

**CRIMINAL VICTIMISATION IN THE INDUSTRIALISED WORLD:
KEY FINDINGS OF THE 1989 AND 1992
INTERNATIONAL CRIME SURVEYS¹**

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Introduction

Background to the International Crime Survey

According to police statistics, crime rates have increased markedly in almost every major industrialised country except Japan in the past three decades. For the public, being a victim of crime has become a common feature of life in most urban settings, and opinion polls show crime to be a major concern. As a result, governments and criminal justice practitioners have re-examined conventional law enforcement strategies to detect and sanction offenders, and have sought to supplement these with social and physical crime prevention efforts of various sorts. Not surprisingly, they have also sought indicators of their own performance, and solace perhaps from the possibility that everyone else is "in the same boat".

Those for whom national crime problems were pressing were impatient with the answer that few sound indicators about other countries' problems were available since the most readily accessible information - offences recorded by the police (or "police figures") - could not be readily compared. This is, first, because the vast majority of incidents that become known to the police come from reports by victims, and any differences in the propensity of the public to notify the police in different countries seriously jeopardise comparisons of the police figures. Second, the comparability of police figures is severely undermined by differences in legal definitions, and by technical factors to do with how offences are classified and counted.

For the purpose of assessing national crime problems, several countries resorted to an alternative way of measuring crime through crime or "victimisation" surveys. Such surveys ask representative samples of the population about selected offences they have experienced over a given time, and whether or not they reported them to the police. As such they provide an independent index of crime, giving both a more realistic count of how many people are affected by crime, as well as - if the surveys are repeated - a measure of trends in crime uncontaminated by changes in victims' reporting behaviour, or administrative changes as regards recording crime. Typically, such surveys have also asked opinions about policing, fear of crime, and so on.

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The potential of victimisation surveys for comparative purposes did not go unnoticed. However, by no means all countries had conducted them, and those that had done so had used different methods which made their results extremely difficult to compare. It was inevitable that as more was understood about the value of survey information, and about the effect that methodology can have on how much and what is counted, a case would be made for a standardised survey in different countries. This would ask the same questions, use similar methods of sample selection, and employ the same methods of data handling.

In 1987 a Working Group was set up to take forward a collaborative survey. Fourteen countries eventually took part in the first sweep of the International Crime Survey (ICS), which took place in 1989. In addition, Japan conducted a survey based on the ICS questionnaire, though with some small question changes and differences in sampling. At the same time, small surveys using the ICS questionnaire were also done on a city basis in Warsaw (Poland) and Surabaya (Indonesia)

In the majority of countries taking part in the 1989 survey, 2,000 respondents were interviewed by telephone. They were asked about eleven main forms of victimisation. Respondents who mentioned that they had experienced one or more of the offences covered were asked short questions about where it had occurred; its material consequences; whether the police were involved (and if not why not); satisfaction with the police response; and any victim assistance given. In addition, some basic socio-demographic data were collected, and some information on people's social life. Other questions were asked about: fear of crime; satisfaction with local policing; crime prevention behaviour; and the preferred sentence for a 21-year old recidivist burglar. Results from the first sweep of the ICS have been presented principally in "Experiences of Crime across the World"³.

The 1992 International Crime Survey

In 1990 participants in the first ICS and a number of other countries were invited to participate in a second round in 1992 in order to:

- a) enlarge the scope for comparisons by increasing the number of industrialised countries covered;
- b) in particular provide East European countries with the opportunity of improving their understanding of problems of crime and law enforcement; and
- c) implement some improvements in the methodology of the survey;

³ van Dijk, J.J.M., P. Mayhew and M. Killias (1990) *Experiences of crime across the world: key findings of the 1989 International Crime Survey*, Kluwer, Deventer, Netherlands; for other publications on the survey see also: van Dijk, J.J.M. (1991) *The International Crime Survey: some organisational and methodological issues and results*, Criminological Institute, Leiden University, Leiden; Takasugi, F. (1991) "The present and future of Japan's crime: from a structural analysis of victimization rates" in Kaiser, G., H. Kury and H.J. Albrecht (eds.) *Victims and criminal justice: victimological research: stocktaking and prospects*, Max-Planck-Institut, Freiburg; Walker, J., P. Wilson, D. Chappell and D. Weatherburn (1990) "A comparison of crime in Australia and other countries" *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* 23; Northern Ireland Office (1990) "International Victimization Survey: a Northern Ireland perspective" *Research Review* 1, Northern Ireland Office Statistics Branch, Belfast; Mayhew, P. (1990) "Experiences of crime across the world in 1988" *Home Office Research and Statistics Department Research Bulletin* 28:4-13.

For the 1992 survey, as was the case in 1989, each participating country was expected to meet their own interviewing costs.

In tandem, UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Criminal Justice Research Institute) in Rome pursued the possibility of carrying out similar surveys in cities in a selection of developing countries. The main purpose was to sensitise local governments to the dimensions and extent of crime in their urban areas. It was also felt that the collection of credible data about criminal victimisation in developing countries - so far completely unavailable - would give a boost to comparative criminological research and theory. Pilot work was conducted in 1991.

Oversight of this work was in the hands of a newly formed Working Group, consisting of J.J.M. van Dijk (Ministry of Justice/University of Leiden, the Netherlands; overall co-ordinator), P. Mayhew (Home Office, United Kingdom), and U. Zvekic (UNICRI).

Table 1 shows the countries which took part in the 1989 and 1992 surveys, on which results in this report are based⁴. These comprise twenty countries in seventeen of which the surveys were done under the direction of the Working Group. Results for these countries are the most rigorously standardised. Three other countries are covered in the report - Japan, Poland and Czechoslovakia - since results were available at national level, their crime profile was thought to be particularly interesting, and there was reasonable confidence that the surveys had been conducted in ways that made their results largely comparable with the other seventeen surveys⁵. All told, this report is based on interviews with just over 55,000 respondents.

The ICS questionnaire, however, has been used in several other countries. Some surveys have made small adaptations to the questionnaire, and there have possibly been changes to some features of the survey methodology (eg. in sampling). All told, the ICS questionnaire has been used at national or city level in over 40 countries.

Methodology

Coverage of the survey

The present survey has many features of other independently organised crime surveys with respect to the types of crime it covers, and how well (or poorly) it measures these. It is based on only a sample of the population, so that results are subject to sampling error, which is a limitation especially for rarer offences. (Sampling error is taken up again below.) The survey is confined to counting crime against clearly identifiable individuals, excluding children. (Crime surveys cannot easily cover organisational victims, or victimless crimes such as drug abuse.) Even

⁴ Some countries which participated in the 1989 survey declined the invitation to join in 1992, in most instances because the time interval was deemed too short to justify a replication. In particular, some countries with comparatively low rates of crime according to the 1989 survey, such as Switzerland, Norway and Northern Ireland, preferred a longer time interval.

⁵ The national data files were integrated and processed by John van Kesteren of the Criminological Institute, Faculty of Law of the University of Leiden in the Netherlands.

discounting crime unreported to the police, the survey will take a broader and probably more value-free count of incidents than police statistics, which filter out incidents which could be punished, but which the police do not regard should occupy the attention of the criminal justice system. In many ways this broader count of crime is itself a strength of the survey.

Adequate representation of the population is always problematic in sample surveys, and those who are and who are not contacted may differ from each other - a point returned to. It is also well established that respondents fail to report, in interview, all relevant incidents in the "recall period"; that they "telescope in" incidents outside this period⁶ and that they may under-report various offences, for instance involving people they know, and sexual offences. There is also evidence that certain groups (eg. the better educated) are more adept at answering victimisation questions, and that thresholds for defining deviant behaviour as criminal can differ across groups.

Table 1: Countries covered in the 1989 and 1992 International Crime Survey

	1989	1992	Both surveys
Australia	*	*	*
Belgium	*	*	*
Canada	*	*	*
England/Wales	*	*	*
West Germany	*		
Finland	*	*	*
France	*		
Italy		*	
Netherlands	*	*	*
New Zealand		*	
Northern Ireland	*		
Norway	*		
Scotland	*		
Spain	*		
Sweden		*	
Switzerland	*		
USA	*	*	*
Czechoslovakia ¹		*	
Japan	*	*	*
Poland		*	

1. Presently Czech Republic and Slovak Republic

⁶ According to a study in the Netherlands, based on a check of victimisation survey data against police data (a forward record check), respondents tend to "telescope in" incidents into the last year reference period which have actually taken place in the previous year (van Dijk, J.J.M. (1991) "On the uses of national and international crime surveys" in Kaiser et al., Victims..., op. cit.). In the International Crime Survey the initial screening question reference period of five years is meant to reduce the forward time telescoping that can occur when respondents are asked about the last year.

An important issue for the ICS is whether these response biases are constant across country. There is little way of knowing. The tendency to forget more trivial incidents is probably a relatively universal phenomenon, and some types of differential "response productivity" may also be constant - at least within the industrialised world. Respondents' understanding of and willingness to talk about most types of crime (eg. burglary and car theft) will be fairly universal. For some offences, however, it is less certain how far results will be affected by different cultural thresholds for defining certain behaviours as crime, and for wanting to talk to interviewers about these. This may apply particularly to sexual incidents and to some forms of assault. Neither can it be ruled out that victimisation levels as measured in the surveys are influenced by the performance of survey companies and their interviewers⁷.

Sample sizes

To encourage as full participation as possible, both the 1989 and 1992 surveys were kept relatively modest. Samples of 2,000 or 1,500 interviews were recommended. It is acknowledged that this produces relatively large sampling error, and restricts the scope for detailed analysis of issues on which a small proportion of the sample would have provided information.

Field work

Field work for the surveys in most countries started in January of the survey year and lasted six to seven weeks. Field work in a few countries (Spain, Northern Ireland and the USA in 1989, and New Zealand in 1992) started somewhat later. An average interview lasted about 15 minutes depending mainly on the extent of victimisation experience reported.

Computer assisted telephone interviewing

Cost was one consideration in deciding to interview by telephone where possible, using the technique of computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). More important, however, was that CATI provides much tighter standardisation of questionnaire administration. It also enables a sample to be drawn which is geographically unclustered, and based on full coverage of telephone owners, including those with unlisted numbers.

Telephone interviewing, and in some instances CATI, has been used for some time in victimisation surveys in Canada, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the USA, for example. Methodological work has shown that, in general, victimisation counts from telephone interviews are similar to those obtained in face-to-face ones given

⁷ Biderman, A.D., D. Cantor, J.P. Lynch and E. Martin (1986) Final report of the research and development for the redesign of the National Crime Survey, Bureau of Social Science Research, Washington, D.C.; Killias, M., A. Kuhn and C. Chevalier (1987) "Nouvelles perspectives methodologiques en matiere de sondages de victimisation: l'experience des enquetes Suisses" *Deviance et Societe* 34:330.

the same standards of field work. This, together with standardisation advantages, and the cost-effectiveness of random digit dialling, suggests that high quality CATI interviewing is a sound technique for crime surveys in western countries in which comparability is paramount. In other countries with low telephone penetration, personal interviews will be needed, although there is no a priori reason why the results of the latter studies, if carried out well, will be badly out of line with those using telephone interviews.

It was acknowledged that those with a telephone in the home might differ from those without. However, in all countries where only CATI was used at least 80% of households had telephones, and in most countries the figure was 90% or higher. In Spain in 1989, telephone penetration was too low outside urban areas, so most interviews were done face-to-face. In Northern Ireland, Poland and Czechoslovakia, where national telephone penetration was estimated to be under 70%, all interviews were personal.

Elsewhere we have discussed in more detail whether any bias has been introduced into results on account of interviewing mainly those with telephones⁸. Briefly, the conclusion drawn was that the 1989 ICS results were unlikely to have been greatly distorted on this account. Telephone ownership did not relate to the experience of different crimes in any consistent way, and there was little evidence to suggest that victimisation counts were lower than if fuller representation of the population had been possible. Because of this it was considered inappropriate to weight the data from either sweep of the ICS to take account of differential telephone ownership.

Survey companies

Inter/View (a Dutch company) were appointed for both the 1989 and 1992 surveys as overall contractor. They were used by sixteen of the participating countries⁹. Field work was sub-contracted by Inter/View to companies abroad.

Sampling

Telephone number sampling frames differ somewhat across county, and precise techniques for sampling varied on this account. However, in all countries using CATI, a regionally well-spread selection of households was sampled with some variant of random digit dialling techniques. Within each household contacted by telephone, a procedure was used to select randomly a respondent of 16 years of age or older, based on the composition of the household (the Troidahl-Carter method). No substitution of the selected respondent was allowed¹⁰.

⁸ van Dijk et al., op. cit., Experiences... p. 104.

⁹ The 1992 Finnish study was carried out independently but using the same methods as in 1989, when work was sub-contracted through Inter/View. Japan, Poland and Czechoslovakia conducted field work independently.

¹⁰ Face-to-face interviews in Northern Ireland and Spain in 1989 applied standard national quota sampling procedures; this was because of the considerable cost savings over other methods of probability sampling which strictly give a more representative population sample. Japan used stratified random sampling based on Census data.

Response rates

In the 1989 survey in particular, response rates were variable, and in some cases rather low. In 1989, the average response rate of the 13 countries using CATI was 41% (i.e. completed interviews with the household members selected for interview out of eligible households that were contacted; data weighted to take account of country size).

To improve response, pilot work was carried out in 1991 to test whether people who initially refused to co-operate could be persuaded to participate when approached for a second time after two to three weeks. In a second phase of field work, all initial refusals, plus the "no answers", "busy" and "respondent not available" were called back. In the three pilot studies, refusal rates in the second phase were of the same order as in the first phase, with the result that the overall response rate was substantially increased (by 10-22 percent points).

In a replication of the ICS in Germany (old and new states) in 1990, an advance notice was sent to those selected in the initial sample. This produced a much higher response rate¹¹. The technique was also applied in the 1992 Finnish study (for which the sampling frame was the Central Population Register, not a listing of telephone numbers). The improved results in these countries provide a case for considering the same technique elsewhere when there are reasons to think response may be low. The technique has some drawbacks however. It precludes the use of random digit dialling, and - if the sample is drawn from telephone listings - excludes households with unlisted numbers (a rapidly growing group in many countries). The exposure of the respondents to an advance notice may also differ across population groups - eg. younger family members may not read them - and thereby introduce bias in results. On account of the promising pilot results on call-backs, and because different sample selection and mailing of letters would have substantially increased costs, a decision was made to retain for the 1992 survey the method of directly contacting respondents by phone.

Table 2: Response rates: 1989 and 1992 International Crime Survey

	% interviewed of eligible contacts	
	1989	1992
Australia	46	57
Belgium	37	44
Canada	43	65
England/Wales	43	38
West Germany	30	
Finland	70	86
France	52	
Italy		61

¹¹ Kury, H. (1991) "Victims of crime: results of a representative telephone survey of 5000 citizens of the former Federal Republic of Germany" in Kaiser, G., H. Kury and H.J. Albrecht (eds.) Victims and criminal justice: victimological research: stocktaking and prospects, Max-Planck-Institut, Freiburg.

Netherlands	65	66
New Zealand		65
Northern Ireland ¹	n.a.	
Norway	71	
Scotland	41	
Spain	33	
Sweden		77
Switzerland	68	
USA	37	51
Czechoslovakia		92
Japan	80	79
Poland		>95
Total ²	41	61

1. As the Northern Ireland sample was a quota sample (interviewed face-to-face), response rates are not available. The response rate for Spain relates to CATI interviews.
2. For 1989, figures exclude face-to-face interviews in Spain, Northern Ireland and Japan. For 1992, they exclude Poland, Czechoslovakia and Japan. The total figures are weighted to take account of country size.

In the 1992 survey, the average response rate was 61%, as against 41% in 1989 (data weighted to represent country size). In virtually all countries which participated in both surveys of the ICS, the 1992 response rates were better than the previous ones, as was expected. This was particularly so in Canada, Finland, Australia, and the USA. In England and Wales, however, the professional body of survey companies advise against calling back on refusals. The 1992 response rate in England and Wales was somewhat lower than in 1989 (38.5% instead of 42.5%). A summary of response rates achieved in the 1989 and 1992 studies is given in Table 2.

