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**VICTIMISATION SURVEYS IN COMPARATIVE  
PERSPECTIVE**

Papers from the Stockholm Criminology Symposium 2007

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## Introduction

The second Stockholm Criminology Symposium was organised in Stockholm 4-6 June in 2007. The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI) organised a number of workshops in the conference programme, including sessions on victimisation surveys. The topic of the safety of the citizens has become increasingly popular, and new interest groups have entered the field. Consequently, there is an increasing need of victimisation surveys that provide adequate, up-to-date and also internationally comparable information on the topic.

We selected three topics for workshops on victimisation surveys. The workshops were named: (1) Victimisation surveys in comparative perspective (Session 25), (2) National victimisation surveys (Session 63), and (3) Surveys on violence in intimate relationships (Session 68). Most of the speakers in these sessions finalised their presentations for publication in this book.

The session on Victimisation surveys in comparative perspective was characterised as follows:

*"The workshop discusses current issues in comparative victimisation surveys, including user/practitioner perspective. There is a current boom of interest in comparative victimisation surveys, and high hopes are attached to their revolutionary contribution to comparisons across countries that are believed not to be hampered by similar problems as comparisons of authority-produced statistical data on crime produced from working of statistics of law enforcement and crime control authorities."*

From this session we have two articles elaborating the Eurostat project that is about drafting a new European victimisation survey: Geoffrey Thomas discusses the objectives and possibilities of the Eurostat survey, and Markku Heiskanen & Minna Viuhko provide an overview of the HEUNI proposal for a European large scale victimisation survey. Another new and interesting project is the victimisation survey of the Fundamental Rights Agency targeting the victimisation experience of immigrants and ethnic minorities in Europe. Jo Goodey has written of the challenges and problems encountered in this project; actually, the fieldwork of this survey is currently ongoing (spring 2008), and the first results of the interviews will be released towards the end of 2008.

When planning the victimisation survey workshops, the user perspective was brought to the fore. Antony Pemberton describes the ways that victimisation survey results have been utilised by the Dutch victim support organisation (Slachtofferhulp Nederland, SHN). The SHN uses the results of the International Crime Victims Survey for policy development at national and international level, and monitors various sentiments surrounding the position of victims of crime. Next, Richard Blath from the German Ministry of Justice gives a German view on victimisation surveys. He also identifies the other side of the coin; in particular the problems created when inflating the concept of

crime as is being done by victimisation surveys to comprise acts that are not punishable according to criminal law but subjectively disapproved of by individual survey respondents. Furthermore, as Blath argues, when illustrating the extent of hidden crime, the results of the victimisation surveys may arouse discontent among the citizens against the decision makers' ability to control safety in the society.

In the second workshop, recent developments in national victimisation surveys were discussed. In this book, experiences from Estonia (Andri Ahven), Italy (Maria Giuseppina Muratore & Giovanna Tagliacozzo), Sweden (Annika Töyrä) and the United Kingdom (Alison Walker, and user commentary by Paul Wiles) are presented. In Estonia, four victimisation surveys have been conducted since the beginning of the 1990s. The trends found in these surveys are rather stable, while the recorded crimes have increased considerably. In Italy, victimisation surveys have been considered a good tool to study crime and to analyse the relationships between different aspects of the safety problem. The balance in collecting objective and subjective information has been found important for a full understanding of victimisation as a social problem, thereby arousing political interest for improving the quality of life of the population.

Sweden has started in 2006 a new series of national victimisation surveys. In the future, this survey is to be carried out annually, making 20,000 annual interviews. The annual victimisation survey is to produce up-to-date information on victimisation trends, fear of crime, and confidence in the criminal justice system, all of which are considered to be relevant for crime prevention.

With a history of more than 25 years, the British Crime Survey (BCS) is one of the oldest victimisation surveys in Europe. In Alison Walker's article, the development of the survey and changes for the future are discussed. According to this assessment, the three major contributions of the survey have, over the years, been (1) to estimate the dark figure of crime, (2) to show victimisation trends, and (3) to estimate the risk of crime for different population subgroups. The results of the BCS are published in the same report as the British crime statistics, and thus trends from both sources are also systematically compared.

The second user commentary from the session is by Tarja Mankkinen of the Finnish Ministry of the Interior. In her article, Mankkinen identifies, from the decision maker's point of view, problems related to the Finnish victimisation surveys: the decision makers do not know about the results of the surveys, first of all because the surveys are carried out irregularly on an ad hoc basis, and second, the results are reported in scientific publications, which are of limited use for the decision makers.

In addition to material from the workshops organised by HEUNI, this anthology comprises a further paper presented in the Stockholm Criminology Symposium 2007. It is the article by Rannveig Þórisdóttir and Helgi Gunnlaugsson, presenting results of a national victimisation survey conducted in Iceland. The special interest of the authors focuses on consumer fraud,

which is a common victimisation category in their country, and, as they argue, perhaps differently understood in Iceland compared to other countries that participated in the International Crime Victimization Survey in 2005.

The third victimisation survey session organised by HEUNI dealt with violence in intimate relationships. In this anthology, two violence against women surveys are discussed. One is from Finland (Markku Heiskanen & Minna Piispa), and the other one from Italy (Maria Giuseppina Muratore & Isabella Corazziari). Both surveys found high rates of male partner violence against women. The Italian researchers underline the problem that women often consider violence in close relations as "only something that just happens", rather than a crime, even in the case of rape by their partners or boy-friends.

The last chapter of the book is the article by Sylvia Walby. Her title is "From statistics to indicators: How to convert information from surveys into practical indicators". This is indisputably one of the most important questions that organisations producing victimisation data are facing, because indicators summarise the complex data into a form that is meaningful for decision makers, including the media and the general public. As Walby explains: indicators constitute a key link between an evidence base and policy making.

Kauko Aromaa  
Markku Heiskanen

# European Victimisation Survey

Markku Heiskanen & Minna Viuhko

Eurostat has recently started to produce crime and criminal justice statistics of the Member States, complemented with data from the EU candidate countries and the EFTA/EEA countries. So far, police statistics and prison population statistics have been published (Tavares & Thomas 2008). Comparisons can be based on crime trend changes, but not on crime level comparisons, because of different criminal justice systems in different countries. For country level comparisons other measures are needed. International victimisation surveys provide a tool for country comparisons (van Dijk et al. 2007).

Eurostat made an open call for proposals on crime and victimisation surveys in the autumn of 2005 for developing European standards for victimisation surveys. The application of the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI) was accepted by the European Commission / Eurostat. This article describes briefly the proposal made by HEUNI (Eurostat 2007).

## Task

The proposal on crime and victimisation surveys contains a description of the current situation in the EU Member States. Data from the UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) and the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) survey on existing national victimisation surveys conducted in 2005 were available for an assessment of the experiences of the EU Member States on the topic, providing information on what kind of methodological choices have been made, what institutions have carried out the studies, etc.

The main objective of the project was to develop a proposal for a model to be adopted at European level, which could be implemented either within existing surveys or as a stand-alone survey. The proposal was to contain methodological recommendations (including recommendations on sampling, interviewing mode, interviewing and field-work instructions, estimation procedures), as well as a detailed questionnaire for data collection.

## National experiences

One task of the project was to report on the results of the UNECE-UNODC survey by providing an overview on how crime victimisation surveys are conducted in the EU Member States, in the candidate countries and in the EFTA countries.

The experience concerning victimisation surveys varied considerably across countries, although the International Crime Victimisation Survey (ICVS) has been carried out at least once in all EU Member States in 1989–2005. The ICVS has been conducted five times, and the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland have participated in all of the five ICVS sweeps. These three countries have the most profound knowledge of the ICVS, but also experience of large national victimisation surveys; e.g. in England and Wales the British Crime survey interviews are presently made on a continuous basis. On the other hand, in many countries the statistical authorities<sup>1</sup> had little if any experience of victimisation surveys, and their experience was mostly limited to multi-purpose surveys where crime victimisation is only one part of the survey.

Statistical institutes had often conducted multi-purpose surveys that included a short set of victimisation and fear related questions, such as living conditions surveys, health surveys or general household surveys. Although this methodological choice allows a wide description of the connection between victimisation and fear, together with other areas of living, the adopted victimisation question set is often too narrow to allow for a detailed analysis of victimisation.

The samples were mostly drawn of households (in two of three of the surveys). The most typical sampling procedure was multistage probability sampling. The Nordic countries, Germany, Hungary and Lithuania had used a simple probability sample. In the multistage probability samples the most common variable applied for the stratification was the geographical area. The degree of urbanisation was used in 43 per cent of the cases. Age and sex were each used as a stratification variable in 29 per cent of the surveys.

Country visits were an important part of the work, designed to provide more in-depth knowledge about the country experience of victimisation surveys. These visits were organised in order to have discussions with representatives of the statistical authorities in the country. The purpose of these visits was to get acquainted with the current situation and the future needs regarding crime victimisation surveys in different countries. The countries were: the UK, Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic. The countries represented different levels of history and field experience of victimisation surveys. One expert of each visited country was invited to serve as a member of the project expert

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, statistical authority means the institute responsible for producing crime statistics in the country.

group. The group had a meeting in June 2007 in Stockholm. In this meeting, details of the survey questionnaire were discussed.

## Methodology and questionnaire

The proposed target group for the survey would be persons aged 15 years and older, who are living permanently in the country. Persons living in institutions should be excluded.

Next, the recommended methodology and the contents of the questionnaire are briefly described. These topics are connected in many ways; e.g. on one hand, for a short victimisation module the telephone mode may be convenient – on the other hand, a very long questionnaire requires inevitably a face-to-face contact. The recommendation was in favour of the face-to-face method, because the length of the interview exceeded the usual time limits recommended for telephone interviews. Also the inclusion of a self-completed section in the survey would be difficult to realize if other interviewing methods were applied.

It is not reasonable to standardise all details of the fieldwork in every country too rigidly. Rather, it is important to take into account the strengths and best practices in each country. This approach has been adopted in the European Social Survey (ESS), which is a high quality European survey. Consequently, the sampling frames and fieldwork details should be tailored to correspond to the circumstances in each country. A simple random sample of the population (persons) could be the ideal starting point in the base sample.

However, this method is not possible to apply in many European countries. Consequently, each statistical authority should be asked about their best practices in sampling. If some features of the analysis are important, such as for example the rural/urban dimension, the sample should be stratified according to such variables. Weighting of the results should be done according to the population structure. As far as the questionnaire design is concerned, our proposal comes in many respects close to the British Crime Survey, but some topics, in particular violence, are treated differently.<sup>2</sup> Questions describing a similar topic or a complex of events are placed into different sections denoted by capital letters, A-G.

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<sup>2</sup> The project studied in detail especially the following surveys: the International crime victims survey (ICVS & EU-ICS), the British crime survey (BCS), the National safety survey of Sweden, the National safety survey of Finland, the Citizen's safety survey of Italy, the General social survey / victimisation module of Canada, Violence against women surveys (national surveys: Canada & Finland; IVAWS) and the Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) victimisation survey directed to minorities and immigrants. The implementation of these surveys differs from each other in many respects, because the surveys are tailored to national circumstances and have a history of their own. For an overview of the BCS, see Jansson (2006).

In general, “tested questions”, i.e. questions used in previous victimisation surveys, have been used where these have been available and applicable. However, we should take into account that questions designed for a certain context can be problematic in other settings. For instance, questions designed for national purposes are sometimes too detailed or country specific for international comparison – therefore simplification may need to be made in regards of many topics. On the other hand, international experiences offer now a great variety of ways of asking about similar matters, and it is sometimes a matter of taste how to operationalise the topic.

The structure of the questionnaire is explained briefly in the following (see Table 1):

### **A. Respondent and household characteristics**

The proposed background variables comprise questions mostly based on the final report of the Eurostat task force on core social variables (Final Report from the Task Force on Core Social Variables 2007). These are variables often used in the social surveys of statistical institutes. Some variables are complex, such as the marital status and occupation, but the idea of similar main background variables is that comparisons can be made in different data sets across the same strategic variables.

### **B. Feeling safe and worries about crime**

This is a kind of a soft start before moving to the concrete victimisation questions. The section comprises commonly used measures of fear or insecurity and also asks for some additional information, such as whether the respondent does not go out after dark at all. In many countries issues related to the feeling of safety are regarded as being important security/safety indicators.

### **C. Screening questions**

The “basic screeners” are proposed for the following ten property crime types: theft of a car, theft from car, car damage, theft of motorcycle, scooter or moped, bicycle theft, home burglary, other burglaries, property damage, robbery and theft (other than vehicle).

The traditional crimes are complemented by “new kinds of crimes” in section E. Questions on victimisation to violence are asked in section G.

### **D. Victim form**

The victim form is used to collect detailed information about the last incident of each crime type described above. The same victim form is used for all of these crime types. Therefore, the victim form comprises different questions for different crime categories. For violence, the victim form is embedded in section G.

### **E. Other victimisation issues**

Other victimisation topics contain consumer fraud (of goods/services), bribery, phishing, identity fraud, computer security (viruses, hacking). Some of these crimes are difficult to define for survey purposes, especially the “new kinds of crimes”, such as phishing and identity fraud.

### **F. Other safety issues**

In section F, questions about certain different home and personal protective measures taken are asked.

### **G. Violence**

Victimisation to different forms of violence differs from many other crimes (e.g. thefts) in the sense that the victims may feel violence to be a sensitive issue, and may be reluctant to discuss their victimisation with outsiders. It is common that many victimisation events are hidden even from the victim’s closest friends. Therefore general victimisation surveys with a rather common formulation of the victimisation screeners and conducted by CAPI or CATI mode are found to be inclined to underestimate certain forms of violence, especially violence in close relations.

Our approach to this problem is to use more concrete descriptions of the victimisation, and to use an interviewing technique that offers the respondent the possibility to respond in full privacy. This can be done by using a mail questionnaire or the CASI-method (computer assisted self interviewing). A postal questionnaire can be given to the respondent to be filled in and sealed during the interview, or the interviewee can send it back by mail. If CAPI-interviewing is possible, a more elaborate system is the CASI method, which we recommend for completing section G.<sup>3</sup>

Why is it so important to take into account the sensitivity of the topic? For instance, the BSC found partner violence by men to be ten times more common when assessed with a separate CASI module, compared with the traditional CAPI results received in the interview immediately before the CASI questionnaire.

In section G, the following main victimisation topics are covered: sexual harassment, violence by strangers, violence by partner, violence by ex-partner, violence by acquaintances and violence before the 15th birthday.

Two reference periods have been used: “since you were 15” and “the last 12 months” (and a third, before the 15th birthday). Information on the number of incidents, injuries, medical care and police reporting is asked in all adult

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<sup>3</sup> The questionnaire can be filled by the interviewer if the respondent so wishes. In the BCS 2004/05, 11 % of the self-completion questionnaires were completed by the interviewer.

victimisation categories. In each offender category, incident specific questions are also included.

**Table 1. Structure of the questionnaire**

Questionnaire	Main issues	Key point
<b>A. Respondent and household characteristics</b>	⇒ <b>Basic background variables:</b> Sex, age, nationality, household structure, education	⇒ Classification, calculation of riskgroups
↓		
<b>B. Feeling safe and worries about crime</b>	⇒ "How safe do you feel" Avoiding places Worry	⇒ Supporting victimisation figures on insecurity, independent dimension of safety
↓		
<b>C. Screening questions</b>	⇒ Theft of a car Theft from car Car damage Theft of motorcycle Bicycle theft Burglary at home Other burglaries Robbery Theft	⇒ Calculation of prevalences and incidences for comparisons. "Traditional crimes".
↓		
↓		
↓		
↓		
↓		
↓		
<b>D. Victim form</b>	⇒ When, where, victim, perpetrator, property, incident details, injuries, police, victim support, prevention	⇒ Details of the incidents, information for assessing the severity of victimisations and for crime prevention purposes
↓		
↓		
↓		
<b>E. Other victimisation issues</b>	⇒ Consumer fraud Phishing Computer crime victimisation Identity fraud Bribery	⇒ "Untraditional victim survey crimes".
↓		
↓		
↓		
<b>F. Other safety issues</b>	⇒ Crimes in the area, home protection, personal safety improvement	⇒ To complete the safety assessment of the respondent
↓		
↓		
<b>G. Violence</b>	⇒ Sexual harassment Violence by stranger Violence by partner Violence by ex-partner Violence by acquaintance Violence in childhood	⇒ More detailed definition of violence and offender types by self-report mode because of the sensitiveness of the topic

## Discussion

Many important border conditions were not available while planning the survey. One of the most important ones was the question of available financial resources. If the victimisation and safety issues will be given high priority in the future, investments required for high quality victimisation survey may be possible. In that case, a comprehensive face-to-face survey (like the BCS in England and Wales) would be a recommendable option.

The reliability problems attached to the telephone survey mode – especially if the landline telephone register is used as a sampling frame - were discussed in depth in the early stage of the planning work. Also the increase of mobile phones as the only telephone in many families will bring along new challenges for the telephone interviewing method. Nevertheless, some countries have conducted large victimisation surveys applying the telephone mode. Privacy protection was one argument presented in favour of the telephone mode as in this case, the interviewer has no direct contact to the interviewee. The solution to privacy protection was to place potentially sensitive questions into the self-completed part of the questionnaire; this solution necessitates the face-to-face mode.

The length of different sections will inevitably raise discussion before the “final” questionnaire is on the field. In general, by its nature the questionnaire is “a statistics questionnaire” – it measures the prevalence and the incidence of different victimisation experiences. These basic topics are supported by some other safety issues, such as feeling unsafe.

Which victimisation sections should have the highest priority? Different forms of violence are highlighted, because we think that it is the most important threat against the safety of citizens. However, on one hand, violence in its different forms is difficult to measure, on the other hand, it is sometimes difficult for the respondent to recognize his/her victimisation experiences, especially when the perpetrator is close to the victim. Therefore, the questionnaire contains two criteria for the victimisation measurement; first, the screening questions are asked separately for four perpetrator groups, second, in all of these groups, detailed victimisation items for violence are presented. Consequently, estimates for stranger violence, for partner violence, and for violence by acquaintances could be produced. Additional information about violence is also needed in order to assess the severity of the victimisation, and for prevention purposes.

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# Targeted Victimization Surveys on Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities: Considerations for Comparative Research Development

Jo Goodey<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The paper addresses a particular neglected area in victimisation surveys - targeted surveys on immigrants and other vulnerable minorities, such as ethnic minorities. The subject is approached through reference to the on-going work of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which recently piloted victim survey research on minorities in preparation for a full-scale survey throughout the EU.

The paper begins by outlining the Agency's mandate for data collection. It then presents a stark introduction to the current deficit, in the mainstay of EU Member States, with respect to the quantity and quality of official criminal justice data in one area that disproportionately impacts on minorities and is of direct relevance to victim survey research; namely, data on racist violence and related crime.

The mainstay of the paper explores the possibilities and challenges of victim survey research on minority groups, and does this with reference to the Agency's pilot survey research in six EU Member States. As the pilot survey's results are for internal use by the Agency, the paper focuses on how to effectively survey 'difficult to survey' groups with the aim of producing results that are, as far as possible, representative of the groups being surveyed and, therefore, of use to policy makers.

As the Agency's forthcoming full-scale survey will be the first standardised EU survey on minorities, lessons learned from the FRA's work in this area are offered with a view to promoting the victim survey instrument beyond its historical and current focus, in most countries, on the majority (that is non-minority) population. Europe's increasingly diverse population requires that standardised survey instruments are developed that can capture the experiences and attitudes of different groups within European societies. Without the development of rigorous survey instruments that can collect data on non-

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not those of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

majority populations, European policy makers in the field of crime, criminal justice and crime prevention will continue to work on the basis of scant, non-comparable and often inaccurate information concerning increasingly important population groups.

## FRA mandate

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) started work on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007 as the legal successor to the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), which had been in operation since 1997. The FRA has extended the EUMC's focus on racism and xenophobia to encompass a wider mandate covering fundamental rights. However, the EUMC's focus has not been lost under the new Agency, as the Council Regulation establishing the FRA states: *'the work of the Agency should continue to cover the phenomena of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, the protection of rights of persons belonging to minorities, as well as gender equality, as essential elements for the protection of fundamental rights'*<sup>2</sup>. Following the tradition of data collection on racism and xenophobia established by the EUMC, the Council Regulation also states: *'The [FRA] Agency should collect objective, reliable and comparable information on the development of the situation of fundamental rights, analyse this information in terms of the causes of disrespect, consequences and effects and examine examples of good practice in dealing with these matters'*<sup>3</sup>.

At the time of writing (October 2007), the Agency's main means of data collection on racism and xenophobia is the RAXEN (Racism and Xenophobia) network. RAXEN was established under the EUMC and consists of a National Focal Point (NFP) in each Member State, which is contracted by the Agency to provide a range of information, annually, on the situation regarding racism and xenophobia in each Member State. There are at present six main thematic areas that RAXEN collects data and information on with respect to discrimination related to racism and xenophobia; namely: employment; education; housing; health and social services; relevant legislation; and racist violence and related crime. The primary idea behind RAXEN is to furnish the European Community's key stakeholders - such as the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament - with data that is able to describe the situation on the ground as it exists across the EU; data that can then be used to inform policy decisions to combat racism and xenophobia. Yet, set against this mandate to collect 'objective, reliable and comparable information' are a number of obstacles that serve to hinder this goal with respect to data availability in each of these areas; including racist violence and crime.

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2 Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007, paragraph 10 of the preamble.

3 Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007, paragraph 12 of the preamble.

## The European data deficit – racist violence and crime

The FRA and its predecessor, the EUMC, have published a number of reports on the situation of and responses to racist violence and related crime in the EU; for example: the Agency's 2005 reports on 'Racist Violence in 15 EU member States'<sup>4</sup> and 'Policing Racist Crime and Violence'<sup>5</sup>; a chapter each year on racist violence and related crime in the Agency's report on racism and xenophobia in the Member States<sup>6</sup>; and, in 2007, a chapter on trends in racist violence and related crime in the report on 'Trends and Developments 1997-2005: Combating ethnic and racial discrimination and promoting equality in the EU'<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the Agency has produced reports that address the issue of criminal victimisation against specific groups; for example, the 2006 reports 'Muslims in the EU: Discrimination and Islamophobia'<sup>8</sup> and 'Antisemitism: summary overview of the situation in the EU 2001-2005'<sup>9</sup>.

What is abundantly clear from each of these reports is that many EU Member States do not have good official criminal justice data collection mechanisms in place that are able to collect information on the extent and nature of 'racist' and related crime. Like other areas of crime data collection (Aebi et al. 2006, European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics 1999 and 2003)<sup>10</sup>, there is a paucity of comparable data on 'racist' crime across the EU (Goodey 2007). But, while the absence of criminal justice data in areas such as organised crime is understandable, given the extreme challenge of trying to count the largely unquantifiable<sup>11</sup>, the reasons for the

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4 <http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/comparativestudy/CS-RV-main.pdf>

5 <http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/PRCV/PRCV-Final.pdf>

6 [http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/racism/report\\_racism\\_0807\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/racism/report_racism_0807_en.pdf); <http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/ar06/AR06-P2-EN.pdf>;

[http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/ar05/AR05\\_p2\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/ar05/AR05_p2_EN.pdf)

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8 [http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/muslim/Manifestations\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/muslim/Manifestations_EN.pdf)

9 [http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/AS/Antisemitism\\_Overview\\_December\\_2006\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/AS/Antisemitism_Overview_December_2006_en.pdf)

10 The European Sourcebook on Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics (1999, 2003 and 2006), which was an exercise initiated by the Council of Europe (published by WODC in the Netherlands), illustrates the difficulties of criminal justice data collection and comparison between European countries with different legal definitions of crime and different data collection traditions. The difficulties of trying to compare official criminal justice statistics between countries is also reported in the UN surveys on Crime Trends -[http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime\\_survey\\_ninth.html#responses](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime_survey_ninth.html#responses)

11 The European Commission has taken steps to address deficiencies and lack of comparability in crime statistics in the EU; Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on 'Developing a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice: an EU Action Plan 2006-2010'; Commission Decision of 7 August 2006 'setting up a group of experts on the policy needs for data on crime and criminal justice' [2006/581/EC]. This expert group has formed two sub-groups with a

continued lack of attention devoted to crimes that could be counted if mechanisms are in place to encourage public reporting and police recording – such as violence against women and racist crime – are grounded in factors related to the lack of importance that is still given in many countries to crimes that impact on socially vulnerable groups.

As an illustration of the current inadequacies of data collection on ‘racist’ crimes in the EU; looking at the latest year for which the Agency has complete information from the RAXEN network for each Member State, either 2005 or 2006, the following situation is reported in the August 2007 FRA publication on ‘Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of the EU’ (pp.121-122); namely:

- Five Member States – Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain – have no publicly available official criminal justice data on racist violence and related crime.
- Ten Member States – Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Romania and Slovenia – have ‘limited’ data collection mechanisms in place to record racist and related crime; for example, reporting refers only to a handful of investigations and court cases. Or, as in the case of the Netherlands, there is a general focus on discriminatory acts that does not allow for the ready distinction of racist crimes.
- Ten Member States – Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Slovakia and Sweden – have ‘good’ systems in place for registering crimes, and/or the system focuses on right-wing extremist acts and/or antisemitic crimes.
- Two Member States – Finland and the UK – have ‘comprehensive’ systems in place for extensive data collection that is able to offer details about factors such as the characteristics of the victim and where victimisation occurred.

What the above assesses is not only the volume of data collected in the Member States, but the detail of information collected at each stage of the criminal justice process and, importantly, whether this information is made available in the public domain<sup>12</sup>.

As a further illustration of the current disparities in official data collection between Member States – in any twelve month period, as reported in each of the Agency’s annual reports on racism in the EU, the UK collects and processes more reports of racist crime than the other twenty-six Member States

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mandate to look at data collection relating to two areas of organised crime - ‘money laundering’ and ‘human trafficking’.

12 See the Agency’s online InfoBase, which provides information on available data collection mechanisms and officially recorded ‘racist’ crime in each Member State, and includes a comparative overview of data collection practices under the heading ‘European Union’; <http://www.fra.europa.eu/factsheets/front/factSheetPage.php?category=1138&country=0&year=2007>

combined. What this tells us is not that the UK has a greater problem with racism than the other Member States, but rather that racist victimisation is prioritised by the State as a social problem. As part of this response, the public are encouraged to report racist incidents by the State and the police are mandated to record and respond to these reports in a systematic way. In addition, the British Home Office currently funds the most comprehensive crime survey in the EU (the British Crime Survey (BCS)), which has, in its various sweeps, incorporated a booster sample of ethnic minority respondents. There is, at present, no comparable survey to the BCS in other EU Member States that documents the extent and nature of racist and related crime against vulnerable groups.

The absence of adequate data collection mechanisms in many Member States poses a problem for the FRA, which has at its core the mandate to collect 'objective, reliable and comparable' data on the phenomenon of racist and related crime across the EU. Reference to this data deficit is apparent in other reports by intergovernmental organizations, such as the Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE 2005 and 2006)<sup>13</sup> and the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)<sup>14</sup>, and in reports by NGOs, such as the European Network Against Racism (ENAR 2006) and Human Rights First (2005), which variously address racist crime or, more generally, hate crime in a European context.

Lack of data on racist crime, or hate crime more generally (OSCE 2006 b), does not allow criminal justice agencies to develop an evidence-based response to the problem, nor does it allow for the assessment of trends in reported and recorded crime over time. Given that the harmonisation of Member States' legislation and criminal justice responses to the problem of racism, and how to effectively monitor it, are some way off yet<sup>15</sup>, the Agency took the decision, after consultation, to develop a victim survey tool for the collection of primary data on experiences of and responses to racist crime in EU Member States. In the tradition of victim surveys, this tool sidesteps criminal justice data collection, which only results in limited information on reported racist incidents, by seeking to gauge experiences of racist crime and harassment, as

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13 Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (2005) 'Combating Hate Crime in the OSCE Region: An overview of statistics, legislation and national initiatives', OSCE-ODIHR, Warsaw; <http://www.osce.org/item/16251.html>; OSCE (2006) 'Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: Incidents and Responses – Annual Report for 2006', OSCE-ODIHR, Warsaw; [http://www.osce.org/publications/odihr/2007/09/26296\\_931\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/publications/odihr/2007/09/26296_931_en.pdf)

14 Country-by-country reports on the situation of and government responses to racism and intolerance in Council of Europe Member States; [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/ecri/1-ecri/2-Country-by-country\\_approach/](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri/1-ecri/2-Country-by-country_approach/)

15 In April 2007 the Council of the European Union reached a general approach concerning the Council Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, which has been many years in discussion, and which aims to approximate legislation and sentencing responses to specific 'racist' crimes across the EU.

well as policing responses to these incidents, as they are experienced by vulnerable minorities.

## Pilot victim survey: objectives and challenges

In June 2006 the FRA launched a pilot victim survey in six EU Member States under the heading ‘ethnic minorities and immigrants’ experiences of criminal victimisation and policing’. The Member States involved were: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovakia. The pilot set out to test different sampling frames and the application of the survey questionnaire on selected immigrant and ethnic minority groups in each Member State. The primary objective of the pilot exercise was to establish whether a survey of this kind could be successfully extended to cover the EU27. The fieldwork for the survey research was undertaken towards the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, with the results of the exercise submitted for internal scrutiny by the Agency in May 2007.

Undertaking a survey of this nature raises a number of challenges that justify a pilot phase to test the survey instrument before it is launched throughout the EU. The main challenge for a survey on immigrant and ethnic minority groups, which impacts on all aspects of the research, lies with the development of adequate sampling frames from which to draw a random and representative sample of groups for surveying. Bearing this in mind, the demands of survey research on what can be characterised as ‘difficult to survey’ groups can be summarised as follows:

- Definition and identification of populations for surveying
- Availability of population data and development of sampling frames
- Questionnaire standardisation and delivery

Taking each of the above in turn, their particular challenges are explored in the following paragraphs with respect to the FRA’s pilot victim survey:

### **1. Definition and identification of populations**

The pilot survey set out to undertake research on ethnic minorities and immigrants, which would serve to test different sampling approaches and the application of the survey questionnaire on these rarely surveyed groups.

It is difficult to apply standardised definitions to terms such as ‘ethnic minority’ and ‘immigrant’ across the EU as they mean different things in different countries. Both legal, sociological and everyday usage can change the meaning of these terms according to who is using them and for what purpose. As the Council of Europe stated in a Parliamentary Assembly on the Rights of National Minorities (2001):

*'The most complex issue remains, however, both theoretically and from a practical point of view, the distinction between "indigenous", "historic" or "traditional" national and ethnic minorities on the one hand, and "the new minorities" composed of recent immigrant communities on the other. Certainly the fundamental human rights and liberties of persons belonging to such groups, as codified in international human rights instruments are universal and indivisible, but in terms of the state's obligations towards the two categories there are major differences.'*

Given these complexities, the terms 'ethnic minorities' and 'immigrants' were used as shorthand in the FRA's pilot research to refer to diverse 'minority' groups that are specific to each EU Member State, and which can be defined or which define themselves in each State according to different criteria and characteristics; such as, ethnicity, immigrant status or background, nationality, 'race' or faith. In this regard, whereas some Member States, particularly those with a colonial past, have a long history of immigration and settlement, other Member States have traditionally been countries of emigration and only relatively recently have recognised their new found status as countries of immigration – such as Italy and Spain. In turn, many Member States in central and eastern Europe have established national minority groups, some of which are given special recognition in law, including significant Roma populations.

In each Member State, the history of immigration and the recognition of 'minority' status largely determine the groups that are available for sampling, and establish some basic exclusion criteria with regard to the groups that *cannot* be surveyed. As ethnic minority and immigrant groups differ from one State to the next, survey groups cannot be readily matched between countries. However, where possible, results can be compared between groups with the same or similar immigrant and/or ethnic origins in some Member States. There is particular scope for this concerning some widespread groups such as the Roma and Turkish immigrants.

While it might be desirable to sample a wide range of minority groups or a particularly rare minority group, survey researchers have to be pragmatic about who can be surveyed if the decision has been made to use probability random sampling. In contrast, quota sampling and snowball sampling approaches are able to identify rare populations for survey research – such as a particular religious community or immigrant group - but cannot withstand scrutiny with respect to their responses being able to 'speak for' any group other than that which took part in the research. The pilot's decision to apply a rigorous probability random sampling approach meant that some groups who were, potentially, most vulnerable to racist victimisation – such as the ethnic Chinese - were excluded from the research because of their low numbers or their low density and wide geographical dispersal.

In addition to these considerations, the FRA pilot survey established a number of exclusion criteria with regard to who the survey did not set out to sample. For example - as the survey was interested in people's experiences of

victimisation and policing in the Member State where they lived, respondents had to have been resident in the Member State for at least twelve months to be included in the pilot exercise. This meant that recent immigrants, including recent asylum seekers in institutional settings, were excluded from the research as they were unable to relate their responses to the Member State where they now lived. In addition, the survey was limited to respondents aged 16 and over, as the inclusion of under 16s would have required a re-designed survey instrument and parental consent.

Another main consideration was that the survey was interested in minority groups that were potentially vulnerable to racist or religiously motivated victimisation; such as minorities that were visibly different from the majority population in a Member State and/or which had a history of differential treatment from the majority population. As a result, and with the guidance of the FRA's RAXEN National Focal Points who are responsible for producing reports for the Agency on the situation of minorities in Member States<sup>16</sup>, the survey excluded those minority groups that could be considered 'privileged' and less vulnerable to victimisation. For example, in the case of Austria the country's sizeable German population was excluded.

Having defined and identified two to three groups for sampling in each Member State, the pilot questionnaire contained a multiple question screener that allowed respondents to self-identify themselves in terms that they felt most comfortable with. The screener asked respondents a series of questions about their nationality status, where they were born, where their parents were born, how long they had been living in the Member State, their mother tongue and, importantly, whether they considered themselves as belonging to one of the groups selected for sampling in each Member State. In this way, each respondent's self-identification formed the basis for respondent selection.

Given the above, different groups were selected for sampling and identified themselves for participation in the FRA's pilot research. For the purposes of comparable survey research this diversity becomes less problematic providing that (1) an identical survey instrument, the questionnaire, is applied across Member States on the basis of probability sampling criteria, and (2) the selection of different groups for surveying is contextualised with respect to the situation in each country.

While comparisons between Member States with very different immigrant and ethnic minority populations are difficult, comparisons can be made between responses from different groups within an individual Member State, and response patterns can be identified between Member States on the basis of respondent characteristics such as gender or age. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that comparisons are regularly made in international survey research between diverse majority populations in EU Member States – ranging from Finnish respondents in the North, Maltese respondents in the South, Irish

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16 For information about RAXEN: [http://fra.europa.eu/fra/index.php?fuseaction=content.dsp\\_cat\\_content&catid=40d97bf19540f](http://fra.europa.eu/fra/index.php?fuseaction=content.dsp_cat_content&catid=40d97bf19540f)

respondents in the West, and Bulgarian respondents in the East. The European Social Survey and the Eurobarometer surveys, as just two examples, regularly draw comparisons between Europe's heterogeneous majority populations. The safeguards on comparing results that are applied to survey research on 'minorities' are often absent with respect to existing comparative research on Europe's majority populations. In this regard, consideration should be given to the possibility that some minority communities, such as the Roma, may have more in common culturally and may share similar experiences of victimisation across EU Member States than Europe's majority populations.

In sum, for the purpose of the pilot research the following groups were selected for interviewing in the Member States:

- Austria: Turkish, ex-Yugoslavians (N=700)
- Belgium: Turkish, North Africans, Italians<sup>17</sup> (N=499)
- Bulgaria: Roma, Turkish (N=900)
- Italy: Albanian, North African, Romanian (N=603)
- Romania: Roma, Hungarian (N=600)
- Slovakia: Roma, Hungarian (N=605)

In addition, in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria and Italy, whenever sub-Saharan Black African respondents were identified through the screening process they were selected for participation because of their visibly different minority status.

## **2. Availability of population data and development of sampling frames**

The definition and identification of groups for survey research has also to consider the realities of who can be surveyed on the basis of available population data on selected groups. In any survey of the majority population, unless it is very large, the numbers of minorities picked up through standard random sampling procedures will be too small to allow for any meaningful breakdown of results according to respondents' immigrant or minority background. For example, the British Crime Survey (BCS) has a household sample from the majority population of more than 55,000 in each 12 month period; yet, the BCS finds it necessary to undertake booster samples of ethnic minorities to extend its coverage to minority respondents who are not readily identifiable using standard random sampling approaches. The challenge for any survey on minorities is how to produce a random sample, based on available population data, which can be said to be representative of minority groups and

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17 The inclusion of Italians as a group for sampling in Belgium was considered to be relevant by the Agency's Belgian RAXEN National Focal Point as there is evidence that this group experiences discriminatory treatment.

is not skewed to reflect the experiences and attitudes of a particular sub-group within the non-majority population<sup>18</sup>.

Probability random sampling of minority groups requires population data about the numbers and location of groups at the local level in order to construct an accurate sampling frame. However, in Europe the type and quality of available population data on minorities differs greatly.

At present, data based on nationality and citizenship is collected in EU Member States, and some collect data based on legally recognised national minorities; such as ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia. In comparison, data collection on ethnicity, as in the UK and Ireland, is not excepted practice in the majority of Member States. As a result, international survey research on minorities will be limited to available data on nationality. This is not ideal as established ethnic minority groups who are nationals of the Member State being surveyed, such as ethnic North Africans in France, become invisible in population statistics that do not record citizens' ethnicity.

The reasons for not recording ethnicity in the majority of EU Member States are deeply held. In some countries the collection of data according to ethnicity is forbidden in law as a discriminatory practice in itself because it serves to classify citizens differently. In France, Republican principles of equality before the law have traditionally interpreted ethnic classification in this way. In Austria and Germany ethnic-religious data collection assisted the Nazis in their identification of Jews and the Roma. The historical legacy of this practice means that there is a continued strong resistance to and suspicion against ethnic data collection. At the same time, members of minority communities may be unwilling to classify themselves as belonging to a particular group because of the negative attributes and discriminatory treatment that this label is seen to promote. This is often the case in countries where there has been limited public discourse concerning discrimination and victimisation on the basis of ethnicity, and where classification on the grounds of ethnicity has not been used to highlight and respond to widespread discriminatory practices.

The Anglo-Saxon approach - to see ethnic data collection as a means for identifying and responding to discriminatory practices in areas such as employment, education and police stop and search - has developed as a tool to keep State agencies accountable with respect to how they treat resident majority and minority populations. Patrick Simon, a French commentator on ethnic data collection, has characterised this practice, in countries such as the United States and Britain, as one means through which the State can attempt to address past and present wrongs, including the legacy of the slave trade, by recognising differential treatment.

What the above means is that the type of population data collected on minorities differs greatly between Member States. In addition, EU surveys on

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18 On sampling rare populations: Groenewold & Bilsborrow 2004; Rothbart et al. 1982.

minority populations face the same challenges as surveys on majority populations with respect to the following:

- Member States use different tools for population data collection – such as censuses, population registers or residence registers.
- The period for which data is collected differs between Member States – for example, census data can be 10 years out of date, while population registers collect information on a regular basis.
- The amount of detail on populations that is available at the local level differs, with some countries producing population data on the basis of a few streets and others only providing data on the basis of large city districts containing thousands of residents.
- Whether detailed population data is readily available in the public domain, and what is available free-of-charge also differs between Member States; with some producing extensive, detailed and accessible information on-line, while others provide only limited information free-of-charge.

Given these challenges, survey researchers often resort to using some form of snowball or network sampling. However, for the reasons outlined earlier, these approaches were not the FRA's first choice because of their in-built limitations with respect to population representation. Instead, the pilot survey tested two main sampling frames in the six Member States; these were:

- Random digit dialling and focused enumeration
- Random route cluster sampling

In every Member State all interviews were conducted face-to-face with an interviewer filling out the questionnaire.

### ***Random digit dialling and focused enumeration***

In Austria, Belgium and Italy this two-stage sampling approach was tested in the capital cities and in the second largest cities, and sometimes the third largest, where there was a sizeable immigrant population among the groups selected for surveying.

As telephone random digit dialling cannot generate an adequate coverage of minority populations on its own, a two-stage probability random framework was tested using random digit dialling *and* focused enumeration. The first method located potential immigrant respondents by means of a brief telephone screener. If respondents identified only themselves as belonging to one of the groups for surveying they were asked for an interview. Where more than one household member was identified as belonging to the group or groups for surveying, the last birthday principle was applied to select a potential interviewee at random. An appointment was arranged with the selected interviewee, with no allowance made for substitution in the case of a refusal or

no contact. Interviewers were required to make up to three call-backs to obtain an interview.

At the end of each successfully completed interview, interviewers asked interviewees whether any of their neighbours were from one of the groups selected for the survey research. Strict criteria were applied with respect to who could be considered a 'neighbour' for sampling purposes, with interviewees asked to consider only those living a certain number of doors either side or above or below them (in the case of flats) – an approach called focused enumeration, which has been used in the UK for different surveys<sup>19</sup>, including the British Crime Survey<sup>20</sup>. Interviewers then called on neighbours identified through focused enumeration (up to three times) and asked them the screener questions to see if they matched the groups for surveying and, if so, asked for an interview. At this point, focused enumeration was no longer applied to avoid over-sampling a particular building with a high minority concentration.

In sum, the combination of random digit dialling and focused enumeration worked well in Austria, but was less successful in Belgium and Italy. The reason for the lower success rate of this combined approach in Belgium and Italy may be the result of two important factors: First, the unwillingness of people to identify their neighbours as potential interviewees and/or a lack of knowledge about whether neighbours are from an immigrant or ethnic minority background; second, and perhaps most importantly, the under-coverage of landline phones among immigrant groups, which meant that the telephone-based screener was unsuccessful.

The increased use of mobile phones makes landline screening and interviewing less reliable as a survey method, as it excludes a growing segment of society that uses only mobile phones – in particular, young people and immigrants (Blair & Blair 2006). This is even more of a problem among immigrant groups as they also tend to have a younger demographic profile than the majority population. For some minority groups, such as the Roma, landline telephone penetration is extremely low, so that alternative sampling methods have to be employed. With this in mind the pilot decided to test random route cluster sampling in the remaining three Member States where the Roma were the main group for surveying.

### ***Random route cluster sampling***

Random route cluster sampling was tested in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia across large parts of each country. Widespread coverage was possible due to the cheap cost of survey research in these Member States relative to other Member States.

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19 For example, focused enumeration was used in the Policy Studies Institute's Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (November 1993).

