiences with the police in the past after their own victimization, will be less willing to call the police in the future whenever this is needed. This assumption is supported in diverse studies, which show that people are indeed less likely to contact the police again if their previous contact was not according to their expectations (Hickman & Simpson, 2003; Franklyn, 2012). Although these findings are often about a next personal victimization, thus not when witnessing someone else being victimized (as is the concern of this thesis), it still tells us something about their standpoint and willingness to contact the police again. In general Silver & Miller (2004) found that satisfaction with the police in a neighborhood is strongly related to more informal social control, which as well supports the second hypothesis:

*H2. Those who have more satisfied attitudes towards the police will be more willing to intervene indirect into crime.*

*Direct intervention pathway.*

Although the theoretical evidence about the second pathway of direct intervention into crime is not that explicitly established in the present literature, evidence gives us some insights. Payne and Gainey (2007) find that a victimization experience increases someone's feeling of unsafety in a neighborhood by 65%. Other studies have found that victims do have higher levels of fear of crime, especially with regard to property crimes (Smith & Hill, 1991; Baba & Austin, 1989; Dull & Wint, 1997). Furthermore Miethe & Meier (1990) indicate that there can be a causal relationship between a victimization and the amount of protective actions someone is taking. The fact that people with a victimization experience in the past are more concerned about safety and becoming a victim again in the future indicates that those people are more a guardian in their environment than those who did not experience a prior victimization (Reynald, 2011). According to Felson & Cohen (1980) guardianship is "any spatiotemporally specific supervision of people or property by other people which may prevent criminal violations from occurring" (p. 392). All together this creates our third hypothesis:

*H3. Those who are prior victimized will be guarding their environment more.*

Furthermore Reynald (2009) states that intervention depends on monitoring and availability. In order to be able to intervene when something is happening, someone has to be available and has to actively monitor his environment. She says that intervention is the ultimate act of guardianship. This way, it will be expected that people who are more actively supervising their environment, will be better able to detect crimes which might be happening around them. This reasoning is in accordance with the perspective of Felson (2006) in which he explains that someone has to be able to distinguish normal from atypical behavior in order to be able to intervene. So those who detect situations as criminal will be more likely to directly intervene into them than those who do not recognize that situation as criminal or deviant. Because those guardians might have been victimized before, they will understand better what their role is in the situation, and thus know that intervention might be helpful in that situation. This way we can derive our final hypothesis:

*H4. Those who are guarding their environment more will be more willing to intervene direct into crime.*

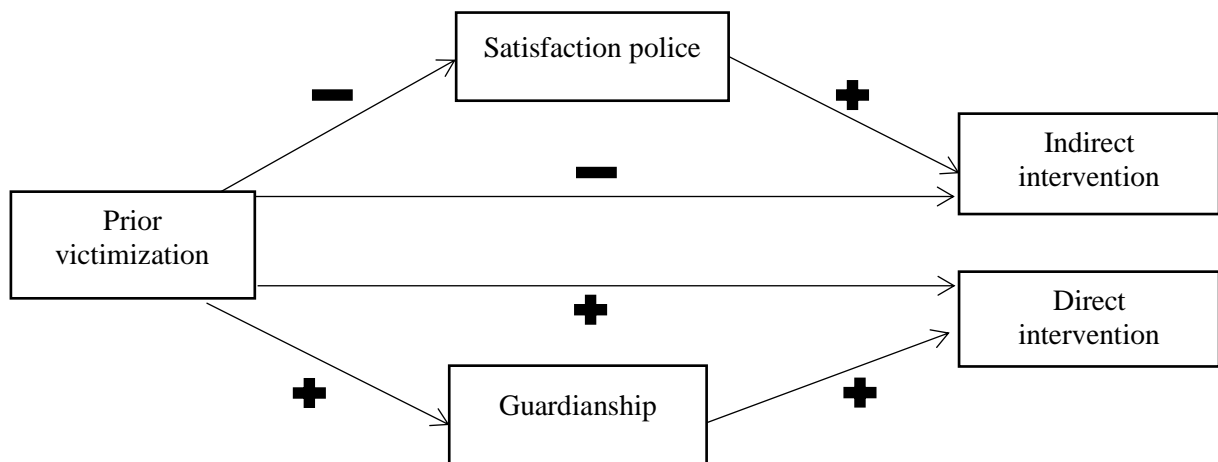


*Conceptual model.*

With these hypotheses this paper tries to find out whether the mentioned mechanisms influence the effect of a victimization experience in the past on someone’s willingness to intervene either directly or indirectly. Although no hypotheses are formulated about this, it is assumed that a prior victimization does have a direct effect on willingness to intervene, because otherwise it would not be possible to detect indirect pathways which might be mediating the relationship.

