

Summary

I. Background of the study

Motivation for the study

Media reporting has repeatedly conveyed the impression that the problem of shoplifting in the Dutch retail sector has grown in recent years. However, an up-to-date and reliable picture of the total scale and precise nature of shoplifting in the Dutch retail sector is lacking. A large proportion of shoplifting incidents in the Netherlands remains hidden (the so-called ‘dark number’). Therefore, Ipsos I&O, in collaboration with Bureau Beke and commissioned by the Research and Data Centre (*Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Datacentrum, hereinafter: WODC*) conducted research into the nature, scale, and ways of shoplifting in the Dutch retail sector and the sector’s resilience. The aim of the study is to provide the National Platform for Crime Control (*het Nationaal Platform Criminaliteitsbeheersing, NPC*)¹ with starting points for designing a new policy for the prevention and repression of shoplifting.

Objective and research questions

The study focuses on the following central research questions:

- What are the nature, ways and scale of shoplifting in the Dutch retail sector?
- In what ways can the resilience of the retail sector against shoplifting be increased?

Each central research question includes a series of sub-questions. The study focuses on shoplifting in physical retail stores that occurs during opening hours by customers and visitors. Shoplifting via burglary, shoplifting by employees, or supplier fraud are excluded. To understand the scale, we consider both the number of shoplifting incidents and the losses suffered by retailers because of shoplifting.

Methods

The study consists of a combination of research methods. First, a concise desk research (‘quick scan’) of the scientific literature on shoplifting was conducted to map offender characteristics, motives, and methods of shoplifters. This desk research served as input for other research activities, such as developing questionnaires and interview protocols. We conducted 11 interviews with experts from trade associations within retail, supermarket chains, and the criminal justice system (‘expert interviews’) and 6 interviews with security staff and retailers (‘in-depth interviews’). Two surveys were also fielded: among offenders and among retailers working in the retail sector. The retailers’ survey formed the basis for estimating the total scale of and losses due to shoplifting.

The response to the retailers’ survey (n=1.519) was achieved through data collection across various panels (the I&O Research Panel, the I&O Research Entrepreneurs Panel, the i-Say panel, and the GfK panel), a sample from the LISA Establishments Register (*het LISA-vestigingenregister*), and

¹ The NPC is a partnership between the government, the police, the Public Prosecution Service (*het Openbaar Ministerie, hereinafter: OM*) and various business organizations, such as Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (*Verbond van Nederlandse Ondernemingen – Nederlands Christelijk Werkgeversverbond, VNO-NCW*) and Dutch Association of SMEs (*Midden- en Kleinbedrijf Nederland, MKB-Nederland*).

through distribution of an ‘open link’ within trade associations and supermarket chains. The offenders’ survey (n=500) was fielded in the I&O Research Panel.² The sample for this survey consists mainly of occasional shoplifters in supermarkets.

In addition to analysis of primary survey data, various sources were consulted for secondary data analyses, namely: Statistics Netherlands (*het Centraal Bureau Statistiek, hereinafter: CBS*) microdata on suspects of shoplifting³, published judicial decisions on shoplifting⁴, police statistics on the number of recorded shoplifting offences, and other relevant figures collected during the study.

In the final phase of the study, two expert meetings were held. The focus of these meetings was to reflect with experts on the (provisional) findings of the study and to discuss the feasibility of different measures against shoplifting.

II. Findings of the study

Scale and nature of shoplifting

Police statistics for the period 2015–2024 show a fluctuating picture of the number of recorded shoplifting incidents. In 2024, the number of shoplifting incidents recorded by the police stood at nearly 39,000. In the study, using various estimation methods, the scale of the *unregistered* share of shoplifting (the ‘dark number’) was calculated. Based on the most plausible scenario in the retailer survey, an estimate was obtained of 833,000 observed shoplifting incidents in Dutch retail in 2024, with a statistical lower bound of 647,000 and an upper bound of 1,019,000 shoplifting incidents. This equates to on average just under 1 observed shoplifting incident per store per month. In addition, respondents were asked about the number of suspected shoplifting incidents, but due to possible differences in interpretation these figures were excluded from the primary estimate of the scale. The estimate of the extent involves, in addition to the statistical margin of uncertainty, a—non-quantifiable—uncertainty that is inherent in making estimates based on a survey (which involves self-reporting) and due to the various assumptions used (regarding the validity, reliability and representativeness of the outcomes). Several scenarios were examined, validated and assessed on their assumptions, and from this the estimates according to the most plausible scenario were derived.