It is unclear why response rates vary as they do across country. Quite probably, it has more to do with the social acceptability of being interviewed on the telephone than with the performance of survey companies, although this cannot be ruled out. In any event, the question of whether results are influenced by the variable response rates is a complex one. One argument about low response is that victims will "have more to say" and will thus be over-represented. This would have the effect of overestimating victimisation risks in countries where response was poorer¹². A contrary argument is that with low response rates, people are omitted with whom it is harder to achieve an interview: people who may be more liable to victimisation because they are residentially more unstable, if not simply away from home more¹³.

Data from the present survey does not support either position unequivocally¹⁴. In the 1989 ICS, victimisation risks were high in three countries with the highest non-response (eg. the USA, Spain, West Germany). On the face of it, this would appear to support the first argument that victims were over-represented and that risks in low response countries were correspondingly overstated¹⁵. The argument is not wholly persuasive however. Risks in Holland were shown to be very high, though non-response was comparatively very low; in Belgium, non-response was high but risks low. It would also seem surprising if risks in the US according to the 1989 survey were actually lower than indicated, which would be the case according to this position.

12 Some early research in the Netherlands on the basis of a mail questionnaire and in Switzerland lends support to this; see Fiselier, J.P.S. (1978) *Slachtoffers van delicten. Een onderzoek naar verborgen criminaliteit*, Ars Aequi Libri, Utrecht; Killias, M. (1989) *Les Suisses face au crime*, Ruegger, Grusch (Switzerland). Both studies showed that victimisation rates were slightly higher among respondents than among non-respondents - though the differences were small.

13 There is some evidence bearing on this from non-response studies outside the victimisation field, which suggest that non-responders register higher on "negative" social indicators, such as ill-health, for example in: Groves, R.M. and L. Lyberg (1988) "An overview of nonresponse issues in telephone surveys" in Groves, R.M., P. Biemer, L. Lyberg, W.L. Nicholls and J. Waksberg (1988) *Telephone survey methodology*, John Wiley, New York. In line with this, Aromaa assumes that the 1992 Finnish sample may include more violence-prone persons than the 1988 sample due to the higher response rate; see the chapter by K. Aromaa on the Results of the International Victimisation Survey in Finland.

14 van Dijk et al., *Experiences...*, op cit.; Bruinsma, G.J.N., H.G. Van De Bunt and J.P.S. Fiselier (1991). "Hoe onveilig is Nederland?: enkele theoretische en methodische kanttekeningen bij een internationaal vergelijkend victimologisch onderzoek" *Tijdschrift voor Criminologie* 32: 138-155.

15 In an independently organised victimisation survey carried out in Germany in 1990, non-response was lower than in the 1989 ICS. The overall victimisation rate was lower than the 1988 rate as well; see Kury, *Victims...*, op. cit. This indicates that rates for West Germany from the first sweep may have been inflated due to the low response rate.

As said, response rates in the 1992 study were generally higher. So too were overall victimisation risks for 1991. What this says about the effect of response rates on victimisation counts is difficult to assess, since "real" changes in risks may have occurred. However, it is notable that in the 1992 survey, several countries with relatively good response yielded higher than average victimisation rates, particularly Poland, Canada and New Zealand.

In sum, then, there is inconclusive evidence on the effects of non-response, which may suggest it has not biased results to any great degree¹⁶. However, it is not ruled out that there could possibly be counterbalancing effects operating, such that the survey picked up a proportion of over-victimised respondents, but lost others for different reasons. Nor can it be ruled out, of course, that the effects of non-response worked differently in different countries.

Weighting

Results presented throughout this report are based on data which have been weighted to make the samples as representative as possible of actual national populations aged 16 or more in terms of gender, regional population distribution, age, and household composition. Data from Czechoslovakia are weighted in terms of gender, regional population distribution and age only because information about household composition was not available. The data from Japan are unweighted, although the sample distribution accords well with the national population profile.

Coverage of the questionnaire

Twelve main forms of victimisation were covered in the 1992 survey, as shown below. For three crimes, sub-divisions are possible. Household crimes are those which can be seen as affecting the household at large, and respondents reported on all incidents known to them. For personal crimes, they reported on what happened to them personally.

Victimisation rates

The indicators

Risks of victimisation can be expressed in various ways. The risks presented here are personal prevalence rates: i.e. the percentage of those aged 16 or more who experienced a specific form of crime once or more¹⁷. Prevalence rates do not reflect the number of times people are victimised. Rather, they show how many of the population are afflicted by crime at all, either individually as a victim of a personal crime, or as a member of a household subject to a household crime. (In

¹⁶ The correlation between non-response rates and overall victimisation rates, based on 35 surveys was not statistically significant ($r = -0.096$; ns).

¹⁷ Incidence rates - a common alternative - express the number of individual crimes experienced by the sample as a whole, counting all incidents against victims. Incidence rates allow a calculation of the overall number of crimes committed in a country (derived by multiplying incidence rates estimated by the survey to the total population). However, with the present sample size this is hazardous.

the ICS, personal crimes are: robbery, theft of personal property, sexual incidents, and assault/threats; household crimes are vehicle theft and damage, bicycle theft, burglary and break-ins to garages, etc.)

The ICS allows estimates for both the calendar year preceding the survey, and for the last five years¹⁸. Findings about the last year will be most accurate, because less serious incidents which took place some time ago tend to be forgotten. This memory loss explains the fact that victimisation rates over five years are much less than five times higher than calendar year rates: five year rates are on average about three times higher.

For countries which took part in both the 1989 and 1992 surveys, the two annual counts are averaged in the following presentation of results. This is to enable better comparisons with countries for which only a 1988 or 1991 count is available. Also, combining figures for two years increases reliability because of increased sample size. Some mention is made later of trends in crime in countries which have conducted two surveys.

West Germany took part in the 1989 survey before unification. It is referred to still as West Germany to avoid misunderstanding as to which states were covered. England and Wales are referred to as England. The Czech and Slovak Republics are still referred to as Czechoslovakia.

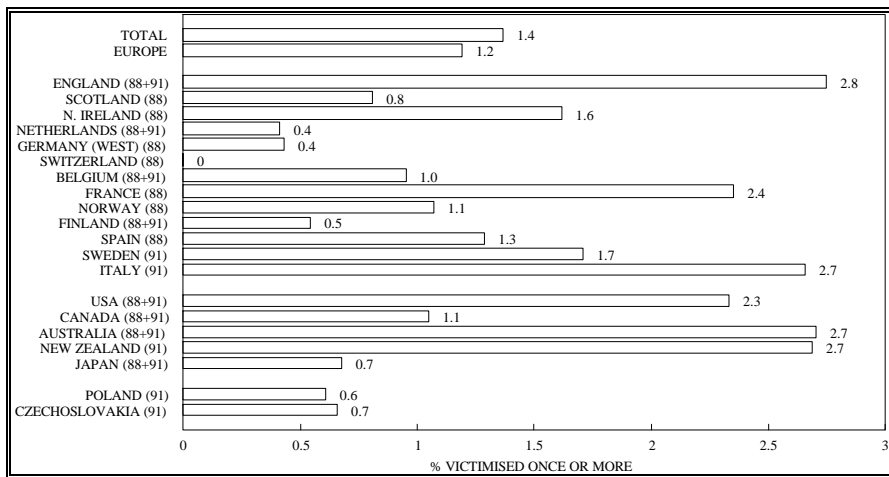
Data in graphics are based on fuller figures than those shown; the bars therefore may not always precisely reflect the prevalence percentages (shown to one decimal place only). The "Total" figures are based on a simple average of data for the twenty countries covered (or those for which data are available). The "Europe" figure is the average excluding the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Theft of cars/joyriding

The interview opened with an inventory of the motor vehicles and bicycles owned by the respondent's household. Next the question was put to car owners whether any of the household cars (including trucks and vans) had been stolen. Cars taken away for the purpose of "joyriding" are covered by the question. Figure 1 shows the one-year prevalence rates for car theft.

Figure 1: One-year victimisation rates for theft of cars

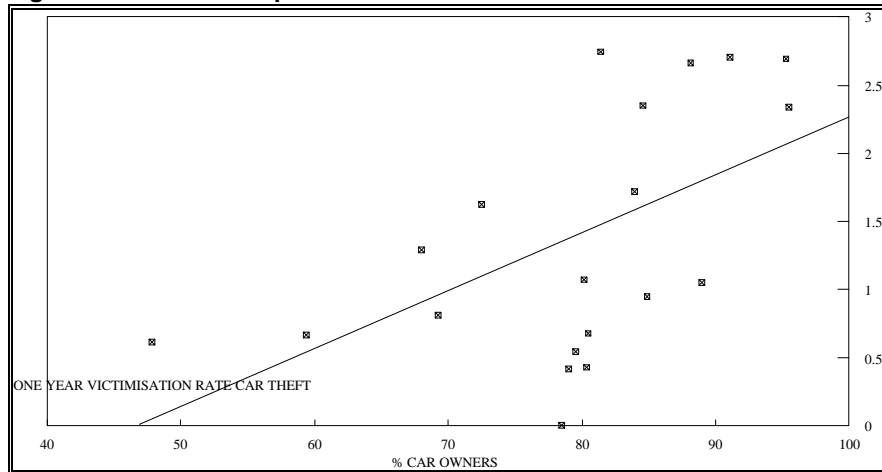
¹⁸ Respondents are asked in the initial "screening" questions about their experience over the past five years. Later follow-up questions deal with the timing of the incidents - eg. whether what happened had been in the current year, or last year (in 1988 or in 1991 respectively), or longer ago. Details are also asked about what happened in the "last incident" if there had been more than one of a particular type.



Risks of car theft vary greatly among the participating countries. In Switzerland, no respondent experienced a theft in 1988. Other countries with low rates are the Netherlands (0.4% of respondents reported a theft), West Germany (0.4%), Finland and Poland (both 0.6%), and Czechoslovakia and Japan (both 0.7%). The prevalence rate for car theft was highest in England (2.8%), Italy, Australia, New Zealand (2.7%), France (2.4%), and the USA (2.3%).

In both survey years, about three-quarters of stolen cars were eventually recovered (taking a measure from the countries at large). Rates of recovery were relatively low in Italy (42% in 1991), West Germany (56% in 1988) and the Netherlands (64%) - indicating that cars may less often be stolen for the temporary purpose of joyriding. Recovery rates were higher in England, Scotland, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, suggesting that the relatively high rates of car theft in these countries may be more influenced by higher levels of joyriding. In the participating countries, Italians appear to face by far the highest risk of having a car stolen which is not recovered.

Figure 2: Car ownership and levels of theft of cars



Ownership rates and vehicle crime

The level of car ownership varies considerably. It is lowest in Poland (only 48% of respondents said there was one or more household car), Czechoslovakia (59%) and Spain (68% in 1988); it is highest in Australia (91%) and the USA (95%)¹⁹. As discussed elsewhere, prevalence rates for vehicle-related crimes correspond to national ownership levels - an indicator of the supply of available targets²⁰. A

¹⁹ The US survey in 1992 used an abridged version of the 1989 questionnaire for cost reasons. The core questions about victimisation and reporting to the police were retained. Among the questions omitted were those on vehicle ownership. Owner-based rates have been constructed from 1989 results.

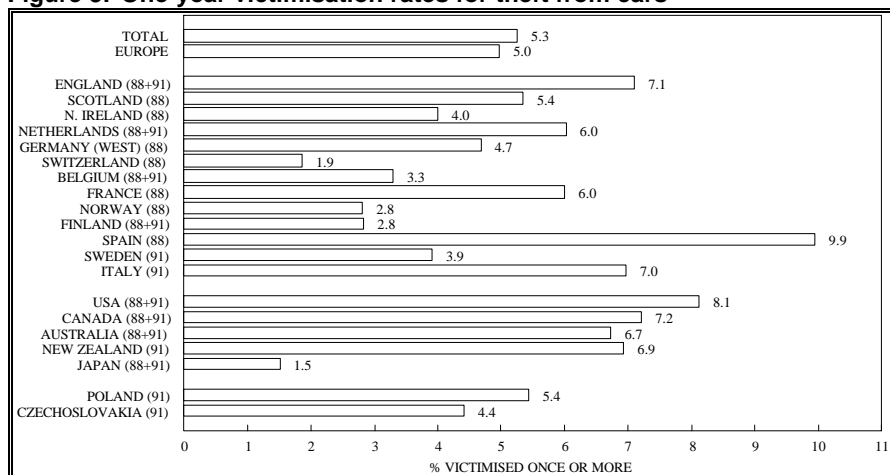
²⁰ van Dijk, Experiences..., op. cit., pp. 47-57.

plentiful supply of vehicles seems to generate more crime - rather than, as might be imagined, criminal demand for vehicles being higher when targets are in shorter supply. Figure 2 shows the association between car ownership rates and levels of theft of cars. (The correlation between the two is $r=0.54$; $p>0.02$; $n=20$).

In general, of course, prevalence rates are higher among owners than among the public at large (because of the smaller base of potential victims). There is good reason, then, to consider victimisation rates for owners specifically. Risks of car theft for owners are the highest in England (3.3%), Italy, Australia (both 3.0%), New Zealand and France (both 2.8%). The owner prevalence rates in Poland and Czechoslovakia are relatively low (1.2% in both countries) but about double the population prevalence rates (0.6% and 0.7% respectively).

The relatively high rates of car theft evident in North America and Australia should be interpreted in relation to high levels of car ownership (and of second and third household cars in particular). The relatively low theft rates in Poland and Czechoslovakia for the population in general may reflect the limited supply of "suitable targets" for theft, in particular more desirable cars. Since the opening of the borders with Eastern Europe, the demand for second-hand cars in the East may well have constituted a pull factor for car theft in the West. According to some police reports, an increasing number of cars stolen in Western Europe are exported East²¹. The association between theft of cars and bicycle ownership and bicycle theft is taken up below.

Figure 3: One-year victimisation rates for theft from cars



Theft from cars

²¹ Ministry of Justice (October 1992) "De Politie en de Muur" in SEC, Tijdschrift over Samenleving en Criminaliteitspreventie. Vol. 6, Ministry of Justice, The Hague.

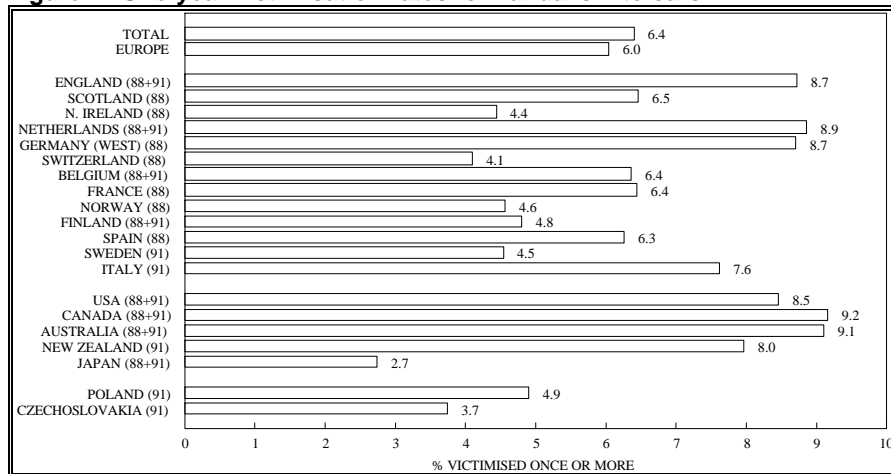
The second form of crime asked about was theft from a car, covering both items left in the car and parts taken off the car, such as wing mirrors and badges.

Some 9.9% of respondents had experienced a theft from a car in Spain, 8.1% in the USA, 7.2% in Canada, 7.1% in England, and 7.0% in Italy (Figure 3). Countries with low levels of thefts from cars are Japan, Switzerland, Finland and Norway -the last three countries at least being characterised by a relatively large part of the population living in small towns and villages.

Ownership rates

The ranking of countries on the basis of ownership rates is largely the same as the ranking on the basis of population rates. The exceptions, however, are Poland and Czechoslovakia, where owners face strikingly higher risks - perhaps propelled by an acute shortage of spare parts in Eastern European countries²². Car owners in Spain and Poland run the highest risk of becoming victim of a theft from or out of a car.