Written below you can find the conceptual model which places the discussed mechanisms in a figure, as well as the direct effects which are assumed. It shows the two mediating pathways which will be tested in this paper, namely: prior victimization decreases the degree of satisfaction with the police. More satisfaction with the police in turn is expected to increase the level of willingness to indirect intervention. Or stated in the other direction: less satisfaction with the police is expected to decrease the willingness to intervene indirectly. The literature also gave reasons to integrate a second possible pathway in this study, namely: prior victimization leads to more guardianship, which in turn increases the willingness to intervene directly into the criminal scene.

Figure 1. The conceptual model



## **Data & methods.**

### *Data.*

A secondary data analysis is conducted with data achieved from the CentERdata Institute. This Dutch institute for data collection and research conducts a longitudinal study called ‘The LISS (Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social sciences) panel’ (LISSpanel, z.j.). The study is conducted since 2007 and consists a wide range of topics. The sample of the LISS panel was contributed randomly in the Netherland with help of the National Dutch Bureau of Statistics (CBS), including people without an internet connection who were provided a broadband connection to be able to participate. Those people were then approached and invited to participate, approximately 80% of them did actually participate in the panel. The panel consists of approximately 7000 respondents covering 4500 households (LISSpanel, z.j.). The respondents are asked to complete questionnaires each month via internet in exchange for a payment.

First of all this paper makes use of the Guardianship Survey. This single wave questionnaire was answered by the people from the LISS panel in August 2011. It was about the three dimensions of guardianship: availability, monitoring and intervention. Next to this the survey also looked at attitudes, perceptions and experiences with regard to crime and guardianship. The survey was send to 6778 individuals of whom 4793 actually completed the survey, which is a response rate of approximately 70%.

Next to this survey this thesis also uses data of the LISS panel about any core concepts like gender and age as controls for the analyses. The Background Survey is a little questionnaire which the respondents have to complete each month they participate. While the Guardianship Survey was conducted in 2011, the background variables were also used from august 2011. Over the years CentERdata conducted a few studies to assess the representativeness of the LISS panel in comparison to the general Dutch population with information from the CBS. Although no comparison is available for the year 2011, the other report shows that CentERdata takes representativeness very serious (Vos, 2010).

When constructing the scales, as noted below, I decided to make sure I only included those respondents that did answer a great majority of the questions of that new scale. When the scale consists of seven items for example, they had to have valid answers to at least five of the items in order to be taken into account, to make sure the scale is representative. After constructing the new scales I applied missing listwise, to exclude those people from the analyses who

did not have a valid value on one or more of the variables needed for this study. This way I ended up with a sample size of 2426 respondents.

### ***Independent variable.***

The first variable in the conceptual model is **prior victimization**. In the data this is measured with the following statement: *“I have been a victim of crime in the past.”*. The respondent was able to answer on a Likert scale with five options ranging from ‘completely disagree’ to ‘completely agree’. For this paper a dichotomous variable was needed with either ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Therefore this variable was recoded into ‘yes’ for those with scores ‘agree’ and ‘completely agree’ and ‘no’ for the rest of the answers, which includes the neutral category as well.

### ***Dependent variables.***

The following concept is **satisfaction with the police**. Based on literature seven statements were used to measure the attitude of the respondents towards the police, taking into account diverse dimensions of the concept like reliance and effectiveness (Weitzer & Touch, 2005; Dukes, Portillos & Miles, 2009). The statements were as following: *“The police in my neighborhood are effective at combating crime.”*, *“You can rely on the police in my neighborhood.”*, *“The police in my neighborhood respond promptly when they are called for service.”*, *“The police in my neighborhood take residents’ concerns seriously.”*, *“The police in my neighborhood are never there when you need them.”*, *“The police in my neighborhood do a good job.”* and *“The people in this area have a good relationship with the police.”*. Respondents had to choose between five options ranging from ‘completely disagree’ to ‘completely agree’ for each statement. To use these questions one question was recoded so that for all of them a higher score indicates more satisfaction with the police and a lower score means less satisfaction. After that a new variable is created which combines these seven questions on one scale. A Cronbach’s Alpha test was conducted to see whether the different variables were interrelated. The test gave a score of .792 which says that it is reasonable to take these variables together in one scale.