20 For a review of the sampling approach adopted by the BCS, including sampling of ethnic minorities, see a paper prepared by P. Lynn and D. Elliot for the Home Office: <http://www.ndad.nationalarchives.gov.uk/CRDA/2/DD/7/1/text/display.html>

This sampling approach requires population data at the local level concerning the distribution of minority groups. Using the best available data in each Member State, a multi-stage sampling approach was adopted. First, a calculation was made of the relative share of each ethnic group selected for interviewing in different regions. This calculation determined the number of interviews to be conducted in each region, which was sub-divided into clusters containing a fixed number of interviews. Basically – the larger the share of the immigrant population in any region the greater the number of allocated interviews and clusters. Second, survey locations were selected at random on the basis of an available list, and clusters were selected at random for sampling. Within each cluster, a standard random route for interviewing was drawn up, with the start of the route being either a central landmark (which was chosen by the fieldwork team leader) or a randomly selected point (depending on the nature of the location).

Once the starting point for the application of the random route procedure was identified, a list or stack of addresses for sampling was established based on every Nth address, and subsequent addresses, from the starting point. Potential interviewees were screened at the listed addresses to see if they were eligible and willing to participate in the survey.

In sum, the application of a multi-stage random route sampling approach worked very well in all three Member States, and would appear to offer a possible approach for sampling minorities that could be transferred to other countries. However, this approach needs to ensure that adequate population data on minorities is available to be able to select regions or districts within cities for sampling.

### **3. Questionnaire standardisation and delivery**

A further set of challenges for any standardised international survey instrument lies with the transferability of that instrument – in this case a questionnaire – between different countries and to different groups.

The UN-based International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS) and the recent European Crime and Safety Survey provide two international examples of a standardised criminal victimisation survey instrument that has been applied in different EU Member States. These surveys are primarily useful to the FRA as they provide a majority population control group with which to compare the results of the FRA survey on immigrants and ethnic minorities. They are also useful because they offer an established questionnaire that was adapted for the pilot questionnaire to incorporate new questions needed for a survey on minorities; for example questions on experiences of police stop and search, and whether there was any indication that experiences of victimisation were racially or ethnically motivated, such as use of racist or religiously offensive language.

A primary challenge for any standardised international survey instrument lies with the translation of the questionnaire into different languages to ensure

that the meaning of questions remains unchanged and can be interpreted in the same way by respondents. In the case of the FRA pilot, this meant translating the questionnaire into the main language or languages of each Member State (such as French, Flemish and German in the case of Belgium), and also translating it into other languages spoken by minorities where there is evidence indicating that a number may not speak the language or languages of the Member State fluently (as advised by the FRA's RAXEN National Focal Points). In this regard, the FRA pilot questionnaire was translated into Arabic and Turkish, and was made available to interviewees where they did not understand a question in the main language of delivery. However, given that the majority of survey interviewers were not from immigrant or minority backgrounds, with a few exceptions, it was necessary to exclude interviewees who could not communicate well enough in the main or one of the main questionnaire languages.

The exclusion of potential respondents because of their inability to speak the language of questionnaire delivery could be problematic if it leads to a skewed representation of minority respondents. To monitor the potential for this, interviewers in the pilot survey were asked to record whether interviewees encountered language problems, whether the alternative language questionnaire was used, and whether interviewees were assisted at any point by someone else in the household. As the results of the pilot exercise have shown, interviewees' non-comprehension of the questionnaire in its main language of delivery was rare, as was the use of alternative language questionnaires. In this regard, the careful preparation of the master questionnaire to ensure use of uncomplicated and non-technical language, which then went through a rigorous process of translation into different languages and back translation into English, undoubtedly helped respondents to cope with the language used.

In the analysis of the survey's results, any strange patterns that are identified might be indicative of a fault in questionnaire translation and wording as much as they show a different result for one set of respondents or one Member State. The on-going analysis of the pilot survey's results will seek to look at any striking findings with a view to identifying such problems.

The delivery of questionnaires to immigrant and ethnic minority groups, particularly when a random route sampling approach is used in certain communities, required fieldwork 'facilitators' in some Member States. This was the case in Bulgaria and Romania where facilitators from local Roma communities were informed about the survey research so they could reassure the local Roma population of the intentions of the survey. The survey companies conducting the research in these two Member States were well aware and experienced in the need to adopt such facilitators for the fieldwork period, and did this to ensure the smooth running of the survey.

In addition to fieldwork facilitators, some surveys go out of their way to hire and train interviewers from the same respondent groups as interviewees. While this is undoubtedly useful in some survey research to gain trust or to deliver a questionnaire in a specific language, there are also disadvantages to having 'matched' interviewees in victim survey research. For example, respondents

may be unwilling to report ‘shameful’ incidents to a representative of their own community, and it may be hard to reassure respondents of the confidentiality of their replies when interviewers are drawn from within small minority communities. In comparison, there is evidence to support the delivery of research questionnaires by ‘neutral’ and unknown interviewers, with the key to their success being their familiarity with face-to-face questionnaire-based survey research. For this reason, there are obvious advantages in survey companies employing middle aged, experienced fieldwork interviewers. In particular, middle-aged women are regarded as the best fieldwork interviewers because, unlike some men, they are seen as less ‘threatening’ to interviewees; at the same time though, female interviewers can feel more at risk of (sexual) assault or harassment when conducting interviews in dangerous neighbourhoods.

In sum, having identified potential immigrant or ethnic minority respondents for interviewing, interviewers encountered a low refusal rate in most countries. The overwhelming reaction among interviewees to the interview experience, which was reported in the de-briefing sessions held by the research teams in each country, was a positive one. It appears that respondents were pleased to be given the opportunity to take part in research that directly asked them about their experiences of criminal victimisation, racism and policing.

## Next steps: towards an EU-wide survey and future developments

Having successfully completed the pilot survey exercise in six Member States, the FRA will draw from this valuable research experience in preparation for a full-scale survey in the EU27, which is due to be launched in 2008.

The pilot has offered detailed insights for the full survey with respect to each of the main points raised above – namely: definition and identification of populations for surveying; availability of population data and development of sampling frames; questionnaire standardisation and delivery. Building on the results of the pilot exercise, decisions will be made concerning each of these areas in consultation with experts in the field of international survey research and sampling.

A revised survey questionnaire is currently under development, which will use the pilot’s findings to re-phrase, cut and insert new questions. Given the paucity of comparable data on minorities in key areas of social life - and not just in the field of criminal victimisation, policing and fear of crime - the new questionnaire will also include questions on respondents’ experiences of discrimination with respect to essential public and consumer services, and will ask questions about rights awareness and civil participation. In this way the revised questionnaire will attempt to look at criminal victimisation, racist and religiously motivated victimisation, and discriminatory police treatment in the wider context of minorities’ everyday experiences of discrimination. These

cross-cutting experiences of discrimination will be looked at with respect to interviewees' self-identified immigrant or ethnic minority status, which in turn will be explored through the lens of respondent variables such as gender, age, socio-economic background, education, place of residence and length of stay in the country.

The FRA has a wide mandate to provide European institutions and Member States with comparative data on 'fundamental rights' across a diverse EU; data that will be used by policy makers to assess the degree of commitment to fundamental rights principles across the EU. In this regard, the FRA's full-scale survey on immigrants and ethnic minorities is grounded in a fundamental rights approach, and one that looks beyond ratification of international law to ask people how they themselves experience their lives, and to explore their responses in the context of a fundamental rights 'barometer'. The full-scale survey will undoubtedly face a number of significant challenges if it is to be successfully applied across twenty-seven Member States, but its results will be a 'first' step when it comes to the production of comparable international data on immigrant and ethnic minority groups, based on a standardised survey instrument.

The experience of immigrants and ethnic minorities as victims of crime is just one area that has traditionally been neglected by victim survey research. There are other groups whose victimisation warrants attention, and this is particularly the case for those that, like immigrants and ethnic minorities, may be prone to hate motivated crime – such as the disabled and LGBT<sup>21</sup> groups. In this regard, the apparent trend among national governments and international agencies to re-frame discussions concerning violence against vulnerable social groups under the generic heading of 'hate crime' is an interesting development to watch. Much like the long struggle devoted to recognition of violence against women, what this 'new' hate crime approach could mean in practice is increased recognition for groups whose experiences of hate-motivated crime have received scant attention from mainstream research and policy formulation. The emergence of the international violence against women survey (IVAWS) at the end of the 1990s, which is based on a core standardised survey instrument, demonstrates that there is scope for targeted international survey research in fields that were previously neglected (Johnson et.al 2008).

Recent initiatives concerning the development of a pan-European victim survey module by EUROSTAT, the statistical arm of the European Commission, show that there is continued interest in the victim survey as a data collection tool for policy development at the level of the EU. The FRA's initiative to develop an international victim survey instrument for comparative research on immigrant and ethnic minority groups should serve to complement any survey work carried out on majority populations by EU Member States. The collection of primary victim survey data from a range of sources will paint a more accurate picture for European policy makers about how different groups within Europe experience crime. This is particularly important in those areas

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21 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).

where there is a continued absence of crime data from official government sources.

The FRA survey has emerged from its mandate to provide data, where none exists, to inform policy. Although the nature of the research is specific to immigrant and ethnic minority groups, it can offer insights for those wishing to undertake research on ‘difficult to survey’ population groups. Of course, other sampling approaches and questionnaire delivery methods, than those presented here, may be more appropriate to other groups. The message that this paper offers is that there is scope to consider victim survey research beyond the traditional focus on majority populations.

For more information on the FRA’s work, and for future reference to the full-scale survey visit: <http://fra.europa.eu>.

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# Development of a EU Victimisation Module

Geoffrey Thomas

## Introduction

The Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) has existed for over fifty years and has a distinguished history in most statistical fields. However its involvement in statistics on crime and criminal justice dates from only November 2004, when it was explicitly requested by the European Council to *establish European instruments for collecting, analysing and comparing information on crime and victimisation and their respective trends in the Member States, using national statistics and other sources of information as agreed indicators*<sup>1</sup>. This unequivocal mandate in the Hague Programme was followed by an intensive period of consultation into the requirements of The European Union in the area of crime and criminal justice statistics, involving not only Eurostat but also the European Commission's General Directorate for Justice, Freedom and Security, as well as a multiplicity of stake-holders at both EU and national level. This consultation culminated in the drawing-up of a Commission Decision on *Developing a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice* which was adopted on 7 August 2006 and incorporated a detailed five-year Action Plan covering the period 2006-2010.<sup>2</sup> The Action Plan sets milestones for approximately forty major activities which have been identified by the relevant actors as significant for the development of a statistical system adapted to the needs of policy-makers, stake-holders and the general public in the European Union.

## The requirement

One of the most important single activities included in the Action Plan is the need to develop a survey module on victimisation. Action 4.3, which is devoted to the *Establishment and implementation of a common methodology for regular data collection for the common indicators – on the basis of the identified policy needs*, sets the following targets in this respect:

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1 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?year=2005&serie=C&textfield2=53&Submit=Search>

2 <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0437:EN:NOT>

- Establishment of a methodology for a common survey module on victimisation mid-2007
- Translation and testing of a common survey module on victimisation 2007-2008
- Implementation of a common survey module on victimisation 2008-2009

The purpose behind this objective is to ensure that by ensuring the development of a common survey module on victimisation, information on crime victimisation could be collected in the Member States according to an agreed methodology so as to provide statistics which would be comparable. In addition, the term 'survey module' was deliberately chosen in order to avoid any preconception concerning the mode of implementation. In other words, the 'module' to be developed was to be regarded simply as a set of questions designed to provide information concerning victimisation. The method of implementation remains at this stage open; a new survey might be one of the options selected, but other means of obtaining information might for example include a module inserted into an existing survey (whether at national or European level) or alternatively data from another source or sources collected according to an agreed methodology.

The development process needed also to take into account the fact that the situation in the twenty-seven Member States of the European Union with regard to studies on victimisation varies considerably. There are for example some Member States where large and ambitious surveys have been operated for a number of years, with the consequence that lengthy time-series are available and that a valuable amount of expertise has been built up as regards all aspects of the planning, from sample design through to data analysis and publication. At the opposite end of the spectrum lie other EU Member States with minimal experience in the area of victimisation surveys, for a variety of reasons. In some of these, administrative sources have traditionally been preferred for many aspects of statistics, whilst in others the resources required for development work have been lacking.

## The current situation

A number of academic exercises have been conducted over the years with the intention of producing comparable figures on victimisation, though these have often been hampered by the intractable problem of including a sufficient sample to permit reliable information to be gathered for rare phenomena. Almost by definition, crime is an experience which affects a relatively small proportion of the population over a given period, and the problem is exacerbated where it is required to produce information not merely for crime generally but for specific manifestations of criminal activity, as will certainly be the case. In some international exercises, attempts have been made to measure crime at national level by aggregating the results for specific crime types, while compiling estimates for specific crime types by aggregating the

results for the participating countries, but this approach must necessarily ignore the potential differences between the countries. Hence the ambition to enlist the resources of the statistical authorities of the Member States, with their specialised expertise in the management of large-scale survey operations, to confront the challenge of producing estimates in one of the most difficult of statistical domains.

A certain number of advantages were already apparent. Ground-breaking research had been carried out, beginning in 2006, under the aegis of the United Nations. Two UN agencies, the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) had collaborated in creating a task force which set itself the not inconsiderable objective of bringing together all the available information about victimisation surveys at a global level. The seminal work of this task force resulted in the development of a database containing all the most important characteristics of all the surveys being carried out at that time or in the planning stage. The United Nations generously placed this invaluable resource at the disposal of Eurostat, which at this stage had recently embarked upon the implementation of the EU Action Plan. The organisations have since continued to enjoy a fruitful collaboration, with the UN task force now turning its attention to the development of a methodology for studying victimisation through surveys. This work will continue to inform the development of the EU survey module at the working level through the mutual attendance of Eurostat and UN at the task forces of the two organisations.

## The consultative process

In line with the guidelines set out in the Action Plan, a number of groups were set up to oversee the progress towards the various milestones which had been defined. Commission Decision 2006/581/CE of 7 August 2006 created a group of experts on the policy needs for data on crime and criminal justice, whose mandate included the definition of essential indicators and identification of political priorities. The agenda at the inaugural meeting of this group on 2-3 April 2007 included a detailed discussion of the issue of developing a victimisation survey module, and subsequently the participants were invited to provide written suggestions to Eurostat. The result of this exhaustive consultative procedure was a comprehensive list of conclusions which may be very briefly summarised as follows:

- Cover the ‘usual’ crime types (such as property crimes and crimes against person)
- Include also some ‘new’ (non-traditional) crime types as far as these can be included in a household survey (such as consumer fraud, identity theft, credit card fraud, computer security)

- Touch upon general safety issues (such as feeling safe, availability of security systems, prevalence of weapons)
- Try to obtain a measure of domestic violence, while taking account of practical difficulties and sensitivity issues

The Action Plan also provided for the establishment of a parallel structure of statistical experts whose role would be to examine the indicators proposed by the Expert Group and to analyse to what extent these might be immediately implemented or, if this were not the case, to develop a strategy for implementation over a period of time. Eurostat therefore created a Working Group for Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice, which met for the first time on 1-2 March 2007. Again the issue of a victimisation survey module was on the agenda at the very first meeting, and the Working Group decided to create a task force whose mandate would be as follows:

- Establish a methodology for a survey module on victimisation, taking account of relevant experiences at national and international level, and in particular the work of the UNECE/UNODC task force on victimisation surveys and the study carried out by HEUNI
- Examine the results of testing the survey module on victimisation in Member States, explore the feasibility of the module and reach conclusions
- Based on the evaluation of the testing, propose an approach for implementing a survey module on victimisation at European level
- Report to the Working Group for Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics on each stage of the above activities

The other essential strand of the development was represented by the input of the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI), a UN agency with a long history of collaboration with the UN and a distinguished record of analysis and research into criminological matters. In view of HEUNI's great expertise, they were invited to prepare a draft victimisation survey module for consideration by the task force. The excellent work carried out by HEUNI on this project is described elsewhere in this volume and so does not need further explanation here.<sup>3</sup>

## The immediate future

The draft questionnaire prepared by HEUNI will be circulated to the Eurostat task force referred to above, whose brief will include:

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<sup>3</sup> See the paper *European Victimisation Survey* by Markku Heiskanen and Minna Viuhko in this volume.

- To comment on the selection of crime types covered
- To recommend appropriate choices concerning the reference period and screening
- To identify any problems of routing and phrasing of questions
- To consider issues of sampling and methodology
- To make proposals for amendments in line with the above

The task force will meet at Luxembourg on 28-29 June 2007 and, based on its recommendations, HEUNI will make the final adjustments to the questionnaire. This version will then be proposed to the EU Member States for translation from English into national languages and pilot testing. The translation will be carried out by experienced professionals with familiarity with the specific problems connected with victimisation issues. For example, it is a well-known fact that certain crime types translated literally into other languages carry a quite different connotation from that in the original, and this must be taken into account in the translation. 'Back-translation' (reversing the translation process and comparing the final product with the original in the same language) is recommended as a useful technique in cases of this nature. The report from the translation process will highlight specific issues concerning the linguistic problems discovered, on the assumption that these may have more far-reaching relevance concerning the implementation process.

With regard to the testing of the questionnaire, it is recommended that this should take place in several stages, beginning with cognitive testing in a laboratory environment or similar where available. The fieldwork should cover several all the following interview modes, where possible in a single national situation by splitting the sample into appropriate sub-samples:

- Written questionnaires sent by post
- Telephone interviews (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing – CATI)
- Face-to-face interviews (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing – CAPI)
- Internet testing

This proposal will be sent to national governmental authorities throughout the EU who are either national statistical offices or ministries in an appropriate field (such as ministries of justice or ministries of internal affairs). These authorities have been selected by the Commission's General Directorate for Justice, Freedom and Security as privileged Framework Partners with whom the Commission is able to work with extreme efficiency through a streamlined financial procedure. Within the Framework Partnership context, specific agreements will be drawn up permitting these government authorities to proceed with the translation and testing of the questionnaire.

## The longer-term perspective

According to the EU Action Plan, this process is scheduled to occupy approximately twelve months. At the end of this period, the results will be subjected to a minute examination by experts specially selected through a public procurement procedure. The brief of these experts will include producing a state-of-the-art summary of the situation on a EU-wide basis, that is to say not merely a detailed report on the results of the testing process described above, but also an overhaul of the existing literature so as to reflect the latest developments on victimisation surveys on the European scene. This will permit an informed debate as to the course to be followed with regard to statistical development in future.

The alternative avenues are evidently numerous. Whereas the most obvious one may be to start a new European survey, this probably represents the most cumbersome and expensive possibility. It may be questioned whether in the current economic climate sufficient political will can be mustered to finance such an undertaking, although evidently this will depend upon the political situation at the time when this decision comes to be taken, and no less significantly, important variations may exist between the views of different Member States on this question. A reduced version of the questionnaire to be introduced into a larger-scale statistical instrument might represent a viable alternative, but in this case an assortment of related supplementary issues would require to be addressed. Paramount among these would be the question of which existing survey or surveys would be likely to prove suitable candidates for this role. For example, the Community Labour Force Survey or the EU Statistics on Living Conditions (EU-SILC) each include a programme of 'ad hoc' modules which are slotted into the main survey on an occasional basis, but the schedule is in each case decided several years in advance so that even if a decision were to be taken along these lines, a considerable delay might ensue before information relating to victimisation were to come on-stream. Possible variations on this theme might include adapting national surveys to incorporate the module, whereby the most obvious drawback might be the diminished level of comparability to be expected from basing estimates on data collected in such a disparate fashion.

Finally it might be conjectured whether within the timescales of this project a new instrument might be proposed, such as a European household survey with a modular architecture as is currently under discussion. It may safely be assumed that these debates will involve the participation of stakeholders at all levels and require a high level of professional competence and dedication from all concerned.

# Victim Support and the International Crime Victim Survey: a Consumer Perspective

Antony Pemberton

## Introduction

It is a perennial uncertainty for anyone involved in research in the social sciences. After all the effort in developing research-materials, collecting and analyzing data and reporting findings the question remains whether policy-makers and practitioners pay any attention whatsoever to the research. For every 'Conflicts as property' thousands of scientific articles, books and reports pass by barely noticed by anyone outside of the academic community. And even if and when the results are used in the development of policy and practice it is not always clear whether they are interpreted and subsequently utilized in the way the researchers had foreseen.

The 'consumer' perspective is gaining importance within the social sciences and crime-related disciplines in particular. In general it is safe to say that the increasing use of market-related funding, even when the source is the government, makes the question what is the direct use of the outcome of this research and for whom, increasingly salient during the drafting of research proposals. Moreover various authors have already commented on the growing divide between crime policy and academic research (Garland 2001; Sebba 2001), which not only calls into question what the policy reasons for this are, but also whether the development of academic criminological research has led to its decreasing policy relevance.

In this essay an instance of the use of a piece of research by an organization is discussed, namely the application and importance of the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) <sup>1</sup> to the Dutch non-governmental organization Slachtofferhulp Nederland (SHN; Dutch Victim Support). This is, in part, based on the author's prior experience as a senior staff member of this organization, in which he was intimately involved in the connection of scientific research to policy making.<sup>2</sup> It will be argued that the ICVS has had a marked influence on the development of various projects of SHN and its results are used to influence victim policy at the national level, but also at the level of

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1 In the 2005 sweep the ICVS was renamed ICVS/ EU ICS. The term ICVS will be used throughout this article, also to describe the ICVS/ EU ICS.

2 Until February 2007 the author was scientific adviser at the head office of Slachtofferhulp Nederland.

the European Union, through the umbrella organization of victim assistance organizations Victim Support Europe (VSE; formerly the European Forum for Victim Services). Before discussing the relevance and use of the ICVS for SHN, the article will review the position of SHN within the policy arena of victims of crime in the Netherlands, which will suggest the possible uses of research like the ICVS. This analysis will review the relevant developments within the criminal justice system research, but will focus on the specifics of the various different factions of the so-called ‘victims’ movement.

## Dutch victim support: a short introduction

The development and policies of SHN closely resemble those of Victim Support in the United Kingdom (Victim Support UK), which was the model for the Dutch organisation. This overview of key features of SHN will draw on similar descriptions of the latter organisation. Goodey provides a short but complete overview of the development of Victim Support UK (Goodey 2005) and for a more in depth discussion one should turn there (see also Reeves & Mulley 2000; Dunn 2007). The close similarity between the organisations allows the use of a more extensive and, not unimportant, English literature concerning Victim Support.

Both organisations are large service providers, with annual budgets of over 30 million pounds in the UK and 15 million euros in the Netherlands. Both deliver low level support, undertaken by volunteers (over 10,000 in the UK and 1,500 in the Netherlands) targeting the immediate short term aftermath of victimization by crime, with VS in the Netherlands providing services to victims of traffic accidents as well, while VS in the UK has a specialized witness service. Victim Support in the Netherlands reaches 100,000 victims annually, while VS UK is the largest organisation of its kind in the world, with more than a million victims per year. Most victims are contacted after referral by the police (amounts to 80% of the victims serviced by VS in the Netherlands), in a matter of days after the report (see also Dekkers, Jansen & Homburg 2006). Having said this, both organisations stress the importance of reaching victims who have not reported their crime to the police, a subject to which will be more extensively discussed below. Although the organisations receive a considerable amount of funding from their respective governments they are still non-governmental organisations. This reflects their origins as civil initiatives. Both organisations have developed from local grass roots initiatives into national organisations, with Victim Support in the Netherlands having achieved full integration in 2002 and Victim Support in the UK currently undertaking the reorganisation from an association of nominally independent schemes to one nationwide organisation.

Neither organisation places explicit restrictions concerning the types of victims of crime serviced. However Victim Support in the Netherlands makes a distinction based on the severity of the crime (see again Dekkers et al., 2006). Where victims of lesser, mostly property offences are allowed to access

services if and when they refer themselves, an outreaching approach is adopted for victims of more severe crimes, like violence or burglaries, which implies a lower limit in the practical service delivery. But the low-level, short term service delivery also leads to an upper limit. Victim Support's remit is to assist victims in the short term, with the often intense, but nevertheless normal reactions to crime. Where the recovery process shows signs of disorder or may take far longer victims are mostly referred to other, often professional welfare organisations (see also Goodey 2005). This is part of the reason why a trained volunteer is considered to be able to delivery services. This means that the most severe types of victimization often are referred to others as the levels of posttraumatic stress disorder are high and the recovery process may take many years. Although there are developments concerning these offences (see Goodey 2005, Patterson et al. 2006), it is safe to say that Victim Support targets relatively severe, but mass types of victimization like burglary or common forms of violence, like assaults and threats. Here the development of clinical disorders are relatively rare (see Kessler et al. 1995; Breslau et al. 2004) and the effects often prove to be transitory.

These features of the target group influence Victim Support policies. In the first place in many of these cases an offender is never apprehended, with the combination of levels of reporting and apprehension implying that less than 1 in 10 of these victims sees the inside of a courtroom as a consequence of their victimisation (as was stressed in the Victim Support UK report *Criminal Neglect* (Victim Support UK 2002); see for similar observations concerning the Netherlands, e.g. Boutellier 2002). This implies that improving the plight of these victims often will not involve any criminal justice involvement beyond that of the police. Therefore the limited resources available to assisting victims should not be concentrated on those victims whose offender is apprehended. Instead of pushing for more rights in the criminal justice system, which would not mean much for most victims, Victim Support has therefore strived for better services to victims. In general the organisation is service-oriented, rather than rights-oriented (e.g. Strang 2002).

The position of victims within the criminal justice system was similarly informed by research. Studies explicitly focusing on victims in the criminal justice system (Shapland et al. 1985 and Wemmers 1996) and the more general work on procedural justice (Tyler 1990) showed that much could be done to improve the position of victims within the criminal justice system without diminishing the position of the suspect/ offender. As Groenhuijsen observed it is not a zero-sum game (Groenhuijsen 1999). Moreover emphasis was laid first on preventing an additional burden of the criminal justice system, rather than championing more controversial instruments that intend to achieve victim benefits through the criminal justice system. Most of the adjustments championed by Victim Support were related to improved information provision and a respectful treatment by criminal justice officials, which although they may be formulated as rights, only achieve their goal when sufficient attention is paid to their service-like implementation (see Groenhuijsen & Pemberton 2007). In principle therefore Victim Support is neutral towards the criminal

justice system (see also Cavadino & Dignan 1996), suggesting additionally that improvements can be made for victims, which do not negatively impact the position of offenders.

This rather apolitical stance toward the criminal justice system is more generally true of Victim Support's strategy. On both sides of the North Sea the organisations have carefully avoided any affiliation with political parties and have therefore managed to maintain good relationships with government irrespective of the political climate, which has played a large part in Victim Support's growth over the past twenty to thirty years. Similarly research is viewed in positivist terms, without too much emphasis on the political background of research. The large role of academics is evidenced by the host of victimologists (Jan van Dijk, Marc Groenhuijsen and Frans Willem Winkel) or trauma-experts (Wim Wolters and Rolf Kleber) who have either occupied board positions or played an integral part in policy development at Victim Support in the Netherlands. Victim Support's positivist take on research is particularly relevant to the use of the ICVS, as will be discussed at more length below.

In summary, the main point of this section is that policy positions taken by Victim Support are related to features of victims that are serviced by the organisation. Victim Support predominantly assists victims of relatively severe, but mass victimization. This means that service delivery is laid down in routines, developed on the base of (research into) many similar situations. Moreover the fact that for most of these victims, involvement in the criminal justice system is restricted to the report to the police means that their recovery necessarily will take place outside of the criminal justice system. Therefore Victim Support is more service-oriented than rights-oriented.

## The policy arena of victim support: victim-specific factions

The policy positions of Victim Support and their relationship with research are a discriminating feature compared to other perspectives on the development of the victims' position. This is true in comparison with other organisations representing victims' interests, but also for more general crime policies in which victims are invoked.

First of all where it is suggested that the increasing importance of victims in criminal justice policy is associated with the rise of a coherent victims 'movement', it will be shown that organisations promoting the position of victims, have differing and sometimes conflicting perspectives on the interests of victims. As was shown for Victim Support these different perspectives can be traced to features of the victims associated with these organisations. Likewise this more general perspective influences the way research, like the ICVS, is viewed. In the current section I will develop this position further.

Second, there are a number of the developments in criminal justice that have coincided with the re-emergence of the victims in criminal justice policy and

are often positively associated with this growth, like the heightened emotional tone of crime policy and the use of retribution as a motivation for sentencing in criminal cases. However it will be shown that although it may well be true that these developments have been beneficial to the victims' plight, the representation of the victim that is invoked by proponents of these developments poses risks to Victim Support. Again I will relate this to the use of academic research. This subject is discussed in the subsequent section.

### **The victims' movement, not a coherent whole**

The rise of the victim has been associated with the growth of the 'victim movement'. However it is highly debatable whether it is correct to speak of a unified movement. Both Williams (1999) and Goodey (2005) question the wisdom of this. Williams suggests that it falls short of the requirements for a social movement, as this is defined by 'the rise of members of an excluded group who seek recognition and influence'. Victimization by crime is most often a transitory experience for those who have the misfortune to be confronted with it, rather than a defining trait by which people can be socially classified. Goodey notes that the ascription of a victims' movement to denote a common political movement is both confusing and inaccurate due to the wide diversity of interests, encompassing right wing lobbyists to feminist rights campaigners.

The latter observation is important, in particular when the difference in the development of the victims' position in various jurisdictions is taken into account. Many authors (e.g. Strang 2002, Goodey 2005 and others) have noted that the tone and policies championed by the victims movement in the United States are of a very different nature to those in the United Kingdom, particularly considering the similarities in the development of their respective criminal justice systems (Garland 2001). Unlike the development of Victim Support in the UK, the victim advocates in the United States have campaigned for more rights for victims, have often been outspoken about reducing the rights of suspects and offenders and have even been associated with pleas to reintroduce the death penalty (e.g. Strang 2002). Cavadino and Dignan (1996; see also Dignan 2005) analyze the various instruments within a conceptual framework, which shows the diversity and sometimes conflicting nature of the proposals.

There has been some analysis of the reason for the divergent development in countries, which has focused on exogenous factors. Barker (2007) for example maintains that factors associated with the political process by which victims' interests become policy define whether a more punitive or a more restorative approach is chosen. Weitekamp's (2002) analysis of the development of restorative justice in Europe suggests that the fact that a certain policy perspective is already in place in a country may hamper the development of newer perspectives. He specifically observes that restorative justice schemes do fairly well where a weak victim support scheme exists, while in countries with

strong victim support schemes restorative justice schemes do not play a major role or are almost nonexistent.

In both the classifications and the explanations for them, the victims' perspective is relatively amorphous. The spin, that political or organisational features place on victims' needs, defines the development of victims' policy. This means that although there may be much merit to this type of approach, it ignores the role that endogenous factors, i.e. those directly relating to differences between victims and their needs play in the development of victims' policies. A closer look at the most prominent alternatives to the Victim Support model will show that these differences are likely to be connected to different policy preferences. In the literature referenced above Victim Support was contrasted with the victim advocates (Goodey 2005; Strang 2002) and the restorative justice movement (Strang 2002; Weitekamp 2002). To this at least should be added organisations that specifically target gendered violence (see for overviews Daly & Stubbs 2007; Hoyle 2007). I will discuss these three perspectives in turn, contrasting their perspectives and positions with those of Victim Support. For each perspective I will conclude by addressing their take on research like the ICVS.

### ***1. Rights-based advocacy groups***

Most advocacy groups (except those that belong to the gendered violence movement) like Support After Manslaughter and Murder (SAMM) in the United Kingdom or Vereniging Ouders van een Vermoord Kind (VOVVK, Association of Parents of Murdered Children) or Aandacht doet Spreken (ADS; Attention helps Speaking) in the Netherlands emphasize 'ideal victim' types<sup>3</sup>, mostly (co-)victims of extremely severe but relatively rare crimes like murder, severe cases of sexual violence and most recently terrorism.

Where Victim Support stresses the normality of reactions, the transitory nature of the effects of victimisation and works on the basis of routines developed by research and evidence of a legion of similar events, most advocacy groups for victims of severe violence emphasize that the crime will leave a permanent stain on victims, with many of them suffering from either post-traumatic stress disorder or conditions of traumatic or complicated grief (which is confirmed by research, see Kaltmann & Bonanno 2003; Kessler et al. 1995, Boelen et al. 2006, Peterson-Armour 2002). Moreover the strong sense that what happened is a unique event, far removed from people's ordinary experience, calls into question the ability of people who have not suffered similar ordeals to understand what victims are going through (Peterson-Armour 2002). This point of departure is further confirmed by the Victim Support, but also of more professional mental health services, to adequately deal with the consequences of extreme forms of violence (see e.g. Rock 1998). It also is part

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3 In an influential article by Nils Christie, he described ideal victims as being blameless and weak in comparison to their perpetrator, who is unrelated and unknown to them, while the perpetrator is large and evil, see Christie 1986.

of the reason why many victim advocacy groups consist mainly of victims themselves.

The extraordinary nature of victimisation in these cases is further emphasized by the severely elevated level of both media and criminal justice involvement. For co-victims of homicide the chance of a trial is high and the criminal justice investigation is more intrusive than in other cases (f. e. the forensic examination of the victims body), which is further compounded by the real possibility that one of the victims' close relations is the perpetrator (again Rock 1998). Coinciding with this the massive media attention serves both as an often unwanted and damaging additional burden, but also stresses the exceptionality of the individual victims' experience. The media-spin on murder cases revolve around the scenario of the ideal victim, casting the victim as helpless, good and innocent, while the offender is presented as evil (Reiner 2002).

The uniqueness and non-transitory nature, coupled with the most-often present criminal justice involvement and the casting of the criminal victimization in stark good versus evil narratives has a number of consequences. First of all the criminal justice system is a far more important focus, merely due to the fact that it is almost always a factor in the aftermath of homicide. The good versus evil narrative suggests a zero-sum approach to victims and suspects/ offenders rights, which is further nurtured by the idea that the damage caused is permanent. If the victim has to suffer permanently, why should the same not apply to the offender? The visibility in the media of individual cases may lead to political consequences on the basis of one exceptional case. Some victims will gain political influence as a consequence of their mostly unwanted media status. Another example of this phenomenon is the tendency to name laws after individual victims (see Garland 2001).

Finally there is an influence on the way research is viewed. Most victim advocacy groups show a preference for concrete victim testimony and narratives to abstracting academic research, as the former confirms and the latter diminishes victims' uniqueness. Moreover the victimization suffered is so rare that it would be unlikely to be included in most large-scale quantitative victimization surveys.

## ***2. Gendered violence movement***

The development of the position of victims of gendered violence, i.e. female victims of sexual and domestic violence, is the one that most closely represents Williams' definition of a movement. The main idea of the gendered violence movement is that the victimization of women takes place in a context that encourages male dominance over women, with victimization in the family sphere being long considered a private rather than a public matter. Related to this, the violence is ongoing and related to other non-violent methods to control and exert dominance over women (for an overview, see Dobash and Dobash 2004). Moreover the victimization here is not a transitory experience, but a constant factor in the life of women, that extends beyond the violence itself.

The movement therefore transcends combating violent acts, which are seen more like a symptom of the problem, rather than the problem itself. The whole societal context needs adjusting in the direction of this disenfranchised group.

First of all this means that the level and type of services needed differ from Victim Support. They may be both more immediate (e.g. shelters) and longer term, more encompassing and related to different goals. Stubbs for example notes that safety and external validation of stopping the abuse are specific needs for this group (Stubbs 2002). The level of professional involvement is larger, with social work agencies undertaking much of the victim assistance.

The critical point of view is represented in a number of ways. In the first place the wisdom of the use of the term victim is debated, due to the disenfranchising connotations that it is perceived to have. Instead the use of the word survivor is preferred (see Hoyle 2007). In the second place, by its very nature, the gendered violence movement calls into question notions of the 'ideal victim' as the victims and the perpetrators are often well known to each other (e.g. Bennice and Resick 2003). Moreover the situation in which victims may fight back eventually and due to this may be branded the offender suggests the problems of defining crime in simple victim-offender terms, necessitating a more close examination of the context, rather than focus on the mere act (e.g. Stubbs 2002).

The criminal justice system is viewed in an equally critical fashion. Initially the criminal justice system was considered to be a primary source of secondary victimization, with criminal justice service providers often adding insult to injury ('the second rape'). This is particularly true for those situations in which victims are further removed from ideal victim status, like victims of marital rape (Bennice & Resick 2003) or victims who were intoxicated or on drugs at the time of their victimisation. But even when reforms to ensure a better fit between victims' needs and the criminal justice system are implemented, problems remain. First and foremost report rates for gendered violence are lower than for comparable violent crime. In the second place, by nature, much gendered violence takes place outside the public eye, which makes delivering sufficient proof in a criminal trial difficult. This then is associated with a high acquittal rate. On a more general note however there is a general critical position towards the criminal justice system, which has led various gendered violence researchers to propose restorative justice conferences as a less bad alternative (see generally Daly & Stubbs 2007).

The critical stance of the gendered violence movement is finally related to the way research is viewed. There is a general sense in the violence against women research community that many cross-sectional quantitative surveys do not adequately capture the context in which domestic violence normally occurs, particularly in the cases where the Conflict Tactics Scale is used (Kimmel 2002). The critical stance is also evident from the emphasis on the political nature of research findings, with research findings that do not fit the ideology of the movement being heavily and sometimes unevenly criticized, (see the reactions to the work of Richard Felson (2002) and Donald Dutton (2006), e.g. DeKeseredy and Dragiewicz, 2007).

### *3. Restorative justice*

Restorative justice is routinely presented as a victim-focused alternative to or adjustment of the criminal justice system (e.g. Zedner 2002). The restorative justice movement strives to readjust both the processes of the criminal justice system, by including victim-offender encounters, often in the form of conferences or mediation and the outcome. Repair of the harm caused by crime to victims, communities and offenders is more important than the punishment and conviction of the latter (for an overview see Dignan 2005). However it is often called in to question whether RJ is as victim-centred as it supposes to be. As Dignan (2005) shows the main theoretical underpinnings of restorative justice are only indirectly related to victims and are not necessarily in their interest. Victim Support Europe has released a policy statement in which she both acknowledges the benefit of restorative justice practices but also expresses concerns as to the risks (see EFVS 2005). Where restorative justice may well be a movement, (which is up for debate as well, due to the large disparities between restorative justice advocates) it does not seem accurate to describe it as a victims' movement.

Due to its reparative focus restorative justice practices have tended to focus on crimes of lesser severity, where repair is a realistic goal.<sup>4</sup> Miers and Willemsens' review of practices across Europe shows that the typical crime deemed suitable for RJ is one of lesser severity, predominantly committed by juvenile offenders (Miers & Willemsens 2004). Moreover restorative justice by nature restricts its focus to those cases in which offenders are apprehended, which means restorative justice practices will normally only be available to a minority of victims.

This latter focus implies that restorative justice proponents are mainly focused on the (contrast with) the criminal justice system. Changing its procedures and goals is main interest of proponents. There is a strong abolitionist tendency within restorative justice and many of the prominent restorative justice thinkers like Christie, Zehr, Braithwaite, Walgrave and others contrasting the restorative justice 'paradigm' with a retributive, criminal justice paradigm (see e.g. Von Hirsch et al. 2003).

There is no clear single perspective on academic research associated with restorative justice, like the ones inferred for the advocacy groups and the gendered violence movement. However a large scale victimization survey like the ICVS will be of limited use. In any case it only addresses the position of victims, and then mostly of victims for whom participating in a restorative justice process will not be an option (no offender apprehended, or not a suitable type of offence). Moreover the survey does not probe victims' preferences for restorative justice procedures.

In summary: instead of viewing the victims' movement as a coherent whole, it is possible to discern a number of, sometimes conflicting, positions between

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<sup>4</sup> Although there are examples of restorative justice practices in more extreme cases, see e.g. Peterson-Armour and Umbreit 2005.

organisations championing victims' causes. These positions are related to specific features of the victims represented and colour the way research is viewed.

In the Netherlands, like in the UK, the Victim Support model in many ways is dominant (see Strang 2002; Goodey 2005). That however neither means that the other factions are non-existent or that policies and services specifically targeting the needs of the groups they represent are neglected. Quite to the contrary: there is considerable development of both services for co-victims of homicide and domestic violence and of forms of restorative justice. However the position of SHN does mean that she is able to influence these policies and services. For example SHN launched a case-management service for co-victims of homicide launched in early 2007. The service targets many of their problems (like the excessive media attention and the additional burden of the criminal justice system) without negatively impacting the position of the suspect or offender.

Finally the differences suggest the possibility that general developments in criminal justice that are commonly associated with the 'return of the victim' serve certain factions of the so-called victims movement more than others. The following section will show that this may have pose risks for Victim Support.

## General criminal justice developments and the position of victim support

The general development of the criminal justice system has an impact on the way both victims and research is viewed. For the description of these developments I turn to Garland's influential analysis in *The Culture of Control* (Garland 2001).<sup>5</sup> This will be familiar to most readers, so I will not discuss the trends he discerns at length.

Amongst others Garland shows that punitive sanctions and expressive justice have re-emerged and that the emotional tone of crime policy has changed. This development is particularly visible in the Netherlands, that until the 1970s was well-known for the strict rehabilitative, welfare orientation of its penal system and its uniquely low incarceration rate, which at the low point in the 1970s was only 17 per 100,000 inhabitants. The increase in incarceration has been marked, currently exceeding 100 per 100,000 inhabitants (Cavadino & Dignan 2006). Furthermore the policy-making process has become increasingly populist and politicized, with political advantage and public opinion gaining influence to the detriment of expert opinion and academic

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<sup>5</sup> Although I am aware that Garland's analysis has an Anglo-Saxon slant, which may not be representative of mainland European criminal justice systems (see e.g. Tonry 2004, Cavadino & Dignan 2006), van Swaaningen's analysis of Garland's work suggests that it does give a relevant description of the situation in the Netherlands (Van Swaaningen 2004).

research. Although Van Swaaningen shows this development to be more profound for the Anglo-Saxon world than for the Netherlands (Van Swaaningen 2004), it is nevertheless easily visible in the Netherlands as well. A clear example is the fact that the last major government policy paper on crime *Naar een Veiliger Samenleving* (Toward a safer society; adopted in 2002) was motivated not so much by developments in crime levels but by the public's fear of crime and opinions about solutions. Discussion in parliament about crime often relates to exceptional cases, which make media headlines, accompanied by public opinion research of the quick and dirty variety. The seemingly unending stream of examples of crime problems gives rise to a perpetual sense of crisis. This may be a slightly hyperbolic in the Dutch situation, but it is undeniably true that in the criminal justice policy in the Netherlands is becoming less predictable.

A final relevant trend Garland discusses is 'the return of the victim'. However, although many of the developments mentioned above have led to more attention to those suffering from crime and have thereby benefited the victims' position, we should not lose sight of the features of the victims that are invoked in many of these trends. It is the 'ideal victim' that makes top stories in the media and is used as justification for increased punitiveness in sentencing. And although measures that serve the interests of 'ideal victims' may well do the same for other victims, this is not necessarily the case. The fact that victims' needs are connected to pleas for more excessive punitive sanctions does, for example, not reflect most victims' actual wishes (Maruna and King 2004).