Figure 4: One-year victimisation rates for vandalism to cars



Vandalism to cars

Another question dealt with malicious damage (vandalism) to cars. As previous questions on car theft had not covered incidents of attempted theft of, or from cars, it is possible that the car vandalism question picked up some cases of unsuccessful attempts (for which the evidence was likely to be damage to door handles, or broken windows for instance).

²² The national rates for thefts from cars are not significantly related to national car ownership rates. See the chapter by S. Timoshenko on the International Crime Survey in Moscow.

The highest rates of car vandalism are in Canada (9.2%) and Australia (9.1%), the Netherlands (8.9%), England and West Germany (8.7%), and the USA (8.5%).

The ranking of countries on the basis of car vandalism rates for owners does not deviate much from the ranking on population rates. However, owner rates in Poland are at the top end of the scale.

Theft of motorcycles/mopeds/scooters

The one-year prevalence rates for theft of motorcycle (i.e. motorcycles, mopeds and scooters) are below one percent in all participating countries, except Japan (1.8%), Italy (1.6%) and Switzerland (1.2%). Figure 5 shows details.

Figure 5: One-year victimisation rates for theft of motorcycles

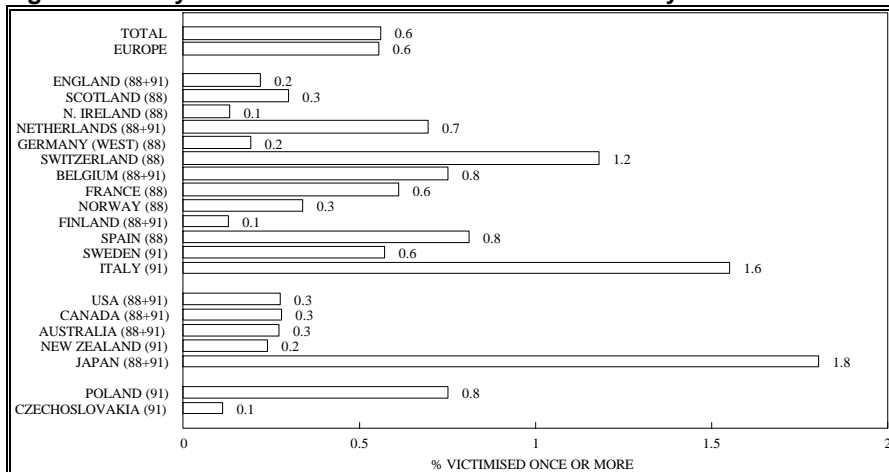
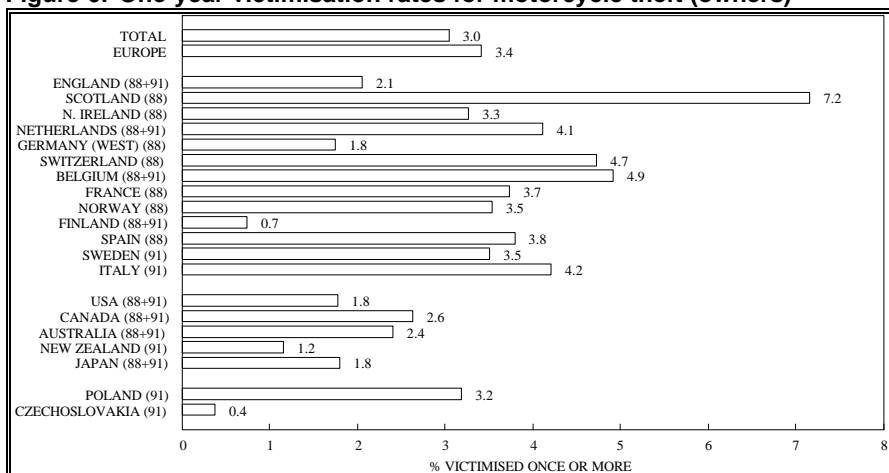


Figure 6: One-year victimisation rates for motorcycle theft (owners)



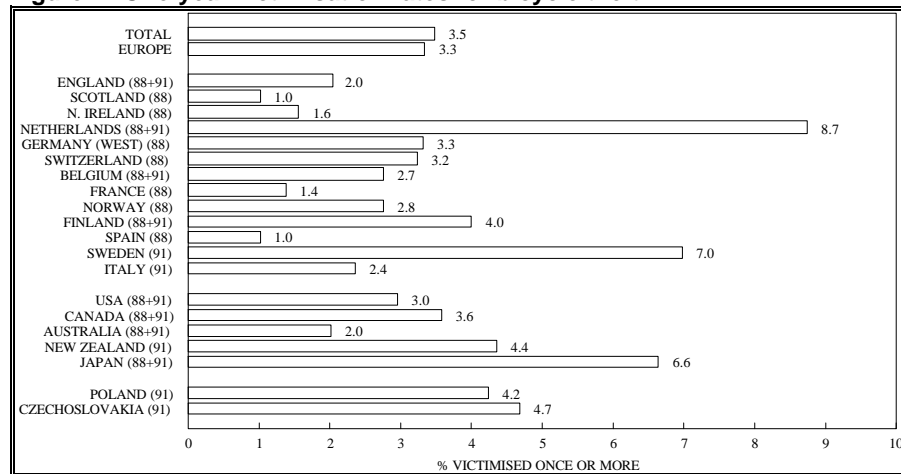
There are very differing levels of ownership of motorcycles, with highest ownership in Italy (37% with motorcycles), Japan (35%), Poland (24%) and Czechoslovakia (29%). Elsewhere, less than one in five respondents said they owned motorcycles. Reflecting the small owner base, owner theft rates are substantially higher than the population rates. They also show a somewhat different ranking, as can be seen from Figure 6.

The highest risks of theft were faced by owners in Scotland (though numbers are small), Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and the Netherlands. Only in Italy and Switzerland were ownership rates high.

Bicycle theft

One-year victimisation rates are by far the highest in the Netherlands (8.7% respondents reporting a theft). Other countries with high rates are Sweden (7.0%), Japan (6.7%), Czechoslovakia (4.7%), New Zealand (4.4%), Poland (4.3%) and Finland (4.0%). The relative risks are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: One-year victimisation rates for bicycle theft

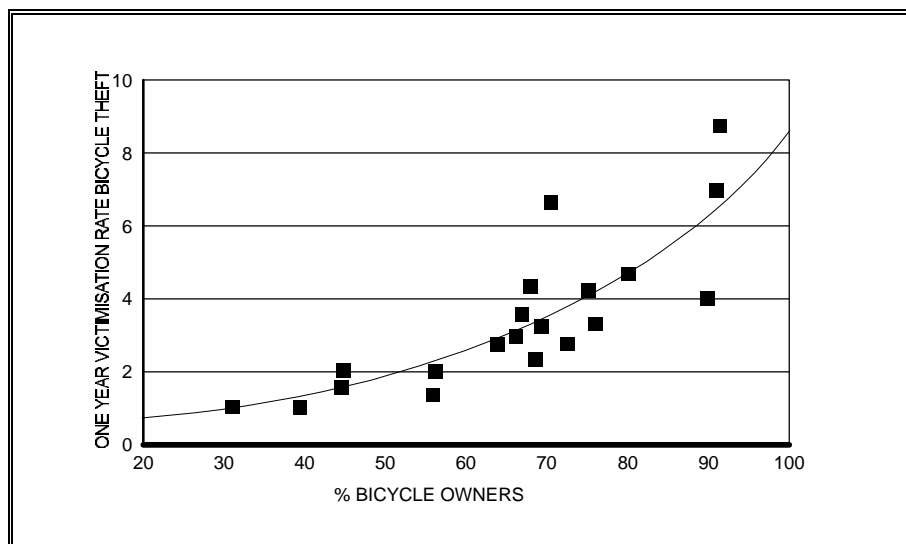


Ownership levels vary between 31% in Scotland to over 90% in the Netherlands and Sweden. Owner prevalence rates for theft show less variation across countries than the population prevalence rates, with the result that the ranking of countries is largely the same on both bases. Again, highest owner rates are found in the Netherlands (9.6%), Sweden (7.7%), Japan (7.3%), and New Zealand (6.4%).

Previous analysis has shown that national bicycle theft rates and bicycle ownership have a strong positive correlation: i.e. thefts are high where ownership is high. The linear correlation coefficient is 0.80 (n=20). An exponential correlation coefficient is stronger (r=0.89), suggesting that for a given increase in the number of

bicycles there is a disproportionate increase in theft. Figure 8 depicts the curvilinear relationship between ownership levels and theft.

Figure 8: One-year victimisation rates of bicycle theft by national bicycle ownership



Car theft and bicycle theft

On the basis of 1989 ICS results, national car theft rates were inversely related to both levels of ownership of bicycles, and levels of bicycle thefts themselves - an association that remains in multivariate analysis which takes account of urbanisation, wealth, and levels of other crime for instance²³. Thus, in countries where bicycles are particularly common, stealing cars less often occurs and bicycle theft is commoner²⁴. This applies notably to Switzerland, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and West Germany - where in each there are three or more bicycles owned for each car.

Explanations for the inverse relationship between car theft and bicycle theft are not obvious, though on the face of it the results suggest that when there are plenty of bicycles around, some thieves will make do with two wheels rather than four. This hints at a degree of "target switch" among thieves who want a means of temporary transportation, or a means of making money from what they have stolen. At the same time, the relationship may reflect interacting factors which result in particular countries having particular "cultures" of vehicle theft. In England, then, the culture is one of stealing cars; in some other countries (notably the Netherlands), the culture seems to be one of stealing bicycles. These theft cultures may be underpinned by a

²³ van Dijk, Experiences..., op. cit.

²⁴ On 1989 and 1992 data combined, the correlation between bicycle ownership and theft of cars is -0.35 (n=20;ns).

number of things: for instance, the absolute supply of different targets; the types, accessibility and security of targets available; or aspects of youth culture (youngsters brought up in a bicycle- or moped-oriented environment may possibly be less inclined to steal cars for joyriding in their teens, partly because they have less experience of driving cars). With regard to bicycle theft in particular, it may be that well developed "fencing" operations arise when theft is common, and/or that wide availability could itself set up a process of opportunist thieving. It has even been suggested that some people who have their own bikes frequently stolen compensate their losses by stealing bicycles themselves²⁵.

Burglary

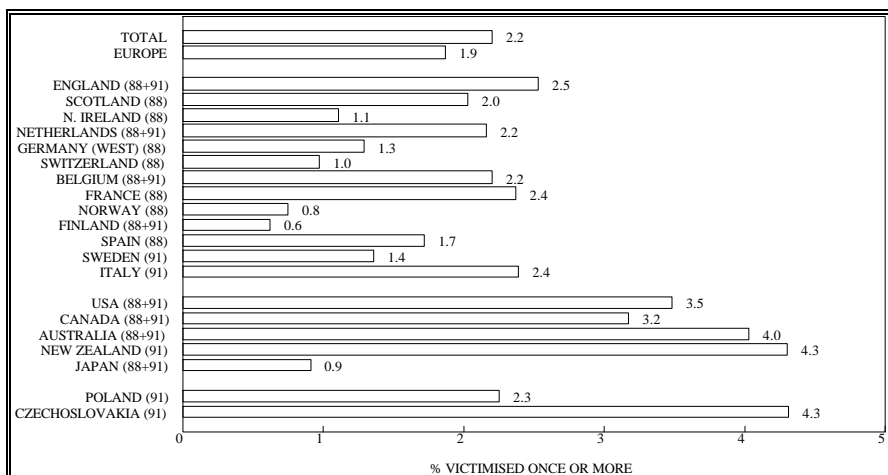
The 1989 survey had two measures of burglary: (i) incidents in which a burglar entered the home ("burglary with entry"); and (ii) incidents of attempted burglary. The 1992 survey included a third measure of break-ins to other household "outbuildings" (i.e. garages, sheds and lock-ups), which had been specifically excluded in the 1989 questions about burglary.

Burglary with entry

Burglars get into people's homes most frequently in non-European countries. Some 4.3% of respondents in New Zealand and Czechoslovakia had been burgled; 4.0% in Australia; 3.5% in the USA, and 3.2% in Canada (Figure 9). Within Western Europe, burglary rates vary in a narrow range - between just under one percent to just over two percent of households having been targeted. Comparatively low rates are found in more rural countries such as Switzerland (1.0%), Norway (0.8%), Finland (0.6%) and Northern Ireland (1.1%). Burglary rates in Japan are also low (0.9%).

Figure 9: One-year victimisation rates for burglary with entry

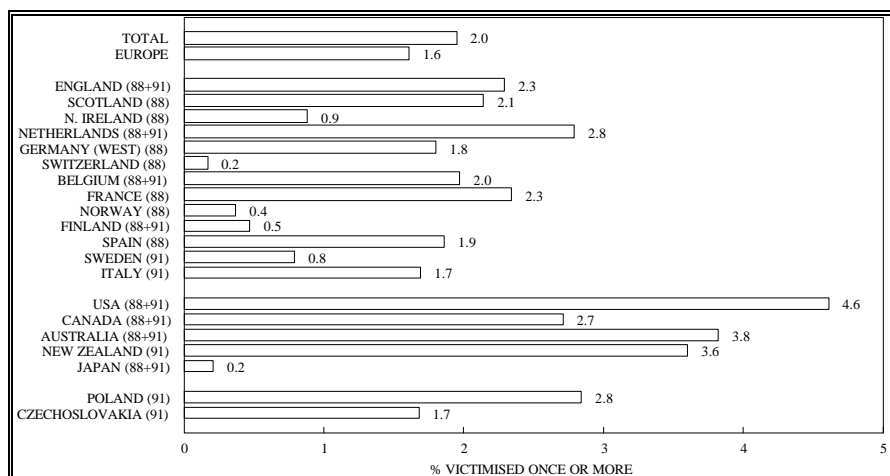
²⁵ van Dijk, J.J.M. (1986) "Responding to crime: reflections on the reactions of victims and non-victims to the increase in petty crime" in Fattah, E. (ed.) Reorientating the justice system, Macmillan, London.



Analysis of 1989 ICS results (at the individual level), showed that, combining data from all countries, those in semi-detached and detached houses had rather higher risks than those in terraced houses and flats/maisonettes, although different types of dwelling varied in their vulnerability according to country - no doubt because of different housing patterns. (For instance, flat-dwellers were most at risk in the USA, England, Northern Ireland, France and Finland; in other countries, those in semi-detached and detached houses were more vulnerable). On the basis of both 1989 and 1992 data, national level analysis now shows a statistically significant positive relationship between the proportion of semi-detached and detached houses each country has and national burglary rates ($r=0.53$; $p<0.05$; $n=19$). This is consistent with research which shows that many burglars opt for semi-detached and detached houses as their preferred targets, probably because of easier access²⁶.

Figure 10: One-year victimisation rates for attempted burglary

²⁶ For a summary, see Shover, N. (1991) "Burglary" in Tonry, M. and N. Morris (eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research*, Vol 14, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.



Attempted burglary

Rates for attempted burglaries are similar to those for completed burglaries in most countries. By and large, then, people in countries where burglars are successful in gaining entry also experience more attempted burglaries. Figure 10 shows risks of attempted burglary.

Break-ins to garages, sheds, lock-ups

The rates for break-ins to "outbuildings" (garages, sheds and lock-ups) varied considerably across the limited number of countries in which the new 1992 ICS question was used. Fewest people were victim in Belgium (0.9%), Italy (1.5%), and the Netherlands (2.1%); rather more were victim in Poland (6.2%), New Zealand (4.8%), Australia (4.2%) and the USA (4.0%). No information is available about which households in different countries are more or less likely to have "outbuildings" around their home - though it might well be assumed that those living in detached or semi-detached houses have more such premises²⁷. The highest proportions of those in detached or semi-detached houses were in Australia (81%), New Zealand (80%), and the USA (77%); the lowest were in the Netherlands (35%), and Italy (28%). Being a victim of outbuilding break-ins, then, is very much a consequence of owning vulnerable structures²⁸.