With respect to **guardianship**, the following four questions with regard to different times a day were used. *“When you are at home on mornings/afternoons/evenings/late night or early morning hours, how often do you look out of your window to see what’s happening in*

*your surroundings?*”. This measurement is in line with the definition of guardianship as mentioned above; the definition mainly implies that people are supervising their environment to make sure everything is safe (Felson & Cohen, 1980). By asking respondents how often they look out of their window at certain times a day we can get an idea of their level of supervision. The five answer categories range from ‘not at all’ to ‘constantly’. Because these questions were all measured in the same way, no recording was needed. A new variable was made which combines the four questions into one variable (by taking means) which indicates the guardianship, with a higher score indicating that someone is guarding more actively. For this new scale a Cronbach’s Alpha test was conducted as well, which gave a score of .881, implying that in this scale the different items are indeed measuring the same thing and might be taken together.

The first outcome variable of this paper is whether people are **intervening indirectly**. As described above this thesis is based on calling the police as indirect intervention (Hart & Miethe, 2008). Therefore this concept is measured in the data with the following statements which ask about calling the police: *“If I see a crime in progress, I would call the police.”*, *“I will not call the police if I see a crime in my neighborhood.”* and *“If I see a crime happening in my neighborhood, I will call the police.”*. The answer categories ranged from ‘completely disagree’ to ‘completely agree’. The second statement is asked in a reversed way, so it has been recoded so that it measures the concept in the same direction as the rest. These all together create a new variable which measures indirect intervention with scores ranging from ‘very unlikely’ to ‘very likely’. For this scale the Cronbach’s Alpha was .607, which is slightly low. It implies that the internal consistency of the items on this scale is not very strong. A further look at the statistic outcomes reveals that the statement which was originally negatively formulated (reversed) mostly causes this. When this item is deleted from the scale the Cronbach’s Alpha will be .722, which is more sufficient. Because of this I decided to delete this second statement out of this scale to make it more representable. It could be the case that respondents did not interpret the question in the right way, because it was asked reversely, which could explain the deviance.

**Intervening directly** is the second outcome variable in this paper. While direct intervention is conceptualized as the action of actively disrupting the scene and assisting the victim (Hart & Miethe, 2008), this is measured in the following questions in the data: *“If I see a crime in progress, I would take some action to stop it.”* and *“If I see a crime happening in my neighborhood, I would take care of it myself.”*. The answers again ranged from ‘completely disagree’ to ‘completely agree’ and a scale was made to combine these two. For this scale the Cronbach’s

Alpha again is a bit low with a score of .620. This may be due to the fact that these two statements do measure direct intervention in a very different way. Regardless I believe they are both needed in order to provide a clear image and because they both handle a form of direct intervention. Additional regression analyses have revealed that when a choice would be made between one of these two statements to be the outcome variable this would not matter for the significance of the tested effects. This leads to the conclusion that it is better to use them both, in order to provide a better interpretation.

A factor analysis was conducted to see whether the separate items which are combined into scales indeed do load together. The test revealed four different factors, which is in accordance with the expectation. The factor loadings can be found in the table presented below. Factor 1, which is in accordance with the police satisfaction variable, consists of seven items that explain 33.16% of the variance. Next factor 2, in accordance with the guardianship variable, is comprised of four items that explained 19.12% of the variance. Factor 3, representing indirect intervention, has four items and explains 11.96% of the variance. Factor 4, direct intervention, has one item with an explanation of 6.89% of the total variance.

As can be seen in the table below the items for indirect and direct intervention are not that clearly showing separate factors in the factor analysis. This may indicate that people do not score such different scores on these two items. This might imply that those who are more willing to intervene in a direct way are also more willing to intervene indirectly and the other way round; they are in general willing to do something in such situations. But because this study is specifically interested in the two different pathways of intervention types, these are still regarded as two distinct concepts.