In estimating losses due to shoplifting, a distinction was made between (1) turnover loss/product damage (direct losses) and (2) the time retailers spend on handling shoplifting incidents and the costs of disrupted inventory management (indirect losses). The direct losses from observed shoplifting in Dutch retail in 2024 are estimated at between 39 and 60 million euros. For suspected shoplifting incidents, the annual estimate is 143 to 245 million euros. Taken together, this amounts

² Before the start of data collection, a screening first took place in the I&O Research Panel. Only panel members who indicated in the screening that they had committed shoplifting once or more in the past five years were invited.

³ To identify under- or over-representation of certain groups in the suspect population, we used two reference populations in the analysis of Statistics Netherlands (CBS) microdata: (1) all suspects of a criminal offence in an index year and (2) all Dutch residents aged 12 years and older.

⁴ The analysis of judicial decisions served to gain insight into the characteristics and methods of suspects of shoplifting. This analysis concerns a specific group of shoplifters.

to roughly 0.2 percent of net turnover in the retail sector. Shoplifting therefore has economic consequences and financial impact on the sector. This is an important observation in a context where the average retailer operates on small profit margins and there is increasing competition from online stores.⁵ In addition, shoplifting leads to substantial indirect losses in the form of lost workdays that retailers spend on handling cases (3 to 4 workdays per year) and through disrupted inventory management (approximately 114 to 157 million euros per year).

We wish to emphasize that the estimates of the extent of shoplifting and the direct and indirect losses due to shoplifting are accompanied by various uncertainties. First, the estimates are based on self-reporting by retailers. This is a source of uncertainty that generally arises when conducting survey-based research. Furthermore, regarding shoplifting we know that, in addition to the observed and suspected incidents, a portion of shoplifting remains entirely invisible to retailers. In estimating losses due to shoplifting, there are other factors that may introduce uncertainty. Because reliable registration figures are generally lacking, it may be more difficult to make an estimate of the annual direct losses due to shoplifting, and to an even greater degree of the indirect losses (the time involved in handling shoplifting incidents). An alternative estimation method based on the number of police reports leads to a lower estimate of the number of shoplifting incidents. Various factors may play a role in this discrepancy, but the difference cannot be clearly or fully explained. Although the uncertainty and range around the number of shoplifting incidents and the losses for retailers in the estimates are relatively large, this does not detract from the conclusion that shoplifting is a common phenomenon that many retailers have (or will have) to deal with and that it leads to considerable direct and indirect losses.

Shoplifting is a widespread phenomenon and occurs in virtually all branches of the retail sector. However, the nature of the problem differs by branch. Two factors may influence the nature of shoplifting: (1) the type of shop and (2) the type of product. Relevant characteristics of the shop are:

1. **The degree of visibility in the shop ('span of control')**. Shops with less visibility (in the customer's eyes) offer more opportunities to commit shoplifting. Factors such as the presence or absence of self-service, the size of the shop, and the number of staff present influence this.
2. **The type of customers**. The profile of the average shoplifter corresponds to the profile of the average customer. Some shops (such as supermarkets) have a varied customer profile, others target a more specific type of customer (such as a drug store with a strong focus on cosmetics items or a hardware store). In addition, the extent to which there is a regular or changing clientele matters; more theft occurs in a shop with a changing clientele where the customer and retailer know each other less well.
3. **The location of the shop**. The degree of urbanization and the type of location within a centre where the shop is situated determine the scale and nature of shoplifting. For example, the number of shoplifting incidents is higher in very urban areas, and offenders who are homeless, or who are addicted, are more common in neighbourhood or district shopping centres.

⁵ The number of webshops in the Netherlands is increasing (see Tenda (2024, 9 August) and the turnover of webshops in the Netherlands is increasing (CBS (2022, 20 December)).

In addition to the type of shop, the type of product plays a role in shoplifting. This includes, for example, the price of a product and the extent to which a product can be resold. This is also linked to the type of shoplifter. For instance, the professional shoplifter is more likely to choose a product that lends itself to re-selling, whereas the occasional shoplifter in a supermarket is more likely to opt for products for personal consumption.