Robbery

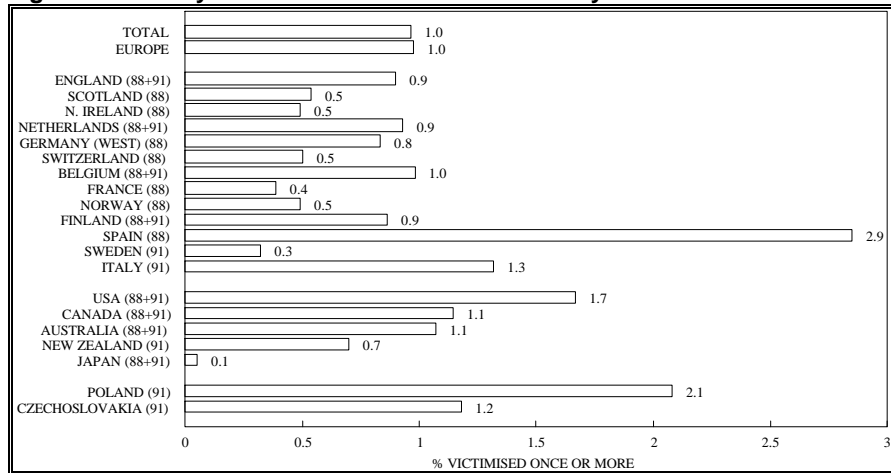
²⁷ The 1992 survey asked about private garaging facilities for cars, but covers a limited number of countries, and says nothing about other premises on or near the home which might be targets of theft.

²⁸ The correlation between the proportion of those in detached and semi-detached houses and break-in rates was 0.63 ($p < 0.02$; $n = 12$)

The one-year victimisation rates for robbery were highest in Spain (2.9% in 1988), Poland (1.9% in 1991), the USA (a combined measure of 1.7% for 1988 and 1991). Rates in Italy (1.3%, 1991) were also relatively high (Figure 11).

In about 40% of the incidents of robbery, the perpetrator(s) used a weapon during the incident. In 20% a knife was used, and in 10% a gun. Deviations from this pattern were the high percentages of robberies with knives in Spain (40% in 1988) and with guns in Italy (17%) and the USA (28% in 1988)²⁹.

Figure 11: One-year victimisation rates for robbery



Other personal theft

The questionnaire gathered information about a broad range of thefts of personal property: pickpocketing, theft of a purse, wallet, clothing, jewelry, sports equipment (either at school, or in the pub, at the beach or in the street). Figure 12 shows the one-year prevalence rates.

The national rates for "other personal thefts" are difficult to interpret because of their heterogeneous composition. Rates were highest in the two participating East European countries, Poland (7.9%) and Czechoslovakia (6.7%). Other countries with high rates are Australia (5.7%), Canada (5.5%), New Zealand (5.3%), Spain (5.0%), and the USA (4.9%). The rate in Japan is very low set against other countries (0.7%). In general, rates for personal thefts tend to be higher in countries with higher rates of other crimes.

Figure 12: One-year victimisation rates for other personal theft

²⁹ The question about use of weapons in robberies was not asked in the USA in the 1992 survey.

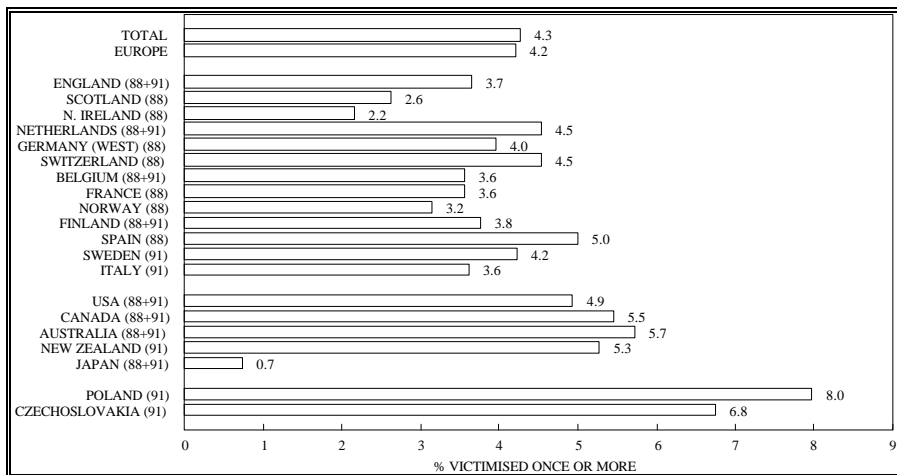
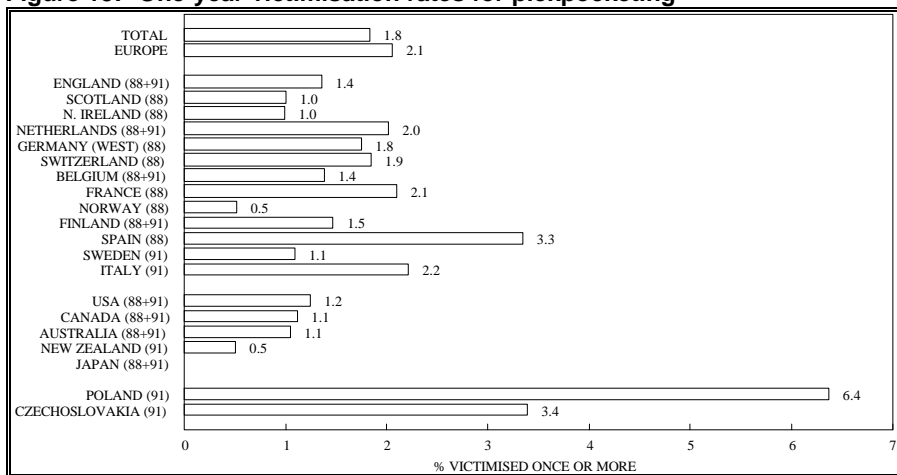


Figure 13: One-year victimisation rates for pickpocketing



Pickpocketing

Most thefts of personal property involved no contact between victim and offender. But in roughly one-third of all cases the victims said they were carrying or holding what was stolen (making it for present purposes a case of "pickpocketing")³⁰. Figure 13 presents estimated pickpocketing rates.

Pickpocketing appears most common in Poland (6.4% of respondents were victimised in 1991), Czechoslovakia (3.4% in 1991), Spain (3.3% in 1988), Italy (2.2% in 1991), France (2.1% in 1988) and the Netherlands (2.0% in 1991). The lowest rates are in New Zealand, Norway, Australia, Sweden, Canada and the United Kingdom. By and large, then, pickpocketing seems more common in Europe, though with variation in levels within European countries.

Sexual incidents

The question put to female respondents to examine their experience of sexual crimes and offensive sexual behaviour is shown below. In the 1991 questionnaire the verb "assault" was added to include more serious incidents.

"Firstly, a rather personal question. People sometimes grab, touch or assault others for sexual reasons in a really offensive way. This can happen either inside one's house or elsewhere, for instance in a pub, the street, at school, on public transport, in cinemas, on the beach, or at one's workplace. Over the past five years has anyone done this to you? Please take your time to think about this."

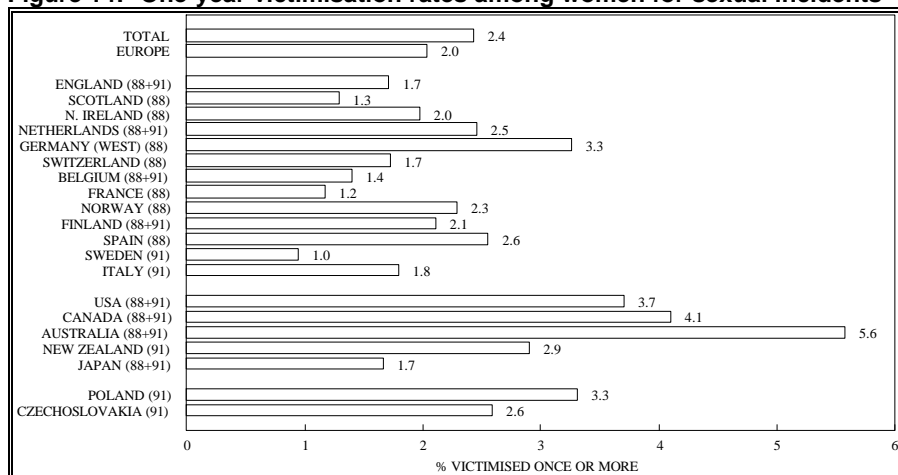
Measuring sexual offences is extremely difficult in victimisation surveys, since both definitions of sexual incidents and readiness to report them to an interviewer may differ across groups, and across countries. Answers may also be influenced by the communicative skills of the interviewers; or their gender (though present analysis showed no systematic relationship between the proportion of female interviewers and national rates of sexual incidents). The ICS measure of sexual offences must be interpreted with great care, then, though results are presented here again, albeit with the additional perspective provided by two follow-up questions designed to assess better the nature of what happened (see below).

The question asked allows two broad types of sexual incidents to be distinguished: (i) sexual assaults (rape, attempted rape, and indecent assault); and (ii) offensive sexual behaviour. Figure 14, first, presents the rates for all sexual

³⁰ Rates of pickpocketing in 1988 were based on the subset of respondents for whom the "last incident" fell in that year. The rates were derived as follows: first, the number of respondents was calculated whose last incident in 1988 was a case of pickpocketing; next, an estimate was made of the number of "double" victims whose last incident was not a case of pickpocketing, but whose first incident was - done by applying the overall percentage of pickpocketing cases. In roughly the same fashion, the number of pickpocketing victims among triple and other multiple victims was estimated. These estimated numbers were added to those for single victims to give an overall pickpocketing rate. The same procedure is applied to sexual assaults as a sub-set of sexual incidents, and to assaults with force as a sub-set of assaults/threats. On receipt of 1992 ICS results, the procedures for estimating offence sub-categories (such as pickpocketing) were applied more rigorously to both the new data and that from the 1989 survey. Some figures for 1988, therefore, differ marginally from those previously published.

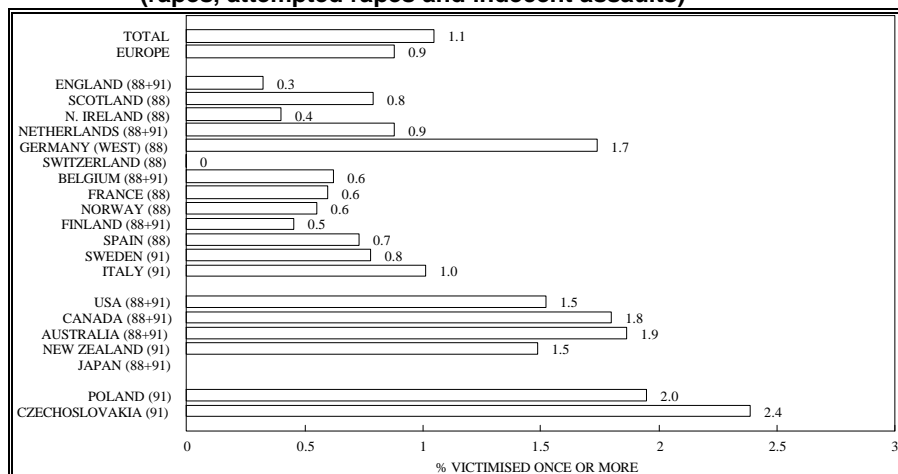
incidents taken together. The one-year rates were highest in Australia (5.6%), Canada (4.1%), the USA (3.7%), West Germany (3.3%) and Poland (3.2%).

Figure 14: One-year victimisation rates among women for sexual incidents



A third of the incidents were seen as sexual assaults (a rape, an attempted rape, an indecent assault) - the proportion not differing greatly across countries. Figure 15 shows one-year risks among women of sexual assaults (rapes, attempted rapes and indecent assaults). Rates for sexual assaults were highest in Czechoslovakia (2.4%), Poland (2.0%), Australia (1.9%), Canada (1.8%) and West Germany (1.7%).

Figure 15: One-year victimisation rates among women for sexual assaults (rapes, attempted rapes and indecent assaults)



To repeat, these results must be viewed cautiously. However, that the proportion of incidents seen as sexual assaults is roughly similar across country lends some credibility to the differences in risk. On the face of it, there is little ground for believing that where high figures for sexual incidents emerge, these are boosted by a higher sensitivity among women in some countries to more minor sexual harassments.

In the 1992 survey, all respondents who mentioned a sexual incident were asked whether, taken everything into account, they considered the incident "very serious", "fairly serious" or "not very serious". On average, 40% of victims considered the incident "very serious"; and 75% "very" or "fairly" serious³¹.

Victims of offensive sexual behaviour were also asked whether they regarded the incident as a crime. In the seven countries for which data are available, more women in Sweden, England, Belgium and Italy felt it was (in excess of 50%), whereas there were lower figures for the USA, Canada and Australia (around 45%), and the lowest of all for the Netherlands (15%). Very tentatively then, in countries which might be seen as more permissive in their attitudes towards sexuality, women are sensitive to offensive sexual behaviour but seem less inclined to label it as criminal.

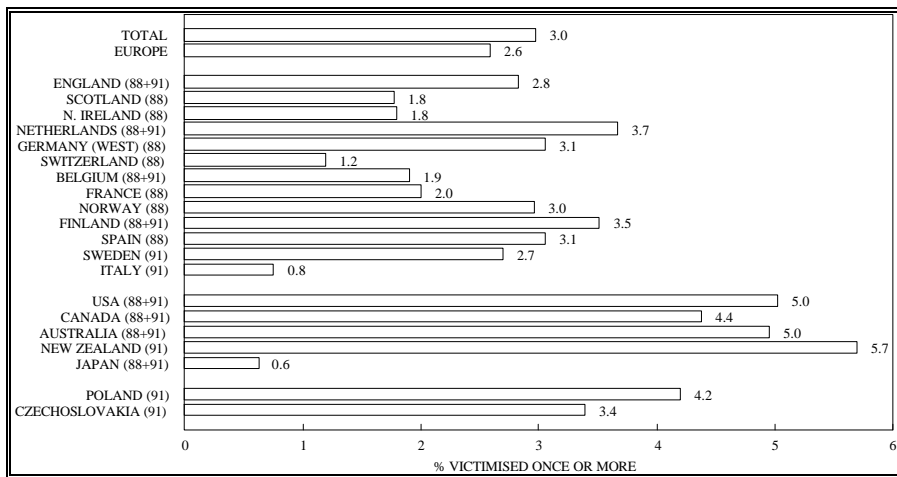
Assaults/threats

The question asked of respondents was:

"Have you been personally attacked or threatened by someone in a way that really frightened you, either at home, or elsewhere, such as in a pub, in the street, at school, on public transport, on the beach, or at your workplace?"

Figure 16: One-year victimisation rates for assault/threats

³¹ In the Netherlands and Sweden, the percentage thinking what had happened was "very serious" was lower than average (29% and 31% respectively); in Italy it was higher (61%). However, this was in line with answers about the seriousness of other offences. Those in Italy were consistently more likely to view offences as more serious, whereas those in Sweden and the Netherlands leaned the other way.

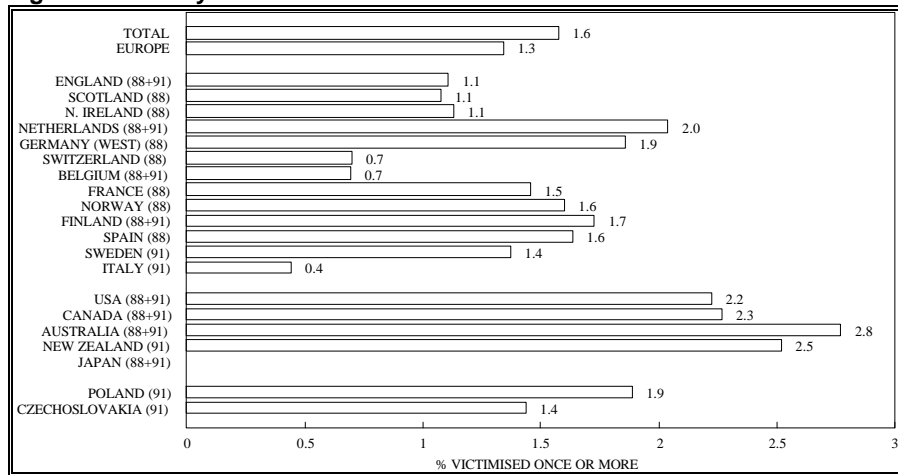


Risks of assault/threats were relatively high in New Zealand (5.7% in 1991), the USA (5.0%), Australia (5.0%) and Canada (4.4%). Countries with assault rates of around four percent are Poland (4.0%), the Netherlands (3.7%), Finland (3.5%) and Czechoslovakia (3.4%). The lowest rates were measured in Japan (0.6%) Italy (0.8%), and Switzerland (1.2%). Figure 16 shows details.