Table 1. *Factor analysis.*

|  | <b>Factor 1</b><br>(police satisfaction) | <b>Factor 2</b><br>(guardianship) | <b>Factor 3</b><br>(indirect intervention) | <b>Factor 4</b><br>(direct intervention) |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| The police in my neighborhood are effective at combating crime.                  | .853                                     |                                   |  |  |
| You can rely on the police in my neighborhood.                                   | .881                                     |                                   |  |  |
| The police in my neighborhood respond promptly when they are called for service. | .821                                     |                                   |  |  |

|  |       |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| The police in my neighborhood take residents' concerns seriously.  | .872  |       |       |       |
| The police in my neighborhood do a good job.   | .886  |       |       |       |
| The people in this area have a good relationship with the police.  | .792  |       |       |       |
| The police in my neighborhood are never there when you need them.<br>(reversed)  | .538  |       |       | .537  |
| When you are at home on mornings, how often do you look out of your window to see what's happening in your surroundings?                       |       | .891  |       |       |
| When you are at home on afternoons, how often do you look out of your window to see what's happening in your surroundings?                     |       | .895  |       |       |
| When you are at home on evenings, how often do you look out of your window to see what's happening in your surroundings?                       |       | .866  |       |       |
| When you are at home on late night/early morning hours, how often do you look out of your window to see what's happening in your surroundings? |       | .772  |       |       |
| If I see a crime in progress, I would take some action to stop it.   |       |       | .579  |       |
| If I see a crime in progress, I would call the police.   |       |       | .660  |       |
| If I see a crime happening in my neighborhood, I would take care of it myself.   | .422  |       | .572  |       |
| If I see a crime happening in my neighborhood, I will call the police.   | .500  |       | .581  |       |
| I will not call the police if I see a crime in my neighborhood.<br>(reversed)  |       |       | .427  | .713  |
| Eigenvalue   | 5.306 | 3.059 | 1.914 | 1.103 |
| Percentage of variance explained   | 33.16 | 19.12 | 11.96 | 6.89  |

Note: Only factor loadings > .3 are shown.

### ***Control variables.***

In addition to the variables described above a few control variables will be added to the analyses. First of all the common factors gender and age are taken into account. The variable gender is recoded so that a score of 0 indicates 'male' and 1 indicates 'female'. For age the respondents were asked to fill in their year of birth, which is recoded to their age at the moment of the survey by computing a new variable which calculates this. Next to this the degree of urbanity of the neighborhood is taken into account. Evidence suggests that crime rates are much higher in big cities than in smaller cities or rural areas (Glaeser & Sacerdote, 1999). While in a more urban place crime is more present, those respondents have a higher chance of being victimized before, in accordance with routine activities theory as mentioned above. Furthermore Huston et al. (1981) state that interveners differ from non-intervenors in terms of their exposure to crime. Interveners are known to be more exposed to crime and by taking the urbanity of someone's neighborhood into account we can exclude this factor from causing any possible effects. Therefore it is necessary to control for whether the respondents are living in an urban area or in a rural place. By taking this as a control variable in the analyses, we can conclude that a possibly found effect exists regardless of the urbanity of the place they live in. This variable is measured with answer categories ranging from 'extremely urban' to 'not urban'. The item is recoded so that a higher score indicates a more urban environment.

### ***Methods.***

For testing a mediation model the following steps will be conducted (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). First regression analyses are conducted for the direct effects of prior victimization on both direct and indirect intervention. Next, four separate linear regression tests are conducted to check whether the expected mechanisms are at work, like described in the hypotheses. The first test is looking at the effect of prior victimization on police satisfaction, followed by a regression of police satisfaction and indirect intervention. Next another linear regression is conducted for the effect of prior victimization on guardianship and a regression of guardianship on direct intervention. Lastly regressions will be conducted for both pathways with the independent as well as the mediator variable as predictors for the outcome variable. This way the direct effect will be controlled for the mediator. These linear regressions will show whether the expected effects are significant, regardless of the control variables that will be taken into account. A significance level of 5% ( $\alpha = .05$ ) is used in the two sided test.

## Results.

In this section the descriptives of the variables will be discussed followed by the results of the regression analyses. These analyses are testing the hypotheses formulated above. While the control variables are not the main interest of this thesis they will only be presented and not be interpreted. Taking them into account makes sure these personal characteristics do not influence any of the results, but their effects will not be mentioned explicitly.

### *Descriptive statistics.*

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics.*

|                       | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>sd.</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Prior victimization   | 0           | 1           | .28         | .448       |
| Police satisfaction   | 1           | 5           | 3.60        | .993       |
| Guardianship          | 1           | 5           | 2.21        | .819       |
| Indirect intervention | 1           | 5           | 4.47        | .760       |
| Direct intervention   | 1           | 5           | 3.53        | .960       |
| Gender                | 0           | 1           | .49         | .500       |
| Age                   | 16          | 91          | 51          | 16.789     |
| Urbanity              | 1           | 5           | 3.07        | 1.273      |

In table 1 the descriptive statistics of the variables are shown. The final sample consisted of 2426 respondents, as noted above. For prior victimization the mean is .277 (min = 0; max = 1; mean = .277). A score of 0 represents that someone did not have a victimization experience in the past. The mean indicates that approximately 28% of the respondents did have a victimization experience in the past.