Characteristics of shoplifters

The concise desk research and the retailers' survey do not clearly show that certain personal characteristics are more common among shoplifters. Which personal characteristics predominate among shoplifters in each shop mainly depends on the type of shop and the type of customers who go there. However, the analysis of *suspects* of shoplifting who come to the attention of the police or are prosecuted in court, shows clear differences in sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Suspects are more often than average male, underage or young adults, low-educated, and have a lower socioeconomic position/income. Moreover, they more often belong to a single-person, single-parent, or institutional household. They also more often live in (very) urban areas. This concerns a specific group of shoplifting offenders: those caught, known to the police, and prosecuted in court. This is a small group relative to the total number of shoplifters.

Types of shoplifters

Based on the study's findings, we propose a general threefold division of offender categories in shoplifting:

1. **The occasional shoplifter:** the more incidental shoplifter who mainly shoplifts because the 'opportunity presents itself', without a clear premeditated plan and for personal use.
2. **The repeat shoplifter:** the shoplifter who commits shoplifting on a fairly regular basis, but without clear systematic planning, strategic tools, or with the intent of selling stolen goods.
3. **The professional shoplifter:** the shoplifter who systematically commits shoplifting, in a professional and planned manner, and targets products that lend themselves to reselling and have a higher value. A common subcategory is a member of a mobile gang that systematically commits shoplifting.

The most common type of shoplifter is the occasional shoplifter. These are usually one-off shoplifting incidents, although shoplifting can occur more than once even among occasional shoplifters. Based on the study, it is not possible to say how large the share of professional, mobile gangs is within the total number of shoplifting incidents, but according to trade associations and other experts, shoplifting by this offender category is less common than shoplifting by the 'ordinary' occasional shoplifter. However, theft by mobile gangs involves larger losses. Because the repeat shoplifter steals repeatedly, it is plausible that this offender category is responsible for a relatively large share of shoplifting incidents.

Reasons for committing shoplifting

There is a varied set of reasons that lead offenders to commit shoplifting. Some reasons are rational in nature (such as estimating the chance of being caught and the possible consequences of being apprehended), while others are more principled in nature (such as the belief that the shop where the theft is committed is already earning more than enough). Based on the study's findings, we make a threefold division of the reasons shoplifters have for committing shoplifting:

1. **Personal factors:** personal reasons for shoplifters to commit shoplifting (such as economic deprivation, drug use, or being able to resell the stolen product).
2. **Facilitating factors:** conditions that are (or must be) present to commit shoplifting and that, as it were, 'facilitate' the theft (such as a low chance of being caught, 'lenient' consequences after being apprehended, stealing a product that can be easily concealed). The underlying idea is that the decision to commit shoplifting is a rational calculation. It matters whether factors are present that create a favourable opportunity structure for shoplifting.
3. **Justifications:** arguments used by shoplifters to justify the shoplifting that are more principled in nature. A common argument is that shops nowadays make so much profit that shoplifting is not really theft.

The reasons for shoplifting in this threefold division can (partly) overlap. For example, if a shoplifter has little to spend (economic deprivation), this affects the rational calculation (facilitating factor) or the principled calculation (justification) he makes regarding the commission of the theft. The study further shows that specific types of shoplifters usually have specific reasons for committing theft. For example, selling stolen goods is a motive for mobile gangs, and financial motives and peer pressure play a greater role among young shoplifters. Offenders who shoplift more frequently use the justification that the shop earns enough more often than the shoplifter who commits theft only once in a while. Among this group of repeat offenders, the rational calculation of factors such as the chance of being caught and possible consequences of being apprehended plays a greater role.

A new personal factor that emerged from the study is that shoplifting is a 'cry for help'. This factor mainly plays a role in shoplifting by mentally confused people. In this case, shoplifting is not the primary goal but is secondary to the need for help. The underlying assumption is that being caught for shoplifting leads to attention and possibly some form of care provision.

Ways of shoplifting

The ways of shoplifting that emerged in the study largely align with the central typology of methods identified in the concise desk research: (1) hiding the product and thus remaining unnoticed (in some cases using external tools), (2) deceiving shop staff, (3) exploiting specific characteristics of the shop, and (4) applying special skills. According to retailers, the most common method among shoplifters is simply hiding the product or products in their pocket, bag, or shopping trolley or basket (method 1). In most cases, this happens without specific external tools. The use of external tools is mainly a characteristic strategy of the professional shoplifter. Offenders themselves often say they shoplift by exploiting specific characteristics of the shop, scanning an item incorrectly with the hand scanner, or weighing products incorrectly (method 3).