In 40% of the incidents, the offender actually used force, as opposed to threatening behaviour. Figure 17 presents national rates for assaults with force. One-year risks were highest in Australia (2.8%), New Zealand (2.5%), Canada (2.3%) and the USA (2.2%). The lowest rates were in Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, and Japan (see Figure 17).

Victims of assaults were asked several other follow-up questions about what happened. In 16% of the threats a weapon was used as intimidation. Those who experienced assaults with force, were asked whether they were shot, stabbed or otherwise assaulted with a weapon. About ten percent of such assaults involved a weapon. Overall, half of those assaulted had actually suffered injury; a quarter saw a doctor as a result. The national figures do not deviate greatly from the overall pattern, broadly indicating that the seriousness of the incidents reported in interview is similar much across country. Countries in which more people mention threats are also those in which more mention is made of assaults with force too.

Figure 17: One-year victimisation rates for assault with force



ICS rates of assaultive behaviour are only a rough guide to national levels of interpersonal violence. For one, they are only weakly related to the homicide rates according to World Health Organisation (WHO) statistics. Thus, for instance, within Europe, the Netherlands has a high ICS rate of assault, but a low homicide rate (1 per 100,000). The homicide rate of the USA is greatly in excess of European rates (9 per 100,000), although the ICS indicator of assault for the USA is by no means

as disproportionately high. Killias³² has cogently argued, on the basis of 1989 ICS results about gun ownership and WHO data on levels of homicide with guns, that homicide rates are likely to reflect levels of gun ownership rather than underlying aggressive behaviour: countries with high gun ownership simply have more gun deaths³³. The ICS data show that ownership rates of hand guns are the highest in the USA (27%), Switzerland (13%; mainly army weapons), Finland (7%), West Germany (7%), Belgium (7%), France (6%) and Italy (6%).

Overall, 30% of victims knew the offender by name, and 12% by sight. This pattern holds across countries, although more victims in Scotland (52%) and Canada (50%) knew their attackers by name than elsewhere. In Canada at least, national campaigns to raise women's awareness about the criminal nature of domestic violence may have played a part in prompting more admissions to interviewers.

Victims were asked finally to assess the seriousness of the incident ("taken everything into account, how serious was the incident for you? Was it very serious, fairly serious, or not very serious?"). Forty percent of victims considered the incident very serious and 30% as fairly serious. National figures do not deviate much, with the exception of Italy where a higher percentage considered the incident very serious (60%). The general similarity of responses suggests that the incidents mentioned by respondents in various countries possess roughly similar characteristics.

It is notable that national rates for assaults/threats and sexual incidents closely correspond. Countries with the highest levels of aggressive criminality are Australia, the USA, New Zealand, Canada and Poland, while other countries with relatively high levels are West Germany, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands and Finland. In all these, the consumption of beer per capita is relatively high with the exception of Poland (a country with a high per capita consumption of spirits). The lowest levels of "aggressive" crime are in Japan, Italy, Switzerland, Scotland and France - most of them countries where the consumption of wine is high³⁴. Clearly, drinking patterns will be only one factor in explaining differences in aggressive behaviour, but given Field's finding that in England growth in beer consumption (rather than alcohol consumption per se) is strongly related to growth in violent crime, the ICS results will merit further examination with multivariate analysis³⁵.

Overall prevalence rates

Various publications reporting results from the 1989 ICS have shown overall prevalence rates (i.e. the percentage of the public victimised by any of the crimes

³² Killias, M.A. (1990) "Gun ownership and violent crime: the Swiss experience in international perspective" *Security Journal* 1:169-174.

³³ Cook, P.J. (1983) "The influence of gun availability on violent crime patterns" in Tonry, M. and N. Morris (eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research*, Vol 4, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

³⁴ National beer consumption rates and national rates for assault/threats are weakly but positively correlated with each other (rank correlation 0.434; $p < .10$; $n = 18$).

³⁵ Field, S. (1990) Trends in crime and their interpretation: a study of recorded crime in post-war England and Wales, Home Office Research Study No. 119, HMSO, London.

covered in the past year). It is acknowledged that this is a fairly crude indicator of annual risk since:

- (i) it conceals the extent to which people may have experienced more than one type of crime;
- (ii) it says nothing about the number of times they have been victimised;
- (iii) differences in the degree of seriousness of what happened are ignored (for instance, being the victim once only, but of a very serious assault may count for more than experience of a number of "petty" thefts of items from work).

This said, the overall annual crime prevalence measure from the two sweeps of the ICS is a readily understandable indicator of proneness to victimisation in different countries - and it is worth reporting on this account. Future publications will give more sophisticated indices of proneness to crime, taking into account, for instance, multiple victimisation and the degree of seriousness accorded by victims to what happened to them.

Taking the average of counts from countries participating in both the 1989 and 1992 ICS, alongside the "last year" counts from countries participating in 1989 or 1992 alone showed that countries with relatively high overall prevalence rates (above 25%) are New Zealand, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, the USA and Poland. Countries with moderately high levels (20-25%) are England, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Italy, West Germany and Sweden. Countries with rates below 20% are France, Scotland, Belgium, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, Northern Ireland and Japan. Table 3 shows details. It should be stressed that within the victimisation bands the rates in different countries are usually statistically indistinguishable. In other words, the differences could be explained by sampling error. Moreover, since the overall rates are based on an average of two years for those countries taking part in the survey twice, they are not necessarily comparing "like with like" in terms of time.

Table 3: Overall victimisation rates for all crimes.¹ Percent victim of any crime over the past year

27.5% - 30.0%	New Zealand	Netherlands	Canada	Australia	USA
25.0% - 27.4%	Poland				
22.5% - 24.9%	England&Wales	Czechoslovakia	Italy	Spain	
20.0% - 22.4%	TOTAL	West Germany	Sweden	EUROPE	
17.5% - 19.9%	France	Scotland	Belgium	Finland	
15.0% - 17.4%	Norway	Switzerland			
12.5% - 14.9%	Northern Ireland				
Under 12.4%	Japan				

1. Based on eleven crimes comparable over the 1989 and 1992 surveys. Average values are taken for countries taking part in both surveys.

Overall prevalence rates are positively related to degree of urbanisation. Due to the greater supply of suitable targets and perhaps less informal social control, "city

air" seems to breed crime in most countries - though Japan is a notable exception to the rule.

An overview of crime specific rates

Theft of cars

Rates for car theft/joyriding are the highest in countries with both high car ownership levels - which excludes East European countries - and low levels of bicycle owners - which excludes the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, West Germany, Switzerland, Canada and Japan. Consequently, countries with the highest rates are the USA, Australia, England, Britain, Italy and France.

Thefts from cars

Rates here are partly dependent upon levels of car ownership. In line with this, Poland and Czechoslovakia show moderately low levels. The highest levels are in Spain, the USA, Canada, England, Australia, Italy and the Netherlands. In relation to only moderately high national car ownership theft rates are remarkably high in Spain and, to a lesser extent, in the Netherlands. The rates in Belgium, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries and Japan are lower than might be expected on the basis of car ownership.

Bicycle theft

The highest rates for bicycle theft are in the countries with high ownership levels of bicycles: the Netherlands and Sweden in particular. Rates of theft are also high in Japan, in correspondence with a high ownership rate and in contrast to a low overall crime rate.

Motorcycle theft

Rates of motorcycle (or moped or scooter) theft are highest in countries such as Japan, Italy and Switzerland where such vehicles are more common, though some countries with lower ownership also have higher than average rates.

Burglary

Burglaries and break-ins are commoner in countries with the highest proportion of people living in semi-detached and detached homes, such as Australia, the USA, Poland, Czechoslovakia and England.

Personal thefts and pickpocketing

Rates are highest in Poland, Czechoslovakia, North America, New Zealand, Australia and Spain.

Pickpocketing

By and large, pickpocketing is more common within Europe, though there are variations between European countries. Risks are highest for those in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Italy, France and the Netherlands.

Robbery

Rates for robbery (theft with force) are the highest in Spain, Poland, the USA and Italy. In Italy this is largely due to high rates of bag snatching (a scippo).

Aggressive crime

The highest rates of aggressive crime are in North America, Australia and Poland. Low levels of violence are found in Switzerland, Italy, France, Belgium and Japan. With the exception of Japan, wine is the most popular alcoholic drink in these countries, rather than beer - though alcohol consumption patterns will of course reflect other national characteristics which are likely to impinge on crime.

Trends between 1988 and 1991

The ICS has been carried out twice in eight countries and so potentially allows an assessment of crime trends between 1988 and 1991. An overview of trends is given below - though some important caveats need to be borne in mind:

- the percentage increases in crime given below are based on prevalence victimisation rates in the two survey years (i.e. the proportion of people victimised once or more). These rates are subject to sampling error so the extent of the percentage increase in crime is only indicative;
- there may have been changes between the two surveys in the performance of interviewing companies, affecting the amount of victimisation measured;
- small changes in methodology (of which the Working Group may not always be aware) could also influence the counts. It is known, for instance, that procedures in Japan changed between the two surveys, which makes its trend data unreliable.

It also goes without saying that from this limited sample it is hazardous to draw firm conclusions about trends in crime in industrialised countries.

With these caveats in mind, for seven of the eight countries participating in the first and second sweeps of the ICS, Table 4 presents changes in the overall prevalence rates in 1988 and 1991 (i.e. the percentage of respondents who reported a victimisation of some type or other over the year). The indications are that prevalence risks have generally increased, in particular in England. Risks decreased in the USA - not out of line with other indicators (see below). Overall risks stayed very stable in Australia, Canada and Belgium.

Table 4: Overall prevalence of crime, 1988 and 1991

	% of respondents victim of one or more crime, once or more ²		% change ¹
	1988	1991	1988-1991
England & Wales	19.5	30.2	56
Netherlands	26.8	31.3	17
Belgium	17.7	19.3	9
Finland	15.9	20.7	26
USA	28.9	26.1	-13
Canada	28.1	28.4	1
Australia	27.8	28.6	3

1. Percentage changes based on more precise figures.
2. Based on eleven offences comparable across both surveys.

The information from the ICS on trends in crime between 1988 and 1991 can be set against other indicators of changes in risks: firstly, data from other victimisation surveys; and secondly, from offences recorded by the police. For many reasons, though, there are limits to these comparisons. The only countries for which there is an alternative measure from national-level victimisation surveys are: the Netherlands (the Dutch National Crime Survey); England and Wales (the British Crime Survey); and the USA (the National Crime Victimization Survey). More important, counts from these independently organised surveys are difficult to compare with the ICS, and with each other. Comparability will be influenced by differences in survey design and even small differences in offence classification can seriously affect counts³⁶.

Comparing trends on the basis of figures recorded by the police is also difficult. Definitions of offences used by the police will differ, so that if the underlying trend in an offence category combining residential and non-residential burglaries, for example, is different from residential burglary alone, this will compromise comparisons. More important is that police figures could reflect changes in recording practice over time, and a change in the readiness of victims to report offences to the police.

A finer-grained picture of trends is presented in Table 5 which shows percentage increases in individual ICS offences between 1988 and 1991. Also shown are increases according to:

- (i) available figures of offences recorded by the police, taking the best available "match" and using in the main the most accessible three-year trend figures for 1987-1990; and
- (ii) results from national victimisation surveys for the Netherlands, England and the USA.

For reasons given, the comparisons are tentative, and more should be made of the general direction of trends, than of precise differences in increases or decreases. Motorcycle thefts are omitted because of small numbers³⁷. So too are risks for thefts of personal property as there were generally few differences between the 1988 and 1991 rates and comparisons with other indicators are difficult³⁸. Neither are figures for Japan shown because trend data are undermined by changes in methodology³⁹.

Theft of cars

³⁶ van Dijk Experiences..., op. cit., p. 107.

³⁷ On the face of it, risks of motorcycle theft have increased since 1988 in England and Wales, the Netherlands, Belgium and the USA.

³⁸ There are no significant differences between the 1988 and 1991 rates for pickpocketing specifically, with the exception of those in Canada (where - on small numbers - risk fell from 1.4% to 0.8%).

³⁹ Risks increased for most offences in Japan, but this is most likely to have been due to changes in how respondents were questioned. In the 1992 Japanese survey, respondents were not asked about five year risks. This may have had the effect of some less recent incidents being "telescoped" into the reference period. While this change compromises comparisons of crime in Japan in 1988 and 1991, it does little to alter the conclusion that risks of most crimes in Japan are low compared to other countries. Risks of bicycle theft and motorcycle theft seem exceptions.

In all countries, thefts of cars have increased according to the ICS. In five countries - England, the Netherlands, Finland, Canada, and Australia - the increases were of 25% or more, and fall outside the range explained by sampling error. In spite of economic recession, car ownership has increased since 1988, though to a less marked degree than the upward trend in thefts, which in any case is probably little influenced by year-on-year changes in the absolute number of cars on the road after a certain level of ownership. To what extent the opening of the borders with East European countries has increased the demand for stolen cars is impossible to say, though - as said - some police sources believe it may have a part to play.

Table 5: Trends in crime, 1988-1991: percentage increases in (i) ICS risks; (ii) offences recorded by the police⁹; and (iii) national crime surveys estimates

	England & Wales	Netherlands	Belgium	Finland	USA	Canada	Australia ⁴
Theft of cars							
ICS	98	83	16	79	23	59	37
Recorded offences ²	59	27	46	67	16	31	1
National surveys ³	41	67			27		
Theft from cars							
ICS	53	30	41	10	-24	2	-5
Recorded offences ²	47	-5		47			
National surveys ³	9	-3			-5 ⁵		
Car vandalism							
ICS ¹	57	16	-6	40	-9	-13	8
Recorded offences	38						
National surveys ³	21	10					
Bicycle thefts							
ICS ¹	205	32	1	57	-7	9	8
Recorded offences	95	10					
National surveys ³	35	-2					
Burglary⁶							
ICS ¹	52	-5	-5	37	-25	5	-7
Recorded offences	42	-12		58	-2	4	-7
National surveys ³	11	-17			5		
Robbery							
ICS ¹	57	24	-8	28	-21	5	46
Recorded offences ³	44	30	14	71	27	25	1
National surveys ³	33				5	6	
Sexual incidents							
ICS ¹	78	-15	11	U/R ⁸	-49	-6	-52
Recorded offences ³	20	2	-9	17	15 ⁷	24	18
National surveys ³	U/R ⁸				-8 ⁷		
Assaults/threats							
ICS ¹	98	19	-14	40	-14	21	-8
Recorded offences	20	10	1	24	20	19	11
National surveys ³	13	5			-6		

1. Percentage increases in risks (ICS) refer to prevalence risks. Figures for vehicle crimes, and bicycle theft are based on population rates.
2. For all countries, recorded offences for "theft of cars" and "theft from cars" will actually relate to thefts for all types of vehicles (eg. including commercial vehicles and motorcycles).
3. Figures for the Netherlands are based on the Dutch National Survey, 1988-1990. (1991 figures are not available). Figures for England and Wales are based on the British Crime Survey, 1987-1991. To match ICS results better, data have been weighted on an adult base for household crime rather than, as is normal BCS practice, on a household base. Also,

BCS data has been re-analysed in other ways to improve comparability with the ICS. For instance, vehicle thefts usually include motorcycles, which have been excluded here; car vandalism and attempted thefts of and from cars have also been combined.

Figures for the USA based on the National Crime Victimization Survey, 1987-1990 (households touched by crime).

4. Only data on the change in recorded crime between 1987-1988 were available for Australia.
5. Based on figures for total household larceny; thefts from vehicles are not distinguished.
6. Burglary with entry and attempts combined.
7. Rape only.
8. "U/R" indicates the trend data is unreliable for various reasons.
9. Police figures relate to 1987-1990 for Belgium, Finland and Canada. Figures for England, the US and the Netherlands are for 1988-1991. Only the change in recorded crime between 1987-1988 is available for Australia.