For the degree of police satisfaction there is a mean of 3.599 (min = 1; max = 5; mean = 3.599). This is slightly more tending towards the maximum, saying that on average people have slightly more positive than negative attitudes towards the police.

With regard to guardianship the mean is 2.211 (min = 1; max = 5; mean = 2.211). This average is tending more towards the minimum, indicating that people are not very actively concerned about the safety in their environment.



Next there is indirect intervention with a mean of 4.467 (min = 1; max = 5; mean = 4.467). This value is quite close towards the maximum, with the maximum representing that people are more likely to be intervening in that way. This leads to the conclusion that people are overall quite likely to be calling the police when they witness something deviant around them.

The last dependent variable is direct intervention, which has a mean of 3.533 (min = 1; max = 5; mean = 3.533). Although this value is lower than for the other form of intervention it is still slightly more towards the maximum, showing that people are more likely to be actively disrupting a criminal scene than doing nothing at such a moment.

Next there are the descriptives of the control variables. For gender the mean is .49 (min = 0; max = 1; mean = .49). A score of 0 indicates men and a 1 indicates women. Thus approximately 49% of the respondents is a women, showing that gender is nearly perfectly distributed in this sample.

For age at the moment of the survey the mean is 51 years old (min = 16; max = 91; mean = 59), with ages ranging from 16 until 91 years.

Finally we see urbanity which has a mean of 3.07 (min = 1; max = 5; mean = 3.07). A higher score indicates that the residence is extremely urban and a lower score that it is not urban at all. The mean is exactly in the middle, saying that the degree of urbanity is equally distributed in the sample.

### ***Regression analyses.***

This thesis will use a linear regression as mentioned above. There are a few assumptions which need to be checked before conducting this test. The first assumption is that all variables need to have a normal distribution. This condition is tested with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The results reveal that none of the variables is normally distributed; prior victimization ( $D(2426) = .455$ ;  $p = .000$ ), police satisfaction ( $D(2426) = .085$ ,  $p = .000$ ), guardianship ( $D(2426) = .124$ ,  $p = .000$ ), indirect intervention ( $D(2426) = .142$ ,  $p = .000$ ), direct intervention ( $D(2426) = .293$ ,  $p = .000$ ). This is not a problem according to the Central Limit Theorem when the sample size is large enough ( $N > 30$ ), which is the case in this study ( $N = 2426$ ). Second, the sample which is used has to be a random one. This is the case as mentioned in the data section. Next to this the homoscedasticity assumption needs to be checked, which is done with Levene's Test. This

statistical test checks whether the variances between groups (in this case those who have been victimized and those who have not) are equal. Results show that for police satisfaction ( $F(1,2424) = 1.033, p = .310$ ), guardianship ( $F(1,2424) = .400, p = .527$ ) and direct intervention ( $F(1,2424) = .036, p = .850$ ) the variances between the groups are equal and the homoscedasticity condition is thus met. But for indirect intervention this is not the case ( $F(1,2424) = 12.464, p = .000$ ), which will be taken into account because it may influence the results of the analyses. At last, the data have to show a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This assumption is tested by looking at the scatterplot of the standardized residuals. The plots show a clear linear trend for all of the relationships between variables, which will be tested (see conceptual model).

