

English summary. Crime statistics 2014

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Swedish statistics and international comparisons

Comparisons between countries that are based on official crime statistics require caution since such statistics are produced differently in different countries. Crime statistics do not provide a simple reflection of the level of crime in a given country. They are influenced by both legal and statistical factors, and by the extent to which crime is reported and registered. These factors can vary from one country to another. There are no international standards for how crime statistics should be produced and presented and this makes international comparisons difficult.

The legal factors that influence crime statistics include the way offences are defined in the relevant legislation as well as the rules and guiding principles that obtain for the work of the police and prosecutors.

The statistical factors that exert an influence include the principles that determine when a crime is recorded in the statistics. In some countries an event is only recorded in the crime statistics if, after investigation, it can legitimately be considered a crime or where there is sufficient evidence that a crime has been committed. Swedish statistics, on the other hand, record all reported incidents as crimes even if some of them are later found not to have constituted criminal offences.

Every country has its own principles about what is to be recorded as a criminal act. In some countries, if several offences are committed on the same occasion, only the most serious of these will be recorded. In Sweden, the principle that is applied involves recording all the offences committed on a given occasion.

Methods of counting crime also vary from one country to another. Several offences of the same kind against

a single victim will be counted in some countries as a single crime. By contrast, in Swedish crime statistics, every offence occurring under these circumstances is counted separately.

The statistical classification of different types of incidents also varies. This is true of attempted offences, for example, which are in Sweden counted together with completed crimes. In a number of other countries, attempted offences are either recorded separately or ignored for statistical purposes.

Crime statistics are also influenced by the public's willingness to report crime, the efforts made by the police to deal with reported crime and the police's prioritization of different types of offences. These factors may also vary from country to country, making international comparisons more difficult.

The International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS) constitutes an alternative source of statistics for international comparisons of criminality. The data are from surveys conducted amongst the general public and therefore not influenced by the same factors as the official crime statistics. The ICVS was first carried out in 1989 and then repeated in 1992, 1996, 2000 and in 2004/2005.

Reported offences

The statistic regarding reported offences reflects offences which were reported to, and registered by, the police, public prosecutor, or other criminal investigatory public authority in Sweden during the reporting period. The statistic shows the total number of reported offences; in other words it also includes events which, after investigation, were not found to constitute an offence, as well as situations in which an offence could not be proven.

In 2014, 1,440,000 offences were reported, which is an increase of 41,800 offences (3 %) as compared with the preceding year. In terms of individual categories of offences, the greatest increases in the number of reported offences in 2014 were in the categories of offences against the person, vandalism, and road traffic offences. The increase in road traffic offences is responsible for almost one-fourth of the total increase of reported offences during 2014. The increase can be explained by the fact that the police (primarily during 2014) also included the less serious offence (punishable by fine) of *leaving the scene of parking damage* in the offence coding for the more serious offence of *leaving the scene of a traffic accident*. Minor finable offences are not ordinarily included in the reported crime statistics and the change means that the number of traffic offences during 2014 cannot be compared with preceding years. The *categories* of reported offences which, in terms of raw numbers, decreased most in 2014 were tax offences and welfare offences.

During the most recent 10 years (2005–2014) the number of reported offences has increased by 200,200 offences (16 %). In respect of all reported offences, the trend is one of a continuous increase since 1975. However, the average rate of increase, i.e. the percentage change from year to year, diminished after the 1990s.

Processed offences

The statistic for processed offences reflects all of the reported offences on which the police, public prosecutor, or other investigatory authority took a decision during the reporting year which resulted in the termination of the processing of the offence.

One offence may generate several decisions if several individuals are suspected of the same offence. The decision which is then reported in the statistic is determined pursuant to a primary decision principle, which ranks the decisions in the following order: decision to prosecute, summary sanction order, waiver of prosecution, limitation of investigation, and other decisions. In a case in which several decisions regarding the offence are taken during different years, the offence may be reported as processed several times in the statistic, but may be reported only once per reporting year.

During 2014, 1,450,000 offences were processed. An investigation was conducted for 50 percent of the processed offences. Of these, the largest categories of offences in terms of numbers were offences against the person and theft and acquisitive offences. The other processed offences (50 %) were dismissed with no investigation. Of these, slightly more than one-half were theft and acquisitive offences. Slightly less than one-third of the processed offences (465,000 or 32 %) had

at least one suspect registered. Almost half of these offences were offences against the person and narcotics offences.

Of all processed offences, 15 percent resulted in person-based clearances (the “person-based clearance rate”), which is the same percentage as in 2013.

The conviction decision rate, i.e. the percentage of person-based clearances among all investigated offences in 2014, was 31 percent.

