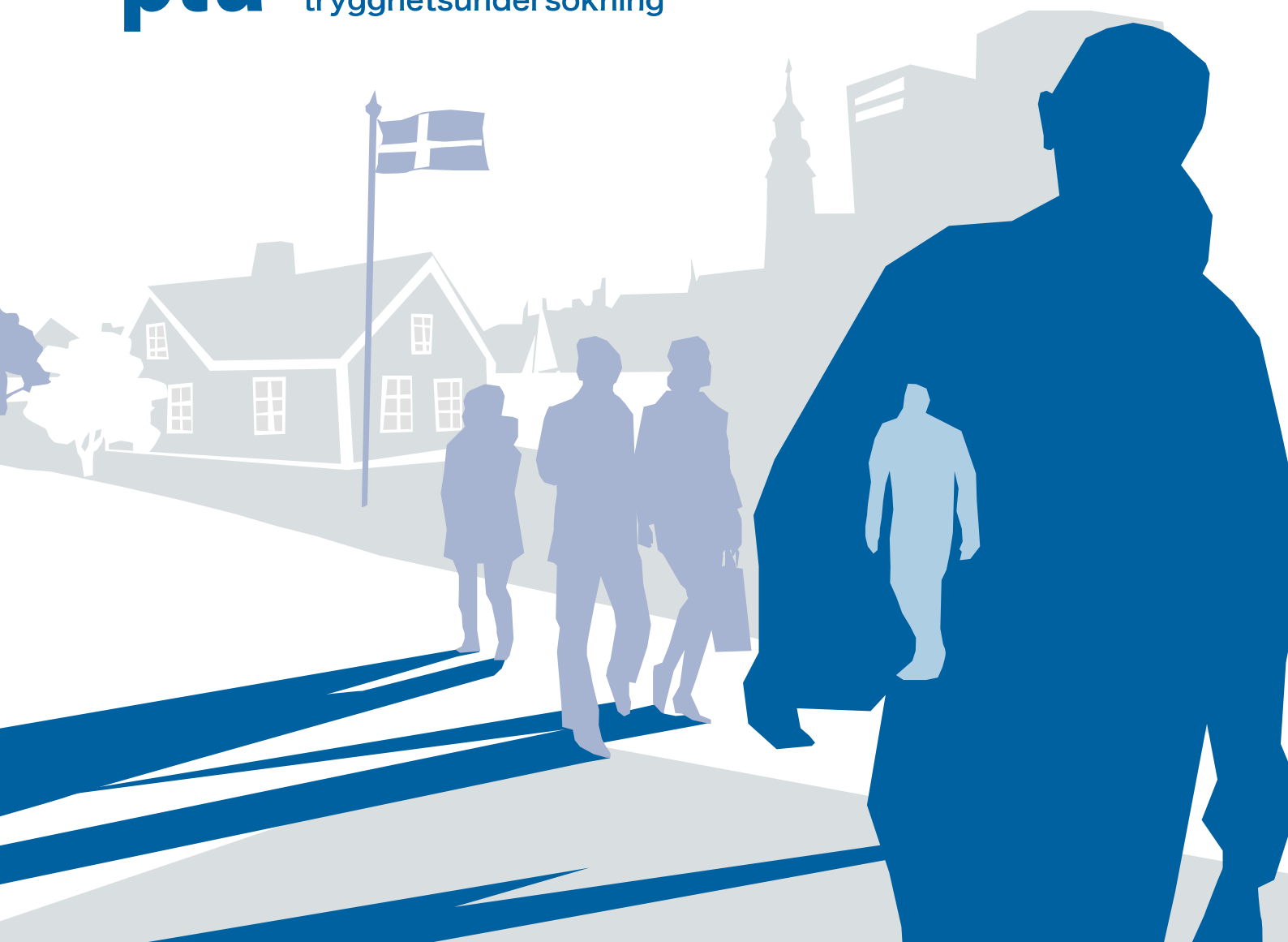


ptu politikernas
trygghetsundersökning



The Politician's Safety Survey 2021

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) - centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures

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Authors: Anna Frenzel

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The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, Box 1386, 111 93 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46(0)8 527 58 400, E-mail: info@bra.se, www.bra.se

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The Politician's Safety Survey 2021

English summary of Brå report 2021:13

Summary

This report presents the overall results of the Politician's Safety Survey (PTU), 2012–2020. The report is mainly descriptive in form, and in-depth, detailed analyses or explanations of results are instead presented in various other in-depth studies. The results of the report are summarised below, divided into the sections Victimisation among elected representatives, Concern among elected representatives, Consequences of victimisation and concern, Police reports and other reporting and Support and security measures. Of the 13,400 elected representatives that constituted the sample population for the PTU 2021, almost 8,000 individuals participated.