*Indirect intervention pathway.*

Table 3. *Regression parameters indirect intervention pathway.*

|                          | <b>Model 1</b>                               |             | <b>Model 2</b>                        |             | <b>Model 3</b>                          |             | <b>Model 4</b>                          |             |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|---|-------------|---|-------------|
|                          | (Dependent: in-<br>direct interven-<br>tion) |             | (Dependent: satis-<br>faction police) |             | (Dependent: indi-<br>rect intervention) |             | (Dependent: indi-<br>rect intervention) |             |
|                          | <b>B</b>                                     | <b>s.e.</b> | <b>B</b>                              | <b>s.e.</b> | <b>B</b>                                | <b>s.e.</b> | <b>B</b>                                | <b>s.e.</b> |
| Constant                 | 3.736***                                     | .062        | 3.114***                              | .085        | 3.178***                                | .075        | 3.150***                                | .075        |
| Prior victi-<br>mization | .094**                                       | .033        | -.083                                 | .045        |   |             | .109**                                  | .032        |
| Satisfaction<br>police   |  |             |                                       |             | .186***                                 | .014        | .188***                                 | .014        |
| Gender                   | .022   | .029        | .076                                  | .040        | .002                                    | .028        | .008                                    | .028        |
| Age                      | .015***                                      | .001        | .008***                               | .001        | .013***                                 | .001        | .013***                                 | .001        |
| Urbanity                 | -.016  | .012        | .016                                  | .016        | -.015                                   | .011        | -.019                                   | .011        |
| R <sup>2</sup>           | .107   |             | .022                                  |             | .162                                    |             | .167                                    |             |
| N                        | 2426   |             | 2426                                  |             | 2426                                    |             | 2426                                    |             |

\*\*\* $p < .001$  \*\* $p < .01$

Table 2 presents the results of the first regression analysis. In the first model the direct effect of prior victimization on indirect intervention is tested. This effect turns out to be positively significant ( $b = .094; t = 2.857; p = .004$ ), saying that those who have been victimized before are

more willing to be intervening indirectly in a deviant situation. The overall model fit was  $R^2 = .107$ , which is a bit low. This means that the variables in this model do only explain 10.7% of the variation in indirect intervention.

To test whether this effect is mediated by the level of police satisfaction a simple regression of 'prior victimization' on 'satisfaction police' (model 2) is conducted. This effect turns out to be not significant ( $b = -.083$ ;  $t = -1.843$ ;  $p = .065$ ). This shows that whether someone had a victimization experience before does have a significant effect on his or her degree of satisfaction with the police, in contrast with the expectations of the first hypothesis.

The third model shows the regression analysis with 'indirect intervention' as the dependent variable. This model demonstrates a significant positive effect of 'satisfaction police' ( $b = .186$ ;  $t = 12.952$ ;  $p = .000$ ). The degree of satisfaction with the police thus does influence the likelihood of intervening indirectly by calling the police. In this model the predictors explained 16.2% of the variance ( $R^2 = .162$ ). The second hypothesis of this thesis states that those who have more satisfied attitudes towards the police will be more willing to intervene into crime. The found effects is positive and thus in support of this hypothesis: people who are more satisfied with the police are more likely to be willing to intervene indirectly.

At last a regression is conducted with both independent variables as predictors for indirect intervention. This model shows that both prior victimization ( $b = .109$ ;  $t = 3.444$ ;  $p = .001$ ) and police satisfaction ( $b = .188$ ;  $t = 13.101$ ;  $p = .000$ ) do have a positive significant effect on the outcome variable. This model explains 16.7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .167$ ) in the outcome variable indirect intervention. The direct effect is still significant, indicating a relationship between prior victimization and indirect intervention after controlling for police satisfaction. Concluding we can say that both victimization as well as the degree of police satisfaction significant predictors are for indirect intervention.

*Direct intervention pathway.*

Table 4. *Regression parameters direct intervention pathway.*

|                     | <b>Model 1</b>                   |             | <b>Model 2</b>            |             | <b>Model 3</b>                   |             | <b>Model 4</b>                   |             |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
|                     | (Dependent: direct intervention) |             | (Dependent: guardianship) |             | (Dependent: direct intervention) |             | (Dependent: direct intervention) |             |
|                     | <b>B</b>                         | <b>s.e.</b> | <b>B</b>                  | <b>s.e.</b> | <b>B</b>                         | <b>s.e.</b> | <b>B</b>                         | <b>s.e.</b> |
| Constant            | 3.699***                         | .081        | 2.387***                  | .071        | 3.652***                         | .098        | 3.618***                         | .098        |
| Prior victimization | .181***                          | .043        | .016                      | .037        |                                  |             | .180***                          | .043        |
| Guardianship        |                                  |             |                           |             | .035                             | .023        | .034                             | .023        |
| Gender              | -.325***                         | .038        | -.044                     | .033        | -.333***                         | .038        | -.324***                         | .038        |
| Age                 | .003*                            | .001        | -.003**                   | .001        | .003*                            | .001        | .003*                            | .001        |
| Urbanity            | -.064***                         | .015        | .003                      | .013        | -.059***                         | .015        | -.064***                         | .015        |
| R <sup>2</sup>      | .048                             |             | .005                      |             | .042                             |             | .049                             |             |
| N                   | 2426                             |             | 2426                      |             | 2426                             |             | 2426                             |             |

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

In table 3 – model 1 the direct effect of prior victimization on direct intervention is presented. The effect is significant ( $b = .181$ ;  $t = 4.222$ ;  $p = .000$ ), implying that people with a victimization experience are more willing to intervene directly. The model is explaining only 4.8% of the variance ( $R^2 = .048$ ) in direct intervention, which is very low.