Within the four existing main methods of shoplifting, specific techniques emerged from the study. For example, in deceiving shop staff, shoplifters use old receipts to take new products without paying; these receipts are shown if they are approached by a shop employee. To hide products, offenders can also use special tools (such as prepared bags), but this is a technique mainly used by professional shoplifters. Since the introduction of the self-checkout, shoplifters also use specific techniques at these self-checkouts; we can see the self-checkout as a characteristic of the shop. Shoplifters, for example, deliberately choose (smaller) products without a barcode. This also shows that the methods of shoplifters are not static and that offenders adapt their ways of shoplifting to

developments in the shop. For this reason (among others), this study does not provide an exhaustive overview of all methods used by shoplifters.

A growing side effect of the shoplifting phenomenon is aggression and violence by offenders. Rather than a specific method, this can be seen as an attempt by the shoplifter to evade getting caught for the theft. Aggression and violence are therefore behaviours that can occur across different offender categories and ways of shoplifting. The increase in aggression and violence by shoplifters has been particularly visible since the COVID-19 pandemic and is linked by stakeholders, among other things, to a broader erosion of social norms in society. However, this possible explanation was not investigated as such; additional research into this phenomenon is therefore desirable.

External explanations for shoplifting

The study identified four external factors that may be associated with the nature and scale of shoplifting in the Dutch retail sector:

1. **The introduction of the self-checkout:** Popular discourse suggests a direct relationship between the introduction of the self-checkout and growth in shoplifting. Retailers recognise this relationship as well, and offenders (from a sample consisting mainly of occasional shoplifters) indicate that the self-checkout has made shoplifting more attractive. Experts, however, are less convinced by the 'self-checkout argument'. They point, among other things, to the fact that retail is highly diverse and not all retailers offer this technology. The approach to shoplifting must therefore also (continue to) focus on other forms of shoplifting.
2. **Inflation:** Besides the introduction of the self-checkout, popular discourse also holds that there is a relationship between shoplifting and the inflation of recent years. According to experts, however, it is unlikely that inflation now has a stronger influence than in earlier periods of price increases. Offenders (from a sample consisting mainly of occasional shoplifters) nevertheless state that inflation has indeed made shoplifting more attractive for them.
3. **Availability of shop staff:** The availability of shop staff is related to shoplifting in two ways: through (1) the tight labour market for shop staff and (2) the average profile of shop employees. First, staff shortages affect the anonymity experienced and the estimated chance of being caught by shoplifters. In addition, shop staff are increasingly relatively young and inexperienced. This affects their ability to recognise shoplifting and to be able or willing to address shoplifters. Furthermore, with less experienced staff, shoplifters may be more inclined to display aggression or violence. Offenders mention the 'shop staff argument' less often than inflation and the self-checkout.
4. **Norms regarding shoplifting:** Both experts and retailers observe a broader erosion of norms around shoplifting. This occurs among customers, who, for example, say that stealing is not so bad because the shop already makes enough profit, but also in society as a whole. This leads to a tendency to downplay shoplifting.

The four factors are presented as external factors, as they concern developments in retail or society more broadly. However, the factors are also related to individual factors, such as reasons for committing shoplifting and ways of shoplifting. For example, the presence of self-checkouts or fewer staff in a shop constitutes the context in which shoplifters commit theft and to which they

adapt their methods. Erosion of norms around shoplifting in society may, in turn, contribute to the way a shoplifter justifies the theft, for example by claiming that it is not a serious breach of the law. Experts therefore state that, in general, it is difficult to say which broader developments in retail or society influence the phenomenon of shoplifting.

Available (policy) instruments against shoplifting

The study discussed various preventive (policy) instruments against shoplifting that are currently available in retail. The measure used most often—and considered the most effective by both retailers and experts—is greeting or addressing customers. This takes the customer out of anonymity. A relatively large proportion of retailers also have CCTV surveillance in the shop.

Besides CCTV, there are other technical measures, such as security mirrors, dummy items, tags on products, and the securing of shelves. Other preventive (policy) instruments include security guards in the shop, communication with other retailers, training employees, (random) checks at the self-checkout or of bags, and warning (potential) shoplifters about the possible consequences of shoplifting.