Victimisation among elected representatives

In the PTU, elected representatives are asked to respond to questions concerning self-reported victimisation during the previous calendar year. This means that the PTU for 2021 describes victimisation experienced during 2020. Victimisation is presented as a proportion of exposed individuals, with the exception of the section concerning situations, perpetrators and motives, where it is presented as the proportion of incidents.

Total victimisation

- In total, 26 per cent of the elected representatives stated that, during 2020, they had been the victim of some form of threat or harassment, or of violence, vandalism or theft.
- The proportion of victimised elected representatives was larger during the election years of 2018 and 2014, compared to the intervening years of 2020, 2016 and 2012. Of these intervening years, the highest proportion was in 2016. The pattern and levels are similar for both women and men, but the difference between men and women was slightly larger in 2018 and 2020, compared with previous years.
- In total, 14 per cent of those who had been victimised during 2020 stated that this concerned a single incident, 52 per cent stated that it happened between two and five times, and 34 per cent stated that they had been victimised on six or more occasions.
- A total of 28 per cent of the female elected representatives and 25 per cent of the males stated that they had been victimised at least once during 2020.

- According to the results of the survey, younger elected representatives are most victimised, and the proportion then decreases successively as the age groups get older. Of the elected representatives aged 29 years or younger, 39 per cent stated that they had been victimised during 2020, compared to 13 per cent among the oldest age group (70 years or older).
- A slightly larger proportion of elected representatives with a non-Swedish background stated that they had been victimised during 2020, compared to those with a Swedish background (29 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively).
- The proportion of those victimised during 2020 was largest within the Green Party (33 per cent), and smallest within the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats (24 per cent in each). Among the Sweden Democrats, the Liberals, the Moderates and the Left Party, the proportion of those victimised was also slightly higher than the average (26 per cent), whilst the proportion of those victimised within the Centre Party was lower than the average.
- Victimisation is greater among elected representatives in the Swedish national parliament than in municipal and regional assemblies, it is greater among those in executive committees than in assemblies, and it is greater among those with chairmanship positions.
- The proportion of victimised elected representatives in 2020 with posts within a municipal assembly was highest in the metropolitan municipalities (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö), where almost half (47 per cent) stated that they had been victimised. The proportion of those victimised was lowest in commuter municipalities close to large towns/cities, and in commuter municipalities close to smaller towns/cities (21 per cent each).
- Victimisation increases with the elected representative's level of exposure (the extent to which they are active on social media, the extent to which they are written or spoken about in the media, and the extent to which they feel they are recognised by the public).

Threats and harassment

- For 2020, 25 per cent of the elected representatives stated that they had been the victim of some form of threat or harassment as a result of their elected position.
- Victimisation in the form of threats and harassment is greater during

election years than in the intervening years. The highest proportion was during the election year of 2018 (32 per cent).

- A total of 27 per cent of women and 24 per cent of men stated that they had been the victim of threats or harassment during 2020. The pattern over time has been similar for both women and men, although the proportion has been higher among women since 2018.
- As in previous years, the most common incident in 2020 took the form of threats or attacks via social media. A total of 16 per cent of the elected representatives stated that they had been victimised in this way.

Violence, vandalism and theft

- For 2020, 3.4 per cent of the elected representatives stated that they had been the victim of some form of violence, vandalism or theft as a result of their elected position.
- The proportion victimised in this way has been higher during election years than in the intervening years.
- In all previous studies, the proportion reporting victimisation had been higher among men than among women. The proportions for 2020, however, were broadly the same (3.5 per cent and 3.4 per cent, respectively).
- Jostling and similar contact was the most commonly experienced form of violence. It is considerably less common that the elected representatives state that they have been the victims of more serious violence, in the form of punches, kicks or similar, or in the form of violence with a weapon.

Attempted corruption

- A total of 2.8 per cent of the elected representatives stated that they had been the victim of some form of attempted corruption in 2020.
- The proportion victimised in this way was slightly higher in 2012–2016, compared with in 2018 and 2020.
- A higher proportion of women than men stated that they had been the victim of attempted corruption in 2020 (3.1 per cent and 2.6 per cent, respectively). This was also the case in previous years, with the exception of 2018, when women and men were victimised to the same extent.
- The most common form of attempted corruption is friendship-based corruption, whereby a person close to the elected representative

attempts to exploit their relationship in order to gain some form of advantage.