Persons suspected of offences

The persons who are reported in the statistic of persons suspected of committing offences have been suspected of offences at the lowest level of suspicion (*suspected of an offence*) and, after the completed investigation, the police or public prosecutor have found that the suspicion of having committed an offence remains. Young people who are under 15 years of age, and thus below the age of criminal responsibility, are not reported in the statistic of persons suspected of offences. A suspected person’s registered participation in a specific offence is known as offence participation. The number of offence participations is reported in the same chapter as the statistic regarding persons suspected of offences.

In 2014, 105,000 individuals were registered as suspected of committing offences; this is a 2 percent reduction as compared with 2013. The number of suspected persons dropped for the third year in a row from a high in 2011. The reduction during the two most recent years can, to some extent, be explained by the launching of a new decision-making structure within the police.

The number of persons suspected of offences has increased since 1975; this increase can be seen even in light of the general increase in population. However, there have been both increases and decreases during the period. As compared with 2005, the number of persons suspected of offences per 100,000 residents has decreased by 8 percent.

Persons suspected of offences were registered as having participated in 324,000 offences (“offence participations”) in 2014. This gives an average of 3.1 offences for each person suspected of an offence during the year. However, the breakdown for offence participations was uneven as among the persons suspected of offences, with two thirds suspected of participation in one offence, slightly more than one third suspected of participation in two or more offences and, among the latter group, 2 percent were suspected of participation in more than 10 offences. The number of offence participations increased by 2 percent between 2013 and 2014.

Persons convicted of offences

The statistic on persons convicted of offences shows the decisions to convict a person during one calendar year. Persons convicted refers to a conviction by a district court or a decision by the public prosecutor, such as a summary sanction order or a waiver of prosecution. A single person may be convicted on several occasions during one year, and thus is registered several times in the statistic. When several persons are included in the same decision, each individual person is registered as one unit in the statistic. One person may be convicted of several offences in a single conviction decision, and in such case only the most serious offence (as seen under the sentencing scale) and the most intrusive sanction are reported in the statistic regarding conviction decisions. There are supplemental statistics regarding offences with convictions in which all offences with convictions are reported.

There were 110,000 conviction decisions in 2014, which is a reduction of 6 percent as compared with 2013. The number of convictions declined for all age groups. In terms of numbers, the largest reduction can be seen in the 30–49 age group.

Of the convictions in 2014, more than half (60,700) were district court convictions. These decreased by 6 percent as compared with 2013. The number of judicial decisions with prison as the main sanction decreased by 3 percent, to 10,900 decisions, which is the lowest level since the middle of the 1970s.

Approximately 49,300 of the conviction decisions in 2014 were public prosecutor decisions in the form of summary sanction orders and waivers of prosecution. Summary sanction orders declined by 6 percent, to 32,500 decisions, and waivers of prosecution declined by 5 percent, to 16,800 decisions.

The number of conviction decisions has declined tangibly during the most recent 40 years and, in 2014, were slightly more than one-third of the number in 1975. A major part of the reduction occurred as early as at the end of the 1970s in conjunction with the decriminalisation of public intoxication. Second to that primary decrease is in the number of summary sanction orders. This is due, in part, to the increased possibility to issue fines (which is not included in the term “persons convicted of offences”) and, in part, to a decrease in the number of cleared offences, particularly during 1994–1996.

In 2014, 198,000 offences led to convictions, which means that the 110,000 convictions referred, on average, to 1.8 offences.

The Prison and Probation Service

The statistic regarding prison and probation services reflects information regarding the number of persons who are admitted to prison service institutions during one calendar year, the number of persons admitted to prison service institutions as of 1 October, the number of persons supervised by the Prison and Probation Services’ noncustodial organisation, and the number of persons in remand centres. Non-institutional care includes individuals on parole, those sentenced to protective supervision or who are serving their prison sentence under intensive supervision with electronic control, as well as those with a conditional sentence involving community service. Individuals sentenced to conditional sentences with community service are not supervised by probation authorities, but the probation authorities administer their community service.

In 2014, 8,940 persons were admitted to prison service institutions, which is approximately the same number ($\pm 0\%$) as the preceding year, but the lowest number during the entire period measured, i.e. 1975–2014. There were 4,320 persons admitted to institutions as of 1 October 2014, which is a 1 percent reduction as compared with 2013. In 2014, 10,400 persons commenced noncustodial sentences with supervision – sentenced to probation or conditionally paroled from institutions – which is a 7 percent reduction as compared with 2013.

As of 1 October 2014, 1,670 persons were in remand centres, a 2 percent increase as compared with 1 October 2013.

Recidivism

The statistic regarding recidivism reflects the number of persons who relapsed into a new convicted offence after an initial event. The statistic does not describe the actual number of relapses among convicted persons but, instead, only relapses into crime which came to the attention of the criminal justice system and led to a conviction (registered recidivism).