More generally, from the earlier discussion it is apparent that Victim Support's perspective concerning victims is at odds with the consequences of a number of the trends mentioned by Garland. This is manifestly different for the rights-based advocacy groups, whose preferred policies more closely mimic these developments. As stated SHN does not support policies that diminish the rights of suspects or offenders and the same applies to calls for increased sentencing, as research shows that this is not in victims' interests (Maruna and King 2004). This is related to matters of principle, but also to practical concerns as well. In general the tough-on-crime policies, although they invoke victims' interests, do not translate into increased spending on improving victims' positions. This is in part due to purely budgetary considerations: most initiatives that are part of tough-on-crime policies are expensive, which may necessitate budget cuts in other criminal justice fields. For example, the crime policy plan *Naar een Veiliger Samenleving*, although it meant increased spending of hundreds of millions of euros on criminal justice agencies, was going to mean a 10% cutback in funding for SHN. Only after an extensive lobby was this overturned by an amendment in parliament.

SHN's concern is then that policies that suppose to serve victims interests, but of which the effects in this respect are doubtful at best, will replace policies that are actually effective in meeting victims' needs. As the next section will show one of the tools she uses to prevent this from happening is research, like the ICVS.

## The use of the ICVS for Dutch victim support

The International Crime Victim Survey is the most far-reaching programme of fully standardised surveys looking at householders' experience of crime in different countries. From the first sweep in 1987 it has grown from 14 to 30 countries in the last, fifth sweep, that collected data on household victimization experiences in 2005 (here the ICVS was renamed ICVS/ EU ICS, see amongst others Van Kesteren et al. 2001; Van Dijk et al. 2007, Van Dijk 2007 and for a full overview of ICVS publications <http://rechten.uvt.nl/icvs/index.htm>). The stated goals of the ICVS are to provide an alternative to police data to gauge the development of crime, to allow comparisons between the countries included in the survey and to extend information on who is most affected by crime.

This section will discuss the use of the International Crime Victim Survey in the policy development of SHN. First of all general observations relating to the relationship between the ICVS and SHN will be discussed. It will be noted that both share a common history. In addition, as was shown in previous sections the perspectives of the ICVS and the SHN concerning victims are similar and SHN uses the ICVS to infuse information relating to the actual opinions and needs of victims into the development of government policy. Second, various recent policy and service initiatives of Dutch Victim Support have been informed by the International Crime Survey. Two examples of this will be discussed, relating to prevention of repeat victimization and reaching victims who have not reported their crime to the police. Finally, concerning the international level, the possibilities of the ICVS for evaluating the EU Framework Decision on the standing of victims in the criminal procedure will be discussed.

### ***General observations: personal and principle links***

First of all the link between the ICVS and SHN is a personal one. Both are the brainchildren of eminent criminologist and justice policy maker Jan van Dijk. Van Dijk played an intricate part in the development and expansion of the ICVS over its five sweeps in the past twenty years. It is undoubtedly due in large part to his skill as a scientist but also as a strategist, first at the Dutch department of Justice and later at the United Nations of Office and Crime that the ICVS has steadily grown over the past twenty years.

Similarly Van Dijk played a central role in the early days of Victim Support in the Netherlands. He was the first chair of the National Organisation for Victim Support (the precursor of SHN) in the Netherlands from 1984 to 1989. The department of Justice policy paper *Samenleving en Criminaliteit* (Society and Criminality) of which Van Dijk was the primary author laid the groundwork for many of the features of Dutch Victim Support today. It also established a firm and enduring link between the Justice department and the organisation.

The evidence of this shared history is still evident from some of the questions included in the ICVS but more generally the view of victims in both the ICVS and Victim Support is similar. The ICVS addresses mass, routine victimization, which includes the more severe forms, with burglaries, assaults and sexual victimization covered in the survey. Moreover the nature of victimization surveys, which initially (see Coleman & Moynihan 1996) were intended to estimate the dark number of unrecorded crime, in itself suggests a focus on victims outside of the criminal justice system. These features resound in Victim Support, with its routine delivery of services to a large number of victims, and its efforts to reach victims outside of the criminal justice system. Moreover where there is clear connection between Victim Support and the ICVS this is not necessarily the case for other organisations promoting victims interests, as was discussed in the previous section. Here it was shown that rights-based victim advocacy groups generally prefer individual testimonies to abstracting research. Also the type of victims they represent are not covered by the ICVS. The gendered violence movement finds cross-sectional victimization surveys to be lacking context. Finally proponents of restorative justice primarily focus on victims, whose offender is apprehended and of less serious crimes.

Currently the use of the ICVS for victim support relates first and foremost to the indications it gives about the actual situation of victims and the input that this suggests for the development of policy, examples of which will be given in the next section and the weight the ICVS results carry toward potential funding organisations. The publication of the ICVS and the (media) attention this generates goes some way to balance both the poorly executed public opinion research and the anecdotal sentiments that run rife in the discussion surrounding criminal justice policy. The results from the survey suggest far more stability in crime levels than is often assumed, with the latest report in fact showing a decrease in crime and recommending more communication efforts to inform the general public of this (Van Dijk et al. 2007). In addition the latest sweep reveals less punitiveness and also repeatedly shows victims to be no more punitive than the general public (Van Dijk et al. 2007; Kuhnrich and Kania 2007). Although these factors are hardly news to those in criminological circles, the same is not true for the general public, and the publication of the ICVS data creates the opportunity to stress these facts.

The time between ICVS sweeps (mostly four or five years) has the further advantage that it gives Victim Support time to incorporate findings, secondary analysis and additional research into the development of policy. Even when policy has been determined there is a lag of a number of years before the service has been developed and implemented on a national scale. This is not only due to the current size of the organisation but also to the time consuming process of securing funds necessary for the development of service.

### *National policies: repeat victimization and victims outside of the criminal justice system*

ICVS results have played an important part in the development of various Victim Support policies and services. This section will discuss examples of these policies/ services and the ICVS results that were used in their development.

Throughout this article the importance of reaching victims outside of the criminal justice system has been stressed. Although most clients still access SHN's services through the police, nearly 20,000 clients annually access the services of their own accord (figures Jaarverslag Slachtofferhulp Nederland 2006, downloadable from [www.slachtofferhulp.nl](http://www.slachtofferhulp.nl)). However this figure pales in comparison to the millions of victims that do not report their crimes to the police. Although many of the crimes not reported are of a less severe nature, mainly relating to property crime or damage, research shows that vulnerable victims, either young victims or victims of sexual or domestic violence also often do not report their victimization. The latest sweep of the ICVS for instance shows that of sexual incidents only one in eight is reported to the police, and of sexual assaults just over one in four (Van Dijk et al. 2007; see for results concerning children, Finkelhor et al. 2001).

The research results confirm the necessity of including services for victims who have not accessed the criminal justice system. Moreover in the past five years additional effort has been expended to reach these victims. In 2003 a national helpline (0900-0101) was introduced, accompanied by a nationwide television campaign. The website [www.slachtofferhulp.nl](http://www.slachtofferhulp.nl) contains additional possibilities for self-referral from 2005 onwards and 2007 saw the launch of a website specifically devoted to children and young people: <http://www.ikzitindeshit.nl/>. In addition proposals have been put forward for the development of methods of emotional support through the web and the introduction of case-managers for victims of sexual abuse, with specific task of making reporting to the police a less strenuous experience.

The research into repeat victimization has repeatedly shown that becoming a victim increases the chances of revictimization (e.g. Farrell 1995), which has been confirmed for the Netherlands as well (Wittebrood & Nieuwbeerta 2000). Moreover the work of Ken Pease, Graham Farrell, Gloria Laycock and others in the United Kingdom has shown that expending police crime prevention efforts to those just victimized, serves to prevent crime (e.g. Farrell & Pease 2001). Contrary to the notion of the 'ideal victim', victims can play a role in preventing crime against themselves.

Early efforts to translate these findings to the Dutch police, however did not prove successful, due to poor implementation and lack of organisational support (see Van Barlingen et al. 1998). When Dutch Victim Support attempted to renew interest in the topic she sought to avoid the mistakes from the earlier attempts. This was sought in more attention to showing the street level police officers of the size and consequences of the problem, a regional approach incorporating all relevant partners and more clear demonstration of

the importance of preventing repeat victimization. To this end a policy documents were drawn up (see Pemberton 2003) which were to a large part informed by a secondary analysis of the International Crime Victim Survey. Van Dijk (2001) showed that repeat victimization does not only negatively affect victims' well-being (see Winkel 2002), but it also has a negative influence on the perception of safety and on the satisfaction with the police. Van Dijk showed repeat victims to be less satisfied with the police, less convinced of the positive effects of her work, more afraid of crime and less likely to report crimes. These results proved important in convincing the regional authorities in the southern Dutch province of Limburg to fund a pilot project, which subsequently was adopted by the Dutch department of Justice. Currently this project is awaiting national roll-out depending on the results of an evaluation, commissioned by the Scientific Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch department of Justice.

### ***The international level: the evaluation of the Framework Decision***

The 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2001 saw the creation of a landmark in international criminal law. The European Union Framework decision on the position of victims within the criminal procedure is the first piece of legally binding 'hard' law relating to crime victims in international legislation. This sets it apart from instruments with similar content, like the United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power or the Council of Europe Recommendation (1985)<sup>11</sup> on the position of the Victim in the Framework of Criminal Law and Procedure, both adopted in 1985, as these are both soft law instruments, which are not legally binding (e.g. Groenhuijsen and Letschert 2006). The legally binding character of the Framework decision combined with the extensive set of victims' rights contained within, led to high hopes for the development of the victims position across the European Union.

However it is safe that these high hopes have not been fully met by the progress made in the six years since the Framework Decision was adopted (see Groenhuijsen and Pemberton 2007). First of all the member states seem to have collectively underestimated its implications. Various Framework requirements have a far-reaching effect on the legal systems of the member states or call for much effort in implementing the services necessary for reaching framework goals. This was obviously not anticipated by the EU-member states. Clear evidence of this is the fact that most of articles were supposed to be implemented in only one year following the Framework Decision. Second, there is the evaluation mechanism of the European Commission itself. As this is solely based on naming and shaming those member states that do not fulfil their requirements the reports of the Commission on the implementation play a central role. However in practice the Commission solely reviews transposal of Framework requirements into national legislation. This both foregoes evaluation of compliance (i.e. the practice in a given system meets the requirements of the Framework decision, with or without formal legislation) and of the effects of implementation. From the fact that a country may have laid down in law the obligation to inform victims of their rights, it does not

follow that victims are in practice informed of these rights. The Commission report on this Framework decision showed much evidence of the shortcomings of this manner of evaluation. As Groenhuijsen and Pemberton (2007) show the report did not reflect the actual situation in many countries.

The ICVS could prove to be a valuable tool in gauging the implementation of the Framework Decision. Van Dijk and Groenhuijsen (2007) discuss a variety of ways in which the ICVS can be used to evaluate the progress made. In particular the measures ascertaining victim satisfaction with police performance and the amount of victims needing and receiving services from a specialised organisation, i.e. a victim support organisation, are relevant. The results are further evidence of the limited effect of the Framework decision. Satisfaction rates with police have risen in some countries but declined in others. The take-up rate of victim support organisations has gone up across Europe, but still falls far short of reaching all victims that need support. Even in the countries with the highest take up rates two out of three victims do not receive the support they need. In the majority of the countries less than one in eight victims receive the help they need.

The ICVS results will be incorporated in a research project proposed by Victim Support Europe which will evaluate the implementation of the Framework Decision. A pilot of this project was reported in Groenhuijsen and Pemberton (2007) and at the time of writing a proposal for a more extensive research project is under review at the European Commission.

## Concluding observations

The International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) is an important and useful tool for Dutch Victim Support (SHN). The connection between the ICVS and SHN does not hold unconditionally for other organisations that claim to further the interests of victims of crime. Both SHN's perspectives on victims and research are similar to those of the ICVS. The discussion of the perspectives of rights-based advocacy groups, the gendered violence movement and proponents of restorative justice show that on both counts – research and victims – other victim-oriented organisations may have alternative opinions. This does not only show that the relevance of the ICVS for these organisations may be less than for SHN, but in a more general sense is evidence of the variety of perspectives within the so-called victims' movement.

SHN uses the results of the ICVS for policy development at the national and international level and to counter various sentiments surrounding the position of victims of crime. In particular the ICVS has informed the development of policy relating to victims who have not reported crime and of a pilot-service focusing on preventing repeat victimization. At the international level the ICVS can inform an evaluation of the implementation of the European Union Framework Decision on the position of the victim in criminal proceedings. Finally the ICVS shows victims to be less punitive and crime levels to be

falling, thereby countering sentiments by which victims' needs and crime levels are invoked to support increasingly punitive criminal justice measures.

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# Victimisations Surveys in Comparative Perspective

Richard Blath

## Introduction

Germany is not having a leading role in national or international crime victimisation surveys. In order to improve the German situation, the Federal Ministry of Interior and the Federal Ministry of Justice organised two colloquia about representative victimisation surveys in 1999 and 2001. On the basis of these two meetings, and following the suggestions of the First Periodical Report on Crime and Crime Control for Germany<sup>1</sup>, both ministries commissioned – in the Spring of 2002 – a working group of criminologists and methodologists to elaborate a draft for crime victimisation surveys in Germany to be conducted regularly. The working group presented its report in the Autumn of 2002. The report includes proposals for forthcoming crime victimisation surveys – variables and items, structure of the questionnaire (modules), time intervals, proposals for sampling and interview methods and an estimate of the costs.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to implement this draft until now. Nevertheless, at the beginning of this year (2007), the Ministry of Interior commissioned an extensive research project on juvenile delinquency, particularly on youth violence. As this project comprises questions on committing offences and victimisation, it serves for the time being as a study on unreported (and reported) offences.

The discussions in and the results of the two colloquia, the working group and, furthermore, the working groups that elaborated two governmental Periodical Reports on Crime and Crime Control form the background of the following reflections about the significance of crime victimisation surveys with reference to crime and criminal justice policy.

## Objectives of crime and criminal justice policy

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1 Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Ministry of Justice (Ed.): First Periodical Report on Crime and Crime Control in Germany. Berlin 2001, <http://www.bmj.bund.de>

What is the meaning of results that crime victimisation surveys provide for crime and criminal justice policy? A precondition for an answer to this question is to describe the objectives of crime and criminal justice policy.

There are at least two main objectives or tasks crime and criminal justice policy has to attain:

On one hand crime and criminal justice policy has to create the legal and actual conditions providing for the optimal protection of the population against crime and its consequences. This contains optimal protection against violations of central values: life, physical and psychological safety, property. Legislation being the main instrument of policy, crime and criminal justice policy has to provide for judicial regulations in the area of protection against threats against public safety. These regulations concern preventive measures, for instance getting information about certain persons or groups by police or secret services, dealing with potentially dangerous persons and situations, and technological solutions to crime prevention (such as public electronic surveillance). Crime and criminal justice policy is responsible for legislation in the field of criminal prosecution and the execution of criminal sanctions, and – of course – crime and criminal justice policy also has to provide for the necessary budgetary resources.

Measures of protection against threats to public safety and measures of criminal prosecution may imply or are actually implying a restriction of individual (personal) rights, for instance privacy, freedom of movement, freedom of speech. Thus, crime and criminal justice policy is – on the other hand – obliged to limit such restrictions as far as possible, and it has to enforce democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights. These are objectives that may be called rational in a normative or value oriented sense.

A further precondition to answer the above question properly is to reflect on the actors or institutions taking part in the “play” of crime and criminal policy and their interests.

The main actors are of course the legislative and executive bodies in charge of fulfilling the tasks of crime and criminal justice policy.

The second group of actors is the general public that fulfils different roles in this “play”. First, the general public benefits from crime policy. People should be protected against crime, in their role as potential, and sometimes actual victims of crime. Second, the general public participates in the process of defining the amount and structure of crime by reporting relevant cases to the police or other crime control agencies. Third, the general public has an important role in the field of crime prevention and combating crime: The crime prevention agencies and the crime combating institutions need the support of the general public to fulfil their tasks - the general public needs to be informed about how it could contribute to crime prevention and combating crime, and should be motivated to cooperate. Fourth, parts of the general public are to be seen as potential offenders. Accordingly, they are addressed by preventive and repressive measures. Finally, the general public exercises the role of a spectator of the “play” dealing with crime and the political and practical efforts to

prevent, reduce or suppress crime. In this role, the general public evaluates the performance of the law enforcement agencies, the criminal courts and the agencies and institutions that are executing criminal sanctions. It is also evaluating the crime and criminal justice policy, eventually in its voting behaviour in political elections.

The third group of actors are the media that execute a further role in this public “play” of committing, preventing and combating crime. Again, there are several aspects that should be taken into account. On the one hand, the media report about crime issues, ranging from concrete cases of crime to the description of the general crime situation. They also report about criminal prosecution, court sentencing, execution of sentences and crime and criminal justice policy. The media do this not only in an objective manner but often in a biased way, biased simply by the selection of certain topics or by scandalising and exaggerating certain events. Sometimes they act in this manner for sensation seeking reasons (crime sells!), sometimes in trying to promote a certain approach to crime and criminal justice policy. As a consequence, the media do influence to a great extent the way the general public perceives crime, its volume, its structure, and its trends. Thus, the media mold feelings of safety or fear of crime, attitudes on deviant behaviour and on sentencing, attitudes on crime control agencies (police, public prosecutors, criminal courts, prisons), and they influence expectations of the general public, their expectations about crime and criminal justice policy. But the media have also an important function under a democratic rule of law perspective. They function as a kind of a monitoring system for crime and criminal policy, watching possible abuses of power executed in processes of criminal prosecution. Crime and criminal justice policy is also under “media surveillance”, when the political actors prepare and decide on new legislation in this area. In almost every case of new legislation in the field of preventing and combating crime, a balance is to be found between the principle of effectiveness and efficiency on the one side and the protection of individual rights (of privacy and freedom) on the other side. In every democratic society, different opinions exist about this balance.

A fourth group of “players” on the stage of crime and criminal justice policy consists of persons, groups and associations that are dealing professionally with the prevention of and the combat against crime: Police, public prosecutors, judges, lawyers, prison staff, probation and parole services, mediation and victim support agencies. This part provides empirical expertise on crime phenomena, crime trends, concrete problems of crime prevention and repression. But these persons, groups and agencies also act as interest groups, indeed as a lobby, trying to carry through their own perspectives, goals and means of crime prevention and suppression on the political level.

Apart from these professional groups, there are additional lobby groups that act on fringes of the crime and criminal justice policy scene, such as private security firms supplementing police forces in private locations or privately organised events. Private firms supplying technical facilities for crime prevention also belong to this type of lobbying.

Two additional institutions are to be named in this context, institutions that observe crime and criminal justice policy from a rather distant perspective. One is the constitutional court. As crime and criminal justice policy and legislation must be compatible with constitutional principles, the constitutional court is authorised to examine political measures including legislation under aspects of human rights, the competence of the different state agencies, and the rule of law.

The other institutions, quite distant from crime and criminal justice policy, are scientific research, criminology in the first place accompanied by many additional academic disciplines including biology, medicine, political science, police science, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, and technical sciences as well. These scientific disciplines are also observing what happens on the “stage” of crime and criminal justice policy, offering or being called for their support of political measures.

Considering what was just delineated above, it becomes clear that crime and criminal justice policy is always – so to speak – in an area of tension stretched out of

- Principles of efficacy and efficiency when preventing and combating crime,
- Normative, even constitutional, principles of human rights and of the rule of law,
- Expectations of interest groups, particularly by prosecution and law enforcement agencies, and the relevant professional organizations,
- Expectations of the general public,
- Media acting differentially from what was described before,
- Criminologists and scholars of other significant academic disciplines in this field.

## Significance of crime victimisation surveys for crime and criminal justice policy

Crime victimisation surveys provide information on the following subjects: Amount, structure (types) and trends of crime, reporting crime, safety feelings / fear of crime, attitudes on crime and criminal justice policy (i.e. protection against threats to public safety, on deviant behaviour, on criminal prosecution and criminal sanctions), attitudes on police and other law enforcement agencies. Having delineated the “action space” of crime and criminal justice policy so far, the following remarks will be dealing with the question how results of crime victimisation surveys can contribute to a rational crime and criminal justice policy.

### *Amount, structure (types) and development of crime*

Police statistics (or crime statistics of other law enforcement agencies) only include information on reported (and recorded) offences. Crime victimization

surveys may provide additional information, information on unreported (and unrecorded) offences. Although this additional information can only include certain types of crime, it is important for crime and criminal justice policy. It may help for instance to take decisions about the allocation of – always short – resources for preventing and combating crime. From a crime and criminal justice policy perspective, the additional information on the amount of crime may cause problems. Politicians have to admit publicly that the amount of crime is larger than it appears from police statistics. A higher crime rate could make the population feel insecure or more insecure than it felt before. This could lead to a greater dissatisfaction of the population, conveyed and reinforced by the media. As a consequence, politicians could be confronted with claims for additional repressive measures. This could affect the always problematic balance between state control and individual rights.

### ***Crime Reporting***

This possible effect of uncertainty seems to be reflected rather rarely in criminological discussions on crime victimisation studies. A possible calming effect which may result from other possible evidence of crime victimisation surveys is mentioned more often in this context: Police crime statistics provide information only about crime that the police are informed of. When the incidence and prevalence of crime measured by police statistics increases, an actual increase of crime is not the only explanation. Additional explanations of such a development are possible. The increase of measured crime may result from the fact that people report more cases of crime to the police. Changes of police law enforcement practices may be an other explanation. The results of crime victimisation studies provide a better insight into the “actual” trends of crime.

Tendencies of public dramatisation can be avoided or at least diminished and may thus have actual effects on crime and criminal justice policy. In Germany for instance reported cases of bodily injury have been increasing since the late 1980s of the last century up to now. Such a long period of increasing figures is an unusual statistical phenomenon. There is some evidence from criminological research (local victimization surveys) and from other sources that the reporting behaviour of the general public but also control and enforcement behaviour of the police have changed. Therefore we have to conclude that the increase of the police (and – by the way – conviction) figures should be explained at least partly by the change of reporting and enforcement and must not only be explained by an actual change of committed offences.

In the 1990s, in Germany there was a tense climate concerning crime and criminal justice policy and practice. There were different explanations for that development: One was German unification and connected real and felt problems of uncertainty, other reasons were mass media reports on single cases of sexual abuse and murders of children and increasing crime figures (but not of cases of sexually motivated child killings). And the consequences: Criminal provisions were tightened in many legislative acts.

Perhaps results of regular victimization surveys would have guided public discussion about these crime issues into another direction, with different crime policy consequences.

### ***Safety feelings / fear of crime***

These two sides of the same coin – safety feelings / fear of crime – belong regularly to the concepts addressed in victimisation surveys. Safety feelings and fear of crime are theoretical concepts that try to describe the perception of crime, the emotions accompanying the perceptions or cognitions, and perhaps behavioural reactions on these perceptions. The theoretical background for this concept is the classic concept of (social) attitudes with its cognitive, emotional or value oriented, and behavioural components. The view of crime as a social problem among others, perceived changes of crime, fear of being victimised, and measures of protection against the risk of being victimised are examples of such attitudes.

Regular and repeated measurements of such concepts may be of great value for crime and criminal justice policy. This part of crime victimisation surveys provide information on how people think and feel about crime, its present volume, and its recent development. Feelings of insecurity, high fear of crime, and perceived negative trends reflect deep concerns of the population. If crime and criminal justice policy is informed about these facts, it can react. It can take preventive or repressive measures against crime. It may provide for better support and help for crime victims.

Such information is also important when fear of crime and feelings of insecurity are not justified, with a view at the actual volume or trends of crime. In such situations, crime and criminal justice policy can try to provide adequate information to the public, and to counter the unjustified fears. Making people less fearful of crime would then be one positive effect. An additional effect could be that claims for more punitive measures against criminal offenders could be avoided.

### ***Attitudes on crime and criminal justice policy (protection against threats to public safety, on deviant behaviour, on criminal prosecution and on criminal sanctions).***

Crime victimisation studies may also address attitudes on different aspects of crime and criminal justice policy. Aspects of crime and criminal justice policy are, for instance, new measures on criminal prosecution (i.e. arrest, electronic surveillance, bugging), criminalisation and – sometimes – de-criminalisation of certain types of behaviour, new types of criminal sanctions, new types of treatment in prison or mental hospitals.

For crime and criminal justice policy it is important to know how people think and feel about such measures that are topical in discussions in the media and the population. Some proposed measures can come into force only when the general public agrees to it. And even if new measures came into force, they

may only be successfully implemented and carried out if the general public supports it. Also in this regard, victimisation surveys are highly valuable for crime and criminal justice policy.

### ***Attitudes to police and other law enforcement agencies***

Attitudes on police, on other law enforcement agencies such as public prosecutors, courts, prisons, mental hospitals, and probation services could be addressed in crime victimization surveys as well.

Under aspects of crime and criminal justice policy, it is important to know how the population thinks and feels about the law enforcement agencies. Satisfaction and confidence are most important dimensions against which the attitudes of the population on the law enforcement agencies may be measured.

The dimension of satisfaction applies mainly on how effective the agencies are in their efforts to prevent and to prosecute crimes. Satisfaction may also be related to the question whether and / or to which degree the representatives of the agencies are behaving in a friendly and supportive manner towards the population as a whole, but also towards the individuals who are or feel threatened and / or are asking for help or protection.

The dimension of confidence concerns the aspect of efficacy and efficiency as well, but, in addition, it is also about the agencies acting within their legal framework and not abusing their powers. Confidence on being safe from the misuse of power is one of the most important elements that create confidence in the state as a whole, confidence in democracy and in the rule of law. And this confidence is of course also a condition for the general public supporting the law enforcing agencies in their tasks of crime prevention and control.

The crime and criminal justice policy is responsible to the law enforcement agencies. Therefore, politicians must be informed about the attitudes of the general public on the law enforcement agencies, about the population's satisfaction with and their confidence in the agencies, concerning their ability to fulfil their functions of guidance and control.

### **Concerns about crime victimisation surveys**

As delineated above, crime victimisation surveys provide important information for the objectives and tasks of crime and criminal justice policy. However there are possible side effects that should be carefully observed. These concerns apply mainly to the concept and recording of the so-called dark figure of crime. The concern has criminological aspects and has a crime and criminal justice policy implication.

#### ***Criminological concern***

In the previous text. the terms "crime" and "offence" were used without a definition, The text relied on the implicit consensus that a crime or a criminal

offence is defined as a behaviour that contradicts a penal prescription, or in other words. That violates a criminal norm. For the following deliberations. it is necessary to explain the concept of crime and criminal offence in an additional way.

There may be a consensus between criminologists, that crime means an action, which cannot be recognized only by observation, but it is the result of a rather complex evaluation of personal and situational circumstances and in addition of a normative and/or value judgement.

In practice and everyday life, many conditions must be fulfilled before a concrete action may be defined as a crime or a criminal offence, for instance:

- The action must be able of being observed,
- Another person has observed the action,
- The “victimized” person ascribes a harmful or illegal objective to the active person,
- A criminal norm exists with a statutory fact (typological description), under which the action can be subsumed,
- Perhaps in addition, there is a social, moral, or ethical norm that forbids the action.
- Another person exists who values or declares that the action contradicts or fulfils the criminal norm,
- Another person (or the actor himself) reported the action to the police or another law enforcement agency,
- The police or another law enforcement agency accepts the report and records the action as a criminal offence,
- The prosecutor, the judge, the court decides that the person did what he did, and decides that the action fulfils the statutory fact of the criminal norm,
- The law enforcement agency statutes that the action was not justified by a legally acknowledged reason,
- And, when the person should be convicted,
- The accused person is declared legally responsible for the action.

There may be additional conditions that should be fulfilled when an action may be judged as being a crime.

Many persons act in many situations in a way that fulfils a statutory fact of a criminal norm and that could lead to criminal prosecution and conviction, but criminal prosecution does not in fact take place.

In problem or conflict situations that could be of relevance for criminal prosecution, many people are able and are prepared to solve the problem without asking for the reaction by the criminal justice system. Or, possibly, they do not realize that the action or the situation is of a criminal significance. Many actions in everyday life situations could be defined and prosecuted as i.e. insult, defamation, bodily harm, even violations of sexual self-determination, but that does not happen. Some of the conditions for being a criminal act are not given.

Illuminating the dark field of crime is one of the aims of crime victimisation surveys. But what is the dark field? The items aiming at measuring crime in questionnaires describe the actions in a rather rough way, actions which may be seen as not relevant for criminal prosecution, and – even if the actor values the action as a criminal act – the “victim” does not want that the action is subjected to criminal prosecution.

There is a danger connected with crime victimisation surveys. Criminology makes people assume that it can recognise criminal offences by crime victimisation surveys in an objective way, but we can not. In such surveys, it is not possible to reflect and name all the conditions that must be met that, in the end, make the action to be seen as a criminal offence.

Carrying out crime victimisation surveys could be a type of net-widening, not on the level of criminal sanctions but on the level of the “action-space”. More actions could be included into the criminal space than the actors are doing. It is a type of reification of life space, of action-space which is defined by interpretation of the action (or behaviour) of the other on the basis of selected perceptions and guided assumptions and ascriptions. Reification nominates a procedure of perception which claims that crime can be measured like a physical entity. But crime should be defined as the result of complex processes of perception, interpretation and evaluation, as explained above.

The danger exists: Crime victimisation surveys could contribute to a reified view on crime, a perspective that is criticised extensively by scholars in other contexts.

### ***Concern under crime and criminal justice policy perspectives***

This reified perception produced by the results of crime victimisation surveys may have remarkable consequences on the notion, on the volume, on trends of crime as it is perceived by the general public and by representatives of crime and criminal justice policy.

The results of crime victimisation surveys imply that the volume of crime is much higher than is known from police crime statistics. The general public could take this as a fact, and could request additional efforts to combat crime, efforts which mostly mean more repression, harsher criminal sanctions, building more prisons. The media could take up these requests combined with reproaches that crime and criminal justice policy does not do enough for the safety of the population. And the crime and criminal justice policy will perhaps give way to those requests.

The information about a greater amount of crime may affect the confidence of the general public into the efficacy and efficiency of the prevention and prosecution of crime. Diminishing satisfaction with the performance of law enforcement could be a secondary effect, perhaps the dissatisfaction will also be directed at democratic parties or to the democratic system and the principle of the rule of law. Consequently, the general public could tend to vote for extremist political parties that promise more safety for the general public.

Promoting such a reified concept may have as a possible result, that the general public is less prepared to solve problem or conflict situations on its own, and that more people request more often criminal prosecution in such cases.

Sometimes items are included in crime victimisation questionnaires that signify types of action which are not (yet) seen as criminal offences. Net-widening of criminalized behaviour – as already mentioned – could be a result.

## Conclusions

These consequences of crime victimisation surveys may be seen as exaggerated. But they are not completely unrealistic. These possible side-effects should be reflected in the process of designing crime victimisation surveys, and when publishing their results. Criminology should not reinforce a reified concept of crime, a concept which does not describe social reality in an adequate way and which is not helpful for solving conflicts in concrete interactions or on the level of society as a whole, a concept which may have negative effects on the general perception of crime and on political reactions.

Going without crime victimisation surveys in future is not the suggestion. It is possible to gain from such studies very useful information for the improvement of criminological wisdom, and for the improvement of crime and criminal justice policy. But what should be, what must be avoided is spreading the impression that it is possible to measure crime exactly. What is measured by crime victimisation surveys insofar is some unpleasant experiences of people which could under additional conditions perhaps lead to criminal prosecution and then to a definition as a crime.

Under democratic devices and under the perspective of the rule of law, criminological research should support a crime and criminal justice policy and a general policy that enhances the confidence of citizens into the conflict and problem solving abilities of the state, into its ability to protect the general public, but also a policy which improves people's self-determination and confidence into its own abilities to solve conflicts and problems, and finally a policy which restrains state regulations – particularly those which impact individual rights and freedom – to the necessary degree.

# Consumer Fraud and Victimization Patterns in Iceland

Rannveig Þórisdóttir and Helgi Gunnlaugsson

Research has repeatedly shown that the amount of crime in society far exceeds crimes reported to the police. In this paper we examine overall victimisation in Iceland with particular focus on consumer fraud victimisations and police reporting based on data from the 2005 Icelandic ICVS survey (International Crime Victims Survey). The findings show, among other things, that slightly more than 20% of Icelanders were victims of one or more of the types of crimes included in the survey in 2004. As for consumer fraud, about 13% of respondents admitted they had experienced some type of consumer fraud in 2004. This level of victimisation was found to be one of the most common types of criminal victimisation in Iceland, but only a small minority reported the incident to the police.

Although research has shown that consumer fraud is on the rise (Holtfreter, Van Slyke and Blomberg 2005), criminological studies on victimisation to fraud have not been prominent. Fraud differs from traditional larceny because the victims voluntarily give their possessions to the offender. An example would be a merchant selling someone a chair claiming it was antique, but knowing it was a cheap copy (Siegel 2006). Even though the FBI categorization of crimes such as fraud is depicted as being less serious than other forms of property crimes such as burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft, many argue that the economic loss may be larger (Reid 2006).

Fraud can be found in many forms and is often related to forgery and counterfeiting, as all involve intentions to deceive or defraud. Despite the difficulties of defining and categorizing fraud, some characteristics may distinguish fraud offenders from other offenders. As with white collar crime, fraud offenders can more often be found among members of higher socio-economic groups who do not perceive themselves as criminals, but rather, as honest people taking advantage of a good business situation.

Shover (1998) has for example referred to consumer fraud as an invisible crime. Consumer fraud like other types of white collar crime is often difficult to detect since this type of crime is sometimes so sophisticated that the victim does not even know he or she has been victimised.

Available research on assessing the nature and extent of consumer fraud indicates that this type of crime is more common than other types of property crime, usually included in victimisation studies, such as violence or theft. For example on average, 7.5% of respondents in 17 industrialized nations said they had experienced some type of consumer fraud in 1999 (van Kesteren et al.

2000). Research within the European Union has revealed that on average about 12% of respondents experienced some form of consumer fraud in 2004 (van Dijk et al. 2005) and nearly a third of the U.S. adult population in 2004 (Anderson 2004).

Although many admit they have experienced some form of consumer fraud, very few report it to the police. For example, one victimisation study showed that the large majority of the fraud incidents, or about 90%, were not reported to the authorities. A few percent (3%) were reported to the police, and 7% to other authorities (Aromaa & Heiskanen 2000).

## Criminal victimisation and victim characteristics

Is the distribution of crime victims random or do certain social groups run a greater risk than others of being a victim of crime? Victimisation surveys have generally shown stable and repetitive patterns, suggesting that victimisation is not random but a function of social and ecological factors. For instance, neighbourhood characteristics affect the chances of victimisation, with those living in the central city having significantly higher rates of theft and violence experiences than suburbanites (Glick 2005). People in rural areas have also shown to have a victimisation rate half of that of city residents. Even though the gender gap is narrowing, males have been found to be more likely for all crimes to be victimised than females (Conklin 2004). Yet, women are more likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault. Females are most often victimised by someone they know, whereas males are more likely to be victimised by a stranger. Victim data moreover show that young people face a much greater victimisation risk than do older people (Reid 2006).

Generally the least affluent members of society are the most likely victims of violent and property crime. This association holds for gender, age and minority groups. However, the wealthy have been found to be more likely targets of personal theft crimes such as pickpocketing and purse snatching (Siegel 2006).

These results do not apply to victims of consumer fraud for studies show that it is largely impossible to predict fraud based on victim characteristics (Holtfreter et al. 2005). Yet some studies have shown a relationship between consumer fraud and young age and educational status (Titus et al. 1995).

## Iceland as a research site

One of the objectives of this paper is to examine whether the patterns and trends found in the victimisation literature on victims' demographic profiles also hold in Iceland, a relatively small and homogeneous society. In particular, we will focus on consumer fraud victimisation and examine if this form of

victimisation shows similar patterns to other victimisation risks, or if there exists a relationship between victim characteristics and consumer fraud.

As for what consumer fraud involves, the ICVS survey asks whether someone, when selling something to them, or delivering a service, cheated them in terms of quantity or quality of the goods or services. In this sense, consumer fraud has some resemblance to economic crime by including fraud while conducting a business transaction. This raises the question whether consumer fraud victimisation shows different group attributes than found in other forms of victimisation. For instance, is consumer fraud suffered more among higher income groups and older respondents, opposite to what we find for other crime type victimisations in society? Alternatively, and similar to victimisation patterns in general, we might expect consumer fraud to be more prevalent in urban areas than in rural areas and males to be more likely than females to face a greater risk of a consumer fraud experience.

## Data and methods

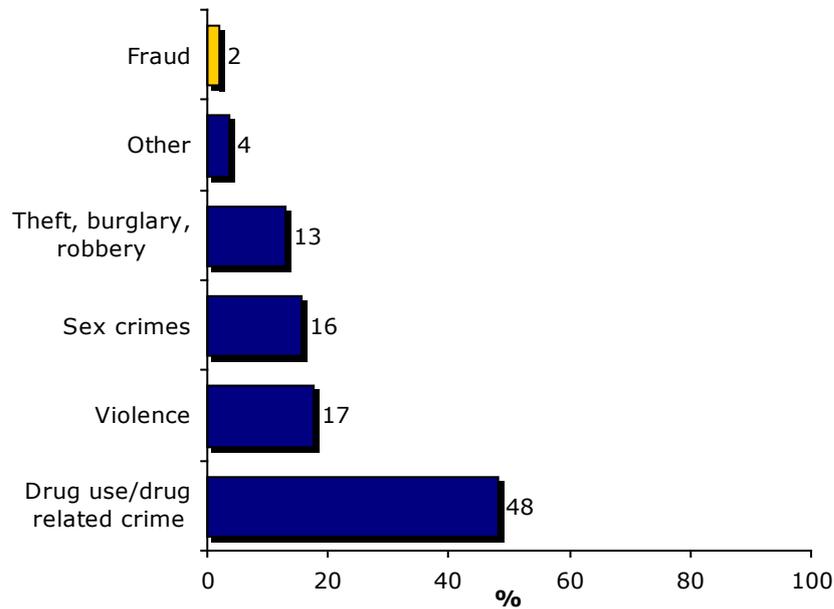
Iceland participated in the ICVS survey for the first time in 2005. The data were collected in January and February of 2005, with a random sampling of 3,000 individuals 16 years of age and older from the National Census. The net response rate was about 67 per cent.

Consumer fraud was measured by asking if participants had in the previous year (2004) been cheated in terms of quantity or quality of the goods or services when buying something, or being delivered a service. In case of property crimes (burglaries and various types of theft) questions were asked about own experience and the experience of others in the household in 2004. Experience of offences therefore does not necessarily refer to personal experience of the individual, yet including cases of incidents which involve the individual's assets or those of his family. In case of contact crime (robberies, violent offences and sexual violations) questions were asked about the individual's personal experience in 2004, but not that of other members of the household.

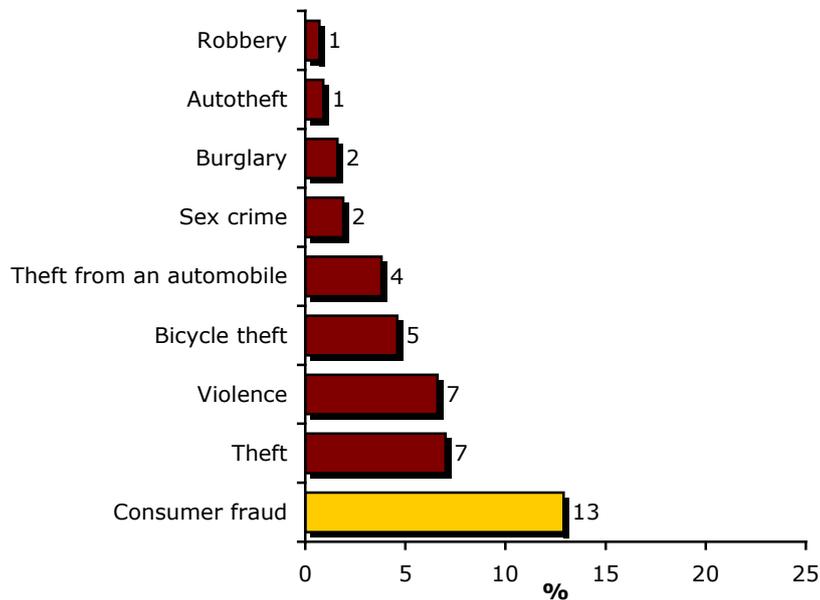
## Findings

Figure 1 shows attitudes towards which type of crime is believed to be the most serious problem in Iceland. As can be seen about half of the respondents (48%) perceive drug use or crimes related to drugs to be the most serious problem, but only two percent mention any sort of fraud. This picture changes when we look at victimisation experiences by crime types. In regard of the findings shown in Figure 2 we see that although consumer fraud is not perceived as the most

serious problem in Iceland, this type of victimisation is the most common crime experience.