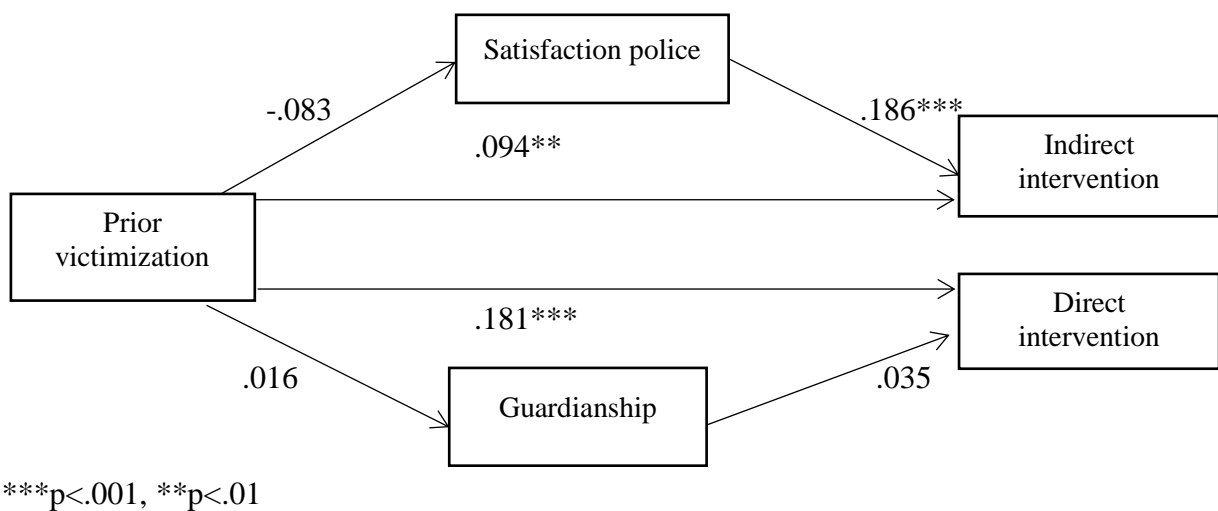
This effect of prior victimization on guardianship is not significant ( $b = .016$ ;  $t = .429$ ;  $p = .668$ ), which shows that having had a victimization experience in the past does not affect the degree of being an active guardian in your environment. These findings do not support the third hypothesis of this study which states that those who are prior victimized will be more focused on safety.

The second part of the pathway is also not significant ( $b = .035$ ;  $t = 1.502$ ;  $p = .133$ ). Thus there is not an effect of guardianship on direct intervention, in contrast to the fourth hypothesis.

The fourth model includes both predicting variables for direct intervention. The results show that prior victimization is still significant ( $b = .180$ ;  $t = 4.210$ ;  $p = .000$ ) and guardianship still non-significant ( $b = .034$ ;  $t = 1.470$ ;  $p = .142$ ). This means that when controlling for guardianship prior victimization still does have an effect on direct intervention.

It is not needed to conduct a Sobel test of mediation because, as illustrated in the figure below, not all effects are found to be significant. If they would be, this test could give us insight in whether the mediator significantly carries the effect between the independent and dependent variables, but since there is no mediation in the results this test is not needed.

Figure 2. Model with results



## **Conclusion & Discussion.**

### ***Conclusion.***

Previous research has indicated several ways in which such a victimization experience influences the people with regard to a lot of different life domains (Hanson, Sawyer, Begle & Hubel, 2010). While it is known that bystander intervention into crime can help reduce harm, this thesis tried to figure out possible mechanisms which could influence the relation between a prior victimization and someone's willingness to intervene either directly or indirectly. Therefore the objective of this thesis was to find an answer to the following question: "How does prior victimization influence someone's willingness to intervene into crime?". This was done by investigating two different pathways of intervention, namely direct (disrupting the scene yourself) and indirect (calling the police).