For the available (policy) instruments for punishing shoplifters (repressive), we can distinguish between measures in the criminal law and civil law domains. Measures within criminal law include notification or reporting to the police, the reprimand measure (*reprimandemaatregel*), and prosecution by OM. Other available instruments fall outside the criminal law domain: civil claim, individual and collective exclusion orders, and the extra-judicial HALT intervention. Reporting to the police is among the most taken repressive measures.⁶ Slightly more than a third of retailers say they do this at times; a large proportion of retailers therefore do not. The most frequently cited reasons for retailers *not* to report are that it takes a lot of time and that ‘it is pointless anyway’. In addition, a relatively large proportion of retailers allow a shoplifter they catch to pay anyway, in which case strictly speaking there is no (successful) shoplifting and thus no repression (punishment).

The study shows that certain (policy) instruments are mainly aimed at a specific offender category. For example, warning shoplifters about the consequences of being caught for shoplifting has an effect on the occasional shoplifter, but less so on the professional shoplifter. For the professional shoplifter, most measures have a more temporary effect. If a retailer comes up with a new solution, the shoplifter will try to circumvent or respond to it in a ‘creative’ way. This is, as it were, a ‘cat-and-mouse game’.

New (policy) instruments against shoplifting

In addition to the nature, scale, and ways of shoplifting, the study also examined increasing the resilience of retail against shoplifting. In this context, new (policy) instruments—or adjustments to existing (policy) instruments—were proposed. In the area of prevention, these are:

- the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the detection of shoplifting;

⁶ A similar proportion indicates that they sometimes notify the police about shoplifting.

- other innovative technologies for the prevention of shoplifting;
- expanding training for employees;
- a public information campaign on shoplifting.

In the area of repression of shoplifting, the following new measures or adjustments to existing measures emerged from the study:

- deploying AI to enforce exclusion orders;
- central registration in the system of (collective) exclusion orders;
- a variant of the Belgian ‘immediate sanction policy’ (*‘lik-op-stukbeleid’*);
- shifting the handling of shoplifting from the police to other parties, such as municipal enforcement or private parties;
- organizing the reporting process more centrally within retail chains;
- linking more or heavier consequences to the commission of shoplifting.

The new measures were put forward by experts or retailers. Not all measures are equally promising, however. Implementing a variant of the Belgian immediate sanction policy (*lik-op-stukbeleid*) in the Netherlands is a less promising measure due to the capacity it requires from the police. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to detect shoplifters, such as ‘smart cameras’ based on facial recognition, runs up against privacy regulations. There is no solution in sight for this yet. Various privacy considerations also play a role in shifting the handling of shoplifting to private parties. As victims of shoplifting, retailers primarily argue for connecting more or heavier consequences to shoplifting. This measure also pays (too) little attention to the (legal) feasibility and to the capacity it requires from the criminal justice system. In answering the research question of how the resilience of the Dutch retail sector against shoplifting can be increased, it is important to take into account the promise of the various (policy) measures. We do so in the next section, where we formulate five recommendations for increasing the resilience of retail against shoplifting. The assessment of promise is based on a combination of conversations with experts on shoplifting and our own considerations as researchers.

Increasing the resilience of retail against shoplifting

The study identified five promising measures to increase the resilience of the retail sector against shoplifting:

1. **Expanding training for shop employees:** It is important that shop employees receive training on shoplifting across the breadth of the retail sector. This is particularly important now that the average shop employee is relatively young and inexperienced. The training should go beyond merely being able to recognise and detect shoplifting. For example, the training should focus on how employees can approach customers and discourage them from committing theft, but also, more practically, on concrete actions such as checking purchases at the till. With the advent of the self-checkout, the playing field for shoplifters has changed. Training should address this as well. For younger shop employees, however, training alone is no guarantee that they will then *dare* to address shoplifters. Other factors, such as experience, also play a role. The training measure applies to all offender categories, but particularly to the occasional shoplifter and, to a lesser extent, the repeat shoplifter. Implementation lies with retail itself.