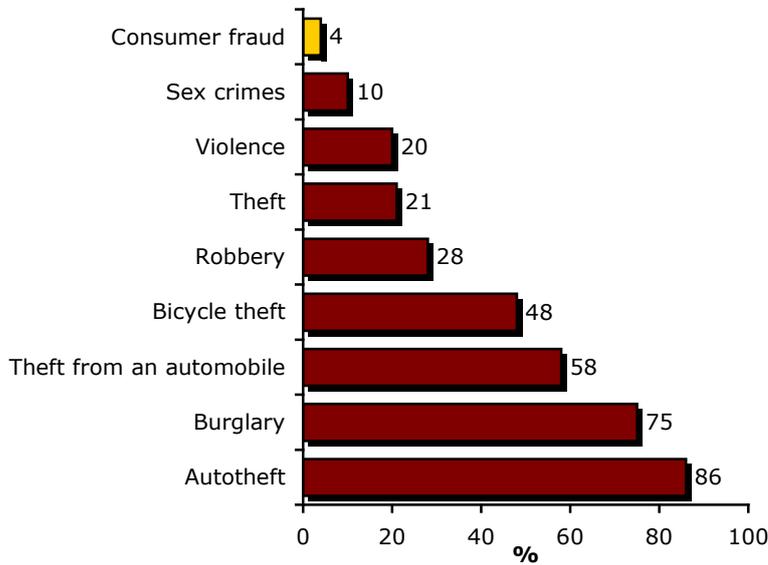
**Figure 1. Attitudes towards which type of crime is perceived as being the most serious problem in Iceland**



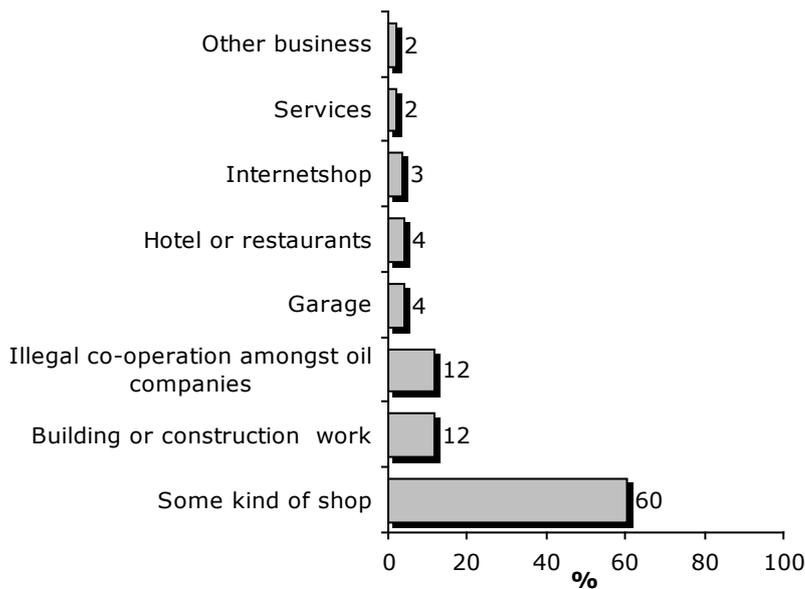
**Figure 2. Percentage of crime experiences in 2004 by type of crime**

As shown in Figure 2, about 13 percent admitted they had experienced some sort of consumer fraud in the year prior to the study, compared to seven percent experiencing theft or violence. Although so many had experienced fraud, very

few state they reported the incident to the police (Figure 3). Of those who had been victimised in 2004, only four percent said they had reported the incident to the police, compared to ten percent of those who had experienced sex crimes and 86 per cent of auto theft victims.



**Figure 3. Percent of those who experienced crime in 2004 and reported it to the police, by type of crime**



**Figure 4. Types of consumer fraud experienced in 2004**

When respondents were asked about what type of consumer fraud they had last experienced in the previous year, most stated it was related to some kind of shop activity (60 percent) or building or construction work (12 percent). It is interesting to note that twelve percent of the respondents mentioned illegal price fixing amongst oil companies which was a high profile case at the time the survey was conducted.

## Discussion

This study examined criminal victimisation in Iceland in 2004 for different types of crime with a specific focus on consumer fraud. Although very few perceive consumer fraud to be the most serious crime problem in Iceland, this type of victimisation was found to be the most common crime experience. Although so many had experienced consumer fraud, very few said they had reported the incident to the police.

When respondents were asked about what type of consumer fraud they had last experienced in the year prior to the study, most stated it was related to some kind of shop activity (60 percent) or building or construction work (12 percent). It is worth pointing out that twelve percent of the respondents mentioned illegal price fixing amongst oil companies, a high profile case at the time the survey was conducted. This high level of respondents mentioning the oil companies might also suggest great willingness of Icelanders to admit being a crime victim. A further sign of this tendency is the overall low reporting of criminal victimisations to the police. In Iceland, only 36% of the respondents, who said they had been victimised, reported the incident to the police, which is comparatively lower than found in many other ICVS studies. Moreover, many respondents in Iceland did not perceive the victimization incident as being a crime nor as being very serious (Þórisdóttir et al. 2005). Therefore, it is possible that the ICVS instrument exaggerates more the number of minor offences in Iceland compared to other countries.

This tendency of reporting minor offences in Iceland might also help explain the relatively high levels of general criminal victimisations in Iceland compared to both the Nordic nations and the EU countries. In 2005, close to 22% of all respondents in Iceland said they had been victimised to any of the crimes included in the questionnaire in the previous year, while the average level for the EU countries was close to 15% (Þórisdóttir & Gunnlaugsson 2007). How do we explain the high rate found in Iceland?

The relatively high response rate in Iceland (67%) might help explain higher victimisation levels, with different age groups being equally represented in the sample. In Iceland, respondents with mobile phones were included in the survey, and young people are typically more frequent users of these communication devices than others (Þórisdóttir & Gunnlaugsson 2007). An additional explanation, not less plausible, is that Iceland is demographically a young nation with a higher birth rate than found in most European nations

(Dahlgaard 2006). Icelandic demographics might therefore suggest a higher victimisation rate than typically experienced in societies with a lower birth rate (Ouimet 2002). Moreover, as was mentioned above, research has shown that younger people generally experience more crime than older people, which might help explain the high rate found in Iceland, compared to EU countries.

Consumer fraud appears to be an equally common crime experience in Iceland as has been found in other European countries (van Dijk et al. 2005), but not as common as in the U.S. (Anderson 2004). Still, consumer fraud is not perceived as a serious crime problem. As a demonstration of this view, consumer fraud was also found to be least likely to be reported to the police. Small and relatively homogeneous societies usually have closer social ties, and more informal social control, than found in more complex societies. Under such circumstances, one might expect fraud to be less common in Iceland than found in other societies, as the word should spread around more quickly of fraudulent behaviour in smaller societies. Therefore, it is somewhat surprising to find that consumer fraud experiences are even more common in Iceland, than found in larger and more heterogeneous societies. Yet, we need to keep in mind that we do not have information on where the fraud took place, if it was in Iceland, or elsewhere.

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# The New Estonian National Victimization Survey - Objectives and Needs of Knowledge

Andri Ahven

## Introduction

Estonia has carried out four national victimisation surveys since 1993. The surveys have become an important tool in measuring the crime level and describing crime trends in a rapidly developing society, where official statistics cannot always provide comparable long-term time series due to continuous changes in criminal legislation and the statistics system. Such surveys have also provided a unique possibility to compare the Estonian crime situation with other countries. While a discussion on the future of international crime victim surveys is strengthening and some scepticism has been expressed on the usefulness of the 'old-fashioned' surveys, we prefer to use a more or less conservative approach. The main reason for this is a need to keep up maximum comparability of data over the years. At the same time, we are looking at international developments in order to implement the new 'international modules' in our future surveys as much as possible.

## Key topics in victimisation surveys

Crime has been an issue of high public interest in Estonia since the late 1980s, when data on registered crime became publicly available after several decades of complete secrecy during the Soviet regime. Rapid increase in the official crime figures in the early 1990s might have given an impression that the crime level in Estonia was extremely high in comparison with western countries, but it was not possible to make any valid international comparisons on the basis of official statistics. In such a situation there was a strong motivation to join the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS).

The first national victimisation survey in Estonia was carried out in February 1993 among 1,000 respondents in the age bracket 16–74 years (Aromaa & Ahven 1993). The following surveys were carried out in the spring of 1995, 2000 and 2004; the number of respondents ranged from 1,173 to 1,700 (Aromaa & Ahven 1995, Ahven et al. 2001, Saar et al. 2005).

Basically the same questionnaire was used that has been in use for the ICVS in general. A limited number of questions were added or excluded, e.g., a

question on thefts from summer cottages was included in 2000 and 2004, and some questions on drug abuse in 2004. The question on motorcycle theft was excluded in most surveys due to a very low prevalence rate. However, international comparisons were made on the basis of similar crime types only.

During the last fifteen years, victimisation surveys have become an important tool for measuring the crime level. The main issues of interest have remained more or less the same since the first survey in 1993, although some emphases have changed in recent years.

- In the early 1990s, comparison with Finland, our closest highly developed nation, and with the other European countries was one of the key topics. According to the police statistics, the number of registered crimes per 100,000 population in Estonia was (and still is) several times lower than in Finland or Sweden, primarily due to large differences in criminal legislation and registration practice (Tavares & Thomas 2007). It was obvious that the actual situation had to be in some way different: for example, in those years the homicide rate in Estonia was among the highest in Europe, just a little lower than in Russia.
- Since the second survey in 1995, monitoring crime trends has become an essential issue, particularly after the year 2002 when the new Criminal Code entered into force. In the new Code many offence definitions were modified, and as a result, official data on recent years have not always been comparable with the data from the 1990s.
- Official crime figures increased substantially in the late 1990s. Simultaneously, the police performance indicators did also improve. These developments did raise a question on crime reporting activity as a factor that may have contributed to such an increase in the official figures (see also chapter "Some questions & new ideas").
- The latest surveys in Estonia (2004) (Saar et al. 2005) and in the other European Union countries (2005) (Van Dijk et al. 2007) have indicated that the total crime level has decreased since the previous survey (2000). In Estonia, official figures have indicated similar trend in the 2000s, and we are eager to follow future developments.
- Victimisation surveys have indicated that the differences between Estonia and most of Western European countries have substantially decreased since the early 1990s as reflected by several indicators (e.g., victimisation prevalence, police performance, fear of crime, attitudes towards punishment), but in some areas the differences have remained relatively large (e.g., reporting to the police). Those issues will remain under attention.
- Some regular surveys (ICVS, police barometer<sup>1</sup>) have become more important in planning and evaluation. For example, the surveys have been used

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1 A list of police barometer surveys carried out in 2000–2007: <http://www.pol.ee/index.php?id=245>

by the police for the evaluation of their own performance; information on attitudes towards punishment has been used in developing criminal policy, etc.

- There has been an increasing interest on the circumstances that might have influenced the risk of becoming victimised. Use of precautions and its possible influence on the victimisation rate have also been examined while the use of some measures (e.g., special doors) has become much more common. Unfortunately, the restricted sample size has often prevented a more detailed analysis on those questions.

## Current state and future needs

While the discussion on the future of international crime victim surveys is strengthening, we may prefer to use a more or less conservative approach. Victimisation surveys have been an independent and a relatively stable tool for measuring developments in crime, targeted against private persons and their households. In our quickly developing society it is important to keep up comparability in at least some basic aspects, even if direct comparisons with earlier surveys will become more complicated.

Statistics Estonia is organising a new survey on victimisation and violence in intimate relationships (two different questionnaires) in October–December 2008. The scheduled interval is five years. The questionnaire on general victimisation is based on the 'old' ICVS questionnaire, with minor modifications. Initially there was an intention to incorporate at least partially a new 'European module', but implementation of the latter may take some years. The main advantage of the new survey in comparison with the previous victimisation surveys will be a larger sample (at least 4,500 respondents) that could allow a rather detail analysis of responses. Still, as the sampling procedure will be different and the main survey will be carried out in late autumn instead of spring, comparability of the results with previous surveys will inevitably suffer.

The Police Board will continue to organise annual population surveys (police barometer). The main attention is focused on police performance and satisfaction with the police, not on victimisation level.

A wide-spectrum business victimisation survey was carried out in Estonia in the spring of 2007. The survey addressed 702 entrepreneurs who were interviewed by telephone about their experiences of crime against their business, protective measures against various offences (including employee theft), etc. The UNODC draft questionnaire<sup>2</sup> was used as the model for our questionnaire, but with substantial modifications: for example, the number of

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<sup>2</sup> Crime and Corruption Business Survey (CCBS). Draft Master Questionnaire. REV. 0: Sep 2006 (unpublished). Received from Anna Alvazzi del Frate (UNODC) in February 2007.

violence-related questions was reduced and a number of questions on various new issues were added. Simultaneously, more than 500 employees from both the private and the public sector were interviewed *face-to-face*, in order to get a wider picture on crimes and other incidents at the workplace – including possible violations by the employer. The results will be published in early 2008.

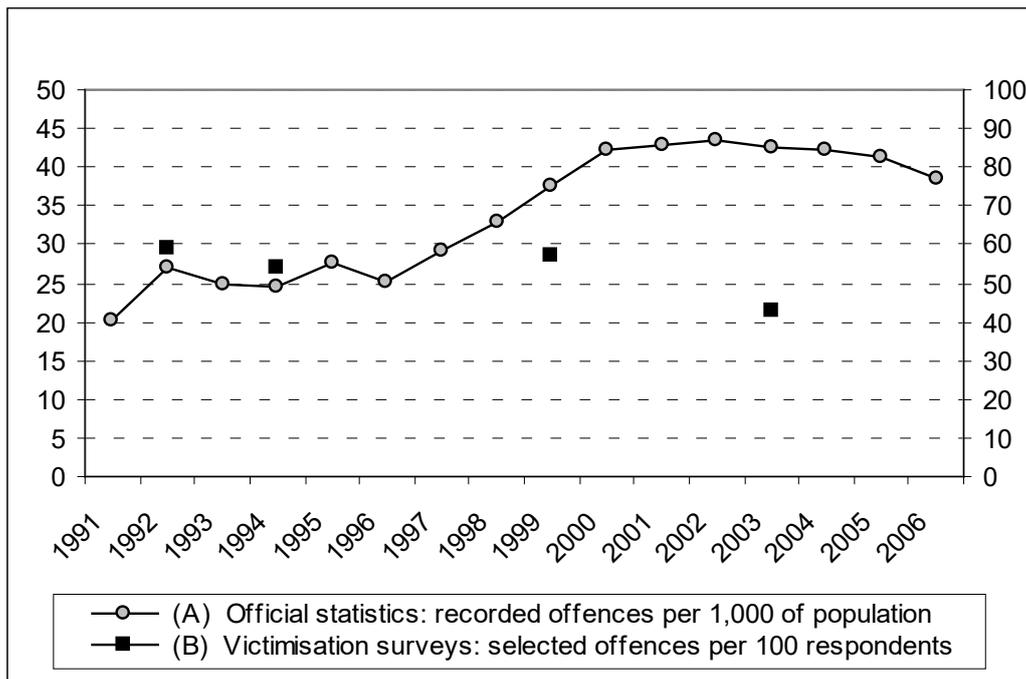
An open question remains how the 'European victimisation module' will influence our scheduled surveys. If a comprehensive, large-scale questionnaire should be implemented and it is becoming compulsory for all European Union member states, it may be difficult to find both human and financial resources for another regular victimisation survey.

### Some questions & new ideas

The ICVS has been used as a main tool for international comparisons, and the surveys have covered a relatively broad range of crimes targeted against individuals and their property. Still, the surveys are not able to provide any information on a large part of criminality, the extent of which is not known: crimes against businesses and other legal entities, crimes against the state etc. Although there have been several other international studies on crime and crime-related social problems (e.g., business victimisation, workplace violence, corruption perception, drugs and alcohol abuse, self-reported delinquency), due to the use of different methodologies it has not been possible to sum up the results of the various surveys in order to get an indicator of 'total crime'. Some principal questions have therefore remained open:

- What is the proportion of crime that victimisation surveys are able to assess?
- Can we make valid conclusions on countries' total crime level just on the basis of the ICVS?

The national victimisation surveys in Estonia have indicated a rather stable victimisation level since the first survey, that described the situation in 1992. At the same time, the official figures on registered crimes have shown a significant increase in the late 1990s – see Figure 1. According to the victimisation surveys there has been no substantial increase in crime reporting activity, and it seems apparent that crimes against private persons and their households comprise now a smaller part of total registered crime than was the case in the early 1990s. This trend may be explained in addition to the real trends in crime (e.g., increasing drug trafficking) by more effective police work: the police started to pay much more attention on drug offences, economic crimes and other so-called victimless crimes.



**Figure 1. Trends in crime in Estonia 1991–2006**

(A) Official statistics: recorded offences per 1000 of population.

(B) Victimization surveys: selected (comparable) offences per 100 respondents aged 16-74 years.

**Sources:** (A) Police Board & Ministry of Justice; (B) Saar et al. (2005).

In order to get a more comprehensive picture on developments in the crime situation, it may be worth while to consider simultaneous surveys on both population and business victimisation that could cover a more comprehensive part of crime than one or the other survey alone.

There is also a growing demand on information about other kind of threats and risks, which may influence public safety and peoples' personal security. These issues are addressed in a new strategy on public safety, which includes a wide range of activities: measures to reduce the number of traffic accidents and fire victims, protection measures against computer-related attacks, etc.

For example, offensive behaviour in traffic has become an acute problem due to a number of serious accidents this year. The number of traffic fatalities in Estonia is above the EU average, and the situation is much better in our neighbouring countries Sweden and Finland. There are no studies on 'traffic victimisation', but it is obvious that such incidents happen much more often than 'ordinary crimes', targeted at someone's property. Maybe we should ask something about drivers' experiences of offensive behaviour in traffic? This area is only one example and it may not be appropriate to add such questions to the victimisation surveys, but there is still a clear need to get more information on factors affecting public safety as a whole.

While considering the future of international victimisation studies we propose some topics or questions that might be interesting from our point of view. Such information could help the authorities to evaluate the effectiveness of various crime control and crime prevention measures, and to work out appropriate schemes aimed at reducing crime and other violations.

- Threats caused by 'electronic crimes' that have become an important issue in recent years: internet fraud, identity theft, theft of private or business information via the Internet or other electronic means, cyber-stalking, etc. According to available information, the prevalence of such offences has so far been relatively low in comparison to traditional property crimes, but we may expect a substantial increase in this area.
- Attitudes towards various institutions of the criminal justice system, in addition to the police. We have a lot of knowledge about attitudes towards the police but there are no surveys on peoples' opinions on prosecutors or prison officials. Some public opinion polls have included questions on confidence in judges, but the reasons of the respondents' attitude have remained unknown. Also, there seems to be some scepticism towards prosecutors (e.g., due to settlement proceedings sentences might be seen as too lenient). Such questions are, *inter alia*, related to an aim to reduce the number of prisoners and to improve the reputation of prison guards.
- Motives for supporting certain types of sanctions. For example, we don't know why community service has been the most preferred sanction according to the victimisation surveys in 2000 and 2004. Did people think that it was the best way of re-socialisation and rehabilitation for convicted offenders, or did they believe that this could help victims in getting some compensation from criminals?
- Concrete measures that have been taken to reduce the fear of crime and to avoid victimisation to street crimes (assaults, robberies or other attacks against the person, thefts from car or car vandalism, etc).
- The main sources of information on crime. Such knowledge might help in reducing excessive fear of crime, especially among elder people.
- Opinions on the use of various precautions and control measures in the streets (e.g., surveillance cameras, automatic speed control cameras), the role of private security companies in patrolling public space etc.

Finally, we hope that in the next surveys we will still be able to look back and say whether the crime level has changed since the last surveys. It would be particularly interesting to know whether the recent decline in victimisation has continued, or was it just a short-time anomaly.

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# The New Swedish Crime Survey – Aim, Contents and Results

Annika Töyrä

## Introduction

Crime and fear of crime are social problems that have become increasingly noticeable in Sweden over the past few years. In line with this development, increasingly higher demands are being placed on society's ability to counteract the problems. The objectives formulated by the Government for criminal policy involve reducing crime and fear of crime for citizens. In order for objectives of this kind to be meaningful and have impact, it is crucial that they are followed up, and that decisions, activities and initiatives are assessed against set objectives.

The challenge posed by crime and other developments in society places great demands on the judicial system. It has been established in various contexts that development of the judicial system must be based on knowledge. Demands on efficiency within the Swedish judicial system have increased, and activities must be assessed in terms of maximum utilization of resources. More stringent demands increase the necessity of being able to monitor and analyze crime and fear of crime. An effective and legally secure operation requires solid knowledge of the scope and development of crime, as well as of the composition of the victim group and victim experiences. It is also important to have methods and systems in place with which to assess what measures and changes are needed; in other words, a basis for development planning is necessary. Initiating an annual victimisation survey, which is conducted at national level, is an important element of our efforts to meet increasing needs for knowledge within the judicial system.

Crime victim surveys have been an important source of knowledge in some other western countries for a long period of time. The U.S. and England (and Finland) have utilized this method to study victimization for a couple of decades. Crime victim surveys have been conducted in countries such as Holland, Italy and Australia for a few years. In England, for example, information about crimes that have been reported to the police is presented together with results from the British Crime Survey in order to provide a more complete picture of crime in the country.

Different types of surveys on victimisation and fear of crime are currently conducted in Sweden. The surveys are valuable in several ways; for example, some of them contain information that stretches far back in time. However, it is clear that additional aspects related to citizen experiences of crime need to be analyzed than what the scope of the surveys currently allows. In the 2005 letter of regulation, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) was tasked with conducting an annual victimisation survey in collaboration with other relevant authorities within the judicial system. Brå planned the survey, which is called the Swedish Crime Survey (NTU), in collaboration with the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority, the Court Service, the National Prison and Probation Administration, the Swedish National Police Board and the Swedish Prosecution Authority. The survey is conducted as a telephone survey with a random sample of the population. The first data were collected in 2006 and the second sweep was collected in 2007. The initial results were published in the first half of 2007.

## Aim of the survey

One of the primary aims of NTU is to supplement information that pertains to reported crimes and which can be used to assess criminal activity. Other important aims include obtaining indications of development in terms of public perception of insecurity and fear of crime as well as obtaining an increased level of knowledge related to victimisation and crime victim experiences, for example when coming into contact with the criminal justice system. A further aim is to obtain an idea of public confidence in the various elements of the criminal justice system.

In Sweden, knowledge of crime is primarily based on information about crimes that come to the attention of the police. It is a well-known fact in crime research that criminal statistics only in a limited manner describe the scope of crimes to which the public is subjected in a given period of time. Annually polling a random sample of the population about their experiences of victimization increases awareness of the scope, structure and development of crime. Sweden has an alternative source to what criminal statistics indicate in terms of citizen victimisation as a result of Statistics Sweden having conducted the *Swedish Survey of Living Conditions* (ULF) since 1978. ULF's broad focus on individual welfare, however, means that the possibility of making comparisons to reported crime is limited. NTU is more specifically formulated to enable results to be related to several different types of crime that are included in criminal statistics. Some of the crimes that can be described in more detail thanks to NTU are sexual crimes, harassment, fraud and muggings.

One overall objective of criminal policy is to decrease the fear of crime of individuals. Fear of crime and perceived security are complex concepts that can be seen in several dimensions. *The Swedish Survey of Living Conditions* (ULF) contains a few questions related to security and fear of crime. There is value in

paying attention to the importance of the time series available in ULF. At the same time, both international and Swedish research indicates the difficulty in describing individuals' fear, worry and insecurity by using only a few isolated questions. The same pertains, of course, to the possibility of studying the consequences of these feelings on the scope individuals have to act, and on their concrete behaviour. This issue was taken into consideration when NTU was designed. NTU offers the possibility of studying the public's perception of security, both generally and more specifically in different areas and sections of the population.

The activities of the criminal justice system must be based on the needs of individuals. This places great demands on the accessibility and service level of authorities. Public confidence in the criminal justice system is important both in terms of its legitimacy and its ability to function efficiently. If citizens lack confidence in the police and fail to report crimes, and do not follow through to be plaintiffs and witnesses in investigations and trials, for example, the criminal justice system encounters difficulty in pursuing its objectives. Previous research indicates that the level of public confidence in the criminal justice system and some of its components is relatively high in Sweden compared to other countries. However, a more integrated picture of the confidence in the criminal justice system and its various components and whether there are differences between people who have been a victim of crime and those who have not, for example, has been lacking. NTU provides important information on how citizens perceive the activities pursued by the various authorities in the criminal justice system.

## Contents of the survey

NTU contains questions about four main topics: victimisation, fear of crime, confidence in the criminal justice system and crime victims' experiences of the criminal justice system.

The first step in the *victimisation* section is screening; the screening element contains questions about whether the respondent was a victim of a number of different types of crime in the past year. The screening questions are formulated to adhere to the definitions used in criminal statistics to the greatest extent possible. NTU's reference period is the same as that in the reporting statistics. Thus, comparisons between NTU results and information about crimes that were reported to the police are made possible, especially over time. These prerequisites improve the possibility of describing the scope and development of the selected types of crime. The types of crimes included in the survey are:

- Threat
- Assault
- Mugging
- Sexual crime

- Harassment
- Housebreaking
- Fraud
- Automobile theft
- Bicycle theft
- Theft from vehicles

The selected types of crime constitute just over 40 per cent of the total number of crimes reported under the Penal Code.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the specified types of crime, there are also questions related to having been a victim of some other crime, which, to a certain extent, should cover other crimes to which individuals are subjected.

The second step in the question area contains follow-up questions to those who say they have been victims of one or more of the relevant crimes. A number of questions related to the circumstances of the crime are posed. For example, the victim responds to questions about his/her relationship to the perpetrator, at what time and in what kind of place the crime took place and whether the crime was reported to the police. The victim also responds to questions about what the consequences of the crime have been. This may concern physical injury and material loss as well as psychological consequences such as feelings of his/her quality of life having deteriorated. Even though some of the respondents have been victims of many crimes, the number of follow-up forms is limited to three. This is to prevent the interview from becoming too long and trying.

*Security and fear of crime* are complex concepts that accommodate several dimensions. NTU highlights several of these dimensions by asking about the respondent's fear of crime on his/her own behalf, the consequences of that fear (for example not going out at night or selecting an alternative means of travel), fear that someone close to him/her will become a victim of crime, and a more general fear of crime in society.

In terms of *confidence in the criminal justice system*, a number of questions related to confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole and in individual authorities (police, public prosecutor, courts and prison and probation service) are posed. Questions are also posed about whether the respondent has confidence in the criminal justice system in terms of it implementing certain tasks in a positive or fair manner.

Crime victims who say they have reported one or more crimes to the police in the past three years also respond to questions about their *experiences* of the authorities within the criminal justice system with which they came into contact in conjunction with crime.

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<sup>1</sup> Crimes that do not afflict individual persons are included in the total number of crimes under the Penal Code, for example shop thefts and public premises break-ins.

## Carrying out the survey

Telephone interviews (CATI) constitute the primary method of data collection. Postal questionnaires are used as a supplement. The postal questionnaire is used when it has not been possible to reach the selected person by phone, or if that person does not wish to respond to questions over the phone. However, the postal questionnaire does not contain follow-up questions for individuals who have been victims of crime.

First, an information letter is sent to the people who were selected to take part in the survey. It contains information about the survey and how personal data will be managed. The information in the letter is available in a number of other languages besides Swedish if desired. The telephone interview can be conducted in Swedish or English. UN recommendations pertaining to interviews with crime victims apply. This may entail, for example, that only women interview women and that the interviewer can offer to call the person who was selected to be interviewed at another time and/or different telephone number.

The data are collected by Statistics Sweden. The sample is drawn from a register (RTB; *Registret över totalbefolkning*) that contains everyone who is registered in Sweden. The sample consists of individuals who are between the ages of 16 and 79 years. Samples are boosted for the youngest and the oldest age groups, as well as for the smallest counties. The sample size was 10,000 people in the first sweep of data collection. The sample was twice as large in the second sweep (20,000). This sample size will apply for future surveys as well. This is generally a large survey sample by Swedish standards. The survey population consists of about seven million individuals, meaning the sample constitutes about 0.3 per cent of the population. Victim surveys, however, require a large sample. When consideration is taken of Swedish conditions, 20,000 individuals is assessed to be the minimum number for meaningful analyses to be possible on an annual basis in several of the question areas.

Each interview takes about 15 minutes on average, but this varies substantially, of course, primarily depending on if the respondent was a victim of crime in the previous year.

A great deal of information is obtained from Statistics Sweden in addition to the questions that are asked from the respondent. By law, the individuals who are involved must be informed that information is obtained in this manner; this information is included in the information letter that is sent out. The advantages of using registry information include, for example, a shorter questionnaire and more reliable information since the quality of the registry is very good. Information obtained from the registry might pertain to income, education and country of birth, for example.

## Results 2006

The response rate in the 2006 survey was 78 per cent, which is considered a very good result. Telephone interviewers believe that the people who take part in the survey are positive to responding to questions. Surveys in general are currently characterized by increasingly diminished rates of response, but NTU seems to highlight an area that is of particular importance for many people. Ninety-four per cent of those who participated took part in the telephone interview, while 6 per cent responded to the questions in the postal questionnaire. A summary of the published results for NTU 2006 are presented in this section.

### **Victimisation**

According to NTU, 26 per cent of the population (16–79 years old) were victims of crime in 2005.<sup>2</sup> However, there are great differences between various types of crime, and victimisation is not evenly distributed over the population. The ten different types of crime that are specifically asked about in the survey reflect a significant proportion of the crimes to which members of the general public were victims in 2005.

### **Crimes against persons**

Threats and harassment are the most common crimes committed against persons, as can be seen in Table 1. Around 5 per cent say they were a victim of these types of crimes in 2005. Assault follows (close to three per cent), while sexual crimes and muggings were indicated to the least extent (less than one per cent).

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to crimes against the respondent, housebreaking and automobile and bicycle thefts are included for other members of the household.

**Table 1. Victimization in the population (16-79 years of age) to crimes against persons, estimated number of events and proportion of events that were reported to the police in 2005 according to NTU**

	Proportion of victimisation, %	Number of events in the population		Proportion of reported events, %	
Assault	2.7	390,000		32.4	
of which serious	28.3 (0.8)	110,000		67.6	
Threats	4.6	650,000		19.0	
Sexual crimes	0.9	184,063		10.9	
Muggings	0.7	70,000		33.0	
Harassment	5.2	360,000	*	19.0	**
<b>Total crimes against persons</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>1,680,000</b>		<b>21.5</b>	

\*Number of victims.

\*\*Proportion of victims who reported one or more events to the police.

It is also clear that just over one-fifth of the crimes against persons that were reported in NTU were also reported to the police, but there are great differences between different types of crime. Muggings and assault, in particular serious assault, are reported to a large extent; one-third of muggings and assaults and two-thirds of serious assaults are said to have been reported to the police. Around one-fifth of the victims say that they reported harassment and threats to the police. Finally, the results indicate that a very small proportion of sexual crimes (11 per cent) is reported to the police.

### *Young people the most common victims of assaults and threats*

According to the survey, 2.7 per cent of the population (16-79 years of age) were victims of assault in 2005. Of these, slightly over one-fourth (0.8 per cent of the population) say they were seriously assaulted (to the extent that they needed to see a physician, nurse or dentist). Almost twice as many, 4.6 per cent, say they were threatened that year. The results of the different groups' victimisation and the circumstances surrounding threat and assault crimes are in many cases in line with previous surveys. For example, twice as many men as women say they were victims of assault, while the two groups say they were victims of threats to the same extent. Women are most often victims of someone close to them, which can be difficult to talk about. This means that women may be victims more often than the results indicate. The youngest respondents say they were victims of assault and threats to the greatest extent.

Public places are the most common crime scenes for threats and assaults. However, women, to a significantly larger extent than men, say they were victimised in a residence. In over half the cases the perpetrator was a complete stranger, an acquaintance in around 30 per cent of cases and someone close in six per cent of cases. Once again, there are great differences between men and

women; women indicate to a significantly greater extent than men that the perpetrator was someone close.

### ***Young women the most common victims of sexual crimes***

Just under one per cent answered yes to the question of “did anyone sexually force, attack or molest you last year” (for 2005) in NTU. Women indicate that they were victims of sexual crimes to a significantly greater extent than men. Primarily young women say they were subjected to this type of crime. Just as was the case for assaults and threats, more than half of sexual crimes are said to have occurred in a public place, about one-fourth at work or school and one-sixth in a residence. The perpetrator was a stranger in almost two-thirds of the occurrences, an acquaintance in one-fourth and someone close in one-tenth of occurrences. However, there is reason to believe that individuals who were victims of someone close are under-represented in the survey for sexual crimes as well, since being a victim of this type of crime can be uncomfortable to talk about, especially if it occurred as recently as in the past year.

### ***Men the most common victims of mugging***

For 2005, 0.7 per cent say they were victims of mugging. Most of these individuals were victims of mugging on one occasion that year. Men say twice as often as women that they were victims. Young people, both men and women, say they were victims to a significantly higher degree than other age groups. As expected, most of the muggings occurred in a public place and the perpetrator was a stranger. Victims in about one-fifth of the muggings say that he/she was victimized as a result of his/her profession. Victims in around 40 per cent of the muggings say they were beaten, kicked or subjected to other physical violence in conjunction with the crime. Knives, firearms and other weapons are not unusual in conjunction with muggings (45 per cent).

### ***Harassment – equally common that the perpetrator is a complete stranger as an acquaintance***

Harassment is described as “being pursued on repeated occasions or receiving undesired visits, phone calls, messages and the like”. Just over five per cent say they were victims of harassment in 2005. About half of these experienced the events as very frightening or quite frightening. Young women in particular seem to be victims of this crime. The perpetrator was a stranger in close to half of the cases and an acquaintance almost as often. Less than one-tenth say someone close was the perpetrator. In this instance as well, women say that the perpetrator was someone close twice as often as men do. Close to one-fifth of those who were victimised believe it was due to their profession. Most of the victims of harassment (two-thirds) say it involved 10 or fewer occasions. A small group (around one-tenth of the victims), however, say they were subjected to a very large number of events (100 or more).

## Property crime

The most common property crimes that respondents say they or someone in their household were subjected to of the crimes included in NTU are bicycle theft and theft from vehicles (just over five per cent), while housebreaking and automobile theft were indicated to the smallest extent (around one per cent). This can be seen in Table 2. Victims of fraud (just under three per cent) fall in the middle; however questions about the latter crime only pertained to the respondent, not to other people in the household.

**Table 2. Victims of crime in the population (16-79 years of age) for various types of crime, estimated number of events and proportion of events that were reported to the police in 2005 according to NTU**

	Proportion of victims	Number of events in the population	Proportion of reported events
Housebreaking	1.0	-	71.8
Automobile theft	0.8	-	93.8
Theft from a vehicle	6.0	-	62.1
Bicycle theft	7.6	-	38.6
Fraud	2.8	222,874	40.1
<b>Total property crimes</b>	<b>16.1</b>	-	<b>50.4</b>

### *Half of all property crimes are reported*

Generally speaking, property crimes are reported to the police to a significantly larger extent than crimes against a person are. Fifty per cent of the property crimes to which the NTU respondents say they were subjected were reported to the police. It is not surprising that automobile theft (around 95 per cent) was reported to a greater extent than theft from vehicles (60 per cent) and to a significantly larger extent than bicycle thefts (around 40 per cent). Just like automobile theft, housebreaking is a type of crime that is reported to the police to a relatively large extent (70 per cent). Finally, victims of fraud reported the crime to the police in 40 per cent of the cases.

### *Vehicle-related crime is most common in one's own neighbourhood*

According to the results, just below one per cent of the population (16-79 years of age) lives in a household that was subjected to automobile theft in 2005. A significantly larger proportion, six per cent, says they live in a household that was subjected to theft from a vehicle. Eight per cent say they live in a household that was subjected to bicycle theft. This means that 13 per cent of the population live in a household that was subjected to a vehicle-related crime in 2005. The households that were victims of bicycle theft most often were households with children, in particular single parents with children and people who live in flats. People living in large cities said their household was subjected to a vehicle-related crime more often than people who do not live in

a large city did. Most of the people who were a victim of a vehicle-related crime say it occurred in their own neighbourhood. Just over one-half of bicycle thefts were said to have occurred in a public place, while 40 per cent were said to have occurred on private property.

### ***Housebreaking more common in large cities than in the rest of the country***

According to the results, one per cent of the population (16-79 years of age) lives in a household that was subjected to housebreaking in 2005. There were no differences in family circumstances or housing conditions in terms of who was victimized. However, people living in large cities indicated this type of crime to a larger extent than people who do not live in a large city did.

### ***The majority of fraud concerns amounts under SEK 10,000***

A question in NTU is “were you as a private individual deceived of money or other valuables in a criminal manner the past year”. Just below three per cent say they were victims of fraud in 2005. Most were victims on one occasion during the year. The results do not indicate any distinctive differences in terms of sex. The crime was slightly more common among the youngest respondents. To be deceived of SEK 100,000 or more was unusual as a private individual, but it did occur in a few per cent of the cases. Almost one-third of those deceived say the sum was between SEK 500-2,000. One-third say the amount was SEK 10,000 or more. There are a number of different ways to deceive a private individual of property. Around one-sixth of the events mentioned in NTU pertain to bank or credit card fraud and about the same amount was indicated for Internet fraud.

### **Repeated victimization – a few people are victims of a large proportion of crime**

It is more common that a person is a victim of repeated crime against his/her person than property crime: 11 respectively 2.8 per cent say they were victims of four or more crimes in 2005. Seventy per cent of crimes against the person affect individuals who are victims of more than a single crime. The corresponding figure for property crime is 50 per cent. A very small proportion of the population (0.9 per cent) was subjected to a significant proportion of crimes against a person (40 per cent); these individuals say they were victims of five or more of these crimes in 2005.

### **Fear of crime**

Fear of crime – or insecurity – does not represent a single cohesive concept. Rather, it consists of a complex set of feelings and attitudes. Its complexity makes gauging and describing the extent of fear of crime difficult. Even if

NTU does not capture all the dimensions of insecurity and fear of crime that have previously been lacking on a national level, it does capture many of them.

### **Most people are secure**

On the whole, the survey indicates that the majority of the adult population feels secure. For example, three-fourths feel quite safe or very safe when going out alone at night in their own neighbourhood, and over half are not afraid of being subjected to housebreaking, assault and battery or their car being subjected to theft or damage. Most do not change their behaviour by taking alternative routes or means of travel or by refraining from activities as a result of fear of crime. Most (over 80 per cent) do not think that fear of crime affects their quality of life. However, the proportion of those who feel secure/insecure is very much determined by how the question is formulated. The results are most interesting when there is something with which to compare, for example development over time or differences between various groups of the population. Thus, based on the first collection of data, the report aims primarily to give an indication of the groups that feel especially insecure.

### **Great differences in fear of crime between different groups**

The results of NTU confirm that there are major differences in fear of crime between groups of the population, and that there are differences between the various dimensions of fear and worry.

#### ***Women more insecure than men***

Women as a whole feel significantly more insecure than men. This becomes especially clear in NTU in terms of general fear of being out late at night in one's own neighbourhood (34 per cent of women and 9 per cent of men feel insecure) and fear of assault or battery (23 per cent of women and 8 per cent of men are often afraid). Results also show that women adapt their behaviour as a result of fear of crime to a larger extent than men do. Differences are not as great between men and women for other types of fear such as fear of someone close becoming a victim of crime or fear of housebreaking and vehicle-related crime. Neither are the differences significant in terms of fear impacting on quality of life, even if some differences do exist.

#### ***Young and older people insecure in different ways***

The results indicate that fear of crime exist in all age groups, but that the character of the fear varies. Young people fear violent crime in particular, while middle-aged people are more afraid of housebreaking and vehicle-related crime and that someone close to them will become a victim of crime. Elderly people, however, seem to feel most insecure about their personal safety when going out late in the evening in their own neighbourhood; they say they do not

go out alone late evenings because of feeling insecure. Elderly people also worry more in general about crime in society. There has been a great deal of focus on elderly citizens' security in the public debate and in the literature on fear of crime. That insecurity of elderly citizens has received the extent of attention that it has is probably in part due to many studies only using one isolated and relatively general indicator of fear of crime (commonly an indicator of insecurity when going out late at night) to ascertain the character of their feelings of insecurity. However, a review of fear of crime indicators in NTU shows that elderly people feel in many respects less insecure than other age groups.

### ***People living in large cities and flats more affected by fear of crime***

People living in large cities are on the whole more insecure than people living in smaller towns and on the countryside. Especially noticeable is fear of assault/battery: almost twice as many often worry about this in large cities compared to people living in small towns or on the countryside. About twice as many people living in large cities believe their quality of life is affected by fear of crime. However, differences are not especially great in many other respects. Furthermore, people living in flats generally feel more insecure than people living in single family homes, especially in terms of going out late at night and fear of assault/battery. They also adapt their behaviour to a greater extent than people living in single family homes do. However, people living in single family homes fear housebreaking to a greater extent.

### ***Being a victim of crime and how one looks upon criminal activity and the criminal justice system are linked to fear of crime.***

People who have been a victim of crime (15 per cent) over the past year feel more insecure than other people (5 per cent) do. This is particularly true of people who were a victim of a crime that violated their integrity.<sup>3</sup> People who have been indirectly subjected to crime, such as having witnessed a crime or having someone close to them who was a victim of a serious crime, also feel more insecure than people who have not had similar experiences. Most of those who feel insecure, however, have not been a victim themselves. People who believe that crime has increased over the past three years feel significantly more insecure than people who believe the rate of crime has stayed the same or decreased. The people who feel especially insecure are those who believe the rate of crime has substantially increased. Among these, 10 per cent are categorized as especially insecure, which can be compared to just over 2 per cent in the group that believes criminal activity has stayed the same or decreased. People's confidence in the criminal justice system also corresponds to how safe they feel. The proportion of people who feel insecure is over twice as large in the group that has little confidence compared to the group that has a great deal of confidence in the criminal justice system.

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<sup>3</sup> Threat, assault, sexual offences, robbery, harassment and housebreaking.

## **Confidence in the criminal justice system**

Previous research indicates that public confidence in the criminal justice system and some of its components is relatively high in Sweden. However, NTU provides a more integrated picture of the confidence in the criminal justice system and its various components.

### **High level of confidence with the exception of the prison and probation service – but many people do not have an opinion**

The results show that confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole as well as for the police, public prosecutors and the courts is relatively high. On average, just over one-half (54 per cent) say they have a great deal of confidence, a fourth (25 per cent) say they have neither great nor little confidence and 15 per cent say they have little confidence. Thus, the majority clearly has a more positive than negative perception of the criminal justice system. The prison and probation service is an exception; the proportion that says it has little confidence is relatively large, and just under a third say they have a great deal of confidence. One result that is also worth mentioning is that many citizens, around one-fourth to one-fifth, do not have an opinion about what level of confidence they have in public prosecutors and the court system or for the prison and probation service.

### **Differences are generally minor between various groups – education and experience of crime, however, are significant**

In general, the survey presents minor differences between different groups in society in terms of confidence in the criminal justice system. Educational level appears to be the most significant background factor. Well-educated individuals have a slightly higher level of confidence in the criminal justice system in general, and for public prosecutors and the courts in particular. In most cases, differences are very small in terms of other background factors (sex, age, Swedish or foreign background and town of residence). Factors that pertain to experience of crime, in particular for crimes that are violating personal integrity, are of slightly greater importance. People who have been a victim of crime have a lower level of confidence than the rest of the population: 41 per cent of the people who were the victim of a crime that violated their integrity say they have confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole compared to 57 per cent of other people. The smaller group of victims who reported a crime to the police and people who have a relative or someone close who was the victim of a serious crime also have a lower level of confidence. However, it should be noted that this does not entail a dramatic difference in levels of confidence in the Swedish population. The majority of people have confidence in the criminal justice system, even among people who have been a victim of crime. The people who have the lowest level of

confidence in almost all the components of the criminal justice system are those who have been charged with a crime.

### **General low level of confidence in how the criminal justice system treats victims of crime**

How the criminal justice system treats victims of crime is the area in which the general public has the lowest level of confidence. Just under one-third of the population have a great deal of confidence in that victims are treated well. The same proportion has little confidence in that victims are treated well. Generally speaking, it is in this area that the smallest differences between various groups in society are found. No matter which groups are studied, there are relatively few people who say they have a lot or quite a lot of confidence in that the authorities in the criminal justice system treat victims of crime well. Almost half of the population have a great deal of confidence in that suspects are treated fairly in the criminal justice system.