The results indeed showed that a prior victimization experience does influence someone's willingness to intervene. A positive direct effect was found for indirect intervention as well as direct intervention. Firstly this means that someone who has been victimized is more willing to call the police when something deviant happens around them, then someone who did not have such an experience. This effect is in contrast to what we expected to find. Based on theoretical evidence it was expected that someone's attitude towards the police could be the mediating mechanism which would cause a decreased willingness to intervene indirectly (Hickman & Simpson, 2003; Franklyn, 2012). Literature suggests that victim's experiences with the police are often causing negative attitudes, because of impoliteness, unfairness or immorality. The fact that the direct effect is in the reversed direction with regard to the expectations may also explain why the expected mediation is not significant. Prior victimization is not found to have an effect on someone's degree of satisfaction with the police. But, someone's level of satisfaction with the police did show a positive effect on someone's willingness to intervene indirectly. Thus, the more satisfied attitudes people have towards the police, the more willing they will be to call them if there is a criminal situation.

The second pathway was looking at someone's willingness to intervene directly. Direct intervention is when someone is actively trying to disrupt the deviance from happening (Hart & Miethe, 2008). For this there was found a positive direct effect as well, implicating that those who have been victimized before are more willing to directly intervene in a deviant situation, which is in line with the expectations. Literature suggested that a victimization experience might increase someone's unsafety feelings which makes them take more protective actions by

guarding their environment more than someone who did not have such an experience (Miethe & Meier, 1990). But the expected mediating mechanism was not found. Thus, we can not say that a prior victimization does increase someone's guarding. Furthermore this guardianship was expected to increase the willingness to intervene directly because those people would be better able to distinguish deviant situations and know what to do. This effect was also not found in the analyses.

An additional interesting result in the tables above is that the explained variances ( $R^2$ ) for the indirect intervention models are considerably higher than for the models for direct intervention. This means that the factors in the models for indirect intervention do explain more of the variance in that outcome variable compared to the direct intervention model. This difference indicates that the first pathway is explained more by the expected factors, which is in accordance with the fact that this pathway does have more significant effects.

These results imply that further research in this field is needed, while bystander intervention can be effective for decreasing crime rates or at least decreasing the harm. Since there are direct relationships between prior victimization and each type of bystander intervention further research needs to investigate which mechanisms might be at work in order to be better able to understand which causes this relationship.

### ***Discussion.***

To conclude a few limitations of this thesis will be mentioned. Firstly, this study takes someone's own victimization experience as a starting point. The indirect victimization model states that even though someone may not be victimized himself, a victimization among their close contacts may also affect their attitudes (Fox, Nobles & Piquero, 2009). By taking personal experiences as the predicting factor this vision is neglected although this might be of influence. Nevertheless the results of the analyses are not expected to be influenced by this, because the intent of this thesis was to find out whether someone's own experience mattered. Although it is beyond the scope of this study, it might be useful for further research to try and find out whether taking a broader definition of victimized people changes the results.

Furthermore little information is known about the victimizations of those who did say they have been victimized. For example the type of crime they experienced is unknown, although this could be relevant. When someone has been victim of a fraud this is less likely to be

influencing their willingness to intervene in a case of sexual harassment then when someone has experienced exactly this type of violence themselves. Moreover the data give no insight in how long ago the victimization took place. It might be the case that the (negative) effects of the experience fade over time (Miethe, 1991; Norris & Kaniasty, 1994). Thus when it happened a few years ago someone's guardianship has faded, someone is not actively supervising their environment anymore.

The way in which the concept police satisfaction was measured in this data might be an additional shortcoming of this thesis. Because secondary data were used, this concept was measured in a general way, asking respondents what their satisfaction was with the police in a broad way. But with regard to the theoretical framework underlying the expected mechanisms another way of measuring could be more accurate. The theory states that someone's (negative) experience with the police in a previous contact determines whether someone is willing to contact the police again in the future. A measurement which is more specifically taking someone's prior police experiences into account could provide additional information and could be more accurate to test the hypothesis.

As noted above future research needs to investigate which other mechanisms might be mediating the positive relationship between prior victimization and both types of intervention. Although little research is done about this evidence suggests that victimization may decrease someone's level of empathy (Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012). Faith in people in general decreases as a result of their victimization experience. This fact is in contradiction to the positive effect this thesis has found between victimization and willingness to intervene and gives another reason to investigate this field of work.

In conclusion, this thesis did contribute to the field of criminology by investigating whether mechanisms of police satisfaction and guardianship did mediate the effect of prior victimization on both direct as well as indirect intervention. The results revealed that these factors were not significantly mediating, which implicates further research is needed on this topic.



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