Offences of vehicle theft recorded by the police (and vehicle theft is a generally well-reported offence) have also shown increases since 1988, though the magnitude of change is not always as pronounced as appears from the ICS. Where national crime survey estimates are available, they also point to an upward turn, though for England rather less so than the ICS.

Theft from cars

ICS rates for theft from cars have gone up in England, the Netherlands and Belgium to a degree not explained by sampling error. They went down, however in the USA - and marginally in Australia. There was relatively little change in Finland and Canada. The ICS picture is not particularly in line with that from recorded offences for the Netherlands, and it shows more change than from the three national surveys.

Car vandalism

According to the ICS, car vandalism did not change very greatly between 1988 and 1991, except in England and Finland, where risks increased to a statistically significant degree. Few police figures are available on car vandalism, and the English ones relate to criminal damage of all kinds. The Dutch and British national crime surveys show increases in prevalence risks, though rather smaller than the ICS.

Bicycle theft

ICS results show that bicycle theft risks have gone up appreciably in England. Risks have also increased in the Netherlands and Finland. There are few other comparative indicators, and they fail to confirm the ICS picture particularly well.

Burglary

ICS risks of burglary (burglary with entry and attempted burglary) have increased in England beyond the degree that would be explained by sampling error. Risks in Finland have also increased, but sampling error cannot be discounted. Risks in the Netherlands, Belgium, the USA and Australia went down, though the decreases are not necessarily statistically reliable. Taken in the round, the data seem to suggest that the upward trend of household burglaries since the seventies may have been stemmed in some countries over the past few years. The degree to which this is due to more household security precautions can only be guessed at.

Robbery

Robbery is a rare offence for which survey estimates based on relatively small samples are prone to error. For those countries with two measures, the increase in 1991 risks - while appearing generally higher - is not statistically reliable. However, police figures for robbery (which include robberies committed against commercial institutions) increased in many countries over the period.

Sexual crime

Rates of sexual incidents according to the ICS changed markedly between 1988 and 1991 in several countries, with rates more often decreasing than increasing. One explanation is that the inclusion of the verb "assault" in the definition affected the answers in some countries in the sense that minor incidents were less often mentioned in interview. (It is unclear why this did not happen in England or Belgium, and arguments are likely to be tenuous). Information from offences recorded by the police and national crime surveys do not add much comment to the picture from the ICS.

Assault

The ICS rate of assaults/threats has gone up in England and Finland beyond the degree that would be explained by sampling error. Elsewhere changes in rates are not statistically reliable. The ICS picture for England is not in particularly good accord with the other indicators, but the broad similarity between British Crime Surveys levels of risks in 1991 and 1991 ICS risks suggests that the 1988 assault count may have been understated⁴⁰.

In sum, then, although the 1992 survey was not mounted to provide for those countries who had participated in 1988 any solid indicator of trends in crime, the data asks for inspection. Tables 2 and 3 indicate that risks have generally increased in the European countries concerned, particular in England. Risks for many crimes in the USA have either not increased significantly, or have shown a decline. Risks in Canada and Australia in 1991 have also decreased or shown only moderate increases for many offences (theft of cars is an exception, and assaults in Canada). That this picture is largely endorsed by other indicators adds some credibility to the ICS results. So too does the fact that comparisons of ICS prevalence rates for 1991 match fairly well with those from national surveys where available (author's computations).

Within Europe, the most consistent ICS increases have been in thefts of and from cars - increases largely borne out by other indicators. The firmest indication is that burglary has increased most in England and Finland.

Reporting crime and the police

Reporting to the police

The frequency with which victims (or their relatives and friends) report offences to the police is strongly related to the type of offence involved. In most countries, almost all incidents in which cars or motorcycles are stolen are reported, as are burglaries with entry. About half of all thefts from a car, bicycle thefts, and robberies are reported, but on average only about a third of all cases of personal theft, car vandalism and threats/assaults are, and only a tenth of the sexual incidents mentioned to interviewers. For the ten crimes covered in the 1989 and 1992 survey,

⁴⁰ See the chapter on England and Wales" by Patricia Mayhew.

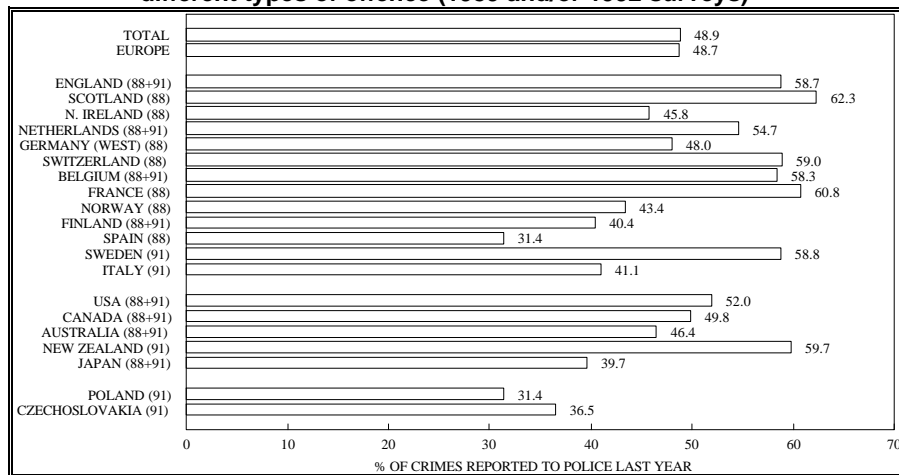
about which reporting to the police was asked, Figure 18 shows the overall percentage made known to the police.

Reporting levels are lowest in Poland (31%) and Spain (31%); they are a little higher in Czechoslovakia (37%), Japan (40%), Finland (40%), Italy (41%), Norway (43%) and Northern Ireland (46%). Countries with the highest reporting rates are Scotland, France, New Zealand, Switzerland, Sweden, England and Belgium.

Differences in reporting will be partly accounted for by the different profile of crimes experienced, and fuller analysis is needed, by crime type, to confirm different propensities to report. Nonetheless, the extent of insurance cover may also play a part: this is low in Spain and East European countries for instance. Additionally, low reporting rates in some countries may indicate a lack of confidence in the public (see later), or local tradition. Japan, for example, is noted for community intervention in incidents in which a known offender is involved.

Table 6 shows, for all countries combined, the reasons for not reporting in relation to the various types of crime.

Figure 18: Percentage of crimes reported to the police: overall figure for ten different types of offence (1989 and/or 1992 surveys)



That the incident was "not serious enough", that there was "no loss", or that the "police could do nothing" were the most frequent reasons for non-reporting. Only a small minority expressed lack of confidence in the police ("police won't do anything", "dislike of police", "didn't dare") - though dislike of the police and fear of reprisals were more often given in the case of unreported crimes of violence. That the incident was "inappropriate for the police" or that it was "solved myself" were also more often given as reasons for non-reporting by victims of personal crimes.

Reasons for not notifying the police did not vary a great deal across country. However, non-reporters in Czechoslovakia (20%), Poland (21%) and Spain (18%)

more often said that "the police wouldn't do anything about it". This may relate to the public's general appreciation of the police, and this is dealt with later.

Victim's satisfaction with the police response

All respondents who had reported a crime to the police over the last five years were asked whether they were satisfied with the way the police dealt with their last report (Figure 19).

Table 6: Reasons for not reporting to the police (% of reasons mentioned): (1989 and/or 1992 surveys; 19 countries)¹

	Theft of car	Theft from car	Car vandalism	Theft of motorcycle	Theft of bicycle	Burglary
Not serious enough	18	48	53	21	33	32
Solved it myself	19	3	4	17	10	16
Inappropriate for police	8	7	8	2	5	6
Other authorities	9	2	2	13	2	4
No insurance	0	2	1	7	5	2
Police could do nothing	7	20	23	11	21	20
Police won't do anything	4	13	10	9	15	10
Fear/dislike police	2	1	<1	1	1	2
Didn't dare	1	1	<1	0	1	1
Other reasons	29	12	9	12	17	16
Don't know	10	4	3	6	4	4

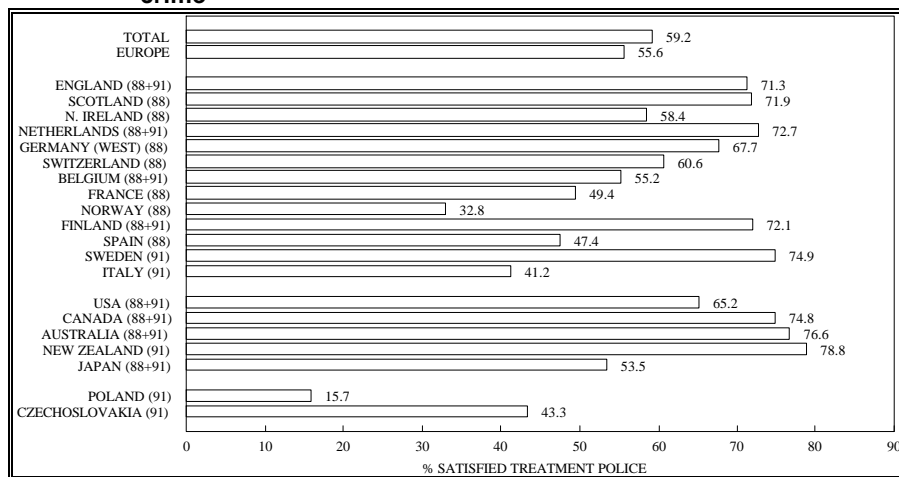
	Attempted burglary	Outbdg. break-ins	Robbery	Personal theft	Sexual incidents	Assault/threat
Not serious enough	49	59	36	34	37	34
Solved it myself	9	10	14	18	20	18
Inappropriate for police	11	7	7	11	8	11
Other authorities	2	2	2	5	4	5
No insurance	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Police could do nothing	19	16	15	12	12	12
Police won't do anything	7	6	12	9	7	9
Fear/dislike police	<1	<1	3	3	3	3
Didn't dare	<1	<1	4	5	5	5
Other reasons	11	8	16	14	17	14
Don't know	3	3	4	4	3	4

1. If data from both surveys were available, the data for 1991 were used. Data on attempted burglary are from the 1992 survey only. Japan excluded.

Having reported an offence, satisfaction with the police response was lowest in Poland, Norway, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Spain. It was the highest in New

Zealand, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Scotland, and England. The main reasons for dissatisfaction are that the police "did not do enough" (42%), "were not interested" (40%), "did not find the offender" (15%), "did not recover my property" (18%), "did not keep me properly informed" (13%), or "did not treat me correctly" (11%)⁴¹. Though broader-based attitudes to police performance may underlie these results to a degree, it is worth remarking that in those countries where reporters are most pleased with how they were treated by the police, there has been some emphasis on initiatives to improve the service given to crime victims.

Figure 19: Percentage of victims satisfied with the police after reporting crime



Victim assistance

In the 1989 survey, victims were specifically asked whether they had received support from a specialised victim support agency. With the exception of the USA, very few victims had received such help. For this reason (and with a view to the social realities of developing countries), this area of questioning was widened to include other forms of support. The changes mean that comparability with the 1989 survey has been compromised⁴².

The 1992 results indicate that among victims who reported an offence to the police, the most common providers of help were relatives/friends/neighbours, and

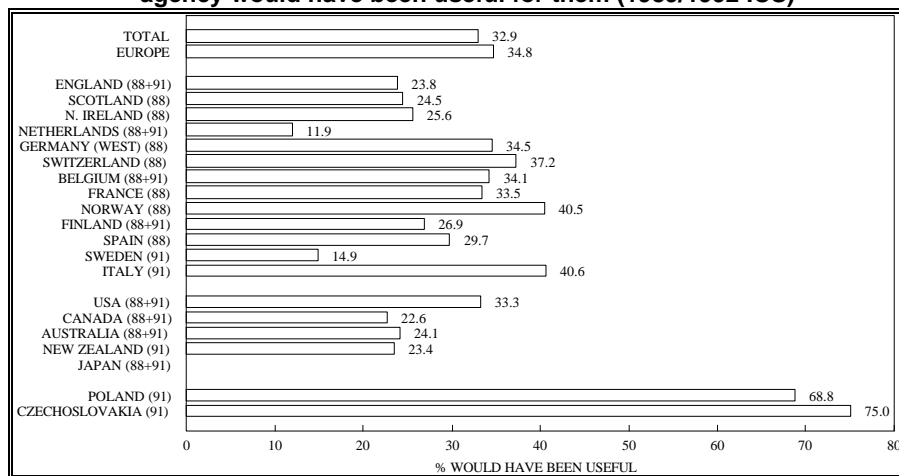
⁴¹ Of the Japanese respondents 43% said they were dissatisfied because the police did not find the offender.

⁴² In 1989, victims were asked about whether they had received any assistance from a specialised agency for any crime they had experienced over the last year. In 1992, the questions about support were focused on the "last crime" over the five year reference period.

the police themselves. Other agencies were less frequently involved. The number of those receiving help from a specialised victim support agency was highest in England (4.8%), New Zealand (4.4%), Canada (4.3%), and the Netherlands (2.7%)⁴³. Among victims of more serious crimes, however, the proportion receiving help was higher, as one would expect.

Victims who had not received help from a victim support agency were asked whether they would have appreciated help (in getting information, or practical or emotional support). Figure 20 shows that on average, about a third of victims would have welcomed more help. Levels of demand were much higher in Czechoslovakia and Poland, perhaps because the economic consequences of crime are more serious - or police help less forthcoming. In Czechoslovakia there is no infrastructure for voluntary aid since under the communist regime the state was supposed to provide all necessary services. In Italy, Norway and Switzerland the need expressed for victim support was also relatively high. Few victims mentioned the need for help in the Netherlands (12% in 1991) and Sweden (15%). Whether this is because help is more readily available from other sources is difficult to say; it may equally well reflect the relatively large proportion of minor victimisations experienced.

Figure 20: Percentage of victims who said the services of a victim support agency would have been useful for them (1989/1992 ICS)



Satisfaction with police presence

⁴³ The question on help from a specialised victim support agency was preceded by one concerning help from voluntary organisations. It is likely that some respondents helped by a victim support agency will have categorised this as voluntary help (since in many countries this work is voluntary). The answers, therefore, have been combined.

In the 1992 survey, all respondents were asked how often the police passed by in their street, either on foot or in a car (a new question). Police visibility seemed highest in Italy (64% said the police passed by at least once a week), Canada (63%), Belgium (52%) and Finland (50%). It was lowest in Sweden (35%), Czechoslovakia and New Zealand (36%).

Overall, about 40% of respondents said they wanted the police to pass by more often than they did. The demand for more police presence was greatest in Poland (67%), Czechoslovakia (65%), England (57%), and Italy (51%). While infrequent police surveillance may explain the demand for more policing in some countries, in others - where police visibility already appears high - it may be that improved policing leads only to higher expectations, at least when crime is seen to be rising.

Although numbers are small, the demand for more police surveillance is positively related at country level to fear of street crime ($r=0.79$; $p<0.01$; $n=12$). This can be interpreted in two ways. Fear of crime may generate demand for more police visibility; or, the (perceived) sufficiency of existing police presence may prevent feelings of fear. In any event, field experiments have shown that foot patrols go some way in helping reduce feelings of fear⁴⁴.