### **A perception of increased level of crime clearly corresponds to a low level of confidence in the system**

How various groups perceive criminal activity is one of the factors that have the greatest significance in terms of differences in confidence in the criminal justice system. The level of confidence in the criminal justice system is significantly lower among people who say they believe the crime rate has increased compared to people who do not believe it has increased.

### **Future possibilities enabled by NTU**

There are significantly greater opportunities for presentation and analysis from as early as the 2007 data collection because, among other things, the sample is twice as large. This enables, for example, regional (by county) presentations of victimisation and fear of crime, additional information about the circumstances surrounding crime and breakdowns into various groups in society – even for crimes that are relatively unusual. At the same pace that the collected material grows, it will be possible to study additional types of victimisation, for example repeat victimisation, hate crimes and the most serious type of sexual crime – rape.

Based on the 2007 data collection, it is also possible to present results from the areas in the NTU that pertain to how people who have been victims of crime and who have been in contact with the criminal justice system (e.g. the police, public prosecutor and courts) experience their contact. One of NTU's most important tasks, however, is to monitor future development of crime, fear of crime and confidence for long periods of time as well as for different groups

of the population. Based on the 2007 data collection, more detailed studies of the inclination to report crime are being planned and comparisons will be made to criminal statistics so that NTU can supplement the criminal statistics that are needed to monitor criminal activity in Sweden better than is the case today.

The material will also contain a great deal of potential for approaching the issue of what factors are most important in terms of victimisation, fear of crime and confidence. For example, this may concern studying the relative importance of the interplay between various individuals and the circumstances of an area in terms of victimisation, fear of crime and confidence. From the 2007 data collection, NTU will contain much more extensive material for this type of study. It might be interesting in the future to supplement the analyses that are made on the basis of NTU with more qualitative studies of fear of crime and confidence. Other survey methods such as focus groups may be utilized in order to go in depth into a particular group or opinion, for example elderly citizens' feelings of insecurity, low levels of confidence or why people do not have an opinion about some component of the criminal justice system. In a few years – when the survey has provided a stable foundation – it will also be possible to focus on certain question areas, types of crime or population groups, either on a regular basis or on specific occasions. Even if a great deal of the collected information and interesting questions remain to be presented and studied, basic results on victimisation, fear of crime and confidence in the criminal justice system in Sweden already exist that have previously been lacking. In the long term, the results from NTU will constitute an even more valuable tool with which to monitor development, identify problems and find solutions both inside and outside the criminal justice system. Knowledge related to victimisation, fear of crime and confidence constitutes an important basis for developing and improving the criminal justice system and other organisations, which in the long run may contribute to reducing crime and fear of crime.

# The Italian National Victimization Survey

Maria Giuseppina Muratore<sup>1</sup> and Giovanna Tagliacozzo<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

Since the late 1960s, victimology introduced a new perspective on criminality. For the first time the victim was regarded as an active subject. This new perspective helped not only to discover the dark figure of crime, its existence and entity, but it allows to look at the crimes' consequences, the dynamic of crimes and it underlines the role of the victim and his/her behaviour as an agent in his/her relationship with the offender.

The Italian national victimization survey<sup>3</sup> (Citizen's Safety Survey) provides information about the volume of the crime in Italy from the victims' perspective. Collecting information directly from the victims (aged 14 and over) makes it possible to pass the problem of underreported crimes, assessing the full extent of the phenomenon and its real impact on individuals. Furthermore, collecting information directly from the victims makes it possible to ask about their own characteristics and life-style, the characteristics of the offender and details on how, when and where the incident occurred. Subjective aspects of safety perception and fear of crime, incivility index perception, opinion about the activity of the police, defence strategies adopted by households to protect their property can also be investigated in a direct population survey. All of the above aspects are very important in determining the quality of life of the population. International comparisons are another important aim of the study.

Not all crimes are investigated in the Italian victimisation surveys. They comprise crimes that can be objectively defined – e.g. usury is still difficult to investigate in a crime survey, due to the victim-offender relationship – and those where the victim can be clearly identified. Monitoring new crimes that come to light is a further aim of victimisation research; the next 2008 victimisation survey will investigate consumer and informatics fraud, credit card cloning, e-phishing and also harassment at work. Types of offence included in the Italian survey concern property crimes and violent victimisation against household and individuals: bag-snatching, pickpocketing, larceny, robbery, physical assault and threats, burglary, unlawful entry, vandalism,

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1 Istat, the Social Structure and Dynamic Office.

2 Istat, the Social Structure and Dynamic Office.

3 The first sweep of the survey was in 1997/98, the second one in 2002, the third one is going to be in 2008.

motor vehicle/parts theft. A short module about sexual harassment and violence (addressed to women aged 14-59 only)<sup>4</sup> is also included.

## The main achievements

As noted above, the victimisation survey allows to have data on criminality, including the dark figure of crime. In the following paragraphs some results that can be achieved by the survey will be illustrated. This is not a complete description of national crime phenomenon but just a little review to have an idea of safety in Italy.

### The main indicators

In order to fully describe the extent of the phenomenon, three different indicators are calculated: prevalence and incidence rates and the concentration. They are calculated with reference to a definite time period (12 months, with the exception of sexual crimes). The prevalence rate is the proportion between the number of victims who suffered the crime in the reference period and the total population (both victims and non victims), the incidence rate compares the number of new crimes that occurred in a specified period (12 months) to the population at risk in the same period, and the concentration represents the number of crimes that occurred in the given period (12 months) to the victim. These indicators can be calculated as an aggregate for the whole of crimes or singularly for each type of crime, depending on the needs of the research: whether it is total or specific information. Particular aggregations can be also done, pointing out homogeneous groups of crimes: i.e. individual or household crimes, property or violent ones.

Crime indicators are often calculated by some territorial characteristics (the main geographical area, the 21 regional areas, the type of municipality) and by some socio-demographic victims variables. Sometimes the analysis also regards the risk factor linked with the victims' life-style (Istat 1999, 2004, Arsani & Muratore 2004).

#### *Prevalence Rate*

The most commonly used rate is the prevalence rate (Table 1). According to the data from the Italian Victimization survey the rate of property crimes is higher (4.4 per cent) than the one of violent crimes (0.9 per cent). Considering all crimes together, the prevalence rate in the reference period (percentage of people who experienced at least one incident in the last 12 months) reaches 5.2 per cent.

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<sup>4</sup> For the 2008 survey this module will be addressing women aged 14-65.

With respect to individual crime, property crimes include attempted or completed bag-snatching, pickpocketing, larceny; violent crimes include robbery – attempted or consumed – and physical assault.

**Table 1. Prevalence rate of individual crimes in the last 12 months, per category of crime – Year 2002 (rate per 100 population 14 and over)**

At least one crime against property	4.4
At least one violent crime	0.9
At least one crime	5.2

Property crimes include bag-snatching, pickpocket, larceny (attempted or consumed); violent crimes include robbery - attempted or consumed - and physical assault.

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

**Table 2. Prevalence rate of household crimes in the last 12 months, per category of crime – Year 2002 (rate per 100 households)**

At least one crime to the main or secondary house	5.8
At least one crime to household's vehicle	14.3
At least one household crime	18.6

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

The rates of household crimes are higher: 5.8 per cent of households experienced at least one crime that involved the main or secondary house (burglary, household property thefts outside the house, vandalism, unlawful entry) and 14.3 per cent of them experienced at least one crime that involved a vehicle owned by the household: completed and attempted theft of car, truck, van, motorbike, moped, bicycle, or theft of parts of them, or of objects that were inside the vehicle.

#### *Incidence and Concentration Rates*

The incidence rates represent the number of crimes per total population (%). Incidence rates are slightly higher than prevalence rates, this means that some victims experienced more than one crime in the reference period. The incidence rate for individual property crime is 5.3, while it is 2.1 for violent crimes. Considering the overall individual crimes the total rate is 7.3 (Table 3).

**Table 3. Incidence rate for individual crimes in the last 12 months, by crime category – Year 2002 (per 100 population 14 and over)**

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At least one crime against property	5.3
At least one violent crime	2.1
At least one crime	7.3

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Property crimes include bag-snatching, pickpocket, larceny (attempted or consumed); violent crimes include robbery - attempted or consumed - and physical assault.

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

**Table 4. Incidence rate for household crimes in the last 12 months, by crime category – Year 2002 (per 100 households)**

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At least one crime to the main or secondary house	9.6
At least one crime to household's vehicle	24.2
At least one household crime	33.7

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Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

In order to highlight the problem of multiple victimisation, the concentration indicator is much more suitable. Comparing the number of crimes with the number of victims, it is possible to understand at a glance how large the problem is. Individual crime concentration equal to 142.1 means that almost 40 victims out of 100 suffered more than one incident in the reference period. Multiple victimization is much higher for violent crimes (218.8) than for property crimes (121.1) (Table 5).

**Table 5. Concentration of individual crimes in the last 12 months, by crime category – Year 2002 (per 100 population 14 and over)**

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At least one crime against property	121.1
At least one violent crime	218.8
At least one crime	142.1

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Property crimes include bag-snatching, pickpocket, larceny (attempted or consumed); violent crimes include robbery - attempted or consumed - and physical assault.

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

**Table 6. Density of households crimes in the last 12 months, by crime category – Year 2002 (per 100 households)**

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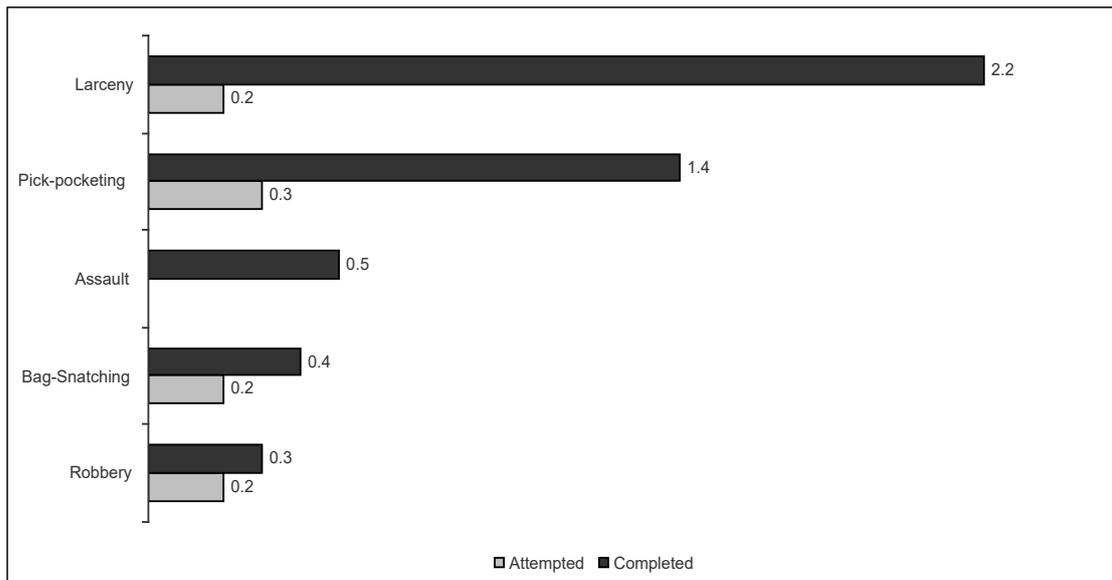
At least one crime to the main or secondary house	160.2
At least one crime to household's vehicle	168.7
At least one household crime	181.5

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Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

### Single crime rates

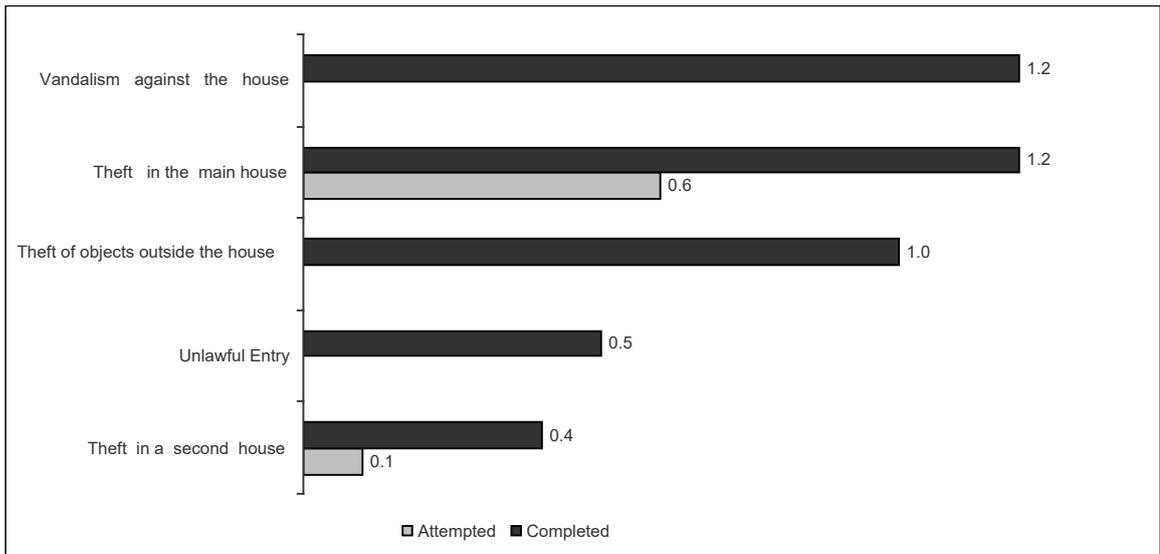
Going into detail of each investigated crime, it is interesting to analyze differences in rates by typologies of crime. Taking into account individual crimes, completed larceny is the most frequent (2.2 per cent population), followed by pickpocket (1.4 per cent). Assault, bag-snatching and robbery rates are lower, almost around 0.5 per cent or less (Figure 1). Rates of attempted offences are always smaller than the rates of the corresponding completed offences, almost 0.2 per cent for all types of individual crime.



**Figure 1. Prevalence rate for individual crimes in the last 12 months, by type of crime – Year 2002 (rate per 100 population 14 and over)**

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

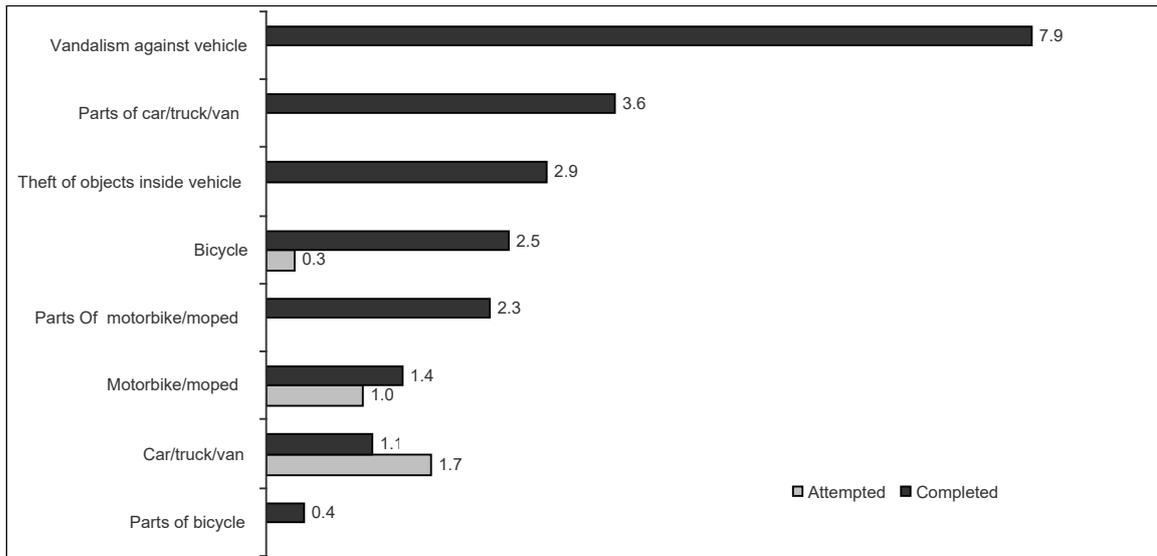
The level of household crime rates concerning house properties reaches 1.2 per cent for acts of vandalism against the house and completed theft in the main house; theft of object outside the house affected one household out of 100 (1.0 per cent), more rarely there was unlawful entry (0.5 per cent) and theft in a secondary house (0.4 per cent) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Prevalence rate for households crimes in the last 12 months, by type of crime against main house or secondary house – Year 2002 (rate per 100 households)**

*Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey*

Finally, rates for household crimes that involve vehicles are much higher (Figure 3). Acts of vandalism against vehicles are the most common type of offences (7.9 per cent). A bit less than 4 households out of 100 had parts of the car, truck or van stolen (3.6 per cent) and 2.9 per cent had an object inside the vehicle stolen. Concerning the vehicles themselves, thieves steal more bicycles (2.5 per cent) than motorbikes or mopeds (1.4), and still less cars, trucks or vans (1.1 per cent).



**Figure 3. Prevalence rate for households crimes in the last 12 months, by type of crime involving vehicles – Year 2002 (rate per 100 households)**

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

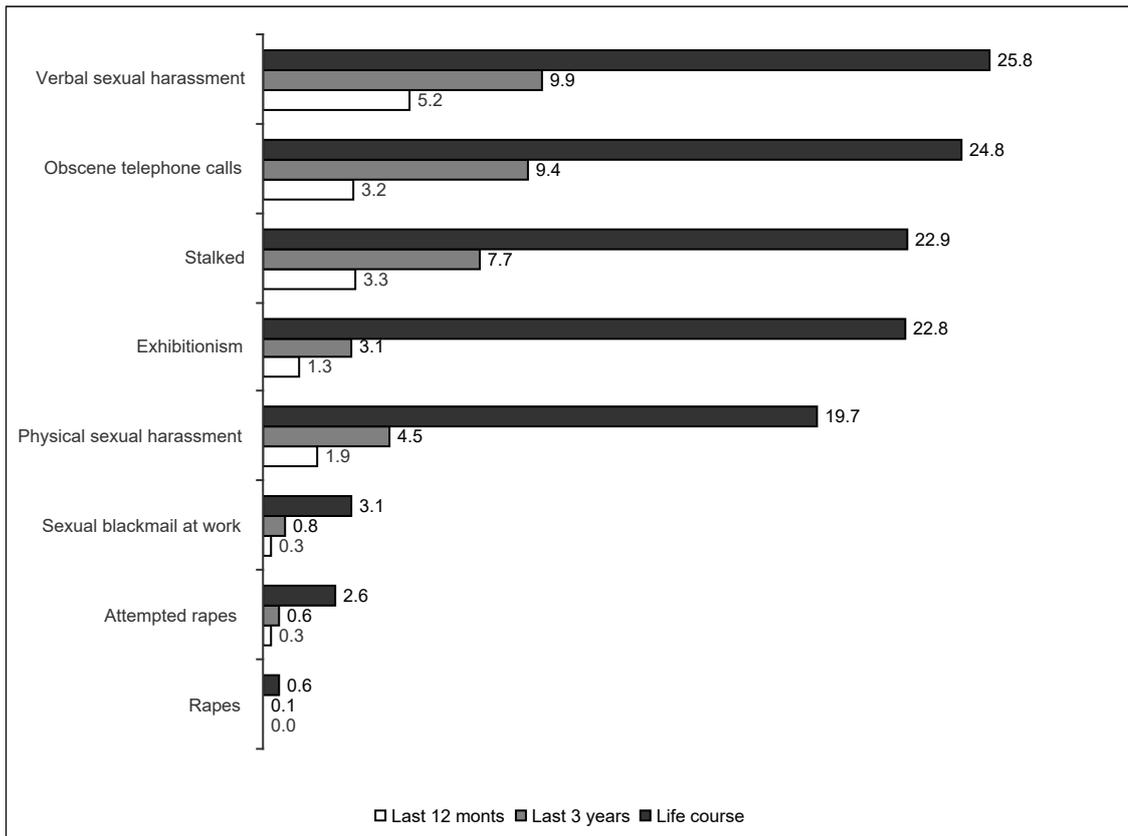
### *Sexual offences*

From the data collected with the module on sexual harassment that is included in the victimisation survey, it is possible to describe the extent of this type of offences against women in Italy.<sup>5</sup>

One woman out of four experienced at least a verbal sexual harassment or an obscene telephone call in her life (Figure 4); referring to the last 12 months, rates are 5.2 and 3.2 respectively. 22.9 per cent of the women have been followed by a man at least once in their life (3.3 per cent in the last 12 months), 22.8 per cent suffered acts of exhibitionism, and 19.7 per cent had experienced physical sexual harassment (1.9 per cent in the last 12 months). Less frequent, but much more severe, are offences such as sexual blackmail at work (3.1 per cent in lifetime period), attempted rape (2.6 per cent) and rape (0.6 per cent).

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<sup>5</sup> In 2006 Istat carried out the first violence against women survey "Women Safety Survey". This is a dedicated survey of 25.000 women aged 16-70, focusing on physical and sexual violence and on domestic violence. The results can be found on the Istat website ([http://www.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non\\_calendario/20070221\\_00/](http://www.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non_calendario/20070221_00/)). See also article in this book.

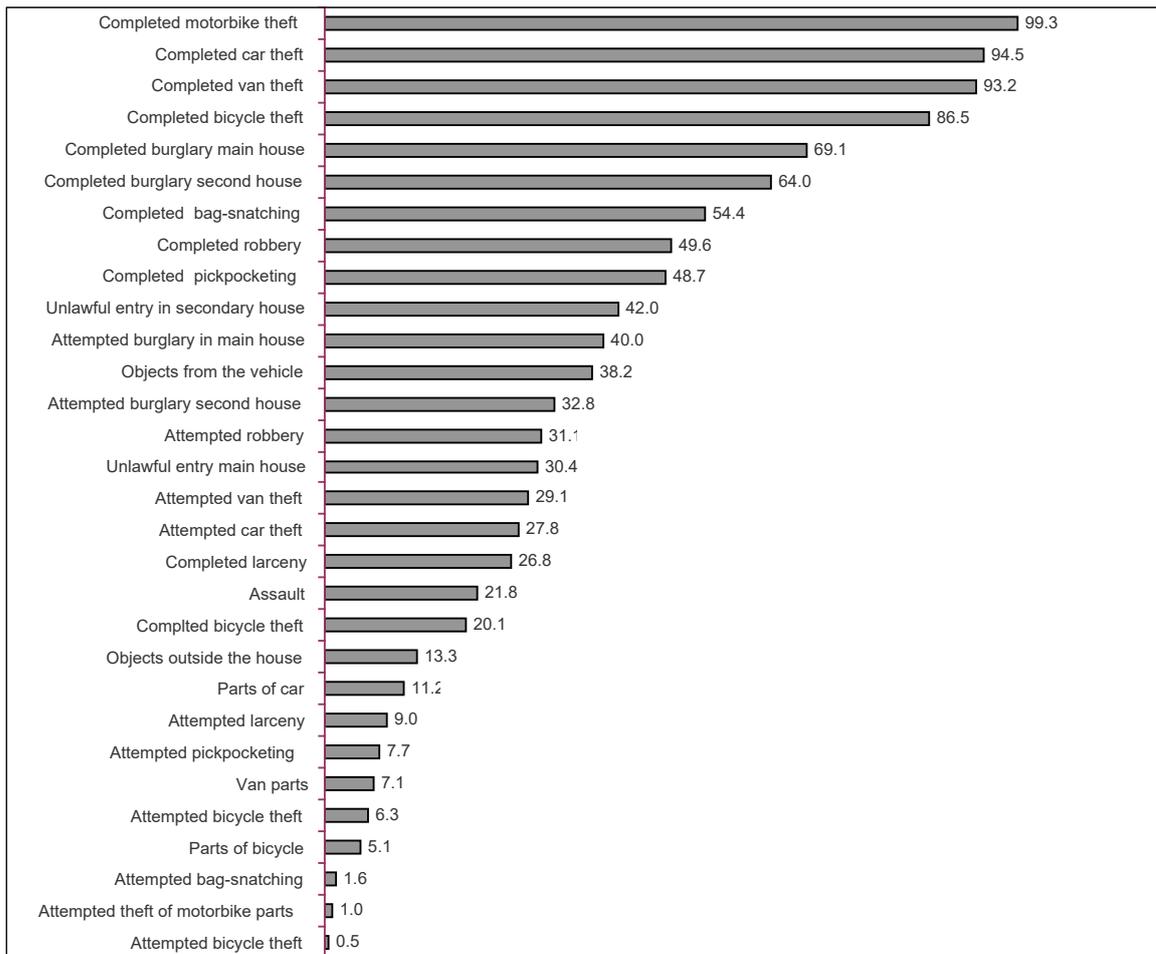


**Figure 4. Prevalence rates of sexual offences – Year 2002 (per 100 women aged 14-59)**

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

### Illuminate underreported crimes

Only about one-third of crimes (34,7%) that occurred in the last 12 months were reported to the police. Despite of what was said by Quetelet and affirmed by Corrado (1986) in Italy quite recently, reporting behaviour differs very much from crime to crime (Figure 5). Completed offences are reported more often than attempted ones. Almost all of the completed motorbike thefts (99,3 per cent) and car thefts (94.5 per cent) were reported. Ranking the crimes by percentage of reporting, completed thefts of vans and bicycles follow. Then, burglary in the main house was reported in 69 per cent of cases. Regarding individual crimes, a little more than one-half of all bag-snatchings were reported (54.4 per cent); for robberies, the reporting rate was 49.6 per cent and for pickpocketing, 48.7 per cent.

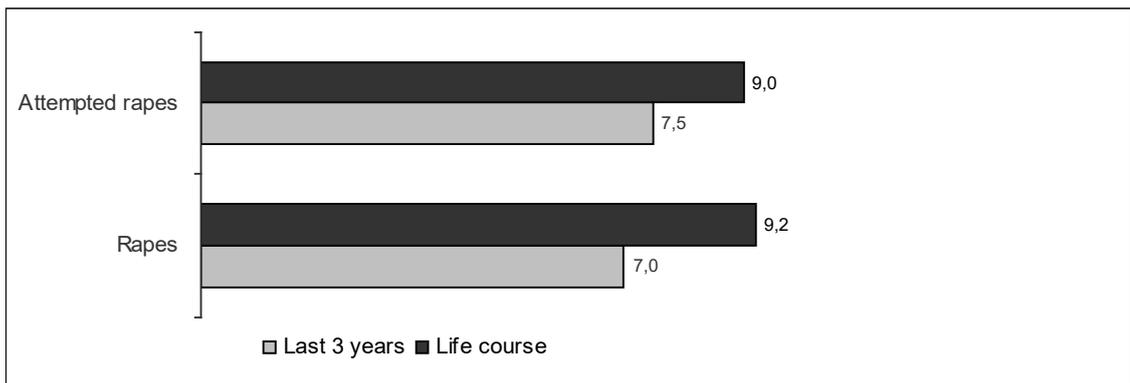


**Figure 5. Reporting by type of crime that occurred in the last 12 months – Year 2002 (per 100 victims of the same crime)**

*Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey*

Crimes that are most rarely reported are the attempted ones (bicycle 0.5, motorbike parts 1 per cent). Also attempted bag-snatching was reported in only 1.6 per cent of all cases, pickpocketing in 7.7 and larceny in 9.0 per cent. Only 21.8 per cent of assaults were reported.

Reporting rates for sexual offences as rapes and attempted rapes were even lower. Lifetime rapes and attempted rapes were reported in almost 9 per cent of cases, while similar crimes that occurred over the last 3 years were reported in almost 7 per cent of all cases (Figure 6).

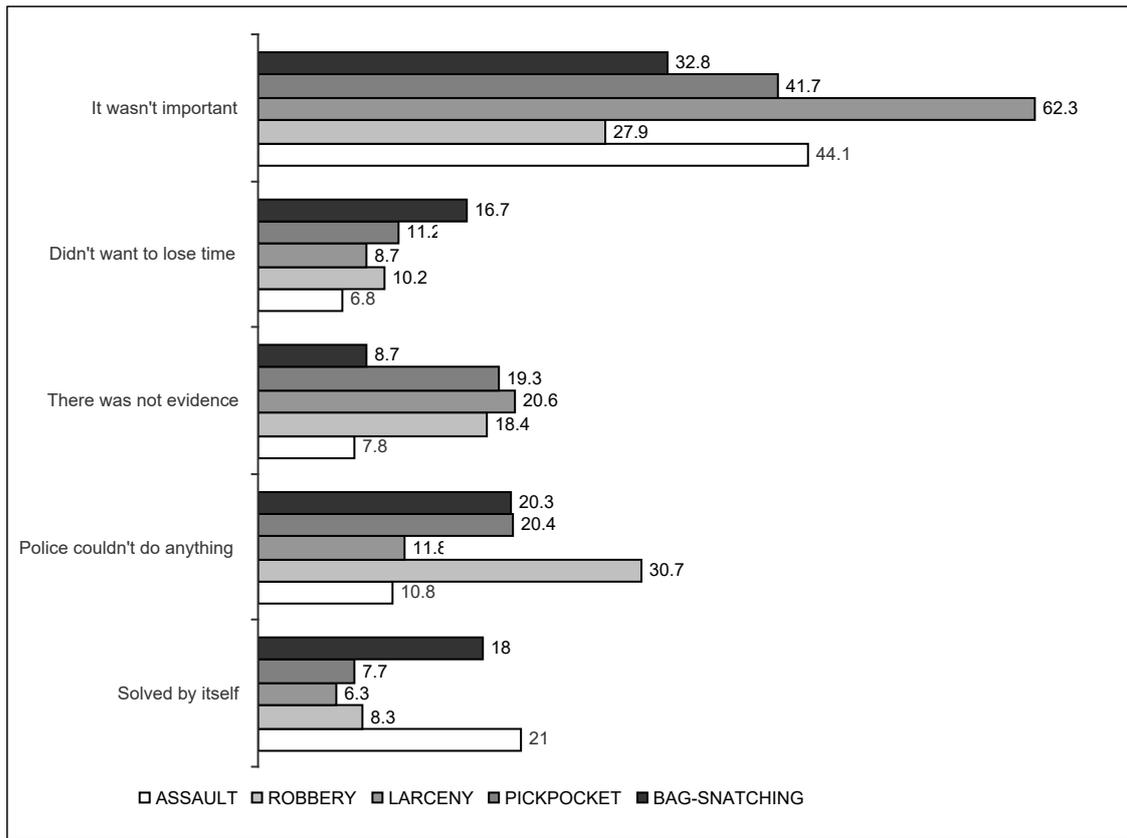


**Figure 6. Reporting of rapes and attempted rapes that occurred over the lifetime and over the last 3 years – Year 2002 (per 100 victims of the same crime)**

*Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey*

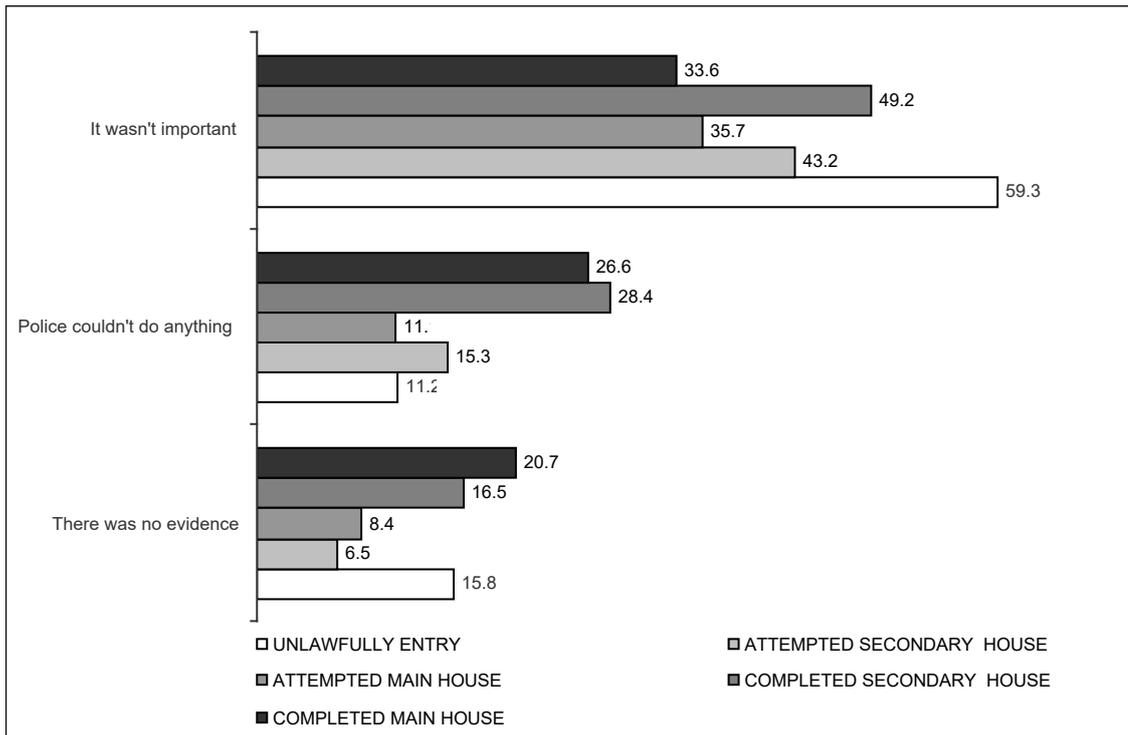
Apart from sexual crimes, in general reporting behaviour depends mostly on the severity of the crime: the main reason given by victims for not reporting an incident is that it is not considered important enough (Figure 7 and 8). In the case of larceny this reason is given in 62.3 per cent of responses.

Concerning individual crimes, victims did not report the case to the police because they did not want to lose time (16.7 per cent of victims of bag-snatching), or because “there was no evidence” or because “police could not do anything” (30.7 per cent of victims of robbery). In other cases they solved the matter by themselves (21 per cent of victims of assaults).



**Figure 7. Main reasons for NOT reporting by type of individual completed crime that occurred over the last 12 months – Year 2002 (per 100 victims who reported)**

*Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey*

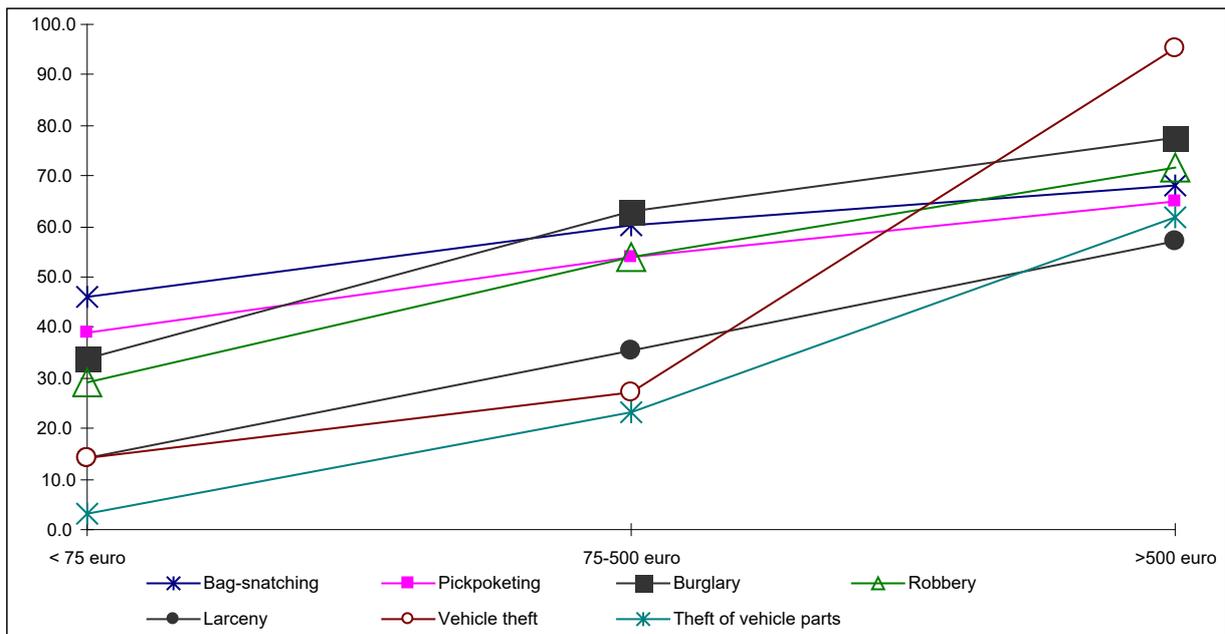


**Figure 8. Main reasons for NOT reporting by type of household completed crime that occurred over the last 12 months - Year 2002 (per 100 victims who reported)**

*Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey*

It is also interesting to notice that the reporting rates for both household victimization and personal property thefts are highest when there is a significant financial loss (Figure 9).

The same trend can be observed for assaults and robberies, both of which are more often reported to the police if the victims are injured.



**Figure 9. Reporting by individual and household crimes by financial loss – Year 2002 (per 100 victims who reported)**

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

## Dynamics of Crimes

Victimisation surveys provide a lot of information on the dynamics of crimes, such as when, how and where they occur, the activity the victim was carrying out at the time of bag-snatching or pick-pocketing, the economic damage, and the outcome, in order to provide a complete picture of the situations that are *most attractive* to the perpetrators of the crimes and to indicate the situations most at risk in which the presence of police should be strengthened on one hand, and the circumstances in which citizens should be more careful on the other. Furthermore, in relation to some crimes, the victim was asked to provide some characteristics of the perpetrator of the criminal act.

Offender information was collected for bag snatching, robbery and assault, in other words when there is direct interaction between victim and perpetrator. This procedure revealed that almost all perpetrators (80-90%) were male according to the victim, and were between 21 and 40 years old in most cases of violent crimes, while the percentage of very young people was rather significant in bag-snatching.

Except for robbery, the perpetrators usually acted alone, although an analysis of the success probability of the crimes has shown that it is higher when a group of criminals act together. In fact, in most cases of attempted purse snatching and attempted robberies, the thief acted alone (in 50% and

45.1% of cases respectively), while 60.3% of completed robberies were committed by pairs or small groups of criminals.

Nevertheless, the action strategies of the perpetrators are not the only factors that affect the probability of success. This varies greatly according to the crime and decreases when the severity of the crime increases, when the victim reacts, and when more precautions are taken to protect the goods.

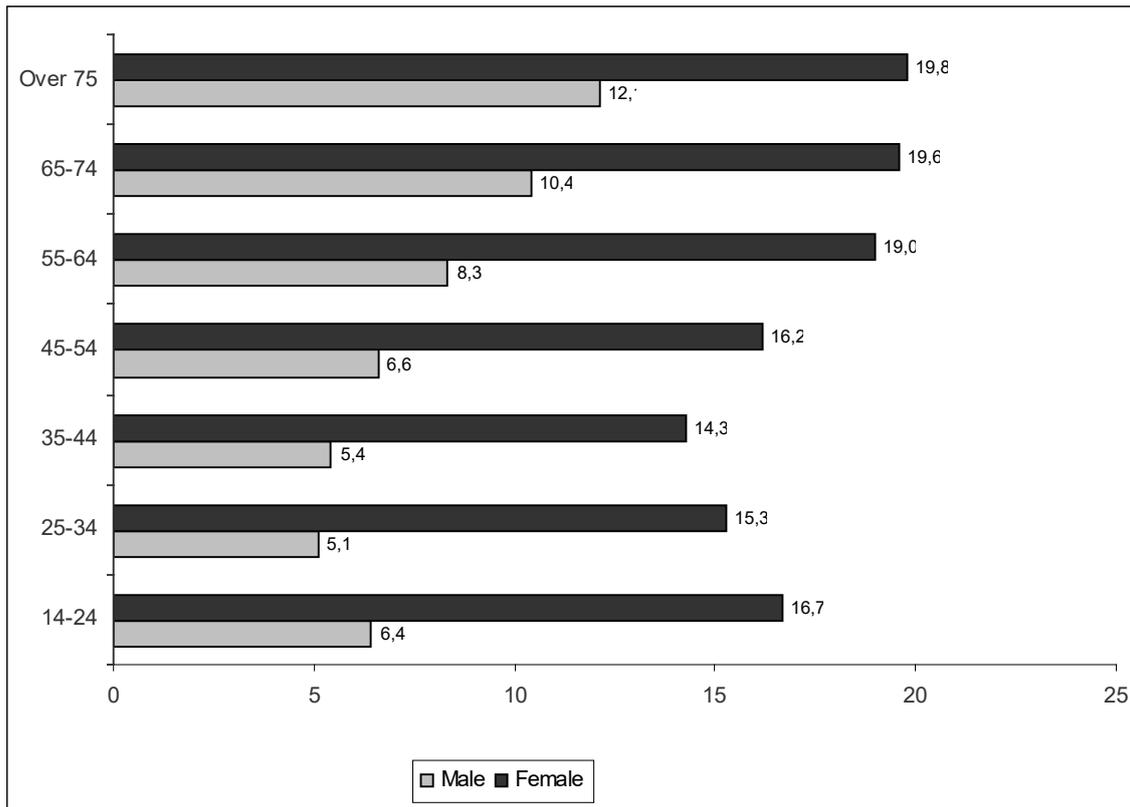
For example, the probability of success of a theft of a personal object is higher (93.9%) when the victim is entirely absent, and decreases as the victim's role becomes more and more active (from 80.2% for pick-pocketing, to 67.9 for purse snatching, and 56.2% for robbery). Main household burglary (67.3%) and vehicle theft (38.2%) are to be considered differently as they may be more difficult to carry out, since the objects of interest to the perpetrators could be protected by alarms and because the manner of carrying out the burglary could be more complex when the burglar has to look at valid escape routes, besides finding the right moment to avoid being seen.

## Subjective aspects

The perception of safety is a particularly interesting subject due to different implications and aspects it encompasses. It is interesting to study it for many reasons: reflecting on its causes, the role a victimisation experience has on fear, the social and environmental decay of the area in which one lives, the relation with the police or the individual vulnerability; reflecting on its manifestations, its impact on everyday life, in terms of anxiety for crime, reactions and precautions citizens take in relation to it (Skogan 1990; Barbagli, 1998; Roché 2000, 2003; Rosina 2003).

Fear of crime among citizens is measured through a set of questions that investigate how safe people feel in different situations, some questions regard worries and the impact of crime-induced anxiety on the respondent's life. In the 2008 survey, a deeper definition of fear of crime will be adopted and also more attention on the intensity of fear will be paid.

Firstly, people are asked whether they feel safe or unsafe while walking alone when it is dark in the area where they live. 27.6 per cent declared to feel unsafe. A second question concerns the feeling of safety when alone at home: 12.2 per cent of citizens say that they feel unsafe even inside their own house, when they are alone at dark. This sensation of insecurity is higher among elderly people than younger persons, and higher among women than men (Figure 10).