2. **Deploying innovative technologies for the prevention of shoplifting:** Examples of technological innovations for the prevention of shoplifting include shopping trolleys with wheels that can block themselves if a customer does not pay, 'smart shopping trolleys' with hand scanners, and chips in products that are linked to customers' bank cards and enable them to pay automatically. Retail abroad already uses these. In our view, such measures are more promising than preventive measures with AI. This measure applies to all offender categories: the essence is that the technology makes it more difficult to leave the shop if payment has not yet been made. The professional shoplifter will likely respond more quickly by adapting his strategy. Implementation of the measure lies with retail, although it specifically targets the segment of retail that is capable of and wishes to make the necessary investments.
3. **Organizing the reporting process more centrally within retail chains:** Due to limited capacity at the police and the OM, civil law measures may be a suitable route for 'smaller' thefts. In cases of strong recidivism and professional, organised shoplifting, however, the criminal law route remains paramount. A measure aimed at this is to organize the reporting process more centrally within retail chains. This can reduce the time retailers need to file a report, but does not remove the problem of limited capacity at the police and the OM. Implementation of this measure lies primarily with retail. The same caveat applies here as to the previous measure: it is mainly useful for retail chains of a certain scale and size, where the necessary investment is feasible and pays off.
4. **Public information campaign on shoplifting:** Due to the perceived erosion of norms around shoplifting, it is important to draw more attention to societal norms regarding shoplifting. This can take the form of a public information campaign. The campaign should focus on the effects of shoplifting for the average retailer, as well as on the possible consequences for offenders.
A public information campaign on shoplifting will mainly influence the occasional shoplifter, for whom shoplifting is an economic calculation of the returns, the chance of being caught, and the possible sanctions that follow. For this measure to be effective, it is important that the content aligns with the behaviour and motives of shoplifters and avoids portraying every customer in advance as a 'potential shoplifter'.
5. **Central registration in the system of (collective) exclusion orders:** A nationwide registration of (repeat and professional) shoplifters is not feasible in the short to medium term due to the public-private cooperation and information exchange required. However, according to the provider of the system (the Centre for Crime Prevention and Safety, *het Centrum voor Criminaliteitspreventie en Veiligheid (CCV)*), a central registration system for collective exclusion orders is realistic in the future. This could identify who the repeat offenders and professional shoplifters are. The measure is aimed mainly at these offender categories. A condition for the desired effect of central registration is that the initial registration by shop owners takes place correctly and efficiently. A challenge with this measure is that, even with a central registration of (collective) exclusion orders, it remains difficult for retailers to recognise which customers in their shop are subject to an exclusion order in their shop or in another shop in the participating area.

In measures to increase the resilience of retail against shoplifting, it is important to emphasise there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution. This is related, first, to the variety within retail and the differences in size and capacity for making investments and taking measures. Second, variation in

the nature, scale, and ways of shoplifting affects the measures themselves. Different types of shops are confronted with different types of shoplifters and thus methods. For a retailer dealing mainly with occasional shoplifters, measures specifically targeting this group are more effective. Variation in other characteristics of shops also plays a role. The presence of self-checkouts is an obvious example.

It is also important to note that some of the recommended measures for increasing resilience against shoplifting are particularly promising for larger shops and retail chains. The deployment of innovative preventive technologies and a centrally organized reporting process require a certain scale and capacity. For the small, independent shopkeeper, such measures are therefore much less feasible. Expanding training for employees is easier to implement and therefore more promising for smaller retailers as well. Another low-key preventive measure against shoplifting—and promising for both large and small shops—is greeting or addressing customers. The study shows that taking customers out of anonymity in this way is, according to both experts and retailers, the most effective form of prevention.

Finally, we can make a few reflective remarks about shoplifting in the Dutch retail sector. The retail sector also makes business-economic trade-offs regarding this phenomenon. Arguments for the introduction of the self-checkout include saving on staff costs and a more positive customer experience. Retailers take into account additional shrinkage due to shoplifting; there is thus a rational, business-economic trade-off of benefits versus costs. Responsibility for tackling shoplifting therefore cannot rest entirely with the government and the criminal justice system. The retail sector itself also bears responsibility. It is already doing so by investing, for example, in measures and technologies to counter or reduce shoplifting at the self-checkout. However, the Dutch retail sector lags behind other countries when it comes to experimenting with such technologies.

Also important to the retailers' own responsibility is the fact that capacity at the police and the OM is limited. This does not mean that these parties cannot or need not play a role in tackling shoplifting. In the discussion about responsibility for the retail sector versus the criminal justice system, it is advisable to consider the distinction between offender categories. Preventive measures are particularly promising for the occasional shoplifter and, to a lesser extent, for the repeat shoplifter. Responsibility for prevention lies mainly with the retail sector. For the professional shoplifter, such as a member of a mobile gang who systematically commits shoplifting, a more robust approach is needed with a greater focus on repressive measures. Here there is indeed a (proactive) role for the police and OM. For the repeat shoplifter—who does not have the systematic planning and professionalism of the professional shoplifter but does commit shoplifting repeatedly—a combined approach by the retail sector and the criminal justice system is likely needed.