General satisfaction with the police

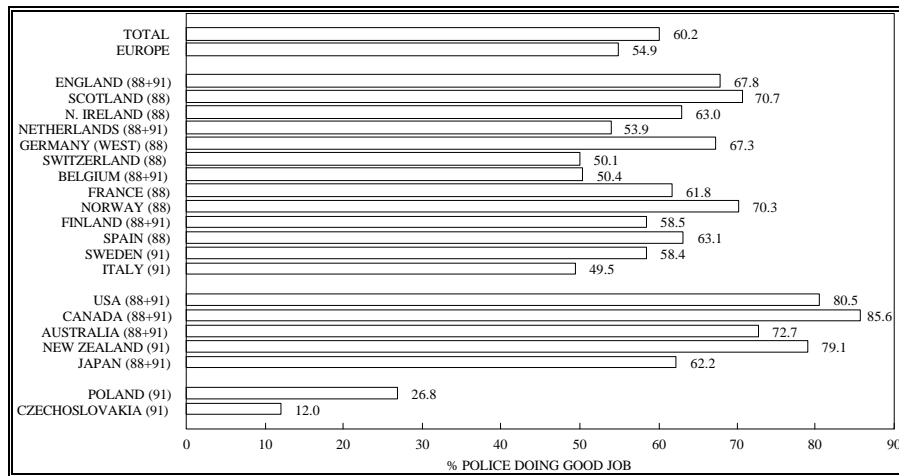
All respondents were asked to give a judgement on the overall performance of the police. The question asked was:

"Taking everything into account, how good do you think the police in your area is in controlling crime. Do you think they do a good job or not?"

General judgement of the police was most favourable in Canada, the USA, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Norway, England and West Germany (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: Percentage thinking the police do a good job in controlling crime in their area (1989 and/or 1992 ICS)

⁴⁴ van Dijk, J.J.M. (1984) "Police burglary prevention experiments in the Netherlands" in Clarke, R. and E. Hope (eds.) *Coping with burglary*, Kluwer-Nijhoff, Boston.



Opinion was least favourable in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Italy, the Netherlands (1991), Finland (1991), Switzerland⁴⁵ and Spain. In several countries, assessments of police performance had declined: notably in the Netherlands (58% favourable judgements in 1989, 50% in 1992), Finland (64% in 1989 and 53% in 1992) and Canada (89% in 1989 and 82% in 1992). There was a smaller drop in satisfaction in England (70% in 1989, as against 66% in 1992)

Overall judgements of the police are more negative in countries where more people feel the need to take precautions against street crime at night ($r=0.47$; $p<0.05$; $n=19$). Less favourable judgements are also found in countries where victims who report crimes are dissatisfied with their treatment by the police ($r=0.61$; $p<0.01$; $n=19$) - though of course one may to an extent drive the other. Broadly interpreted, these relationships suggest that by increasing presence in residential areas and by improving treatment of crime victims, the police may improve their standing in the public's eyes, help counter anxiety about crime, and increase willingness to report crimes. Police initiatives on these fronts should not be readily discounted.

Reactions to crime

Fear of burglars

Fear of crime is generally seen as an important element of the social costs of crime, and recent crime prevention policies are geared both towards reducing crime as well as anxiety and worry about it. In some instances, the reduction of fear requires special initiatives, for instance to redesign urban environments and provide better lighting, which can have direct effects of feelings of safety. Field studies have

⁴⁵ The low percentage of Swiss respondents who said the police do a good job conceals a very high percentage of "don't know" answers (39%).

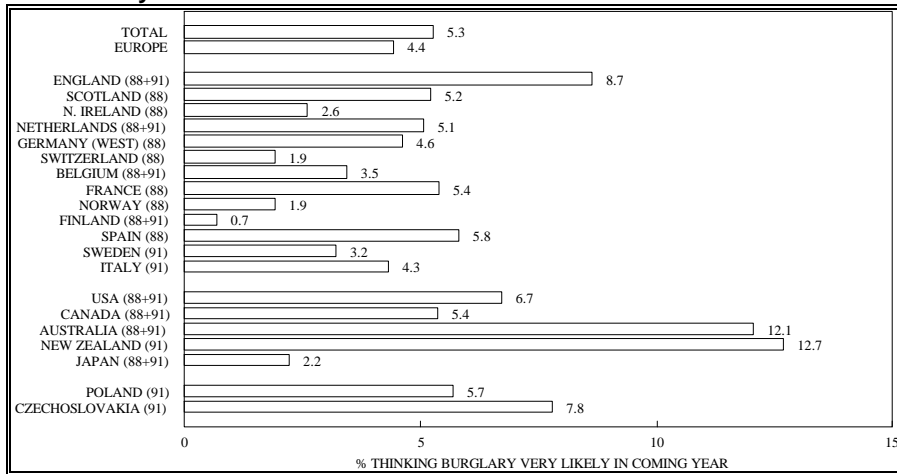
also shown that police presence on foot is an effective method of reducing fear, regardless of its impact upon actual crime levels.

In the 1989 ICS, respondents were asked both how they rated their chance of being burgled over the next year, and - to tap fear of street crime - whether they avoided certain areas or people when they last went out in the evening. In the 1992 survey, a widely-used question was added about how safe (or unsafe) respondents felt when walking alone in their area after dark.

Figure 22 presents the percentage of people who were concerned about burglary. The feeling that a burglary was very likely to happen in the next year was highest among those in New Zealand, Australia, England, Czechoslovakia, and the USA. Least concerned were those in Finland, Norway and Switzerland. In England concern about burglary had increased somewhat since 1989, along with actual burglary risks.

Perceptions of risk at national level are strongly related to actual risks of burglary (Figure 23). Countries where a high proportion thought they would be very likely to be a victim tended to be those in which vulnerability to burglary was highest. The correlation between national burglary rates and fear of burglary is very strong ($r=0.87$; $p<0.001$; $n=19$).

Figure 22: Percentage thinking a burglary very likely to happen in the coming year



Fear of street crime

Figure 24 shows the percentage of respondents who said they had taken precautions the last time they went out in the evening, either by avoiding risky areas, or by staying clear of certain people.

Figure 23: Experience of burglary (with entry) in the last year, by percentage who thought burglary very likely in the next year (19 countries)

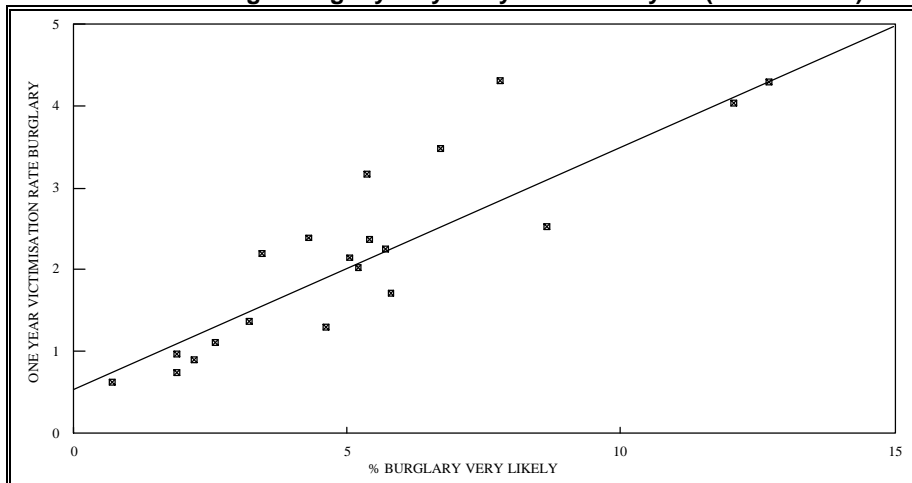


Figure 24: Fear of street crime (1989 and/or 1991). Percentage of people who take care when going out in the evening

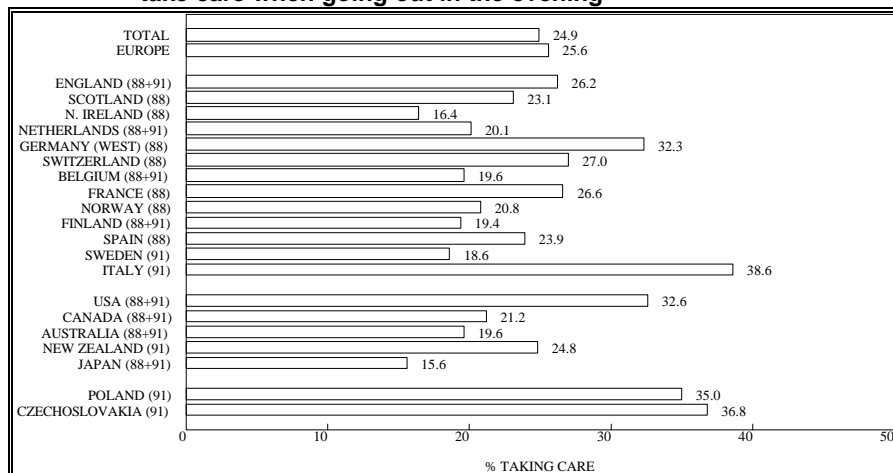
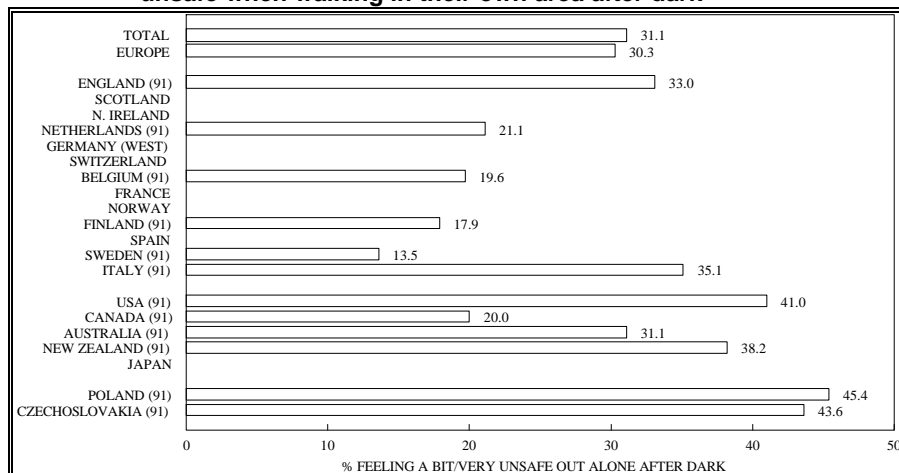


Figure 25: Fear of street crime; percentage of the public feeling a bit or very unsafe when walking in their own area after dark



Evasive action was most common in Italy (39%), Czechoslovakia (37%), Poland (35%), the USA (33% in 1988), West Germany (32% in 1988) and England (27%). Those in Japan, Northern Ireland and in the Scandinavian countries were less concerned. Evasive action is much commoner among women than men in all countries.

Data are available for some countries from the 1992 survey on how safe (or unsafe) respondents said they felt when walking alone in the local area alone after dark. (Information is not available for Japan.) On average, roughly a third felt a bit or very unsafe (see Figure 25).

Those in Poland and Czechoslovakia were most anxious (above 40% felt a bit or very unsafe.) Those in New Zealand (38%), Italy (35%), England (33%) and Australia (31%) were also more fearful than elsewhere. The question was not asked in the USA in the 1992 survey, but replies in another survey in 1990 showed 41% feeling a bit or very unsafe. Both ICS measures of fear of street crime are highly interrelated.

In contrast to the picture for burglary, fear of street crime is not consistently related at national level to risks of violent crime (assaults, sexual incidents and robbery)⁴⁶. In Italy and West Germany, for instance, anxiety is relatively high, but risks are lower than in the Netherlands and Canada, where anxiety is less marked. Similarly, those in Poland and Czechoslovakia show levels of anxiety disproportionate to national risks of violence.

What this poor association indicates is, first, that the relationship between risk and fear is better measured on an individual basis - taking account of people's specific feelings of vulnerability which will be affected by previous victimisation and the type of area in which they live, for instance. It also suggests that fear of street crime may be determined by specific "cultural" pressures. For example, media coverage of mafia killings or terrorist activity may increase fear, while in Eastern Europe recent exposure to sensational media stories about crime after the lifting of censorship may have heightened anxiety. Fear of street crime could also be related, in some countries at least, to confidence in the police).

Crime prevention

Four questions were asked in the 1989 survey about precautions against household crime, but following analysis of results and new pilot work these were rethought. In both the 1989 and 1992 surveys, however, information was gathered about how many of those living in semi-detached, detached or terraced houses owned burglar alarms, and about the presence of caretakers or security guards for those in apartments/flats. Figure 26 shows levels of burglar alarm ownership. The figures are often high, and it cannot be ruled out that some people claimed they had an alarm on account of residual mistrust about the credentials of the survey. Other indicators of alarm ownership in England, for instance, show lower levels of ownership.

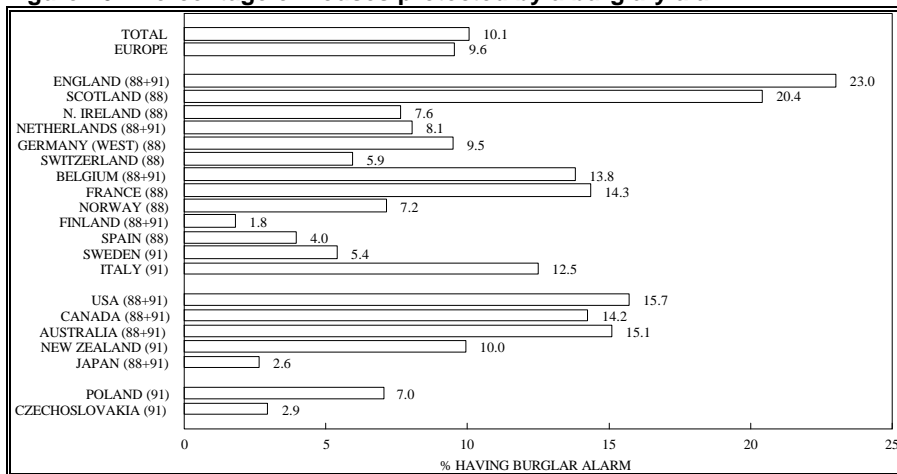
Ownership of alarms nonetheless varies greatly across country. Alarms appear to be most often installed in England, Scotland, the USA, Australia, and Canada, though rarely in Finland, Japan, Czechoslovakia or Spain (less 5%). The penetration of alarms at national level was positively related to national burglary risks: i.e. those in countries facing higher risks appear more likely to install alarms (or say they do; $r=0.39$; $p<0.10$; $n=20$). At the level of neighbourhoods, in contrast, high alarm ownership has been found to be negatively related to burglary rates -

⁴⁶ For example, the correlations between robbery, assaults/threats, and sexual incidents and the ICS measure of "avoiding places" are all low ($r=0.21$; $r=0.01$; $r=0.15$; all ns).

consistent with the idea that alarms can offer local protection if at the cost of sending burglars into less-well-protected areas. In any event, the level of alarm ownership in most countries may not yet have reached the level at which burglary rates are affected. One might conjecture that the USA - where burglary rates have declined over recent years - exemplifies a situation where there are sufficient numbers of sophisticated alarm systems⁴⁷ (and perhaps enough caretakers/security guards in apartment buildings) to influence overall burglary rates.

In several countries, the employment of caretakers is currently being promoted as a crime prevention measure on the grounds that they will usually improve surveillance and informal social control, notwithstanding their maintenance functions⁴⁸. The ICS results give no very clear picture as to whether risks for those in accommodation overseen by caretakers are more protected against burglary⁴⁹. This is no doubt because of interactions between levels of local risks and the type of accommodation in which people live in particular areas, and because caretaking levels are unlikely to match to risk levels.

Figure 26: Percentage of houses protected by a burglary alarm



In the 1992 survey, a series of other questions about home protection were asked. The most common response of householders in all countries was to install special door locks. On average, half of the households had used these. The

⁴⁷ Studies among burglars have shown that the deterrent value of alarms linked to a private or public alarm centre is higher than that of lower budget "standalone" alarms which are more common in Great Britain; see Figgie Report (1988) *The business of crime: the criminal perspective*, Part VI, Figgie International Inc., Richmond.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Hesseling, R. (1989) *Evaluation of caretakers program: results of the first survey among residents (in Dutch)*, Research and Documentation Centre, Ministry of Justice, The Hague.

⁴⁹ van Dijk, *Experiences...*, op. cit, p. 86.

percentage is much lower in Poland (16%), Finland (20%) and Belgium (25%). Other common measures were special grilles on windows or doors, and keeping a dog to deter burglars: both more common in England, North America, Australia and Poland, but quite uncommon in Sweden and Finland. In Belgium, Sweden and Italy almost half of households said they had not taken any of the six listed security measures.