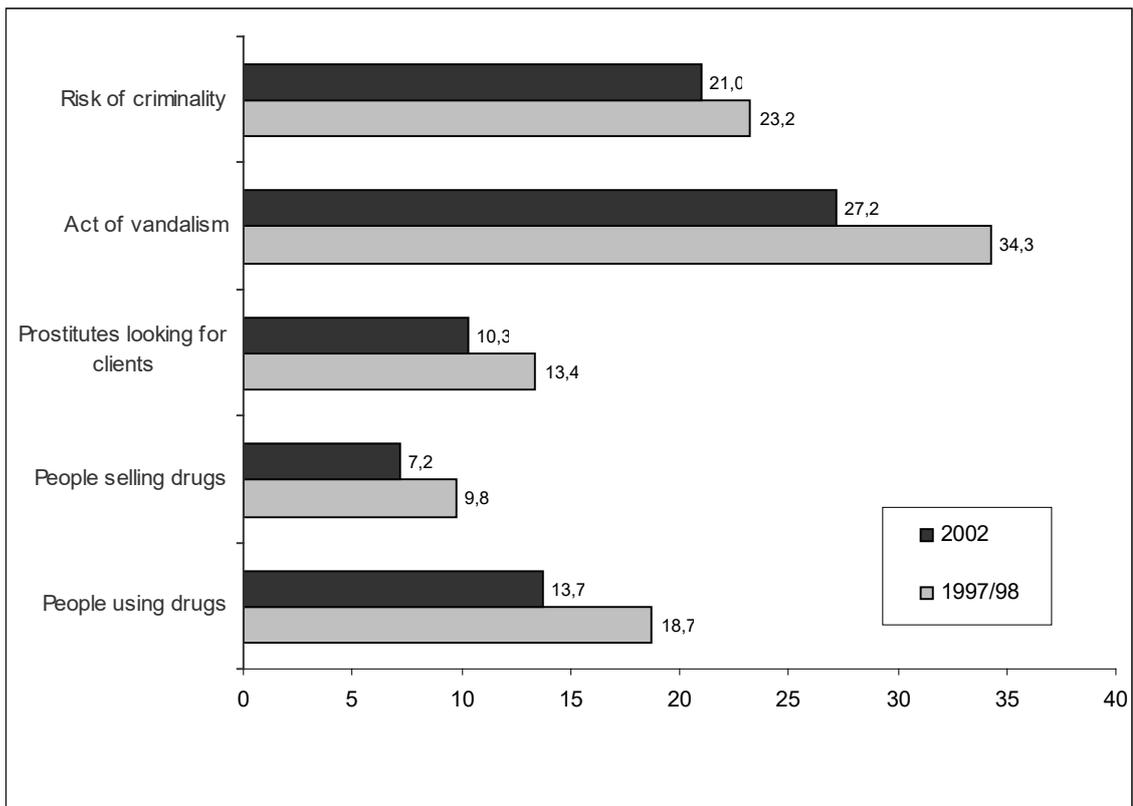


**Figure 10. People who feel unsafe when walking alone in the dark in their own area by age and gender – Year 2002 (rate per 100 population 14 and over)**

Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey

Fear of crime also depends on actions and events that apparently have little relevance, but that taken as a whole are perceived as signs of to what extent the general order in the community is under control. *Disorder* has a social and a physical dimension. Social disorder is for example when in an area there are people using or selling drugs, prostitutes, homeless, people who get drunk; there is physical disorder when there are buildings abandoned or in bad condition, graffiti on the walls, telephone booths damaged, dirty roads, trash.

The Italian Victimization Survey shows how frequently citizens are witness of such "soft" crimes in the area where they live. Acts of vandalism are reported by 27.2 per cent of respondents, people using drugs by 18.7 per cent; 13.4 per cent of respondents have seen prostitutes and 9.8 per cent noticed people selling drugs (Figure 11). Also in Italy, an interesting analysis shows the relationships between these aspects with fear of crime, social worries and safety measures taken at individual and household level (Barbagli 1998, Muratore and Sabbadini 2003, Istat 2004).



**Figure 11. Indicators of social and enviromental decay – Year 2002 (rate per 100 population 14 and over)**

*Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety Survey*

## Methodological features

The Italian Citizens' Safety Survey is carried out every five years; the first sweep was in 1997/98, the second one in 2002 and the third one is going to be carried out in 2008. In order to achieve a good estimate of the dimension of the phenomenon of crime, great care is given to the entire statistical process, paying constant and special attention to all the choices and working activities that need to be made. While deciding on the best methodological choices, it is important to take into account all parameters that may affect the results of the survey, concerning the survey topic itself and the required estimate levels, considering of course the costs and the available budget. Therefore, close attention is paid to every phase of the survey and, particularly, the following aspects have to be pointed out: the questionnaire design, the interview technique, the sampling procedure, the training instruments, the monitoring system while collecting data.

## The Questionnaire Design

*It is well known how different interviewing modes and techniques, as far as different manners of asking questions, or the ordering of topics, can affect the answer of the respondent. Planning the questionnaire, special care was given to all of the following aspects:*

- Wording
- Ordering of Questions
- Screening Technique
- Reference Period and Telescoping Effect

Concerning the wording, it is important to consider that particular words can have a different meaning in different areas of the country. Also some juridical terminology can be misunderstood by common people. People have different abilities to understand, because of social status, level of education, or age. This is why when asking about crimes it was necessary to fully describe the act, underlining the aspects that mostly define a type of crime and using examples. For example, in the case of individual crimes, sometimes common people do not know the difference between pickpocketing and bag-snatching.

The ordering of questions is also an important matter in order to reduce the context effect but, regarding sensitive questions, much more relevant is the intent to come through the respondent's disposition in answering questions. In particular, topics that engender reticent behaviour - for different reasons - are the household's income, burglary strategies adopted to protect the ownership, sexual harassment and violence. Our strategy was to put these critical items at the end of the questionnaire in order to give enough time to the interviewer to establish a good relationship with the respondent.

Since the main goal of the Italian Victimization Survey is the assessment of the volume of crimes, we chose the screening technique as a help for remembering crime. The screening technique consists in asking the respondent with a set, a battery, of questions about the different crimes he/she has experienced in the reference period and how many times, postponing the questions that describe incident details. This helps the respondent to focus his/her attention on the type and number of crimes and using the correct reference period, as remembering correctly when each crime occurred is often difficult. Respondents, indeed, can forget less important incidents as well as repress the most serious ones or they can wrongly recall some events in order to be more socially desirable. This is why the reference period must not be too long, in order to facilitate the proper remembering of the occurred facts.

To address the telescoping effect problem, the Italian Victimization Survey adopted a combination of two reference periods: firstly crimes are asked considering the last 3 years and then regarding the last 12 months.<sup>6</sup> This

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<sup>6</sup> Only sexual violence is asked for the entire lifetime.

strategy aids the reduction of the telescoping effect but does not represent a the definitive solution.

In fact, a specific study has been made in the 2002 Italian Victimization Survey, adding in the questionnaire, after the crimes screening, some detailed questions about the month – or at least the season - and year of the most recent event. The result of this analysis is that, despite of the use of the reducing period strategy (3 year and 12 months), many errors are still present in the collected information (for instance 23 events of burglary - collected as if they had happened in 2001-2002 – had actually happened before 1999, 48 during 1999 and 96 in 2000). So the implementation of corrections was done and many biases were eliminated, as shown in table 7.

This confirms the importance of using a combination of strategies such as: reducing the reference period and funnel questions, helping in reporting the date of the event by using of probing (dear date), besides the interviewers' training.

**Table 7. Imputation of correction weights for selected crimes –Year 2002**

Crime	% of error	Change on weighted estimates	
		(.000)	(.000)
Pickpocket	10,5%	858	764
Bag-snatching	10,2%	276	245
Robbery	9,9%	237	201
Household burglary	19,0%	1018	803
Car theft	7,8%	1110	1016
Van theft	12,8%	70	61
Theft of parts of vehicle	19,3%	1621	1276
Assault	6,0%	263	240

*Source: Istat, Citizen's Safety survey*

#### *The interview mode*

As regards the survey mode, considering the sensitivity of the questions as well as the complex structure of the questionnaire, a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) has been considered more suitable than a face-to-face interview. Referring to the complexity of the structure, a different interview path can be followed depending on the experience of victimisation of the person interviewed using filters that can be applied to an entire section of the questionnaire as well as to a single question asked. Referring to sensitivity,

CATI interview allows the splitting of the interview in more sequential sub-segments through the possibility of dating appointments. This would make the survey period longer than necessary, but would reduce the respondent's fatigue thus lowering the risk of definitive interruptions of the phone conversation and allowing respondents to choose the most suitable moments to answer the questionnaire. Telephone surveys are also a better guarantee for safety and anonymity.

### *Sampling Procedure*

The sampling design consists of a two-stage sample, stratified at the first stage by region and type of municipality. All the socio-demographic areas are represented and data are weighted to represent the population up to a regional level. The representative sample is made of 60,000 households (the selection is made from the last updated telephone list) and one person randomly selected in each of them, aged 14 and over, is to be interviewed. In the first two sweeps of the survey, the sexual harassment and violence module was addressed to women aged 14-59 with a sample of 22,575 women, whereas in the new 2008 survey the upper age limit will be raised to 65.

There is a substitution of non-respondents to assure representativeness by strata. Substitution households are identified as the more geographically closer to the base sample.

### *The Training Instruments*

In order to minimize refusal and interruption rates and to guarantee a high quality of the data collected, an appropriate interviewer selection and training is really a critical and essential aspect that has to be taken into account. Unquestionably, during the collecting phase, interviewers play a very important role. Because of the sexual harassment and violence module inserted in the Italian survey, interviewers are always and only female.

The selection of the interviewer's takes into account the candidate's skills in communication abilities, the tone of voice, the past experience in social interviews and technical abilities in using computers. The training is quite long and consists in 3 days of theoretical aspects and a day and a half of technical exercises and simulations of interviews.

Before starting the fieldwork, interviewers must make some trial interviews, that are real interviews to households not in the sample. During the collection phase - that lasts almost 5 months - interviewers attend weekly (at the beginning, then every 15 or 20 days) debriefing with Istat's staff in which they face, discuss and try to solve individual or general problems that come up during the interviews, problems that can negatively affect the quality of data.

### *The Monitoring System*

Simultaneously with the data collection, Istat staff is in charge of the control of the quality of the data collected. It is essential to solve in real time any kind of problems that can affect the quality of data.

Regarding the goal of minimising the refusal and the interruption rates, the letter that Istat sends to all sampled households is also useful. This letter is signed by the President of Istat and the intention is to inform the households about the aim of the survey, the reasons why they are asked to participate and to answer, which are the duties about responding or not and their rights regarding, for example, the protection of the information they provide and their privacy. In the letter, a toll free number is given that households can call to receive information, explanations or reassurances about the seriousness of the study and about the institute that is carrying it out.

Further on the problem of quality of data collected and on minimising refusals and interruptions, the hall assistance, that is the assistance of Istat's staff to the interviewers during the fieldwork, is very helpful because it allows to understand immediately if a single interviewer has problems in gaining interviews, or if she discusses and gives reasons correctly, or if she has a wrong approach contacting people. What is more, the hall assistance by Istat's staff permits to verify if interviewers put the questions in the right way, reading the entire edited text and with the right intonation.

But the core of the monitoring system in a CATI survey is the daily production of indicators. Each telephone dial represents an outcome that is automatically recorded. This means that at any moment it is possible to process the data registered and produce a report of all the activity made in the period (by day, by week, by month) for each interviewer, or per regional areas, or for a particular moment of the day.

Main indicators that can be produced are the response, refusal and substitution rates, the number of appointments with the households and the length of the interview. It is also very useful to implement control charts of the process in order to quickly detect situations that are out of control.

In the 2002 Italian Victimization Survey, the refusal rate has been about 15%, the interruption rate 0.5%, the average length of the interview 22 minutes (in the range of 10 and 90 minutes).

### **Conclusions**

For all the reasons described above, victimisation surveys are considered a good tool to study crime. Direct population surveys allow us to analyse the relation between different aspects of the safety problem: a good balance in collecting objective and subjective components is helpful in order to better understand the problem in its entirety. Outcomes can be very useful to plan policy that aims to improve the quality of life. This political attention to users

is very important because it implies a continuous reference to social changes and their consequences. These results could be better achieved, as well as the monitoring of the phenomenon, with a shorter survey periodicity, an update at least every 3 years would be surely preferable.

Another issue to be addressed is the survey mode, and in the specific Italian case the problem concerns the coverage issue. Households are progressively turning from the fixed household phone to the sole mobile one. In Italy, the number of households with only a mobile phone has increased rapidly, and reached about 15%. This fact precludes the chance to reach these households, whose members have often a different lifestyle compared to the others. To get over this problem, one solution can be the use of a mixed mode technique. Equally, in order to have the chance to be reached, the households' telephone numbers should be available on lists and not secret. In this case, the use of random digit dialling can be a solution; on the other hand this does not allow mail questionnaires, while this mode is important to improve the participation of the households that are in the sample.

Anyway, methodological analysis (carried out on a face-to-face survey) indicates that differences regarding victims of pickpocketing, bag-snatching and burglary according to the ownership of the telephone landline, or vice versa only the mobile phone, are not so important and they can be still taken under control through some adjustments in the weighting procedure.

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# The British Crime Survey: the Experience of Measuring Crime over 25 Years

Alison Walker

## Introduction

The first British Crime Survey was carried out in 1982 collecting information about people's experiences of crime in 1981. The first BCS was essentially a research tool designed to obtain a better count of crime (as it included crimes that were not reported to or recorded by the police); identify risk factors in victimization and examine people's worry about crime and their perceptions of and contact with the police. Although we still use the BCS for these purposes, today it looks very different from the original BCS. This paper presents an overview of three aspects of the BCS over the past 25 years:

- what has changed and what has remained constant
- the changing picture of crime measured by the survey
- changes for the future.

The BCS is a victimisation survey in which adults living in private households are asked about their experiences of crime. It includes property crimes such as vehicle-related thefts and burglary, and personal crimes such as assaults. As such it does not aim to provide a total count of crime but it does provide robust trends in crime over time and this is why the BCS has filled such a prominent role in the measurement of crime both within the Home Office and elsewhere. As identified in the Smith Review of crime statistics (2007):

*The British Crime Survey is a high-quality survey that has contributed significantly to the Home Office's and to public understanding of crime trends over the last 25 years. It is also a very important research tool and has led the development of new crime reduction programmes, services for victims and improved the quality of the criminal justice system.*

The requirement to maintain a consistent trend has been a major driving force in the evolving design of the survey and the overall methodology has remained the same since the survey began measuring crime in 1981.

## Consistency within change

Consistent aspects of the methodology include the overall sample design, the use of a twelve month reference period for crime, the main questions and method used for measuring victimisation, and the use of a modular questionnaire.

The overall sample design has always been based on a stratified random probability sample of addresses with the random selection of one adult aged 16 or over per household. Over time, some of the stratification factors have been modified and the primary sample unit has changed from wards to postcode sectors. Sample size has also increased. The BCS has always been a large survey in order to identify and provide useable data on the major crime types for different sections of the population but over time it has increased from 11,000 in 1982 to 20,000 in 2000 and then to 33,000 in 2001/2 and 45,000 in 2005/6.

The increase in 2001/2 was part of a series of inter-related changes introduced following a review of the survey in 2001. The larger sample size required a move to continuous fieldwork throughout the year rather than the one-off approach that had been used previously. Prior to 2001/2 all respondents were interviewed in January to March and asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year. Continuous fieldwork meant the change to a moving 12 month reference period for the experience of crime.

BCS measures of crime have always been based on a single 12 month reference period. The survey has never used the approach of setting this within a longer period such as the 5 years used by the ICVS nor has it used a shorter period such as the 6 months used by the NCVS in the US. Prior to 2001/2 the survey referred to the experience of crime in the calendar year preceding the interview. This meant that the results could be directly related to a specific calendar year (e.g. the 1998 survey reported on crime that had happened in 1997). From 2002/3 onwards the BCS employed a moving reference period which meant that we were no longer able to relate the experience of crime to a single calendar year.

Survey results are reported annually based on a financial year of interviewing (April to March) and relate to the incidents experienced by survey respondents in the 12 months prior to their interview. For example, interviews in year ending March 2007 cover crimes experienced from April 2005 (12 months before the first month of interviews) to February 2007 (the month before the last month of interviews; BCS deals in whole calendar months). See Figure 1.

This time lapse has consequences in the use of the BCS for measuring performance and in explaining these measures to policy colleagues. For example, where BCS data is used to measure a target based on interviews in year ending March 2008 the reference period for the crimes to be included begins in April 2006, so much of the crime will already have occurred before any 'last push' to achieve the target might happen.



and the criminal justice system. These modules can be changed or maintained from year to year. We also exploit the large sample size by selecting random sub-samples (usually a quarter of the sample) to answer some modules of questions which means we can collect more data while maintaining a constant interview length. It is interesting to note that one consequence of the fall in crime since 1996 has meant that we have been able to include more modules because fewer people have their interview taken up by describing incidents of crime.

The screener questions have been constant since the survey began and this is one of the major strengths of the BCS. These questions are asked as 'openly' as possible so that people are not pre-judging whether they personally thought of the incident as a crime. For example, rather than asking if respondents have been assaulted we ask:

*'has anyone, including people you know well, deliberately hit you with their fists or with a weapon of any sort or kicked you or used force or violence in any other way?'*

*and rather than asking if they have been burgled we ask:*

*'has anyone got into this house/flat without permission and stolen/tried to steal anything'.*

The detailed questions on each incident allow us to identify which incidents would be defined as offences and using this information we code the offences based on the coding system used by the police. Coding of offences is conducted after the interview to ensure the highest quality control. This methodology has remained the same over the 25 years of the survey.

## Other changes

In addition to the main sample, BCS has over time included additional boost samples. A boost sample of people from ethnic minority backgrounds was introduced in 1988 and included every year until 2006/7 when it was agreed that the overall larger sample size meant this additional sample was no longer required. This decision is now reviewed yearly. We also have a 'youth boost' to double the sample size for people aged 16 to 24. This was introduced in 2002 to enable the more precise measurement of drug use (which the BCS covers through use of a self completion module).

The survey technology has also been updated over time with changes to data collection in 1994 when the survey moved from paper and pencil to CAPI and a complete review of data processing in 2005 resulting in a more automated approach.

## What the BCS has shown

Over the last 25 years, the BCS has consistently provided data and analysis for use in policy making and development, academic research, performance measurement and informing the public. In overview, it is important for three major contributions to the understanding of crime which we could not have gained from police figures:

- an estimate of the 'dark figure' of crime
- consistent trends in crime
- estimates of the risk of crime overall and for different population sub-groups.

For the crime types it covers, the BCS can provide a better reflection of the true extent of household and personal crime because it includes crimes that are not reported to the police and crimes which are not recorded by them. The BCS shows that around 60% of crimes are not reported to the police (although this varies by crime type). This means that BCS estimates of the total number of crimes experienced by people living in private households are more than double those counted in the police figures. The relationship over time between BCS and police figures can also be used to identify broad changes in recording practices.

The BCS is a better indicator of crime trends than the police figures because it is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police, and in police recording practices. This has been best illustrated over the past decade when two major changes in recording practices have affected the trends in police recorded crime. Thus while police figures have shown periods of increase because of these changes, the BCS has shown a consistent fall in overall crime, indicating that the underlying trend was down and the police figures were reflecting these changes in practice. However, it is worth noting that these sorts of differences require careful handling in explaining the findings to the public.

Police figures are offence based and cannot link crimes to victims so BCS estimates of risk have been extremely influential in the development of crime policy. By identifying those most at risk, policies of prevention can be more accurately targeted. For example BCS shows that households with low incomes are more at risk of burglary but that households with any form of security measures are at much lower risk of burglary. The extra details we obtain about each crime also contribute to help these types of analyses. For example, BCS shows that vehicle theft is most likely to take place when a car is parked in the street outside the victim's home. However, further analysis taking into account how long cars were parked in different places showed that public car parks were associated with higher risk of vehicle theft which led to development of secure car parks policy.

## What next?

The two main issues facing the BCS in the near future are how to incorporate 'new crimes' into the existing framework of the survey and whether we should expand the coverage of victimisation.

Using the modular approach, we have added questions on newer types of crime including: credit card fraud, computer viruses / hacking; the receipt of unsolicited offensive material; email / mobile phone harassment; internet fraud. This means we can provide separate estimates of these new types of crimes and through this methodology we can add crime types as they arise. However, at some stage we will need to consider whether to incorporate these 'e-crimes' into the overall picture of crime which poses issues for the future; in particular that many of these 'e-crimes' cannot be counted in the same way as, for example, vehicle crime. These are issues which need to be faced by all victimisation surveys.

We also need to consider coverage of the survey. The Smith Review of crime statistics (2007) proposed that we expand the BCS to include under 16's and people who do not live in private households and also to measure commercial victimisation. We are currently conducting development work with the intention of expanding the survey to include 10 to 15 year olds using a reduced and modified BCS questionnaire. We also commissioned a scoping study to investigate including people living in group residences, but the work concluded that currently there is no adequate sampling frame and the cost of producing one was prohibitive. Further work looking at sampling particular sub-groups was recommended. Two surveys of commercial victimisation have been conducted by the Home Office the most recent in 2002 and it is our intention to scope and develop a further survey to complete the overall picture of crime.

Looking further ahead, there are issues of data collection; although the BCS maintains a very good response rate, face to face surveys are becoming more difficult and the web is seen as the way forward for surveys. We hope that this will be one more change we can adopt while continuing to maintain a consistent picture of crime as we have done for the past 25 years.

# The British Crime Survey

Paul Wiles

## Introduction

Victimisation surveys were first developed in the United States in the mid-1960s leading in 1972 to the establishment of the first US National Crime Survey. This was also accompanied by the development of both national and local surveys in many countries, for example the Netherlands. In the United Kingdom the first attempt at a victimisation survey was in a 1966 social survey carried out by the UK Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys, followed in 1972 by questions on victims of residential burglaries in the annual General Household Survey. In addition, an important test of crime survey methods was carried out in London in 1972 (Sparks 1977).

The British Crime Survey (BCS) in its now familiar form was first carried out in 1982 with householders asked about their experiences of crimes during 1981. This survey was based upon face to face interviews with persons aged 16 and over in 11,000 households in England & Wales and 5,000 in Scotland (Hough & Mayhew 1983). The first BCS was carried out in both England & Wales and Scotland, however while the name remained unchanged subsequent surveys were restricted to England & Wales with independent surveys carried out in Scotland. The interest in the first survey meant that BCS surveys began to be carried out at regular intervals, leading eventually to a continuous survey. However in many respects the design has broadly remained the same for the first 25 years.

## Why did we need the BCS?

Although the uses of the BCS have expanded over the last 25 years the basic aim of the BCS has remained unchanged. This is to provide a trustworthy index of crime and, in particular, a measure of the number and make up of those crimes not recorded by the police (the dark figure of crime). The BCS was therefore initially very much a research tool aiming to help our understanding of the police statistics on recorded crime which had started over 100 years previously in 1857<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Constabulary Act 1856

## The BCS as an aid to criminal policy development

Initially the results from the BCS were treated with distrust by policy makers and the public who preferred and understood the police statistics and were confused when the trends they showed were different. However the late 1980s and early 1990s brought with it a policy shift within the Home Office from a concentration on offenders to victims. Until then except for homicide all the criminal justice statistics collected by the Home Office were offender oriented. This policy shift generated a requirement for more details on victims, something the BCS could provide.

The availability of information on victimisation by age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic class from the BCS meant that these factors were not just a feature of small scale research projects. Instead data was available nationally and changes over time could be monitored. This allows, for example, the monitoring of policies to reduce domestic violence or drugs use targeted at particular social groups. The BCS is also able to measure views of criminal justice agencies, the fear of crime and the use of security measures such as burglar alarms. It also indicated that some people or households suffer repeatedly from crimes.

The BCS had then moved from the edges of crime policy to the centre. A modular structure has meant that in addition to some standard core questions new modules can be introduced on particular policy needs and repeated if appropriate.

## The BCS as a national statistic

The initial introduction of the BCS was as a research tool run by researchers and with no involvement of the Government statisticians in the Home Office. This meant that the publication of the BCS and police recorded crime statistics were in separate reports by different authors and at different times. This problem was addressed by the review of crime statistics (Simmons 2000) which recommended the publication of both series in one report including analysis showing comparisons and differences between both data series.

In the UK statistics began in the 1990s to be identified as part of a new independent group called National Statistics where this term acts as a kite mark for quality. The BCS became part of this group completing the move from research tool to Government statistic. Joint publication of BCS results and police recorded crime began in 2001 and with it the acceptance of the BCS as the main national measure of crime trends.

## BCS as a performance tool

The BCS is now a key tool in monitoring national trends in reducing crime, people's perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system. It is currently used to measure a number of Home Office performance targets. Although police crime statistics could be seen as a better measure, since they are not restricted to household crimes, or to those aged 16 and over, on the other hand they clearly exclude crimes not reported to the police and should be seen as a measure of police action and not an independent measure.

One response to the expanding use being made of the BCS was a need for a larger sample to enable more local analysis and the associated introduction of a continuous survey. This enabled the production and publication of both the BCS and recorded crime statistics on a quarterly basis. The policy need for such data has justified the higher cost (now £4.8m) and the increased sample size (now 47,000). Although this enhancement still only provides data at national and police force level it does enable some modelling of the BCS against recorded crime data at local level.

## The BCS as a dataset for external researchers

The original research use of the BCS has now mainly passed to researchers outside the Home Office. The Home Office annually makes the dataset with the relevant meta-data available through the ESRC data archive in Essex. The BCS's modular structure gives flexibility for researchers to develop some questions either as a project in itself or part of a much wider project. In addition, Home Office researchers will work with academics in the design of particular modules aiding both the Home Office and the researcher.

## The future of the BCS

A review of crime statistics in 2007<sup>2</sup> made additional recommendations for both the British Crime Survey and the police recorded crime statistics. In particular consideration into the collection of information from victims aged under 16 and from the hard to reach groups (e.g. elderly persons in retirement homes) to correspond to the social changes taking place. The review also proposed that the commercial and business surveys published in 2005<sup>3</sup> should be repeated as well as making recommendations about the offences collected in the police statistics.

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<sup>2</sup> Crime Statistics: An independent review (November 2006)

<sup>3</sup> Crimes against retail manufacturing premises: findings from the 2002 Commercial Victimization Survey (2005) Home Office Online Report 37/05

Internationally the BCS is seen as a model for countries developing their own surveys as well as for surveys such as the International Crime Victimization Survey (van Dijk et al. 2008) which aims to compare crime levels between countries. Although questions remain about the size and the cost of the BCS, its future seems secure forming an important part of international criminological research.

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# Value of Victimization Surveys for Decision Makers

Tarja Mankinen

It is generally agreed that statistics do not provide a full picture of the level of crime. Victimization surveys play an important role when assessing the volume of crime. Crime statistics and victimization surveys together give a broad picture of the crime situation and the trends. The problem is that victimization surveys do not have the same status as the crime statistics. In many cases it might be quite difficult to get resources for victimization surveys. These issues have been discussed widely during the past several years in Finland.

## Victimization surveys in Finland

Finland is quite a small country. It is less complicated to develop nation-wide data systems in small countries. New technology is widely and rapidly adopted in Finland also because of an overall positive attitude towards new applications of technology. The first national police data system was implemented in 1992. Since then all crimes reported to the police have been in the same data base. The official crime statistics are based on this system. Since then many other national police information systems have been developed. Because of the well organised information collection it is possible to find out for example how many crimes were reported to the police in a certain town or smaller area at any specific time. The Police data systems include also information about the offender and the victim of the crime as well as many other issues. In conclusion it is fair to say that a lot of resources have been invested to develop well functioning information systems and they are serving well the needs of the society. It is sad to observe that the development of victimization surveys is not as good.

The most important victimization survey in Finland is the National Victimization Survey. It was carried out for the first time in 1980, and the most recent survey was conducted in 2006. It includes information of both victims of violence and accidents.

Other important surveys are the Youth Victimization Survey and the Women's Victimization Survey. The Youth Victimization survey has been conducted since 1995 and the Women's Victimization Survey in 1997 and 2005.

The survey of child victimization is still lacking in spite of the fact that it is regarded very important. The Child victimization survey is more complicated

to conduct because the information on the victimisation of very small children aged 0-5 years is difficult to collect.

During the recent years, the need of a victimisation survey of male adults has also been discussed. As a justification of this need, it has been pointed out that men are the largest group of victims of violence. Such a victimisation survey is also needed because it might be that only a small proportion of domestic violence against men is reported to the police because of cultural reasons.

Another victimisation survey that has not been carried out is the victimisation survey of businesses. A high-level steering group was established in 2006 to develop public-private partnership between authorities and businesses. The main task of the steering group is to improve the security and safety of the business. The steering group gives out twice a year a business crime security situation assessment which is drafted by the National Bureau of Investigation together with experts from the authorities and business. A regularly conducted business victimisation survey would give important background information to this co-operation.

### Why victimisation surveys are not widely used in the decision-making process

In Finland, the measurement of results is regarded as being very important. The government's programme includes several indicators that measure the development of safety and security. The performance plan of the authorities must also include indicators that illustrate results and achievements. The Police have a quite well developed measurement system. The only problem is that the role of victimisation surveys could be more important.

Victimisation surveys should play a more important role in the decision-making process. In fact this is seldom the case. Experience has shown that there are many reasons why victimisation surveys are not widely used in the decision-making process.

One problem is that victimisation surveys are not very well known among the decision-makers. The surveys are often regarded as individual studies.

Reports of victimisation surveys are sometimes quite difficult to read. They can be lengthy reports full of details and references to other studies. All this is important to guarantee the high quality of the study. But, on the other hand, because of this, the audience of the study might become quite limited. Decision-makers are quite busy people and they want the information served in a very short and explicit form.

Because the reports are often quite complicated, the possibility that the reader can make a wrong conclusion or interpretation grows. For example, the National Victimisation Survey 2006 (Injury report) includes 11 pages text including the introduction. The main contents of the survey are altogether 77

tables. For the average reader it is very difficult (and boring) to study these tables because they are made according to the needs of the statistician.

One practical problem in Finland is the lack of permanent resources to conduct victimisation surveys regularly. Even to carry out the National Victimization Survey is difficult because there are no permanent resources available. Because of this uncertainty it is difficult to be sure of the exact time schedule of the survey. Due to this lack of regularity it is difficult to use the information of the surveys as a part of the decision-making and planning processes. This creates a vicious circle. The victimisation surveys do not play an important role in the decision-making and planning processes because they are not carried out regularly, and because of this they do not have the status they should have.

### Victimisation surveys - how to develop a more client friendly approach

The first step is to define more clearly the purpose and different audiences of the surveys. If the objective is that the audience of these surveys is wider comprising different groups such as decision-makers, politicians and media, this must be taken into account when presenting the results.

There is no need to develop further the main survey if it is targeted to researchers and members of the academia. It is also important that the full report is available if needed. But if the target is that the results of the survey are part of the decision-making and planning processes, a more client friendly version of the survey must also be available.

In the UK, the British Crime Survey has a long history and it has an important role in the decision-making process. One of the main reasons for this is that in addition to the actual study the results are published in another form for those who do not care about all details. Because of this, the audience of the survey is larger.

In Finland, the same idea has been adopted. The results of the National Victimization Survey were published in two client-friendly booklets. One of the booklets deals with the development of the volume of violence, the other one with the volume of accidents and injuries. This method should be developed further when carrying out the next survey. It would be important that other main surveys could be published in an easy-reader form.

If the audience of the surveys became larger, it might be easier to get resources that are needed to carry out the surveys regularly. This means in practice that the needs of the wider audience are recognised and taken into account. The survey must be as reliable in scientific terms as before. The only difference is that the results are presented in a form that is easy to understand among a wider audience.

## Victimisation surveys regularly in the future

The Finnish government is going to adopt the second Internal Security Programme in the spring of 2008. In the programme the term of internal security is defined as follows: Internal security means a state of society in which everyone can enjoy the safe society and rights and freedoms guaranteed by law, without justified fear or insecurity caused by crime, disturbances, accidents or phenomena and changes occurring in Finnish society or in a globalising world. To measure the results of the programme, regular victimisation surveys are needed.

The security programme contains actions that are going to be implemented in co-operation. One of the actions is to increase the co-operation and co-ordination in the area of preventing violence. According to the action, victimisation surveys should be conducted regularly in the future. This is a clear step forward to increase the importance of victimisation surveys in the decision-making process.

There are also future challenges to victimisation surveys. One is how to take into account immigrants and ethnic minorities. The immigrant population is growing rapidly in Finland. The confidence in authorities such as Police has always been very high in Finland. The most recent survey on this issue was published in April 2008. According to the survey, 94 per cent of the respondents of the survey had a very good or good confidence in the Police. It is quite obvious that this is not the case among ethnic minorities because of their different background. If the target is to increase the confidence of the immigrants in the authorities it is very important to get more information of the victimisation rate and experiences of the immigrants. Until now this information has only been collected with a separate study.

# Violence against Women in Finland. Results from Two National Victimization Surveys

Markku Heiskanen and Minna Piispa

## Introduction

Most western countries have since the beginning of the 1990s conducted dedicated violence against women surveys (Martinez & Schrötle 2006). The interest to study violence against women by means of population surveys was aroused by the awareness of the extent of partner violence. Previous information on violence against women was based on general crime victimisation surveys. By general victimisation surveys we mean surveys that ask a population sample about property crimes and violence, and violence is seen as a gender neutral crime category. It has been argued that the general victimisation surveys do not manage to capture extensively the gender specific features of women's victimization (Walby & Myhill 2001), but rather the male specific features of violence perpetrated by strangers on the streets and on public places.

In Finland, the first survey on violence against women was conducted in 1997. The aim was to yield comparable information concerning the prevalence and patterns of violence committed by men against women (Heiskanen & Piispa 1998).

In 1997, violence against women was in Finland not perceived as a severe social problem by the government, and the topic was not an issue in societal debate. During the eight years between the two surveys, many governmental programs and recommendations have been launched to reduce violence against women (Piispa & Heiskanen 2006). Also different services to support the victims have been introduced. Against this background, the government wanted to study the situation by repeating the survey on violence against women in 2005.

Similarly to general victimisation surveys, also the dedicated violence against women surveys operate on a general population level, and therefore the effects of social debates, focused actions, programs or recommendations cannot be separated in the results, and no experimental approach testing such changes was embedded in the survey design.

The main topics of the Finnish violence against women surveys are fear and precautionary means, sexual harassment and victimisation to violence as adult and in childhood. Detailed information about the context and the consequences of victimisation are asked for the most severe case. In addition to the traditional

background information also questions about family, health, hobbies, partner's control behaviour in couple relationships, alcohol use, and violence in the childhood home were asked.

In this article we consider whether the prevalence and the structure of violence against women have changed over eight years in Finland. We begin with an overview of the situation, but focus on analysing partner violence.

## Data

Both samples were drawn from the Finnish Population Register. In 2005, the sample comprised 7,213 randomly chosen women aged 18–74. Statistics Finland collected the data by a postal survey during the period 27 September 2005 – 5 February 2006. 4,464 accepted answers were received. The response rate was 62 per cent.

The mail survey has been found to be an effective data collection mode also in Sweden (Lundgren et al. 2000). In general, however, high and fluctuating non-response is one of the main problems in mail surveys. The data quality may turn out poor also because of partial non-response and inaccurate answering to the questionnaire. On one hand, the mail mode is not affected by the interviewer and may guarantee the privacy protection of the respondent. On the other hand, in violence against women surveys the role of the interviewer has been found to be even more important than in many other topics, because the interviewer functions as a sensitive link between the delicate questions of the survey and the respondent. Therefore, in many other countries, the violence against women surveys have been conducted by telephone or face-to-face, and thorough interviewer training has been emphasized (Johnson et al. 2007).

In the comparable Finnish violence against women survey carried out in 1997 the response rate was 70 per cent. The reasons for the lower response rate in the latter survey are not clear. One might be the increased length of the mail questionnaire. The new questionnaire was five pages longer than the previous one, totalling 24 pages in 2005. The increase in the length of the questionnaire was mostly due to a new layout of the questionnaire. The number of questions increased only by four, but the length in the number of pages may have given the impression of a high response burden to the respondents.

The decrease in the response rate was particularly large among young women. In 1997 the response rate of 18–24 years old women was 76 per cent.. The response rate of young women decreased by 16 percentage units from the 1997 survey.

In the end of the 1990s the topic was new in Finland, so this could explain the high response rate among young women. It seems that in 2005 young women did not find as often as in the time of the first survey the topic interesting enough to fill and return the questionnaire. Another explanation may be the chosen data collection mode; young women might have preferred

answering via Internet. In the 2005 survey the share of respondents aged 65–74 years was somewhat higher than in 1997. As a result of the changes in the response rate in different age groups, the response rate varied less across different age groups in 2005 than in the 1997 survey.

Statistics Finland was responsible of the fieldwork and data processing in both surveys. The results were weighted to correct for the sampling bias and non-response by using post-stratification. The criteria for calibration were age, marital status, native language and region.

## Definition of violence

Most topics of violent victimisation are delicate, but especially in partner violence sensitivity in asking the questions is required (Johnson 1996 & 2005; Schwartz 2000; Piispa & Heiskanen 2005). The sensitiveness of the topic and the importance of responding were mentioned in the introduction of the questionnaire in the following way:

*“We ask you to answer even if the matters dealt with may bring back painful memories. We also ask you to reply even if you feel that many of the questions have not much to do with your personal situation: all answers are important as we try to assess the relative extent of different phenomena”,*

and in the end of the questionnaire the telephone number of a helping agency (Women’s Line) was given.

The questionnaire was designed so that the experiences of violence in different contexts were asked in separate questions. The starting point for the screening questions was the woman’s relationship to the possible perpetrator, not the type of act committed. The perpetrators were classified into three main categories:

- men in current partner relationships,
- men in previous partner relationships, and
- other men (unknown and known men, but not partners).

Experiences of violence in each perpetrator group were asked both for the last twelve-months time period and for the respondent’s entire lifetime after her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. Events from many years back can be difficult to recall, and therefore the results may not always be reliable. We chose to ask about both time periods, for if only the twelve-month reference period had been used, events that may have seriously disturbed the woman’s life could perhaps not have been accounted for. Some of the dynamics of violence and repeated victimisation can also be better captured by asking about the lifetime prevalence. (See Walby 2005.)

In each perpetrator category, the violence was measured by using a series of descriptions of acts of everyday violence, from threats to more aggravated forms of physical violence including sexual violence. The list of victimisation events is modified from Finnish victimisation surveys, as well as from the Conflict Tactics Scale and violence against women surveys from other countries (Straus & Gelles 1992; see also Johnson & Sacco 1995; Johnson 1996; Heiskanen & Piispa 1998; Heiskanen 2002.)

In 1997, the question on partner violence in the Finnish survey was following:

*“Has your current partner sometimes behaved violently against you (over the last 12 months or earlier), such as:*

1. Threatened you with violence?
2. Prevented you from moving or grabbed you?
3. Slapped you?
4. Thrown a hard object at you?
5. Beaten you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you?
6. Strangled or tried to strangle you?
7. Shot at you or stabbed or cut you with an edged weapon?
8. Beaten your head against something?
9. Pressured, coerced or tried to coerce you to have sex with him?
10. Behaved violently against you in some other manner?

Violence by a stranger or an acquaintance was inquired about against a list basically similar to the one used to inquire about violence by a partner. The violence outside the relationship (non-partner violence) was dealt with first, next came the questions on violence committed by the current partner, and finally the violence by a former partner. Recollection of violent events was also made easier by grouping the questions by perpetrator category. Using a list of different forms of violence is one way of trying to make it easier to recall the violent events.

Combining unknown and known perpetrators is a problematic solution, and may lead to underestimation of the victimisations in this category. Known men differ in many respects from unknown men as possible perpetrators, the latter group feeding on the image of the danger outside the home. The group “known men” is problematic also by its composition; it covers among other things men with whom the women may have been in close relations, such as boyfriends, long-time courtships etc., who are not defined as partners. The combining of these groups was a practical decision -- the need to shorten the questionnaire -- and supported with the argument that the survey’s primary concern was violence in partner relations.

Inquiring about sexual violence in partner relationships proved problematic in the 1997 survey, because we asked about forcing, coercing or attempting to coerce to sexual intercourse in the same question. The prevalence of completed rapes could not be estimated from the data. In 2005, an additional set of screening questions were included to measure more accurately the

victimisation to sexual violence. These questions were similar as those used in the Swedish survey on violence against women (Lundgren et al. 2002):

*“We would yet like to ask more exactly about certain forms of sexual violence. Has your current partner ever (over the last 12 months or earlier):*

1. Forced you into any form of sexual activity by threatening you, holding you or hurting you in any way?
2. Tried to force you into any form of sexual activity by threatening you, holding you or hurting you in any way?
3. Forced you or tried to force you into any form of sexual activity when you were unable to refuse, e.g. because you were asleep, passed out, unconscious or fuzzy?

All perpetrator groups had in the 2005 survey the same screeners. (In 1997 the item “Prevented you from moving or grabbed you?” was not asked about “Other men”.)

## The frequency of exposure to violence

According to the 2005 survey, 43.5 percent of the women had at least once experienced a man’s physical or sexual violence or the threat of such violence after having reached 15 years of age. In the 1997 survey the corresponding share was 40 percent. Thus, there has been a small increase in Finnish women’s experience of male violence<sup>1</sup>.

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1 The new questions about sexual violence and especially the new item “Tried to prevent you from moving, grabbed or pushed you” to the questions concerning violence outside the partnership increased the lifetime prevalence to 46.7 %. The increase is mainly caused by the item measuring physical violence outside partner relationships. In comparisons, the new items are of course omitted.

**Table 1. Women aged 18-74, who have at least once been victims of men's violence or threats since the age of 15, according to type of perpetrator in 1997 and 2005 (% , the percentages are calculated of victims within each group)**

Since the age of 15	1997	2005
Women total	100.0	100.0
(n)	(4,955)	(4,464)
Victim of at least one form of violence	40.0	43.5*
Violence outside a partnership		
Total	24.4	29.1*
Threats	11.1	14.4*
Physical violence	10.4	10.6
Sexual violence and sexually threatening behaviour	16.7	21.2*
Violence in a partner relationship		
Total	22.2	19.6*
Threats	9.0	7.6
Physical violence	20.0	17.6
Sexual violence and sexually threatening behaviour	5.9	4.3*
(n = women in a partner relationship)	(3,495)	(3,172)
Violence in an ex partner relationship		
Total	49.9	49.0
Threats	33.8	31.5
Physical violence	46.1	44.7
Sexual violence and sexually threatening behaviour	18.7	17.3
(n = women with previous partnership)	(1,365)	(1,497)

\* The results between the 1997 and the 2005 surveys differ at 95 % confidence level

Women's exposure to threats, sexual violence and sexually threatening behaviour outside the partner relationship has increased, whereas physical violence in a partner relationship has remained unchanged (see Table 1).