For all persons with an initial event in 2008, 25 percent relapsed with a new convicted offence within one year, 34 percent within two years, and 40 percent within three years from the initial event. To summarise, one can observe that the recidivism rate shows a weak decrease over time. The recidivism rate differs markedly between men and women. Within three years, 28 percent of the women had relapsed while the recidivism rate among men was 42 percent.

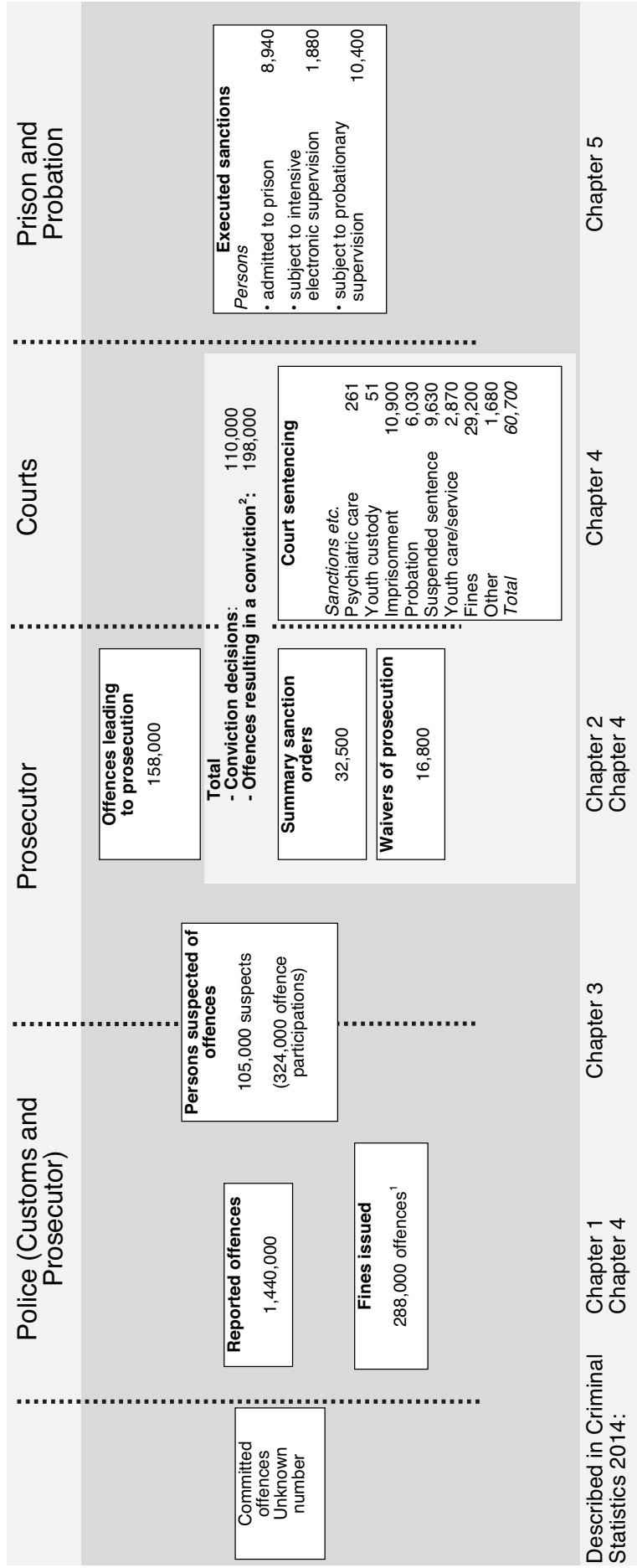
The risk of recidivism increases markedly in step with the number of previous convictions. The recidivism rate for persons with more than 9 previous convictions was 93 percent within three years. Among first-time offenders, the recidivism rate was 22 percent. "Previous convictions" means final judicial decisions or other conviction decisions five years prior to the initial event.

A regression analysis confirms most of the patterns presented by the statistics. Men relapse more often

than women, the risk of recidivism increases with the number of previous convictions, and there is no difference over time. Men have a 51 percent higher risk of recidivism than women, and persons with more than 9 previous convictions have more than a 25 times greater risk of recidivism than first-time offenders.

The median number of days until first relapse was almost 8 months (243 days) in 2008. The median number of days was 262 for women and 239 for men.

Outline of the criminal justice process 2014



¹ 275,000 fines issued by the police.

² Total of: summary sanction orders, waivers of prosecution and court sentences.

This outline summarizes (in round figures) some of the data from the Criminal Statistics for 2014, describing some of the year's occurrences throughout the criminal justice process. The data are not intended to describe the "flow" of the criminal justice system. Such a comparison is not possible to make as the various figures are based on different units and definitions (see instructions for reading). The "outflow" from the system, i.e. offences and cases that resulted in no subsequent action – for example reported offences where no suspect was found, are not included in this outline.