Attitudes to punishment

One question was put to respondents about their opinions on sentencing. They were asked which of the five types of sentences they considered the most appropriate for a recidivist burglar - a man aged 21 who is found guilty of burglary for the second time, having stolen a colour television. Table 7 shows the percentage of respondents opting for either a fine, prison or a community service order. (The answers are from the 1992 survey for those countries with two counts.)

Table 7: Percentage in favour of a fine, a prison sentence, or community service order for a young recidivist burglar

	Fine	Prison sentence	Community service order
England & Wales ¹	8.9	37.3	40.2
Scotland ²	14.4	39.0	33.5
Northern Ireland ²	9.0	45.4	30.2
Netherlands ¹	9.4	25.9	47.6
West Germany ²	8.8	13.0	60.0
Switzerland ²	11.6	8.6	56.7
Belgium ¹	12.0	18.7	55.2
France ²	10.3	12.8	53.0
Norway ²	23.0	13.8	47.0
Finland ¹	13.2	13.9	54.9
Spain ²	23.4	27.0	23.4
Sweden ¹	14.1	26.2	47.4
Italy ¹	9.6	22.4	46.5
USA ²	8.2	52.7	29.6
Canada ¹	9.6	38.9	30.3
Australia ¹	7.7	34.0	48.0
New Zealand ¹	9.6	24.4	50.6
Japan ²	12.6	29.5	. ³
Poland ¹	12.3	29.3	45.6
Czechoslovakia ¹	10.3	62.5	16.2

1. 1992 survey.

2. 1989 survey.

3. In 1989, 15.2% of the Japanese sample said that the perpetrator was guilty but did not have to go to court. Twenty-three percent said the defendant should be given a non-custodial sentence.

In contrast with the stereotypical image of public demand for imprisonment, community service orders are seen in most countries as the most suitable punishment. (Interestingly, the percentage opting for a community service order in Finland - where such orders were recently introduced on a larger scale - had

increased since the first ICS)⁵⁰. Support for imprisonment is most widespread in Czechoslovakia (63%), the USA (53%), the United Kingdom (England/Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: approximately, 40%), Canada (39% in 1992) and Australia (34% in 1992). The popularity of imprisonment in "anglophone" countries suggests a special "British" tradition of punishing burglars and other offenders by means of imprisonment. New Zealand, however, is an exception (only 24% of respondents opted for imprisonment).

Respondents who favoured imprisonment were asked for how long the burglar should go to prison. The mean length of the recommended sentence was the highest in Poland (159 months), USA (39 months), Spain (32 months), Japan (27 months) and Belgium (26 months). Much less severe prison sentences were recommended by those favouring a prison sentence in Switzerland (7 months), Norway (11 months), France (12 months), West Germany (12 months) and Sweden (12 months).

Popular support for imprisonment is generally higher in countries with relatively high burglary rates. Demand for tough punishment, then, seems in part a response to higher actual risks - though half those in Belgium, West Germany, New Zealand and the Netherlands preferred community service orders in spite of comparatively high national burglary risks⁵¹.

Previous analysis has suggested that actual per capita imprisonment rates tend to be higher in countries where there is more public support for imprisonment for a recidivist burglar (eg. in the USA, the United Kingdom, and the ex-communist countries)⁵². This association can be interpreted in two ways. Either sentencing policies follow popular attitudes; or, public attitudes follow established sentencing traditions. In any event, the experience in Finland indicates that the public may become more supportive of alternatives to imprisonment after their formal adoption as a sentencing option.

Discussion

The ICS in perspective

This report presents results from two sweeps of the International Crime Survey (ICS), carried out in 1989 and 1992 to provide a measure of predominantly "ordinary" crime against household members and their property in each of the previous years. Results here come from twenty countries, eight of which participated in both sweeps, another seven in 1989 and another five in 1992. As well as measuring people's experience of crime, the survey also documents some other aspects of national reactions to crime.

The results were obtained from surveys of adults. The samples were chosen to ensure adequate representativeness, and additional statistical weighting of results was done to correct some remaining imbalances in sampling. Interviews in sixteen

⁵⁰ In 1989 36.8% of the Finnish sample favoured a cso (54.9% in 1992).

⁵¹ The correlation between the national burglary rates and the national percentages of those favouring imprisonment is 0.45 ($p < 0.05$; $n = 19$).

⁵² van Dijk, *Experiences...*, op. cit., p. 83.

of the twenty countries were conducted by telephone through variants of random digit dialling, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), which allows interview methods to be more tightly standardised. (In three countries face-to-face interviews were used, and in one a mixture of face-to-face and telephone interviews.)

The distinctive feature of the ICS lies in its standardisation - the use of the same questionnaire, similar methods of sampling, and co-ordination of data analysis. Though the survey has limitations - returned to below - it nonetheless gives an alternative comparative perspective to statistics of offences recorded by the police, which will reflect the amount of crime victims drawn to the attention of the police, and differences in police procedures as regards what offences are counted, and how. It also offers better comparative material than results from independently organised national victimisation surveys, where differences in design seriously compromise comparisons.

The limits of the ICS should be recognised however⁵³. First, to maximise participation, the samples interviewed were relatively small (usually 2,000 in each survey), with the result that all estimates are subject to sampling error. Second, it is well-established that crime surveys are prone to other forms of response error, mainly to do with the frailty of respondents' memories, their reticence to talk about their experiences as victims, and their failure to realise an incident may be relevant to the survey. These factors probably mean, on balance, that the ICS undercounts crime; it certainly means that the survey measures public perceptions of crime as expressed to interviewers, rather than "real" experience. The critical issue here, of course, is whether response errors are constant across country. Many may be, though it cannot be ruled out that there are different thresholds for defining certain behaviours as crimes, and for wanting to talk to interviewers about these. Third, although survey administration was centrally organised, survey company performance could have differed across country, affecting what respondents were (and were not) prepared to tell interviewers. Fourth, response rates were variable, and low in some surveys. This may have unknown effects on results, although on the face of it measured victimisation levels do not relate in any clear way to response rates. Fifth, respondents were interviewed by telephone in most countries, and although methodological work suggests that this mode of interviewing is unlikely to distort results greatly, some differences across country due to differences in the acceptability of being questioned by phone cannot entirely be discounted. Finally, although for seventeen of the twenty countries covered here there was central co-ordination of survey administration and data analysis, the surveys in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Japan were independently organised, and some changes to ICS methods may have been made. In sum, then, sceptics have room for argument about the quality of data from the ICS, and these cannot be readily dismissed. However, the ICS programme was very much a case of "nothing ventured nothing gained", and we would argue that gain is indisputable.

This chapter gives only an overview of key results from the 1989 and 1992 surveys, and the results of some very preliminary explanatory analysis. The coverage of the section on victimisation rates, moreover, puts emphasis on what

⁵³ See the chapter by Richard Block on "Measuring victimisation: the effects of methodology, sampling, and fielding".

are conventionally called "league tables". Though points about reliability of survey estimates need to be borne in mind, we make only a modest apology for this. Criminologists tend to take the stance that comparative research should be for high-minded theoretical purposes, rather than to fuel simple curiosity in the quality of life in other countries. Criminal justice administrators however - often the sponsors of the ICS - think rather differently and usually welcome whatever information may be available as indicators of their own performance.

The value of the ICS data will, in any case, be more fully realised with secondary analysis, which must go well beyond league tables⁵⁴. Risk analysis will be of obvious interest: for instance, looking at patterns of crime in a fuller range of cultural contexts; analysis of more serious crime (using respondents' answers about the seriousness of incidents); assessment of ICS risks in terms of social indicators assembled from other data sets; and risk analysis that controls for individual and local area characteristics in looking for any "nation" effect (bearing in mind that differences in national victimisation rates will reflect differences in the socio-demographic profile of the population). But there is other information in the survey which will also merit secondary analysis. Victims' preparedness to report crime to the police, for example (a question central to the ICS), can be more fully examined in multivariate analysis which simultaneously takes into account crime seriousness, relationships with the police, and alternative social supports.

Some analysis of this type has already been done on the basis of results from the 1989 survey. For instance, van Dijk has shown that in all participating countries the risk of crime was increased by higher socio-economic status, younger age, and living in a larger city independently of each other⁵⁵. The similarity of results was more notable than the few variations - eg. that age had less effect on car theft risks in the USA, Germany and France; that bicycle theft was more of a risk for higher-income groups in countries like Switzerland and the USA, where (racing) bicycles are used more as luxury good; and that women were comparatively less at risk in Switzerland, the Netherlands and Northern Ireland - countries where labour force participation is lowest among women. In the same study, van Dijk took "country of residence" as a variable in its own right to see whether particular countries are more or less crime-inducing than others when socio-demographic structure is taken into account. The results suggest that the comparatively high victimisation risks in the USA, Australia and Canada are explained in the main by population structure; in contrast, there is somewhat greater risk than would be expected in Northern Ireland, Spain, Belgium and France.

Understanding national crime rates

A tentative interpretation of the findings from the 1989 and 1992 ICS is that property crime rates seem partly determined by crime-specific opportunity structures. Thus, the results suggest that one determinant of the amount of vehicle crime is the availability of targets to steal. In countries where vehicles are common, the demand for targets is higher. Vehicle crime seems to be sustained by plentiful

⁵⁴ See the chapter by James Lynch on "Secondary analysis of International Crime Survey data".

⁵⁵ van Dijk, *The International...*, op. cit.

targets, rather than caused by few vehicles being available to the population generally. The greater accessibility that semi-detached and detached houses provide to thieves also seems to affect risks of burglary and outbuilding break-ins. Partly on account of opportunity factors, property crime rates appear to rise with increasing levels of affluence. Thus, the comparatively high rates in North America, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, England, Sweden, Italy and West Germany might be seen as the downside of economic prosperity. However, set against affluence levels, property crime seems high in Spain, Poland and Czechoslovakia; and low in Switzerland, Norway, Belgium, Finland and Japan. In the latter countries, relatively low levels of urbanisation will play a part - though Japan is a clear exception. New Zealand appears an example of an only moderately urbanised country with high property crime rates nonetheless.

Some property crimes seem to be more culturally specific. By and large, pickpocketing is more common in Europe, though there are variations within European countries. Robbery appears particularly characteristic of Spain, the USA, Poland and Italy.

The indications are that aggressive crime is more prevalent in North America, Australia, New Zealand and Poland than in Western Europe and Japan. Within Western Europe, it seems more of a problem in West Germany, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, and Finland - i.e. the more northerly countries. Speculatively, it could be said that aggressive criminality is a feature of beer drinking countries, though drinking patterns may be only one factor.

Policy implications

The results of the ICS indicate that crime currently impinges on many people's lives with, for instance, over one in five of those in twelve of the twenty countries covered here having experienced in the last year at least one incident of theft or damage to their property, or some form of aggressive behaviour. No doubt political or commercial capital has been, and will continue to be made by exaggerating the problem of crime, but levels of actual risk are far from negligible, whether or not these are softened by insurance premiums or social support.

At the same time, the ICS results help put local crime problems in perspective. In many Western countries, the public view is probably that crime is a "national plague" for which lax parenting, government inaction, inadequate leisure provision (or whatever) is to be blamed. There may well be little awareness that other countries with different family infrastructures, or different politically-oriented governments face similar problems. The ICS data clearly dismiss the notion of high crime rates as unique to just one or two countries. With the most obvious exceptions of Japan and Switzerland, all industrialised countries suffer from an appreciable level of property and aggressive crime, particularly in more urbanised areas. Put bluntly, this seems to be the price to be paid for living in an affluent, urbanised and democratic society.

The ICS suggests that two ex-communist countries (Poland and Czechoslovakia) have much higher levels of crime than indicated by police-recorded crime figures, which may well show an undercount of crime, due at least to victims' reluctance to report crimes. Quite possibly too, many East European countries are

currently experiencing a rise in crime⁵⁶. The positive relationship between vehicle ownership levels and "victimisation" (this being highly likely to involve a vehicle as target) suggests that the public's vulnerability will continue to increase during planned economic recovery. Again, ICS data may provide perspective to any post-communist "crime boom". Local communities may feel this is an unwelcome price to pay, but "moral panic" in Eastern Europe would be unjustified on account of levels of crime which have become the norm in most other European countries. Even less justified would be any proposal to decelerate the modernisation process in Eastern Europe in order to curb rising crime.

Against the background of these observations, some other broad policy implications of the results are drawn out below:

- In order to assess national risks for different types of crime, international comparisons are valuable, but should not be taken entirely at face value. For one, crime can vary as much within countries as between them, with overall levels concealing broad variation in local risks. Also, levels of crime will reflect degree of urbanisation, such that comparisons of risk for those in large cities may be illuminating. The ICS data become somewhat stretched in this regard, but preliminary analysis based on answers given by those in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants nonetheless provides some pointers. In Australia, for instance, about three-quarters of residents live in cities, which increases national rates; city risks in Australia appear much less out of step with those in European cities than risks in Australia overall. Within Scandinavia, Swedish national risks appear higher than those in Norway or Finland, though the Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish city risks are markedly similar. Risks in US cities appear generally higher than elsewhere (though there are exceptions for some crimes), while risks in cities in Canada and Western Europe are broadly in line.
- Given the importance of urbanisation as a crime-inducing factor, there is scope for more crime prevention attention to be given to the way in which urban centres are planned and designed, as well as to the infrastructure of central and local government support to local communities, particularly in any new urban developments.
- It may be that technical measures to reduce opportunities for crime will affect overall levels of risk only if applied collectively above certain critical levels. Householders may or may not have the inclination and financial resources to provide themselves with better protection, but central and local government can take matters forward, for instance by ensuring that residential dwellings comply with minimum security standards, analogous to existing ones for safety. In East European countries in particular, technical (and social) crime prevention measures should be actively promoted at this important juncture.
- That car-related incidents make up a substantial proportion of crime, and appear to be still increasing, should induce governments to negotiate urgently with

⁵⁶ Kury, H. (1992) "Victim surveys in Germany" paper prepared for the Preparatory Seminar of the International Conference on Understanding Crime: Experiences of Crime and Crime Control", UNICRI, Rome, 17-18 March 1992; Dashko, G.V. (1992) "Quantitative and qualitative changes in crime in the USSR" *British Journal of Criminology* 32:160-166.

vehicle manufacturers regarding better security standards for cars⁵⁷. At the same time, there may be a case for including the economic costs of car-related crime in analyses of the costs and benefits of maintaining (or improving) provision for cars and bicycles on the one hand, and public transport on the other.

- Further analysis of the relationship between violence and levels and types of alcohol consumption seems worthwhile to assess whether some governments should reassess fiscal policy with a view to discouraging the consumption of beer.
- Analysis of ICS results on firearm ownership has shown this to be related to levels of gun suicide and homicide, and robbery with firearms⁵⁸. This suggests the need for a critical look at legislation concerning the possession of firearms (guns in particular). At the very least, the enforcement of possession about regulations of firearms should be given due priority.
- Police forces which do poorly in satisfying victims when they report crime should make efforts to improve service, independent of traditional objectives of criminal investigations. A better response to victims may improve the public's general appreciation of policing⁵⁹ and in the longer-term help curb feelings of anxiety about crime, and improve reporting to the police. Government will also have a part to play - in collaboration with the police, the judiciary, and the voluntary sector - in establishing special support agencies for crime victims in urban centres.
- Government and the judiciary in some countries should take heed of the broad-based level of public support for non-custodial sanctions such as community service orders in preference to imprisonment. The case for custodial sentences cannot necessarily be endorsed in terms of public backing.
- In countries with high levels of petty theft and vandalism, there may be room for governments to open public debate about styles of parenting with a view to increasing social awareness and responsibility amongst adolescents. The Japanese culture is frequently studied for its capacity for efficient economic production; it may offer lessons too as regards maintaining a high level of social integration in an affluent, urban environment.

⁵⁷ Clarke, R.V. and P.M. Harris (1992) "Auto theft and its prevention" in Tonry, M. (ed.) *Crime and Justice* Vol. 16, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

⁵⁸ Killias, Gun ownership..., op. cit.

⁵⁹ Winkel, F.W. (1991) "Police, victims and crime prevention: some research-based recommendations on victim-oriented interventions" *British Journal of Criminology* 31:250-265; Wemmers, J.M. and M. Zeilstra (1991) "Victim services in the Netherlands", *Dutch penal law and policy*, Bulletin No 3.