Threats, physical violence and sexual violence in a partner relationship have slightly decreased since the 1997 study, but the decrease exceeds the confidence interval only in sexual violence. A detailed examination of the different forms of physical violence reveals that statistically significant decrease has occurred in the case of slapping, but not in other violence items.

Nearly one-half of the women who have put an end to a partner relationship have experienced different forms of violence or threats by the ex-partner. According to Table 1, the share of those women who have experienced violence at least once in their previous partnership is approximately equally large as in the previous survey. Notwithstanding, the trend for different forms of violence appears to be decreasing slightly. Almost all cases of ex-partner violence have included physical violence.

According to the 2005 survey 21 per cent of the women's most serious lifetime victimisation outside partner relationships was committed by their present or previous boyfriends. This means that every fifth victimisation outside partner relationships may have similar features as violence in partner relationships.

Over eight years, there has not been a statistically significant change in women's exposure to violence during the 12 months preceding the survey in the crime categories described in Table 2. About one woman out of nine had experienced some kind of physical or sexual violence or threats.

**Table 2. Women aged 18-74, who during the last 12 months have been victims of different forms of violence or threats, by type of perpetrator, in 1997 and 2005 (% , the percentages are calculated of victims within each group)**

During the last 12 months	1997	2005
Women total	100.0	100.0
(n)	(4,955)	(4,464)
Victim of at least one form of violence	11.3	11.6
Violence outside a partner relationship		
Total	4.5	5.3
Threats	2.2	2.9
Physical violence	1.4	1.3
Sexual violence and sexually threatening behaviour	2.3	2.8
Violence in a partner relationship		
Total	8.6	7.9
Threats	3.6	3.0
Physical violence	7.0	6.3
Sexual violence and sexually threatening behaviour	2.5	2.0
(n = women in a partner relationship)	(3,495)	(3,172)
Violence in an ex partner relationship		
Total	7.0	6.1
Threats	4.2	3.2
Physical violence	4.9	4.7
Sexual violence and sexually threatening behaviour	2.5	1.6
(n = women with previous partnership)	(1,365)	(1,497)

Because the time span between the surveys is eight years, there is reason to ask whether changes in the age structure of the population have influenced the results. Finland has an age cohort of persons born between the years 1945-49 which is unusually large compared to other age cohorts. The life and the development of this group has had a considerable influence on many societal

phenomena. However, the large age cohort is presently aging and causing more pressures to the welfare services than to the violence support services.

Adjusting the results from 2005 with the 1997 age structure does not have an impact on the results. The share of women victimised at least once after their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday increases after the age adjustment by 0.2 percentage units. Outside partner relationship settings and in the current partner relationship the share of victims increases by 0.1 percentage unit. Adjusting for age decreases violence in previous partner relationships by 0.4 percentage units.

## Violence in partner relationships

In this article we focus on violence in partner relationships, because the most distinguishing feature between general victimisation surveys and dedicated violence against women surveys is violence in close relations (Heiskanen 2002). We have further limited the scope mostly to current partner relationships, although also some comments concerning the terminated partner relationships are important.

In 2005, of 18-74 years old Finnish women 51 per cent were married and 18 per cent were cohabiting. In 1997, 55 per cent of the women were married, 16 per cent cohabiting. The share of cohabiting women has thus increased, while the share of married women has decreased. At the same time divorces have increased. Most of the couple relationships had, according to the 2005 survey lasted rather long; of married women 89 per cent and of cohabiting ones 55 per cent had lived in the partnership for five years or longer. 77 per cent of women were living in their first partnership. Cohabiting woman had more partner relationships than married women.

The proportion of widows and unmarried women has remained unchanged over the eight years between the surveys; five per cent were widowed and 17 per cent were unmarried in both years.

Table 3 shows basic facts of men's violence against women in partner relationships in different "background variable" groups of the women. The adult age lifetime prevalence is rather stable in the different age groups. Only in the oldest group, the lifetime prevalence is considerably below the average. This may be a consequence of not reporting of violence on the questionnaire.

The one-year prevalence is highest for young women, and experiences of partner violence decrease with age. Victimization of young women has increased from 1997, but the increase does not exceed the 95 per cent confidence limit. Partner violence is most common if the partnership has lasted for 2-4 years or less. Foreign studies have given similar results of young women's risk in partner relations (Lundgren et al. 2001, Schröttle & Muller 2004, Walby & Allen 2004). One reason for a low victimisation prevalence among elderly women is probably that they have separated from their violent husband.

Partner violence is more common among cohabiting partners than in married couples. The reason for this is that women living in a marriage are older than cohabiting women. The partners often marry after having been cohabiting for some time, e.g. when they have children.

Students, unemployed, and self-employed women were victims more often than the average. Table 3 shows that victimisation of women caring for their house and of those working in agriculture has increased. However, these are small population groups, and the increase does not exceed the confidence limits of the estimates. The only statistically significant change in Table 3 is the decrease of partner violence among women on maternity leave. The decrease is found both in the lifetime and the one-year prevalences.

**Table 3. Share of victims of partner violence, by the woman's age, marital status, education, social situation and duration of partner relationship. Lifetime and one-year prevalences (% of women living in partner relationship), 1997 and 2005**

	Life-time		One year	
	1997	2005	1997	2005
Age group				
Total	22.1	19.7	8.6	7.9
18-24	25.1	26.0	17.9	21.4
25-34	25.6	21.0	13.8	10.2
35-44	21.2	22.4	9.4	8.2
45-54	23.2	19.9	6.3	6.3
55-64	22.8	18.1	5.3	5.3
65-74	12.9	10.3	2.0	2.4
Marital status				
Cohabiting	27.2	23.4	15.1	11.8
Married	20.7	18.3	6.8	6.5
Education				
University	23.8	20.1	9.9	6.6
College	23.8	21.7	8.9	8.1
Vocational school	23.6	19.8	9.7	9.4
Matriculation	27.6	22.1	16.5	13.8
Secondary school or less	18.4	14.8	6.0	5.3
Socioeconomic situation				
Full time employee	22.1	20.5	9.0	7.5
Part time employee	26.3	25.8	8.5	9.2
Farming entrepreneur	14.9	17.4	3.0	8.7
Other entrepreneur	30.9	22.8	11.4	10.2
Maternity leave	27.4	16.4	12.8	6.6
Unemployed	24.8	21.4	11.1	12.7
Retired	17.5	13.5	4.5	3.5
Student	25.8	26.8	16.7	18.0
Housekeeping	14.9	19.6	6.0	13.0
Duration of partnership	23.1	20.6	8.6	7.7
Less than 2 years	21.6	16.4	14.2	11.7
2-4 years	25.9	21.5	17.9	13.7
5-10 years	23.9	23	13.8	10.1
11-20 years	24.4	22.6	8.1	6.2
21-30 years	24.5	21.1	5.9	6.1
31 – years	20.3	18.3	3.8	5.2

Also questions about the partner's background were asked in the survey. When the partner was young, student, unemployed, working part-time or had low education, the women had experienced violence more often than the average. Especially when the partner was unemployed, the women's risk was high; 23 per cent of women living with an unemployed partner had in 2005 experienced violence during the last 12 months. Compared to the 1997 result, the victimisation by unemployed partner has increased by 10 percentage units.

In the beginning of the 1990s, there was a heavy economic depression, and the unemployment rate was still high in 1997 (13 %), although the situation was improving in the end of the decade. In 2005 the unemployment rate had declined to eight per cent. Therefore the composition of the group of unemployed men has changed, and the social acceptance of being unemployed may have changed.

To sum up the discussion of factors connected with victimisation in partner relationships, we constructed two models from the 2005 data to describe the factors that explain variations in victimisation to partner violence. In the first model (Table 4, Model 1), we wanted to know whether different family structure variables are associated with victimisation. These variables were, in addition to the age of the woman (age here describes the phase of life of the woman. The woman's age is quite similar to the partner's age: in 80 per cent of Finnish couple relationships, the age difference of the partners is at most 5 years), duration of the partnership, marital status (cohabiting/married), the number of partner relationships, and the family situation (cohabiting, with children under 7 years; cohabiting, with children older than 7 years; cohabiting, no children; and the same subcategories for married couples). These variables have been found to be connected with partner violence in previous studies (Heiskanen & Piispa 1998; Häll 1995; Johnson 1996).

Although these family structure variables had very low explanatory power in both data sets, and the correlation between age and duration of partner relationship is high ( $r > 0.7$  in both data sets), the results offer possibilities for interesting interpretations (Table 4). The family situation and the number of the partner relationships were not connected with victimisation to partner violence. After controlling for the variables in the model, young women had during their partner relationship been four times more often victims of partner violence compared to the oldest age group. This result seems contradictory because the experiences of victimisation are cumulative for the whole duration of the marriage. Victimisation should not decrease by age. However, if violent partner relationships have ended, the previous husbands are classified as ex-partners. This fact is supported by the result that in partner relationships that have lasted for a short time, there is less violence if the age of the respondent is controlled for. On the other hand, after the duration of the partner relationship exceeds 10 years, the victimisation rate seems to be rather stable. In partner relationships where couples were cohabiting, the violence is more common than in married couples. The young age of the woman and cohabiting have been found to be risk factors for partner violence also in other studies (Lundgren et al. 2002; Schröttle & Muller 2004; Walby & Allen 2004).

The family structure variables did not explain very much of the variations of partner violence. The reason for this is probably the fact that significant changes in Finnish couple relationships did occur before the end of the 1990s. In 1950, the proportion of the family population was 86 per cent. In 1997, 79 per cent of women between ages 18 and 74, were living in families. The proportion of women living in families has decreased slowly; in 2005, 76 per

cent of the Finnish female population aged 18—74 years lived in families. (Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2006.)

The survey data from 2005 show that, compared to 1997, the amount of women cohabiting and women divorced has increased. 18 per cent out of all women were cohabiting (16 per cent in 1997). 10 per cent of all women were divorced in 2005 (8 per cent in 1997). The share of women living in a marriage has decreased (from 55 per cent in 1997 to 51 per cent in 2005).

Finnish women are today older than before when they get married for the first time. In the beginning of the 2000s (2001-2003 annual mean), women were on the average 29.3 years old when they were married for the first time. This was about six years more than in the 1960s (Jallinoja 2000, 63—79; Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2006).

In order to examine more broadly the factors connected with victimisation to partner violence, we constructed a model in which also other aspects of victimisation besides the family structure were taken into account, such as men's use of control in partner relationships (e.g. Dobash & Dobash 1992), the woman's and her partner's life situation (e.g. education, unemployment), lifestyle (e.g. alcohol intoxication) and social role learning (Johnson 1996; Lundgren et al. 2002; Stuart et al. 2002). The results for both surveys are shown in Table 4 (Model 2).

**Table 4. Two logit-models describing factors connected with the life-time victimisation for partner violence (n=3,172)**

<b>Model 1, 2005</b>		
	Exp(B)	Sig.
Duration of partner relationship		0.017
Less than 2 years	0.32	0.000
2-4 years	0.492	0.007
5-10 years	0.603	0.030
11-20 years	0.687	0.073
21-30 years	0.751	0.132
30 – years	1	
Age		0.001
18-24	4.102	0.000
25-34	3.386	0.000
35-44	3.197	0.000
45-54	2.611	0.000
55-64	1.931	0.003
65-74	1	
Marital status		
Cohabiting	1.45	0.004
Married	1	
Constant	0.132	0.000
Nagelkerke R Square		0.024
<b>Model 2, 2005</b>		
	Exp(B)	Sig.
Partner's controlling behaviour		0.000
4-9 forms	27.48	0.000
3 forms	20.13	0.000
2 forms	8.141	0.000
1 form	4.094	0.000
No controlling	1	
Partner's father violent		0.000
Yes	2.084	0.000
No	1	
Partner's intoxication		0.001
No data	1.577	0.400
At least once a week	3.192	0.000
1-2 times / month	1.633	0.015
1 time / every 2 month	1.485	0.094
A few times during a year	1.32	0.142
Not during last 12 months	1.322	0.228
Never	1	
Victim of violence during childhood		0.000

<b>Table 4 continued</b>	Exp(B)	Sig.
Yes	2,326	0,000
No	1	
Woman's father violent against mother		0,022
Yes	1,339	0,022
No	1	
Woman's education		0,003
University degree	1,796	0,003
Vocational college	1,709	0,001
Vocational school	1,162	0,425
Matriculation examination	1,593	0,066
None of these	1	
Constant	0,105	0,000
Nagelkerke R Square		0,313

The model shows that violence in partner relationships is strongly connected with the partner's controlling behavior. In 2005, the influence of the partner's controlling behavior was even stronger than in 1997; this may be due to the over-representation of young women in the 1997 sample<sup>2</sup>. For young women, the partner's controlling behavior had a weaker connection with victimisation. The results show also that the risk of victimisation increases steadily when the partner is using several forms of control.

Model 2 contains two additional variables that describe the situation of the woman's partner. In both data, the woman's risk of partner violence is doubled when the partner's father has been violent against his spouse or other family members. The partner's frequent alcohol use resulting in intoxication increases the woman's risk for victimisation.

Being exposed to violence during her childhood and her father's violence against her mother in her childhood increases the women's lifetime victimisation. However, the father's violence against the mother seems to have only a quite weak influence on the woman's victimisation to partner violence. The woman's higher education seems to increase victimisation slightly.

The correlation between the woman's and her partner's alcohol consumption is rather high (0.420,  $p=0.000$ ). This means according to Holmila's (1993) research that heavy drinking women have often heavy drinking partners. Although women in Finland in the 2000s drink slightly more than ten years ago (Simpura & Karlsson 2001), Holmila's finding may still be valid. The woman's frequent alcohol use resulting in intoxication increases somewhat her risk of exposure to partner violence, but when her partner's alcohol use is taken into consideration, the woman's alcohol use is not any more connected with her victimisation (the variable is dropped from the

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<sup>2</sup> Weighting coefficients were not used in the models.

model). Already the man's intoxication once or twice a month increases his partner's risk of victimisation to partner violence.

Considering the variables that were not included in the model (selection criteria  $p > 0.05$ ), we find that all the household structure variables and even age, were excluded. The man's and the woman's education, the form of relationship (cohabiting, married) or the unemployment of the partner were not associated with victimisation to partner violence. One reason why unemployment was not associated with victimisation could be that the economic situation in Finland has in the 2000s been good, and in the 2005 survey only two per cent of all men having a partner relationship were unemployed.

## Consequences of partner violence

It is difficult to assess the consequences of violence. Injuries are one indicator of the seriousness of violence. However, even the violence recorded by the police does not always contain visible injuries<sup>3</sup>. Therefore we discuss here also the psychological consequences of partner violence and the controlling behaviour of the partner. Controlling behaviour is not a similar effect of violence as injuries and psychological consequences, and also non-violent men can exercise controlling behaviour. We have nevertheless used it as one indicator of consequences, because it increases the total burden of victimisation.

Almost 40 per cent of women did not report any physical or psychological consequences of their most serious partner violence incident. Minor injuries may be forgotten or women did not remember the details; the argument is supported by the observation that nearly 30 per cent of victims did not respond to the question of injuries – they are calculated as having no injuries.

In about 40 per cent of the most severe partner violence incidents, physical injury followed (Table 5). The injuries were most often bruises and wounds. Although also more severe injuries such as bone fractures existed, they were uncommon. The number of bruises and wounds have somewhat decreased from 1997.

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<sup>3</sup> In 2005, in 70 % of petty assaults, in 23 % of assaults and in 4 % of major assaults, no physical injuries incurred (Rikollisuustilanne 2006). It is of course possible that police do not record minor injuries in all cases.

**Table 5. Consequences of the most severe partner violence incident (current partner), %**

	1997	2005
Physical injury	42.3	37.7
Psychological consequences	62.7	58.8
Physical & psychological consequences	39.5	35.4
Physical & psychological consequences & controlling behaviour	26.0	23.7
n	778	599

Psychological consequences of violence comprised fear, shame, feeling of guilt, hatred, depression, numbness, loss of self-esteem, sleeping difficulties and nightmares, concentration difficulties, difficulties in relation to men, difficulties in gynaecological examinations and difficulties in work or in studies. These were more common than physical injuries. The share of victims who suffered from physical or psychological consequences was 66 and 61 per cent respectively. This means that nearly all women suffering from physical injuries suffered also from psychological consequences.

In 2005, more than one-third of the women living in a partner relationship suffered from both physical and at least one psychological consequence of partner violence.

Taking into account the controlling behaviour of the partner, about one-fourth of women who had been victims in partner relationships had experiences of all of these three types of violence. Controlling behaviour of partner was measured by nine assertions (e.g. he is jealous and doesn't want me to speak with other men, he tries to restrict my seeing of my friends or relatives, he demands to know where I am and with whom, and when I am going to return, he calls me by names in order to subdue me or to humiliate me). Over one-half of victims reported controlling behaviour by their partner (57 % vs. 54 %, the corresponding figures for non-victims were 19 % and 14 %).

## Violence and help-seeking

Women, who have suffered from violence in their partner relationship can get informal and formal social support to deal with violence.

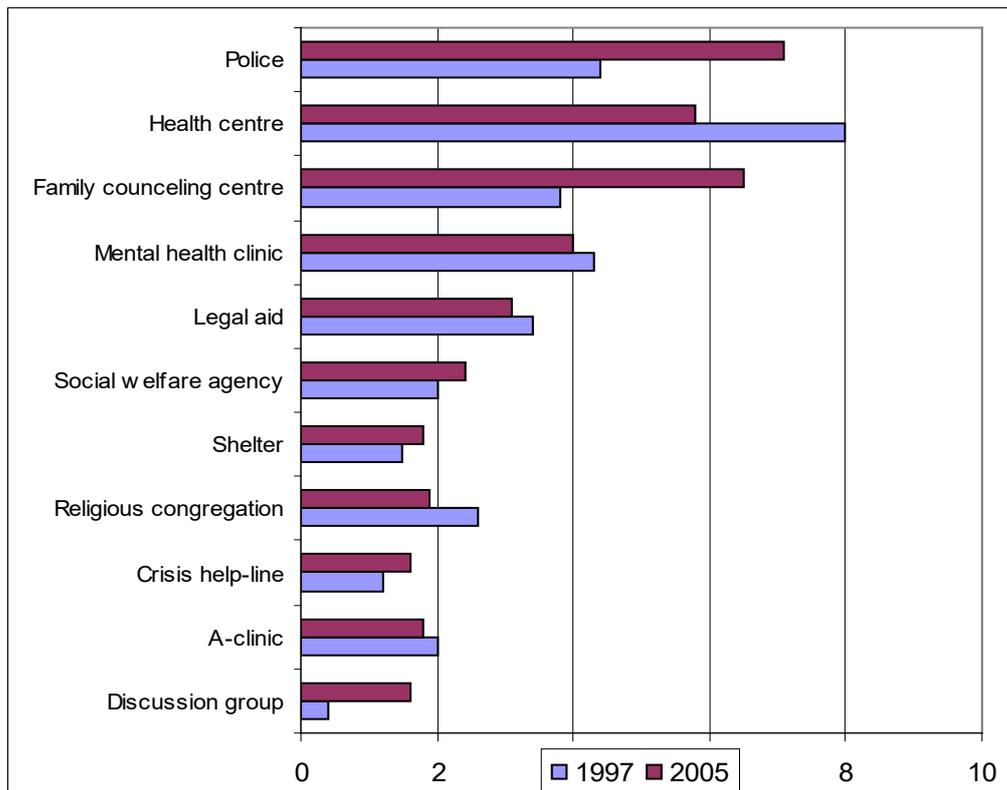
Here, informal social support means the kind of support a person receives in her close community, from others than public authorities. Informal social support is generally provided by the family, relatives, friends, colleagues and the near-by community.

Different service agencies offer formal social support to victims of violence. Central among them are, in the present context, at least the police and many social and health service providers.

Women who have become victims of violence usually rely on informal social support: more than half of the respondents who had experienced partner violence said that they had talked about the violence with a close friend, family member or other close person (58 % in 2005 and 52 % in 1997,  $p < 0,0001$ ). Informal social support has many positive effects on the quality of women's life and may have an empowerment effect (Goodkind et al. 2003).

To resort to official support and help is considerably less common than relying on informal support. One-fifth of the victims said that they had sought help from some official body in partner violence cases. Women are seeking help more often if the violence has lasted for a long time. Women, who had suffered from violence which had started at least seven years ago and was continuing, had sought help from official agencies twice as often (42 %) as women whose violence had lasted for a shorter period (22 %).

When official help is sought, it is most frequently sought from the police and health service providers (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Agency where women had sought help because of partner violence (% of those who had experienced partner violence)**

The study indicated that it has become somewhat more common to rely on official help and treatment in partner violence cases in general. This means that seeking help through official agencies has increased in cases of violence by former partners. According to the new research material, 31 percent of those who had sometimes experienced partner violence had sought help from some agency, whereas the percentage was 26 in 1997.

There are several reasons for this. First, it might be that the threshold for seeking support has become lower. During past years, more public attention has been paid to partner violence than before, and women have become increasingly aware of their position as victims of violence. Second, this could be explained by an increased availability of treatment and support.

## Violence in previous relationships

As discussed earlier, the share of relationships where the partner was violent was larger in previous than in current relationship. The proportion of victims in previous relationships had in 2005 remained on the same level as in the 1997 survey; nearly one-half of the women having put an end to a relationship had been victims of this kind of violence.

However, considering only the share of victims in previous relationships may lead to biased conclusions about the extent of the violence, if the overall amount of women having previous relationships has changed. In the 2005 survey, the amount of women who had experienced violence or threats by their previous partners, was 27 per cent higher (69,500 women) compared to the 1997 survey. This is because the number of women who had previous partners has increased, along with the increase of divorced women (both marriages and cohabiting), from 515,000 to 665,000 women in eight years. In Finland, there have been annually approximately 13,000 divorces, and over 30,000 women separating from cohabiting relationships, which has increased the amount of women with experience of previous relationships (StatFin 2006).

The increasing amount of previous partner relationships has increased the women's total victimisation burden. Of all women aged 18-74 years, 18 per cent had according to the 2005 survey experienced at least once violence or threats by a previous partner, while the corresponding figure in the 1997 survey was 14 per cent. When adding all the women who have experienced violence in their relationships, whether current or previous, the share of victims out of women who are or have been living in a partner relationship is the same in both research years (31.5 % in 1997, 31.6 % in 2005). The decrease in violence in current partner relationships is balanced by an increase of violence in previous partner relationships, because many women who have previous partners also have a current partner.

When considering the previous partner relationship, information about the victim and the perpetrator is in many cases not up-to-date. The divorce or moving apart may have occurred many years ago, and the characteristics of the

victim or the perpetrator during the data collection may differ from those at the moment of the violent incidents. Therefore we did not ask in the survey detailed information about the perpetrator in previous partnerships.

Here, we analysed how the age of the victim at the time of the divorce or moving apart and the duration of the previous partner relationship varied in the two research datasets. Again, violence was more prevalent in partner relationships that had lasted for two to ten years. This is the same trend which was seen in current partner relationships and a reason for this might be that women tend to divorce in that phase of a relationship. The average duration of previous partnerships with a violent partner had increased a little, from 9.5 years in 1997 to 10.2 years in 2005 ( $p= 0.0223$ ). The women divorced or separated from their violent partners were about one year older in 2005 (33.3 years) than in 1997 (31.9 years,  $p= 0.0027$ ).

## Reporting to the police

About 10 per cent of partner violence and violence outside the partner relationship were reported to the police. It is known that police statistics are not a reliable source for describing the extent of violence against women, in particular violence in partner relationships. The willingness to report depends on several factors, such as the severity of the incident and how close the victim is to the perpetrator. Cases in which the assailant is unknown to the victim are more likely to be reported to the police, compared to cases where the violent person is close to the victim (Kelly 1988; Heiskanen & Piispa 1998; Niemi 1985).

According to the police statistics, family and partner violence have increased steadily; partner violence against women has increased by 38 per cent from 1997 to 2005, and family violence by 47 per cent (Yearbook of Justice Statistics 2006). The number of assaults reported to the police has increased in general, both for women and for men. This may be due to the increase of this kind of violence, but it may also reflect an increase in the reporting activity and in working practices of the police. The policemen are at present better trained on how to act in partner violence cases, which produces more incidents into the crime statistics. A reform of the criminal law in 2004 restricted the right of the victim to withdraw the charge in assault offences to petty assaults only; this can be expected to increase the number of recorded assaults in the police statistics in the future.

## Lethal violence against women

Lethal violence against women is a severe problem in Finland. During 2000-2004, an average of 1.6 women per 100,000 Finnish women died from

violence. The corresponding figure for other Western European countries is considerably lower (e.g. in Ireland 0.3, in Spain, Italy and the UK 0.5, in France and Iceland 0.6, in Sweden, Norway, Germany, Portugal and the Netherlands 0.7, and in Denmark and Austria 1.0. (European Health for All Database 2006.)

On average nearly one-half (47 %) of the lethal violence against women was defined as partner violence in the causes of death statistics in the years 1996-2004.

It is not clear why lethal violence against women – and lethal violence in general – is more common in Finland<sup>4</sup> than in other Western European countries. Men's heavy alcohol consumption and the marginalisation of certain population groups have been considered to be factors that contribute to violent behaviour (Lehti & Kivivuori 2006).

The trend in violence resulting in death has, however, been decreasing in Finland. In 1990—1994, the annual average number of female deaths was 49, but in 2000—2004 only 39. Factors explaining the decrease may be the aging of the Finnish population and the improvement of living conditions. Lehti and Kivivuori (2006) state that violent deaths have at the same time slightly increased in other European countries, partly because of the increase of immigrant populations.

## Discussion

Finland had to manage with its first (1997) victimisation survey for eight years before updated information was available. This is a long time. However, not even the eight year period seems to reveal major changes in the results. The one-year victimisation prevalence in different perpetrator groups is very similar in both surveys.

The lifetime prevalence of men's violence against women in Finland is high, and it has increased since 1997. The increase comes from threats and sexually threatening behaviour outside partnership settings. On the other hand, violence in current partner relationships seems to have slightly decreased, in particular sexual violence.<sup>5</sup>

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4 According to the most recent international victimisation survey, the difference in assaults and threats between Finland and other Western countries is not large (Van Dijk et al. 2007).

5 The lifetime prevalence is a complicated tool for time series studies although it is an important means for estimating victimisation and its consequences for a longer time period. For instance in our survey the violent incidents reported from a longer time period than eight years, are in principle covered in both surveys, and this may cause a delay in the signs of changes. In our survey it was not possible to cut an eight year period from the data in a comparable way because of changes in the questionnaire.

One reason behind the decrease in partner violence could be the increased violence prevention work, campaigns against partner violence and the development of helping agencies for victims. This might be expected to have increased women's consciousness of violence and made it easier to discuss violence in public with authorities and acquaintances. As a consequence of this kind of development the victimisation prevalence could have on the contrary increased because of increased reporting. Although violence in partnerships has not increased in the long run, seeking for help has increased. This can be an outcome of increased awareness and consciousness of partner violence, together with an improved availability of helping services.

Violence in previous partner relationships is common; every second woman who had put an end to a relationship had experienced at least one form of violence or threats. The situation seems rather stable when the results are adjusted to the group of women who have at least one past relationship. However, the number of women who have past relationship has increased during eight years in Finland, and therefore the amount of victims has increased although the proportion of women who have been victims has not changed.

The results of the new survey reinforce the picture of partnership violence; partner violence against women appears to be associated with men's use of power and control over women and is more related to the characteristics of men than those of women. In the results of the new survey, the impact of men's controlling behaviour on women's victimisation is even more visible than in the 1997 survey. Age-adjusting the results showed that the differences in the age structure of the respondents (the population grows older) do not explain the small decrease in the prevalence of partner violence. Neither is it explained by the structure of the couple relationships. Social institutions have in many western countries been rather stable for decades. The largest recent changes in the contents of the couple relationships and sexuality have occurred in Finland in the 1960s and 1970s. Even though the role of the family is diminishing, it still has a powerful role in people's values. Therefore it is not a surprise that partnership violence has not changed considerably over the eight years between the two Finnish surveys. Considering the one year prevalence of previous and present partner violence, as well as violence outside the partner relationship, there have not been statistically significant changes in threats, physical violence and sexual violence. Some comments concerning the results are yet needed.

We constructed two statistical models of the survey data. In the first model we used certain family structure variables to explain differences in partner violence. The young age of the victim, the duration of the partner relationship, and marital status (cohabiting vs. married) explain some of the variations in victimisation, but the explanatory power of this model is very low. When the partner's intoxication and controlling behaviour and the woman's and her partner's experiences of violence in their childhood are included, the model becomes more efficient. This means that certain behavioural features of the

male partner should be taken into account in the early phase of the relationship to prevent the violence from bursting out.

In the future, the termination phase of partnerships presents a new challenge to the prevention of violence. Violence and especially threats and controlling behaviour often continue and even increase after separation. Men use control and threats after separation also in situations where couples are negotiating about the custody and meeting arrangements of the children (Ekbrand 2006.) This may in the future be an issue that affects a growing number of women.

The continuum of partner violence is also relevant before the partner relationship. One-fifth of women's victimisations that were experienced outside the partner relationship, were caused by their boy- or male friends. The prevention of partner violence should thus begin at a very early stage – already at schools.

Causes of death statistics show that violent causes of deaths in partner relationships are more common in Finland than in other Western European countries. The positive tendency seems to be a slightly decreasing trend in homicides. Violent deaths are often connected with the perpetrator's alcohol use. The increase in alcohol consumption in Finland may in the future become a risk factor regarding the increase of different forms of violence.

The prevalence of partner violence against women has in the dedicated surveys been considerable higher compared to the general crime victimisation surveys in Finland. This has led to discussion between the researchers how well different ways to ask about victimisation are able to describe the phenomenon. In our view, the survey questioning method, in which the perpetrator group is first clearly identified, and after this questions about the details of the incidents are asked, is more effective in revealing partnership violence compared to the method used in the general victimisation surveys that uses the incident as a starting point and therefore may miss certain intimate features of violence (see also Schrötle & Martinez 2006).

As a conclusion we state that violence against women continues to be common in Finland, and the prevention work has still a long way in front of it. In eight years, violence and threats over all have not decreased. New dangers may be caused by the increased used of alcohol, marginalisation in different forms and the emerging differences between different cultures in Finland.

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# The New Italian Violence against Women Survey

Maria Giuseppina Muratore and Isabella Corazziari <sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Violence against women and, in particular, domestic violence, represents a widespread and complex phenomenon very difficult to study; yet it is essential to measure and analyse violence to develop, at institutional level, policies and services aimed to face them.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, statistical institutes have studied violence with victimization surveys, collecting information about many kinds of crime, from theft to robbery and so on. In Italy Istat dealt with victimisation to sexual harassment and violence, by developing a specific module inserted in the multi purpose survey on citizens' safety (editions 1997-1998 and 2002).

The violence module within the victimization surveys was intended to describe crimes that are not reported, and some of their important features such as characteristics of victims and of the events. The two surveys represented a useful tool to study and understand the dark figure of crime. Nevertheless, they are not enough to detect kinds of violence the victim suffers by someone who is very close to her, for example the *partner* or *ex-partner*, that is *domestic violence*.

On the basis of the above considerations, the Equal Opportunity Department c/o the Ministries' Assembly Presidency and Istat entered an Agreement in 2001 to realize an *ad hoc* survey about domestic violence, whose main aim is to gain knowledge about violence against women in Italy, in terms of prevalence and incidence, characteristics of anyone involved and consequences for the victims.

The survey is quite complex, and a long design period was needed (since 2002), with focus groups, qualitative studies, experts interviews, pre-test and pilot surveys, before the final version of the questionnaire was defined and the most suitable methodology to collect information in the Italian context was found. Nine focus group sessions were conducted, with operators of women's shelters, victims of violence, interviewers and other women aged 18-70, not included in the above categories.

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The design of the survey addressed on one hand the possibility to define and better understand some contents to be analysed, such as psychological violence, economic violence, risk factors, consequences of violence, the social context and violence stereotypes, and on the other hand some methodological aspects such as questionnaire design and *wording*, the best way to approach the woman, interviewer characteristics, their training, the monitoring of the process quality and the context of the interview.

During this planning phase, Italy participated in the IVAWS Project (test 2002), but the analysis of the Italian context (2002-2004), carried out through the qualitative phase (2002-2004) and the pilot survey (2004), caused a redefinition of the survey, the final version of which was implemented in 2006.

## The survey methodology

The survey was made by telephone with the aid of computers (CATI), from January to October 2006, using a sample of 25,000 women.

The extremely sensitive subject required particular care to be taken with respect to all phases of the process. Interviews were scheduled all day long, so as to give the woman the possibility to choose the best time of the day for the interview.

Much care has been given to the women's safety, from the first to the last contact. Women had the possibility to interrupt the interview at any time, they could be contacted on their mobile telephone, they could verify the authenticity of the call and of the survey by calling the toll free number provided, and if they asked for it they could obtain information about addresses and phone numbers of the women's shelter that was closest to them.

Particular care was taken when selecting and training interviewers. The training consisted of lectures, exercises, role-playing (where participants, simulating interviewers and interviewee, simulate conditions similar to the actual ones). A specific psychological aid was provided to interviewers both during the training and during the data collection phase.

## The questionnaire

To collect data about the volume of *physical and sexual violence* the respondent has suffered during the reference period, a particular technique was used, called *screening technique*. This technique consists of asking the respondent a set of questions about the kind and the number of violent events she has suffered during a specific period of time, without asking about details at the moment.

The questions are formulated as describing examples, victimisation events in which the interviewed woman can recognise her own experiences. The methodological choice shared with other international surveys was to avoid the terms “physical violence” or “sexual violence”, preferring to describe concretely acts and/or behaviours in order to help women to disclose their experience.

The use of many details when asking women if they have suffered violence, providing them various possible situations, places and perpetrators of violence, is a strategic choice to help victims to remember events that happened a long time ago, in this way decreasing the risk of underestimating the phenomenon. An underestimate may also be caused by the fact that women sometimes do not consider themselves as victims, and consequently they have not developed the consciousness regarding the suffered violence. In such cases they can more easily recognise single facts and episodes that actually happened.

To make women feel more comfortable to speak more easily about the suffered violence, questions about violence by non-partners (relatives, colleagues, friends, other known people, strangers) were asked first, and only after this came the questions about the current and previous partners.

Information on physical and sexual violence was collected with respect to various possible perpetrators through *three different screenings*:

- the section “*Screening of violence by a non partner male*”, is administered first to all interviewed women. Two sets of questions are asked, one about physical violence and the other about sexual violence, both by relatives, colleagues, friends, other known people, strangers;
- the section “*Screening of violence by current partner*” is administered to women who are married, or living with their partner, or boyfriend at the moment of the interview;
- finally, the section “*Screening of violence by previous partners*”, is administered to women who had been married, cohabiting or engaged more than once.

The choice of three separated *screening* is considered strategic. First because it allows women to focus more accurately and in different moments of the interview, on events and stories of violence related to different perpetrators, and second, because it makes it possible to address the topic of domestic violence more gradually, in an advanced phase of the interview, when a collaborative and trusting relationship with the interviewer is expected to be reached.

Physical violence is ranked from the less to the most serious one: the threat to be physically hit, to be pushed, grabbed or yanked, knocked with an object, slapped, kicked, punched or bitten, to be victim of an attempted strangulation, of a choking, burning and threats with weapons. Sexual violence is described as any situation in which women are forced to do or suffer sexual acts of different kinds, against their will: rape, attempted rape, sexual harassment,

sexual intercourse with a third party, undesired sexual intercourse suffered for fear of consequences, degrading and humiliating sexual activities.

Only few questions were made of violence that occurred before the age of sixteen: some on sexual violence and some on physical violence suffered or witnessed within the respondent's family of origin.

Psychological and economic violence was collected only with reference to the women's partners. More precisely, such violence was always asked when referring to the current partner if there was one, and only with reference to violent partners when asking about ex-partners. It includes a set of 20 questions regarding denigration, behaviour control, segregation strategies, intimidation, heavy financial constraints by the partner.

Data on stalking were also collected. Stalking is defined as a form of persecutory behaviours by the women's former partners (ex-husband, ex-cohabiting partner, ex-boyfriend) at the end of their relationship.

Victims of violence also provided some information regarding the most recent episode of violence (for partner and non partner violence). This section, intended to give a more in-depth view of the violence, comprised questions about the episode contextualization, the characteristics of the perpetrator, the details of the episode, the consequences of violence and victim behaviour, the relationship to police, the history of the domestic violence, including violence while the victim was pregnant, child witnesses of the violence, children as victims of violence.

## Some results

### **The volume of violence**

In Italy women suffering physical or sexual violence during their lifetime were 6,743,000, or 31.9% of all women aged 16-70. 5 million women were victims of sexual violence (23.7%), 3,961,000 women were victims of physical violence (18.8%). About 1 million women were victims of rapes or attempted rapes (4.8%). 14.3% of women in a current partner relationship or in a previous one, were victims of at least one episode of physical or sexual violence by their partner; considering only women with an ex-partner, this percentage rises to 17.3%. 24.7% of women were victims of violence by a non partner man.

While physical violence is more frequently perpetrated by partners (12% against 9.8%), the opposite is true of sexual violence (6.1% against 20.4%), and this is mainly due to sexual harassment. The difference, indeed, is almost negligible as far as rapes and attempted rapes are concerned.

**Table 1. Women aged 16 to 70 years who have suffered physical or sexual violence by men, by time of the event, type of perpetrator, and type of violence - Year 2006 (per 100 women with the same characteristics)**

	During lifetime*			Last 12 months		
	All perpetrators	Partner or ex-partner	Non-partner	All perpetrators	Partner or ex-partner	Non-partner
Physical or sexual violence	31.9	14.3	24.7	5.4	2.4	3.4
Physical violence	18.8	12	9.8	2.7	1.7	1.1
Sexual violence	23.7	6.1	20.4	3.5	1	2.6
Rape or attempted rape	4.8	2.4	2.9	0.3	0.2	0.2
Rape	2.3	1.6	0.8	0.2	0.1	0
Attempted rape	3.3	1.3	2.3	0.2	0.1	0.2

\* Violence by non partner is collected after age 16

In the last 12 months, 1,150,000 women (5.4%) were victims of violence. 3.5% of the women were victims of sexual violence and 2.7% of physical violence. 0.3%, or 74,000 women, were victims of rapes or attempted rapes. Domestic violence affected 2.4% of the women, while violence outside the domestic context reached 3.4% of them.

Furthermore, women suffered different forms of violence and violence by several perpetrators: one-third suffered both physical and sexual violence and 21% of the victims suffered violence both within the family and outside of it, 22.6% only by their own partner, 56.4% only by men other than their own partner.

The majority of the victims suffered several violence episodes. Repeated violence occurs more frequently when the abuser is a partner than when he is a non-partner (67.1% against 52.9%). The peak is reached in the case of sexual violence perpetrated by the current partner (91.1% of repeated violence).

## The perpetrators of violence

### The case of domestic violence

Analysing the perpetrator of domestic violence, it comes out that victims of physical or sexual violence by the current partner were 7.2% of the women and 17.4% by a former partner (Table 2). Rates for former partners, during lifetime, are systematically higher than those concerning the current partner, both for physical (14.6% against 5.9%) and for sexual violence (8.1% against 2.5%), also for rapes and attempted rapes (3.7 against 0.5%). Furthermore the rate of rapes or attempted rapes (2.4%) rise to 5.2% for former husbands. It should be underlined anyway, that the majority of previous partners were current partners at the moment of crime.

The victimization rates are higher for former husbands/cohabiting partners (22.4%), followed by ex-boyfriends (13.7%), husbands or current cohabiting partners (7.5%), and finally by current boyfriends (5.9%).

In the last 12 months, 2.4% of all women suffered domestic violence, 1.7% physical violence, 1% sexual violence.

**Table 2. Women between 16 and 70 years of age victims of physical or sexual violence by a partner, by perpetrator, time when the crime was perpetrated and type of violence – Year 2006 (per 100 women with the same characteristics)**

	Current partner	Ex-partner	Husband/cohabitant	Boyfriend	Ex-husband/ex-cohabitant	Ex-boyfriend	Total partner violence
<b>DURING LIFETIME</b>							
Physical or sexual violence	7.2	17.4	7.5	5.9	22.4	13.7	14.3
Physical violence	5.9	14.6	6.2	4.5	20.5	10.8	12
Sexual violence	2.5	8.1	2.6	2	10.7	6.1	6.1
Rape or attempted rape	0.5	3.7	0.6	0.1	5.2	2.6	2.4
Rape	0.4	2.4	0.5	0	4.2	1.5	1.6
Attempted rape	0.3	2	0.3	0.1	2.5	1.6	1.3
<b>Total victims of violence (in thousands)</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>1,921</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>2,938</b>
<b>LAST 12 MONTHS</b>							
Physical or sexual violence	2.3	1.1	1.9	3.8	0.9	1.1	2.4
Physical violence	1.5	0.9	1.3	2.6	0.8	0.9	1.7
Sexual violence	1.0	0.4	0.9	1.3	0.4	0.4	1.0
<b>Total victims of violence (in thousands)</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>499</b>

### The case of non-partner violence

Considering non-partner violence the more widespread form of violence is the sexual one. The perpetrator, considering both physical and sexual violence (table 3) is first of all an unknown person (the corresponding victimisation rate is 15.3%), at the second place acquaintances or someone who the woman knew by sight (6.3%), followed by friends 3%, colleagues 2.6%, relatives 2.1%. But considering the different kinds of violence separately, only 37.3% of all cases of physical violence were caused by an unknown person against 65.6% (table 4) of sexual violence (above all due to sexual harassment). For rapes or attempted rapes, violence by unknown persons decreases to 23.1%, that is to say that the perpetrators of more serious forms of sexual abuse have been persons with whom the women are in some relation, first of all acquaintances (42.9%), followed by friends (15.9%), colleagues (10.0%), relatives (6.7%).

**Table 3. Women between 16 and 70 years of age victims of physical or sexual violence by a non-partner, by type of violence suffered, period and type of perpetrator - Year 2006 (per 100 women with the same characteristics)**

PERPETRATORS	PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE		PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE WITHOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT		PHYSICAL VIOLENCE		SEXUAL VIOLENCE		SEXUAL HARASSMENT		RAPE OR ATTEMPTED RAPE	
	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months
	Known person	12.8	1.6	8.4	0.9	6.7	0.8	8.5	0.9	6.7	0.9	2.3
<i>A relative</i>	2.1	0.2	1.9	0.2	1.7	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0
<i>An acquaintance</i>	6.3	0.7	3.7	0.3	2.6	0.3	4.3	0.5	3.3	0.4	1.2	0.1
<i>A friend</i>	3.0	0.4	2.1	0.3	1.6	0.2	1.7	0.3	1.1	0.2	0.5	0.1
<i>A family friend</i>	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	.
<i>Work colleague</i>	2.6	0.3	1.1	0.1	0.8	0.1	2.1	0.2	1.8	0.2	0.3	0.0
<i>Does not specify</i>	0.5	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Unknown man	15.3	2.0	4.2	0.4	3.6	0.4	13.4	1.7	12.9	1.7	0.7	.
<b>Non-partner</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>0.2</b>

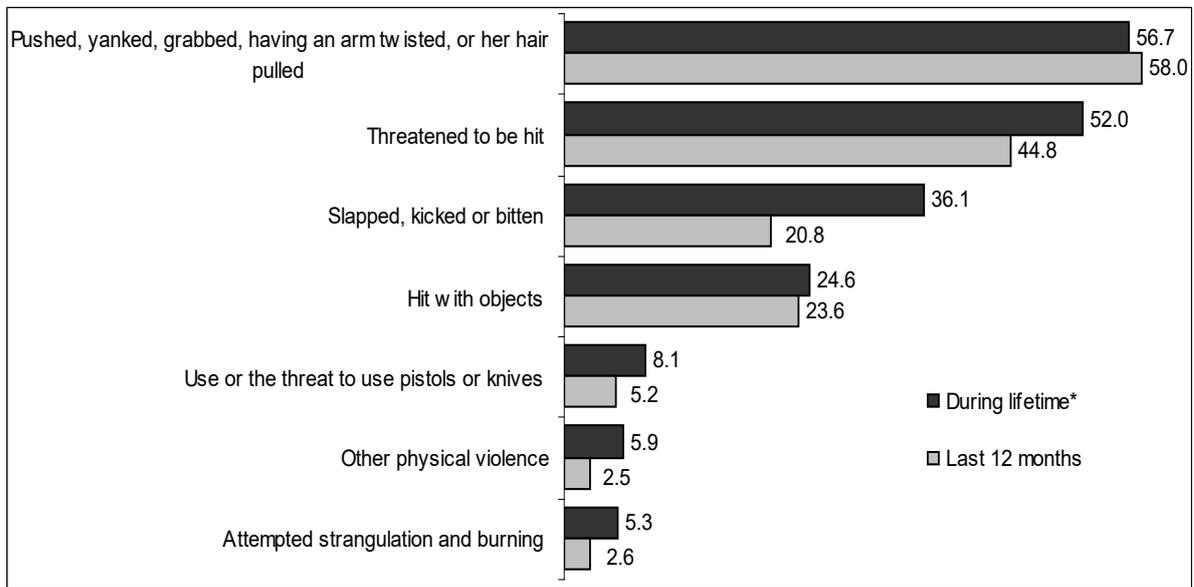
**Table 4. Women between 16 and 70 years of age victims of physical or sexual violence by a non-partner, by type of violence, period and type of perpetrator - Year 2006 (per 100 victims with the same characteristics)**

PERPETRATORS	PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE		PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE WITHOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT		PHYSICAL VIOLENCE		SEXUAL VIOLENCE		SEXUAL HARASSMENT		RAPE OR ATTEMPTED RAPE	
	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months	Since 16 year-old	Last 12 months
	Known person	51.9	46.6	71.8	71.9	68.5	69.6	41.5	36.2	35.4	35.2	77.9
<i>A relative</i>	8.5	6.6	16.3	16.1	17.3	18.0	2.6	0.9	1.6	1.0	6.7	2.8
<i>An acquaintance</i>	25.4	20.9	31.7	25.8	27.1	23.2	21.2	18.7	17.3	17.6	42.9	42.4
<i>A friend</i>	12.2	12.5	18.2	20.0	16.1	17.1	8.4	10.4	6.0	9.8	15.9	36.1
<i>A family friend</i>	1.6	0.8	1.7	0.3	1.5	0.3	1.4	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.9	.
<i>Work colleague</i>	10.6	7.6	9.1	9.1	7.9	9.7	10.4	7.0	9.7	7.0	10.0	1.3
<i>Does not specify</i>	2.0	1.0	3.6	2.2	3.5	2.5	0.9	0.3	0.5	0.3	2.5	.
Unknown man	62.0	58.3	35.6	30.1	37.3	31.8	65.6	66.4	68.3	67.5	23.1	17.4
<b>Non-partner (in thousands)</b>	<b>5,221</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>2,457</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>2,062</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>4,305</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>3,981</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>37</b>

Before their sixteenth birthday, 6.6% of all women have been sexually abused and the same framework for non-partner violence is present. The perpetrator of violence, in fact, is a relative in 23.8%, another known person in 24.7% and an unknown man for 24.8% of all victims.

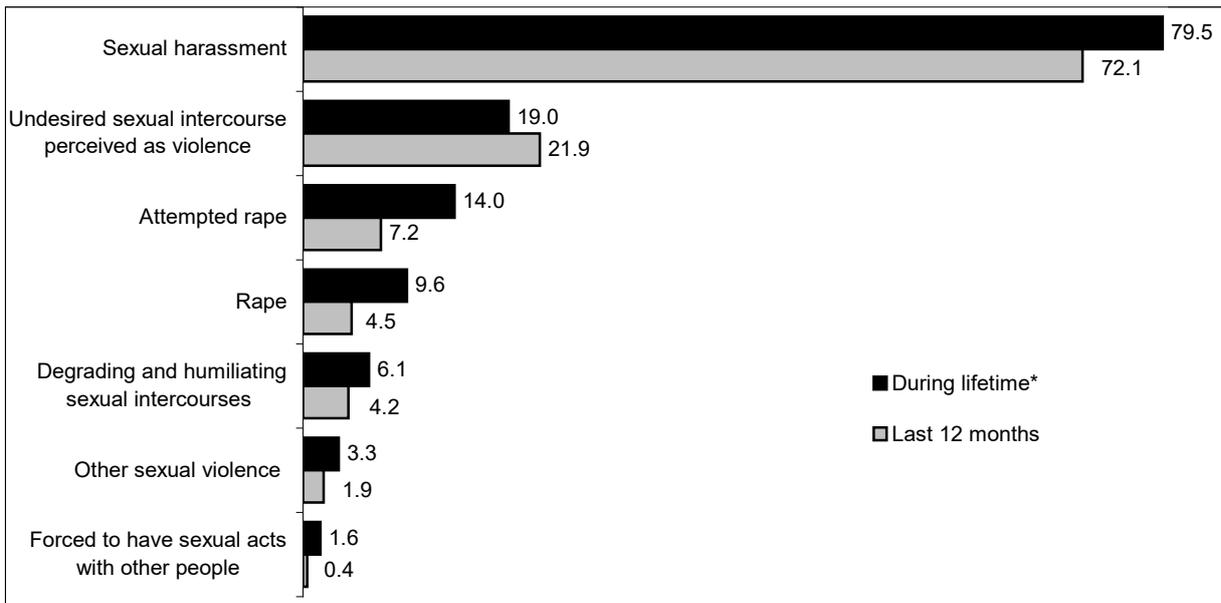
### The different forms of violence

Among all the physical forms of violence covered in the questionnaire (Fig.1), the most frequent ones are being pushed, yanked and grabbed, having an arm twisted or her hair pulled (56.7%), being threatened to be hit (52.0%), slapped, kicked or bitten (36.1%). Next come the use or the threat to use a pistol or knives (8.1%) or attempted strangulation or choking and burning (5.3%). Among all forms of sexual violence (Fig.2), the most common is physical harassment, that is being sexually touched against one's own will (79.5%), undesired sexual intercourse perceived as violence (19.0%), attempted rape (14.0%), rape (9.6%) and degrading and humiliating sexual intercourse (6.1%).



\* Violence by non-partner are collected by age 16th

**Figure 1. Women aged 16 to 70, victims of physical violence by a man, by time and type of suffered violence – Year 2006 (per 100 women victims of physical violence)**



\* Violence by non-partner are collected by age 16th

**Figure 2. Women aged 16 to 70 victims of sexual violence by a man, by time and type of suffered violence – Year 2006 (per 100 women victims of sexual violence)**

Contrary to common stereotypes, partners are responsible for the most part of rapes (69.7%), 17.4% were perpetrated by an acquaintance and only 6.2% by an unknown man.

The partner is responsible also for the most of undesired sexual intercourses, suffered for fear of consequences and more serious forms of physical violence (table 5).

**Table 5. Women aged 16 to 70 victims of physical or sexual violence during their lifetime\*\* by perpetrator and type of violence – Year 2006 (percentage distribution)**

TYPE OF VIOLENCE	PARTNER			NON PARTNER							Total*
	Current or ex-partner	Current partner	Ex-partner	Unknown man	Acquaintance	Colleague	Friend	Relative	Family friend	Not specified	
Pushed, yanked, grabbed, having an arm twisted, or her hair pulled	69.9	25.3	47.2	13.8	8.3	2.5	6.8	6.3	0.4	0.9	100.0
Threatened to be hit	58.4	17.7	42.0	18.5	14.7	3.9	4.7	7.1	0.9	1.8	100.0
Slapped, kicked or bitten	82.5	27.1	57.0	4.5	4.4	0.7	3.5	8.5	0.2	0.7	100.0
Hit with objects	64.1	24.3	40.4	8.0	9.6	3.5	7.1	9.9	0.1	2.0	100.0
Use or the threat to use pistols or knives	52.5	8.4	44.6	24.3	11.6	4.5	2.2	7.0	.	0.7	100.0
Attempted strangulation and burning	78.0	16.5	61.4	6.5	5.0	0.3	2.7	8.8	.	1.9	100.0
Other physical violence	41.4	7.2	34.2	21.1	15.7	6.3	5.7	6.5	1.4	4.1	100.0
Undesired sexual intercourse perceived as violence	93.6	44.5	71.6	0.5	2.0	0.2	3.9	1.5	0.0	0.5	100.0
Rape	69.7	14.3	55.5	6.2	17.4	1.5	7.2	1.5	0.8	1.2	100.0
Degrading and humiliating sexual intercourse	100.0	24.1	76.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0
Attempted rape	37.9	6.0	32.0	16.4	27.4	7.9	9.5	5.0	1.2	1.3	100.0
Other sexual violence	40.1	3.4	36.9	33.1	12.4	4.4	7.6	3.8	1.5	0.2	100.0
Forced to have sexual acts with other people	49.8	3.9	45.9	3.0	34.8	13.8	3.7	4.1	2.7	.	100.0
Sexual harassment	-	-	-	68.3	17.3	9.7	6.0	1.6	1.2	0.5	100.0

\* The sum of rates can be more than 100 as the woman can have suffered more than one type of violence

\*\* Violence by non-partner is collected after age 16

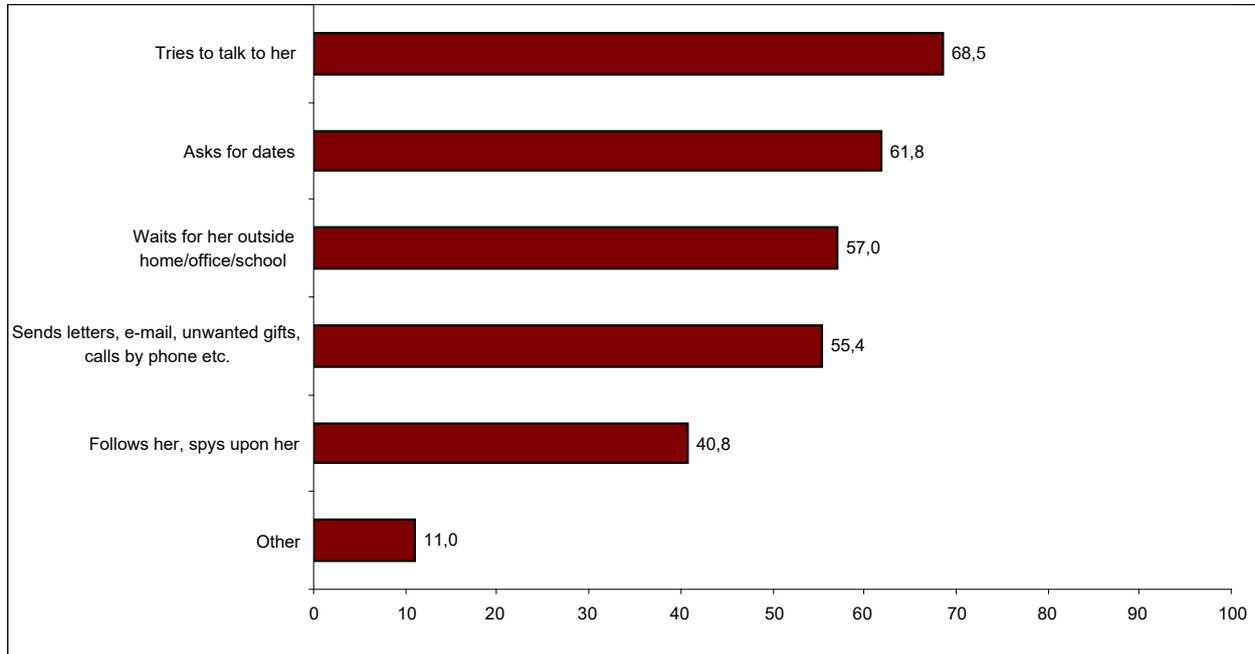
Besides physical and sexual violence, partners had also subjected the women to psychological violence and stalking.

43.2% of women with a current partner have suffered psychological violence, 21.1 % always or often. Furthermore, very often these victims suffered physical or sexual violence as well.

Of forms of psychological violence, the most common ones were isolation and attempted isolation (46.7%), control (40.7%), financial violence (30.7%) and berating (23.8%), followed by intimidations (7.8%).

Finally, 18.8% of all women have been victims of stalking by a former partner when they were separating or after the separation. In particular, 68.5% of partners tried to talk to the woman in a nagging way, against her will, 61.8% repeatedly asked for an appointment to meet her, 57% were waiting for her outside the home or at school or at the workplace, 55.4% sent messages, made phone calls, sent e-mail, mails or undesired presents, 40.8% followed her or spied on her, and 11% applied other kinds of strategies.

In many cases the stalked women were also physically or sexually abused by the same partner.



**Figure 3. Women with a former partner who were stalked, by form of stalking - Year 2006 (per 100 victim of stalking)**

### The seriousness of partner violence

Focusing on domestic violence, victims consider this category of violence to be<sup>2</sup>; domestic violence is characterised by injuries, feelings of one's life being in danger, and heavy consequences, as well as the inability to see it as a crime.

In particular, 34.5% of all women reported that they were victims of very severe violence and 29.7% of them declared it was severe enough. 21.3% of women felt their life was in danger when the violence was perpetrated, and 27.2% of women suffered from injuries caused by the violence; the injuries were so severe that it was necessary to seek for medical treatment in 24.1% of the cases. Furthermore, almost one-half of the women who were victims of several episodes of violence perpetrated by their partners suffered, due to the violence, a loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, a sensation of powerlessness (44.9%), sleep disorders (41.5%), anxiety (37.4%), depression (35.1%), difficulty to concentrate (24.3%), recurring pains in different parts of their body (18.5%), difficulty in managing children (14.3%), suicide phantasies and self-punishment (12.3%). In addition, 6% of women were unable to carry

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<sup>2</sup> The victim's judgement for non-partner violence is similar, even if less accentuated.

out things of everyday life, as well as to work (5% of victims), percentages that increase to 20-25% for victims of very serious violence.

To cope with the consequences of the violence, 10% of the women used medicine or alcohol, another 11.3 % found support in psychological or psychiatric therapy and 2.8% sought for help in shelters or specialized services for the protection of women. All these percentages become higher and higher with the increase of the seriousness of the violence.

However, despite this serious picture, only 18.2% of victims considered the suffered domestic violence as a crime, 44% considered it as something that is wrong and 36% only something that happened. Even in the case of rape or attempted rape, only 26.5% of women considered it to be a crime.

## The silence of the victims

In almost all cases, violence is not reported to the police. The hidden part of violence is very large, and it reaches 96% of violent acts by non-partners and 93% by partners. Even in the case of rapes, almost all of them (91.6%) are not reported to the police. The physical violence is more often reported, and all types of violence are more often reported for non-partner violence than for partner violence.

The share of women who talked to none about the suffered violence is very high too (33.9% of victims of violence perpetrated by a partner, 45% of victims of violence by a current partner, and 24% of victims of violence by a non-partner).

36.9% of the women who suffered domestic violence talked to friends, 32.7% to their family, 9.5% to relatives, 4.9% to public prosecutors, lawyers or police, 4.2% to colleagues at work. Data shows that when victims address public prosecutors, lawyers or police, the possibility to “escape” from a violent relationship increases.

Considering non-partner violence, women tell about the bad experience first of all to a friend (41%), to a family member (32.2%), their partner (23.9%), a colleague or a boss or a mate (8.6%), a relative (7.2%). Only 2.2% report to a lawyer or to the police or to the magistracy, and an even lower percentage to social and health care services (1.1% to doctors and nurses and 0.8% to social workers and advisory personnel).

Women tell about the violence to people belonging to the same context in which the violence occurred more frequently: if it was perpetrated by friends, 40.2% of victims tell about it to friends, if it was perpetrated by colleagues, 30.2% tell about it to people at the workplace, if the perpetrator is a relative, 46.4% tell about it to family members. In contrast, if violence is perpetrated by unknown persons, victims tell about it mainly to friends and neighbours (46.9%) or a family member (35.1%).

**Table 6. Women between 16 and 70 years of age victims of physical or sexual violence by a partner or non partner during their lifetime, by perpetrator, report of the crime to the police and the person women have talked to about the crime – Year 2006 (*percentage distribution*)**

REPORT TO POLICE	Partner				Non-partner				
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Rape or attempted rape	Total	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Rape or attempted rape	Sexual harassment	Total
Yes	7.5	4.8	5.3	7.3	11.0	1.8	7.1	0.8	4.0
No	92.2	94.8	94.3	92.4	88.1	98.0	92.9	99.0	95.6
Don't know/Won't answer	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.9	0.2	.	0.2	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>TO WHOM HAVE YOU TALKED ABOUT THE VIOLENCE *</b>									
A member of the family	33.7	25.3	26.0	32.7	40.8	28.9	27.4	28.6	32.2
Partner	-	-	-	-	26.0	23.3	23.5	23.0	23.9
Another relative	9.9	5.4	5.5	9.5	10.4	6.1	8.7	5.6	7.2
A friend/neighbours	37.1	33.5	30.5	36.9	39.9	41.4	32.2	42.7	41.0
A work colleague/employers/study friend	4.5	1.5	1.4	4.2	10.0	8.0	6.1	8.4	8.6
Doctor/nursing staff /first-aid doctors	3.7	4.4	4.7	3.7	2.3	0.7	3.8	0.3	1.1
Health and/or social workers	4.0	5.0	4.9	3.9	1.8	0.6	3.7	0.2	0.8
Lawyers, judges, police	5.2	2.8	2.9	4.9	6.1	0.9	4.1	0.4	2.2
Nobody	32.9	41.9	43.7	33.9	20.4	25.1	32.4	24.4	24.0
<b>Total**</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Data referred to the last suffered event

\*\* The sum of rates can be more than 100 as the woman can have told more than one person

## Domestic violence risk factors

According to the main literature and research studies, violence is widespread in all social classes and also in Italy it seems to be a transversal phenomenon especially regarding the partner characteristics.

Nevertheless, some risk-related characteristics of the women emerge from the data, even if differences in the victimization risk are to be considered with caution because they could also reflect different tendencies of women to speak about the suffered violence.

### *Risk-related characteristics of the women*

Considering domestic violence, the data show that separated and divorced women are the most affected when considering the lifetime period, young women when considering the last year.

Women who suffered domestic violence during their lifetime are predominantly separated or divorced (45.6%), followed by singles (17.8%), married women (10.4%) and widows (9.8%).

Victimisation rates are higher among women aged between 25 and 34, women with a high level of education (high school or university degree), managers, entrepreneurs and professional women, unemployed women looking for a job, students, women in other occupation category, employees. Physical violence within the family is more frequent in these categories, while sexual violence seems to be a crosscutting issue, apart from the case of marital status where the peak is with separated and divorced women. Obviously, for some women the divorce or the separation can be a consequence of violence itself, while for others, it is the factor that triggers violence.

**Table 7. Women between 16 and 70 years of age victims of physical or sexual violence by a partner during their lifetime, by type of violence suffered, type of perpetrator, marital status, age categories, educational qualification and professional status – Year 2006 (per 100 women with the same characteristics)**

	PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE			PHYSICAL VIOLENCE			SEXUAL VIOLENCE			RAPE OR ATTEMPTED RAPE		
	Current or ex-partner	Current partner	Ex-partner	Current or ex-partner	Current partner	Ex-partner	Current or ex-partner	Current partner	Ex-partner	Current or ex-partner	Current partner	Ex-partner
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>												
Unmarried	17.8	6.0	18.5	14.6	4.5	15.0	8.0	2.2	8.5	2.8	0.1	3.4
Married	10.4	7.4	11.3	8.5	6.1	9.1	4.1	2.6	4.8	1.5	0.6	2.7
Separated/divorced	45.6	10.9	44.3	42.9	10.8	41.6	21.7	1.0	22.0	10.2	0.3	10.5
Widow	9.8	1.2	9.7	8.0	1.2	7.9	4.7	-	4.7	2.0	0.0	2.0
<b>AGE</b>												
16-24	16.3	5.4	18.0	12.6	3.6	13.8	8.0	2.4	8.4	2.8	0.0	3.5
25-34	17.9	6.7	19.6	15.3	5.6	16.6	7.1	1.9	8.5	2.1	0.2	2.8
35-44	14.7	7.2	17.5	13.0	6.2	15.4	6.3	2.4	8.0	3.0	0.7	4.5
45-54	13.4	8.1	16.8	11.6	6.9	14.2	5.5	2.6	8.3	2.2	0.6	4.2
55-64	12.0	8.2	16.0	9.8	6.3	13.9	5.4	3.1	8.1	2.2	0.7	4.5
65-70	9.1	5.9	11.8	7.3	4.3	10.0	4.2	2.6	5.7	1.5	0.7	2.3
<b>EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION</b>												
Graduated	18.7	8.6	18.4	16.5	7.9	15.4	7.2	2.1	8.1	2.8	0.4	3.4
High school	17.3	7.4	19.6	14.9	6.1	16.8	7.3	2.4	8.9	2.9	0.5	3.9
Secondary school	13.0	7.0	16.2	10.6	5.6	13.0	5.9	2.7	7.7	2.3	0.5	3.8
Primary school/no school degree	8.6	6.4	11.5	6.9	4.7	10.2	3.9	2.5	6.0	1.3	0.5	2.8
<b>PROFESSIONAL STATUS</b>												
Managers/entrepreneurs/professionals	23.5	9.9	24.0	20.7	9.2	20.6	7.8	1.6	9.3	2.1	0.4	2.5
Directors/managerial staff/employees	17.0	7.8	18.1	14.9	6.7	15.5	7.1	2.3	8.6	2.9	0.5	3.8
Labourers	13.9	6.3	17.6	12.0	4.7	16.0	6.9	2.8	9.0	3.1	0.5	5.0
Self employed	14.4	7.4	18.0	12.0	6.4	14.9	6.5	2.6	8.7	2.6	0.1	5.0
Looking for employment	20.7	9.9	21.6	17.0	7.6	17.3	8.7	3.9	9.4	3.0	0.5	3.9
Housewives	9.8	6.8	12.1	8.1	5.5	10.5	3.7	2.3	4.7	1.2	0.6	2.1
Students	17.9	5.4	19.5	13.9	3.6	15.2	9.1	2.5	9.6	3.4	0.0	4.1
Retired from work	12.2	7.5	15.5	9.9	5.9	12.9	5.6	3.0	7.5	2.5	1.0	3.8
Other condition	17.6	6.5	23.2	16.9	6.5	22.0	7.6	1.1	11.6	2.9	0.0	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>

Analysing results over the last 12 months, the risk is highest for young women between 16 and 24 and between 25 and 34 years of age, singles, students, those who are looking for a job, managers, entrepreneurs and professionals.

### *Partner and childhood characteristics*

Looking at the partner characteristics in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, no clear differences emerge for violent versus non-violent partners. However, significant associations can be established between violence and some aspects of social behaviour.

Women with a partner who is violent also outside the family are generally more affected by domestic violence.

Considering current partner violence, the most important risk factors within the family are associated with male behaviour. Indeed, women are exposed to a higher risk when they have a partner who is physically violent (35.6% against 6.5%) or verbally violent (25.7% against 5.3%) outside the family, or when the partner tends to denigrate them or not to take consideration of them in the daily life (35.9% against 5.7%). Furthermore, women with a partner who drinks until he is drunk, are victims of his violence three times as often as other women (18.7% against 6.4% of women), the rate rises to 38.6% if he gets drunk every day or almost every day and it reaches 38.3% if he gets drunk once or more per week.

**Table 8. Women between 16 and 70 years of age victims of physical or sexual violence by a current partner, by time of occurrence, type of perpetrator and some characteristics and behaviours of the partner – Year 2006 (per 100 women with the same characteristics)**

	DURING LIFETIME			LAST 12 MONTHS		
	Current partner	Husband/ cohabitant	Boyfriend	Current partner	Husband/ cohabitant	Boyfriend
<b>CURRENT PARTNER'S EDUCATION</b>						
Graduated	7.1	8.2	4.3	1.9	2.1	1.5
High school	7.4	7.8	6.3	2.7	2.2	4.1
Secondary school	7.1	7.2	6.6	2.3	1.8	4.8
Primary school/no school degree	7.1	7.1	11.3	1.3	1.2	6.8
Don't know/Don't answer	4.3	7.2	0.5	2.8	4.5	0.5
<b>CURRENT PARTNER'S PROFESSIONAL STATUS</b>						
Managers/entrepreneurs/professionals	8.5	8.5	8.6	2.8	2.3	4.9
Directors/managerial staff/employees	7.5	8.2	5.1	2.7	2.7	2.6
Labourers	6.3	6.3	6.3	2.5	1.9	4.7
Self-employed	7.4	7.5	6.8	2.1	1.9	3.2
Looking for an employment	5.7	6.6	3.9	1.7	1.7	1.7
Students	6.3	13.1	6.3	4.9	13.1	4.9
Retired from work	7.3	7.5	1.5	1.1	1.1	0.0
Other condition	10.1	12.4	1.2	2.1	2.2	1.2
<b>CURRENT PARTNER DEVALUATES THE WOMAN</b>						
Yes	35.9	37.1	23.4	14.0	13.8	15.6
No	5.7	5.7	5.5	1.6	1.2	3.5
<b>CURRENT PARTNER DRINKS/DRANK UNTIL HE IS/WAS DRUNK</b>						
Yes	18.7	25.5	10.4	6.6	6.3	6.9
<i>A few times in a year</i>	17.8	22.6	12.1	7.0	6.0	8.2
<i>One or more time a month</i>	14.2	25.0	3.8	3.4	3.9	2.9
<i>One or more time a week</i>	38.3	54.3	10.0	5.5	7.4	2.2
<i>Each day more or less</i>	38.6	39.0	0.0	14.4	14.5	0.0
<i>Doesn't know</i>	9.3	12.5	0.0	0.0	11.4	0.0
<i>Doesn't answer</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.5	0.0	0.0
No	6.4	6.7	5.1	2.0	1.7	3.2
<b>CURRENT PARTNER PHYSICALLY VIOLENT OUTSIDE THE FAMILY</b>						
Yes	35.6	38.3	30.6	15.6	12.8	21.1
No	6.5	6.8	4.2	1.9	1.6	3.1
Don't know/Don't answer	23.5	29.5	10.5	3.6	13.6	5.7
<b>CURRENT PARTNER VERBALLY VIOLENT OUTSIDE THE FAMILY</b>						
Yes	25.7	27.9	19.1	9.1	8.3	11.4
No	5.3	5.6	4.1	1.6	1.3	2.7
Don't know/Won't answer	11.0	12.0	9.4	4.4	3.8	5.4
<b>CURRENT PARTNER HAD PROBLEMS WITH THE POLICE DUE TO HIS VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR OUTSIDE THE FAMILY</b>						
Yes	51.4	52.1	49.0	22.0	15.7	43.3
No	7.0	7.3	5.7	2.2	1.9	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>3.8</b>

Furthermore, partners who were abused in their childhood or who witnessed violence in their childhood families were more often perpetrators of violence (the rate of violence is about 30-35% against the 6% in the group who have not witnessed or suffered violence). The exposure to risk was also higher for women who experienced sexual or physical violence in their childhood and/or witnessed to violence of their father against their mother (for these women, the rate of partner violence increased from 6% to about 20%, and the more general violence rate increased from 29% to 64%).

The cycle of violence, unfortunately, seems to continue if we consider that many women suffering from repeated violence by their partner had children when violence occurred. 62.4% of these women said that children witnessed the domestic violence and 15.7% answered that children also suffered violence by their father.

In particular in the 19.6% of cases where children witnessed violence rarely, 20.2% sometimes and 22.6% often. For children physically abused by their father, violence occurred very rarely for 5.6%, sometimes for 4.9% and often for the remaining 5.2%.

## Conclusions

Data emerging from the survey underline the seriousness of the phenomenon that is widespread and prevalent regardless of social status, even if women hardly regard violence suffered as a crime. The partner violence is more serious than violence by boyfriends, but it is considered more frequently only something that just happens, rather than a crime.

This is a common scenario, even in the presence of injuries, that policy has to face. Policy has to consider the importance of education and culture, to break first of all the idea that violence plays a normal part in interpersonal and intimate relationship.

Unfortunately this last observation seems to be shared also by the youngest women too in the relationship with their boyfriends. Some of them consider the rape perpetrated by their boyfriends just as something that happened.

Another important aspect to focus on is the silence that generally surrounds violence against women. As was shown above, women often do not tell anyone about the violence, and even more rarely are they reporting it to the police. But those women who tell about the violence have a higher probability to escape from violence itself, and even more if they seek for help from a shelter, hospital, doctors, police, lawyers, or judges. This aspect underlines the importance to break the silence: not to tolerate violence means not to accept it. Reporting may contribute to women feeling less guilty and more able to break the cycle of violence.

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# From Statistics to Indicators: How to Convert Information from Surveys into Practical Indicators

Sylvia Walby

## Introduction

This paper is concerned with the development of summary indicators of gender-based violence. It addresses the tension between the use of specialised categories for gender based violence and the use of mainstream crime categories. There is very considerable experience in the development of survey methodology for collecting data on violence against women. National surveys have now been carried out in many and groups of countries in both the North and South (Alméras et al. 2004; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005; Heiskanen and Piispa 1998; Johnson 1996; Kishor et al. 2004; Muratore and Sabbadini 2005; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000; Walby and Allen 2004; Walby and Myhill 2001). Moving from complex survey statistics to indicators that are usable for public policy development is the challenge addressed in this paper.

## Indicators and definitions

### **Why indicators?**

Indicators summarise complex data into a form that is meaningful for policy makers. They constitute a key link between an evidence base and policy making. There have been many policy innovations to reduce and eliminate violence against women; much political good-will; and much rhetoric. In order to decide whether initiatives are having a positive impact it is necessary to know whether the situation is deteriorating or improving. There are many forms and types of knowledge about the nature of violence against women and the policies to stop this. Often these data are too complicated to support the decision-making of policy makers without the input of considerable time and expertise. The purpose of indicators is that they provide a simple summary of a complex picture, abstracting and presenting in a clear manner the most important features needed to support decision-making.

## Criteria for selecting indicators

Several criteria for the selection of the indicators have been developed (Berger-Schmitt and Jankowitsch 1999; Alméras et al. 2004; Statistics Canada 2002). In general, indicators should:

- Summarise complex data.
- Be unambiguous and easy to interpret.
- Enable an assessment as to whether an improvement or deterioration has occurred, including the establishment of whether changes over time have occurred.
- Be meaningful and relevant to policy makers, service providers and the wider informed public.
- Be capable of being supported by reliable and robust quantitative data.
- Be available at regular intervals and be comparable between countries and population groups.
- Be neither so many as to confuse, nor so few as to mislead.

There are several proposals for indicators, including the European Union (2004); European Women's Lobby (2003); Statistics Canada (2002); US Center for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Saltzman et al. 2002); UK government (Home Office 2005); UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Alméras et al. 2004); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2003); summarised in Walby (2006a).

There are two major kinds of indicators: outcomes; and policy actions. The focus here is only on outcomes, since the measurement of the extent of the development and implementation of policy requires a different methodology from population surveys.

## Definitions

The development of indicators requires decisions on how to define the range of actions in a manner suitable for a large scale survey in a wide range of countries and the range of perpetrators.

The United Nations (1993) definition of gender-based violence in the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women is: 'Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life'.

This UN definition is an important reference point, but it needs more precise operationalisation before it is suitable for inclusion as a set of questions in a survey. It is possible to separately name forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment in the

workplace, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, dowry deaths and so-called ‘honour’ crimes. However, in some countries some of these forms of violence would be present in very few cases in the survey, possibly making it preferable to group them together into more general categories, even if the survey questionnaire asks separate questions about different forms.

There is a tension in the development of indicators between on the one hand the detailed appreciation of distinctive nuances within a framework specific to the expert VAW field, and on the other hand, the use of more general categories that facilitate addressing priorities within mainstream policy arenas. Early attempts at specifying indicators tended to the former, while later developments have tended to move towards the latter.

## Indicators of extent and severity of gender-based violence

There are two dimensions to outcome measures:

- Extent: measured by either or both of prevalence and the number of incidents
- Severity: measured by one or more of frequency, the nature of the action and injury.

### **Extent**

There are two main approaches to the operationalisation of the extent of gender-based violence: prevalence and incidents.

Prevalence refers to the proportion of the population that has experienced violence in a given period, usually either (adult) life-time or the previous year. The notion of prevalence captures the particular and specialised nature of domestic violence as a coercive ‘course of conduct’, a series of related occurrences, rather than a one-off event. This figure, which ranges from around one quarter to one half of women in their life-time, has been important in the establishment of the scale of the problem (Krug et al. 2002).

A disadvantage of the use of prevalence as the sole indicator of the extent of VAW is that it is a specific measure developed in the specific field of VAW, which can be hard to mainstream into some other policy domains, especially that of crime, where the focus is instead on the number of incidents.

A further disadvantage of prevalence as the sole indicator is that it does not contain a measure of severity. In those countries where surveys of interpersonal violence are addressed to men as well as to women, the focus on prevalence can sometimes obscure the extent of gender inequality in the use of violence. If domestic violence enters crime statistics as a ‘course of conduct’, then it counts as just one crime incident, even though there are usually several events within this ‘course of conduct’. In this way, the repetition and frequency of the attacks disappears from view thereby leading to underestimates of the extent of violent crime and domestic violent crime in particular.

A count of the number of incidents of VAW in a population unit is an alternative or additional indicator of the extent of gender based violence. The use of this indicator facilitates the mainstreaming of VAW into other policy domains, such as crime. In operationalising this, care needs to be taken to distinguish between the number of actions and the number of events. This requires rethinking the use of the Conflict Tactics Scale is being used, since it is hard to clearly separate the number of actions from the number of events in this framework (Fals-Stewart, Birchler and Kelly 2003).

It is recommended that the indicators for the extent of gender based violence should include both prevalence and the number of incidents, not prevalence alone.

## **Severity**

It is important to have an indicator that represents the severity of the violence, as well as its extent. There are three main approaches to the measurement of severity: frequency; the nature of the action; whether there is an injury and if so its seriousness.

**Frequency.** The number of times that the same person is subject to violence is a measure of severity. This is different from the number of incidents per population unit, being rather the average number of incidents per person subject to the violence.

**Action.** The nature of the action has very frequently been used as a measure of its seriousness, especially through the use of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), developed by Straus and Gelles (1990). The CTS consists of a list of items, of increasing levels of severity, such as slap, kick, choke, use a weapon. There are three problems with this scale. First it is confined not only to domestic violence, but also excludes sexual violence in a domestic context, so it is far from comprehensive. Additional scales would need to be used to capture sexual assault and non-intimate partner violence. Second, the use of the actions of the perpetrator as the measure of severity may not be congruent with its effects on the victim. In particular, the injurious effect of the same action is greater when the perpetrator is a man and the victim a woman than vice versa. The British Crime Survey found that a minor act of domestic violence led to physical injuries for 49% of women as compared with 36% of men, while a severe act of domestic led to physical injuries in 77% of women and 56% of men (Walby and Allen 2004, 38). Third, the scale is unique to the field of domestic violence, and it is hard to use it to mainstream VAW into other policy fields which use different forms of scaling of severity, such as the use of injury to differentiate the severity of different categories of violent crime.

**Injury.** The existence and severity of injury is a way of operationalising the concept of severity in gender based violence that is widely used in crime statistics and rarely used in the specialist domestic violence field. Injury is a victim-focused measure of the severity of the impact of the violence. The existence or not of any physical injury is the easier part of such a scale. A

further distinction may be made as to the levels of violence, using a commonly agreed scale. Such an approach has the advantage of being easy to mainstream into the adjacent policy fields such as the criminal justice system. To be comprehensive there would need to be a concept of injury which goes beyond that of simple physical injury. For example rape is a very serious injury in its own right, not needing to be further translated. A more difficult, though important issue, is that of the mental health injuries that are a common consequence of VAW, but which are not simple to operationalise for a population survey. More complex surveys might include measures developed in the mental health field, but this probably goes beyond reasonable expectations for international standards for a VAW population survey.

Recommendations: Severity should be indicated in two ways. First, the frequency of the incidents. Second, by injury, including no injury, minor injury, severe injury, rape.

## Consistency

There are a number of matters concerning time periods and the specific population studies that are important if there is to be comparability between survey outcomes in different surveys. These include: time-period during which the violence occurred; age of population sample; marital and cohabitation status of population sample.

## Time period

The time period used in most VAW surveys has been that of either or both of the last year, life-time (or adult life time), though there have been some exceptions with the use of periods of five years, and of six months.

The use of life time was useful in the early stages of development of this field, especially for consciousness raising. However, this time period is not of much relevance if the focus is on the evaluation of the impact of recent policy changes.

The use of quite short periods for recall, such as that of six months, may aid the accuracy of recall. However, the shorter the period the larger needs to be the sample size, so this may be not practical in the context of budget restraints.

The time period of 'last year' is the most commonly adopted approach. This is the time period recommended here.

## **Age**

Surveys are quite varied in the use of age restrictions on the population sample. Most have a lower cut off that approaches adulthood, though this varies, predominantly between 15 and 18. Many but not all have an upper cut off. The criteria range from reproductive age of 49, to ability to use a computer unaided by interviewer of 59, with further ages representing various expectations of competence.

There needs to be agreement on a key age range for which data is collected and reported, even if individual countries have their own reasons for including younger or older groups.

The recommendation here is 16-59 as the core age group.

## **Marital and cohabiting status**

There is restriction in some surveys, especially where the focus is domestic violence rather than the full range of gender-based violence, to women who are currently or ever have been married or cohabiting. This is unduly restrictive, since violence against women can take place outside of marriage and cohabitation.

The recommendation is that no restrictions of current or previous marriage or cohabitation are placed on the population sample.

## **Crime categories, the conflict tactics scale or something new**

There is a tension between indicators of gender based violence based on mainstream crime categories and those based on specialised categories for gender based violence. While the history of this tension is understandable; it is now time for mainstreaming of categories of gender based violence (Walby 2005b, 2006b).

Historically, crime statistics have been insensitive to the specificities of gender based violence. Few countries have a crime of domestic violence. It is hard to disentangle domestic violence from other violent crime; not least because it requires the definition and recording of the social relationship between the perpetrator and victim. While some forms of sexual assault, especially rape, were recorded, these were a minority. A host of specific forms, such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and so-called 'honour'-based crimes, were barely, if at all, on the statute book. Historically, the criminal justice system has been notorious for its lack of action on gender-violence and its reluctance to record such incidents.

So it was not surprising that scholars, activists and practitioners in the field invented new categories to capture the specificities of gender-based violence.

Concepts and definitions were needed to name, record and discuss these events. This developed as a field in its own right; often far from the world and framings of criminology. The development of the Conflict Tactics Scale to define and conceptualise domestic violence is the leading example of this, but not the only one. These specialised concepts and definitions provided a much needed way of naming, conceptualising and comparing forms of gender-based violence.

However, this separation between the crime statistics of the criminological community and the specialised categories of gender-based violence researcher community is unsatisfactory. It means that researchers and policy makers speak past each other, rather than engaging. In particular, it means that crime statistics, which influence the priorities in the use of the enormous resources of the criminal justice system, underestimate the extent of gender-based violent crime, since domestic violence is still not adequately recorded within these statistics. The detailed information available from specialised national surveys on gender-based violence may then be treated as if they were relevant primarily to the much more poorly resourced policy area of gender equality.

It is time for gender mainstreaming in statistics; to integrate these two fields (crime statistics and specialised gender based violence categories) to the benefit of each. Of course, the practice of gender mainstreaming is riddled with its own tensions and difficulties: how to make sure that the effects are mutual and not just a one-way domination of the mainstream over the new gendered thinking (Walby 2005).

Crime statistics need to routinely include the gender of the victim as well as the perpetrator. This is not difficult information to obtain. They need to include whether or not there is or has been an intimate relationship between the perpetrator and victim. Again, this is not difficult information to obtain. Such basic steps would enable gender-based violence to be made visible within crime statistics.

Gender based violence practitioners need to count the number of incidents not only gather the information needed for prevalence, that is, whether or not there is a victim. They need to use injury as one of the criteria that measure severity of the action. Such basic steps would enable much easier dialogue with mainstream criminology, which measures the crime rate using the number of incidents, not prevalence in the population, and assumes treats injury is a key measure of severity. The Conflict Tactics Scale had its uses, but its time is over. Recording prevalence (rather than the number of incidents) and the nature of the action (rather than the injuries caused) unnecessarily separates the analysis of domestic violent crime from other violent crime.

## Conclusions

It is time to mainstream gender into crime statistics; in particular to mainstream the analysis of gender based violence especially domestic violence into the analysis of violent crime.

Indicators of gender based violence should cover two dimensions: extent and severity. Extent is best captured not only both the prevalence of gender based violence in the population and but also by the number of incidents per population unit. The number of incidents is needed in order to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender-based violence into criminology and the criminal justice system. An indicator of severity is important in order to accurately reveal the pattern of gender-based violence, especially its gender asymmetry, which can be obscured if prevalence is the only or main indicator. The severity of the violence is best captured by both the frequency of incidents per abused person and by the level of injury.

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