Situations, perpetrators and motives

- In most incidents during 2020, the perpetrator was either unknown or anonymous.
- In those instances where the victim had an idea of the perpetrator's identity, it was most often a man estimated to be aged 45–64 years, who was acting alone and was perceived as a disgruntled citizen.
- In around half of the incidents, the perpetrator was linked to some form of group, according to the victim, which was often a far-right or racist group.
- The incident was most often associated with a specific political issue in which the victim had been engaged – in many instances this concerned issues about integration, the acceptance of refugees, and racism.
- In most cases, the victim stated that the main objective of the perpetrator was to humiliate or insult him or her.
- In total, 7 per cent of the elected representatives in 2020 stated that there had been some verbal, written or physical attack of a sexual nature in conjunction with the incident or one of the incidents. In this regard there is a clear difference between men and women, as this was reported by 11 per cent of the victimised women, whilst the corresponding proportion for men was 3.0 per cent.

Concern among elected representatives

The elected representatives are also asked to respond to a question regarding their level of concern during the previous calendar year. This means that the PTU for 2021 describes the concern experienced during 2020. The question addresses whether they had felt concerned – either that they themselves would be the victims of crime or similar unpleasant events as a result of their political position, or that another person close to them would be victimised. Concern among elected representatives is reported as a proportion of all respondents and as a proportion of those respondents who reported victimisation.

Concern among all elected representatives

- In total, 24 per cent of all elected representatives stated that, during 2020, they had felt concerned that either they themselves would be the

victims of crime or similar unpleasant events, or that another person close to them would be victimised.

- The proportion that felt concerned increased during the period 2012–2018 (from 16 to 30 per cent), and then decreased to 24 per cent in 2020.
- A total of 26 per cent of the female elected representatives and 23 per cent of the men stated that they had felt concerned at least once during 2020. The higher proportion among the women became apparent in 2018, and this situation also remained in 2020.
- The proportion that felt concerned during 2020 was highest within the age groups 29 years and younger and 30–39 years (40 per cent in each age group). The corresponding proportion among the oldest age group (70 years or older) was 10 per cent.
- The proportion was higher among elected representatives with a non-Swedish background, compared to those with a Swedish background (33 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively).

Concern among victimised elected representatives

- Concern among those elected representatives that had been the victims of some form of incident during 2020 followed the same distribution patterns as among all elected representatives, although at higher levels.
- In total, 51 per cent of victimised elected representatives stated that, during 2020, they had felt concerned that either they themselves would be the victims of crime or similar unpleasant events, or that another person close to them would be victimised.
- The proportion of those victimised that felt concerned increased during the period 2012–2018 (from 42 to 55 per cent), and then decreased to 51 per cent in 2020.
- A total of 53 per cent of the victimised women and 49 per cent of the men stated that they had felt concerned at least once during 2020. This difference between men and women can be observed in almost all previous years.
- The proportion of those victimised who also felt concern increases as the age of the age groups studied decreases.
- Of those victimised with a non-Swedish background, 60 per cent stated that they had felt concerned during 2020, compared to 49 per cent among those victimised with a Swedish background.

Consequences of victimisation and concern

The elected representatives are also asked to respond to a question regarding the consequences of their victimisation and concern during the previous calendar year. This means that the PTU for 2021 describes the consequences during 2020. The consequences of victimisation and concern are reported as a proportion of all the elected representatives, and as a proportion of those who reported victimisation.

Consequences among all elected representatives

- In total, 26 per cent of all elected representatives stated that, during 2020, they were affected in their elected role, either in their considerations or their actual actions, as a result of victimisation or concern about being victimised.
- The proportion that reported some form of consequence increased from 20 per cent in 2012 to 26 per cent in 2016. It then subsequently remained at the same level in 2018 and 2020.
- For 2020, 31 per cent of the women stated that they had been affected by victimisation or their concern about being victimised, compared to 23 per cent of the men.
- The most common consequence was that the person avoided engaging in, or expressing views about, a specific issue, which 17 per cent of all elected representatives stated that they did in 2020. It is mainly this type of consequence that has increased over time.

Consequences among victimised elected representatives

- The consequences among those elected representatives that had been the victims of some form of incident during 2020 followed the same distribution patterns as among all elected representatives, although at higher levels.
- Of all elected representatives that had been victimised during 2020, 46 per cent stated that they had been affected in their elected role, either in their considerations or their actual actions. This proportion has increased since 2012, when it was 40 per cent.
- Of the women who had been victimised during 2020, 53 per cent stated that they had been affected by the victimisation or their concern about being victimised, compared to 41 per cent of the men.
- The most common type of consequence was that the person avoided engaging in, or expressing views about, a specific issue. Of those who

felt they had been victimised, 32 per cent stated that they had exercised self-censorship in some situation connected to their elected role.

- Those who avoided engaging or expressing themselves in a specific issue as a result of victimisation and/or their concern stated that this was often related to racism, immigration, migration or integration. Other topics included the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccinations, gender equality and feminism, the climate, the dismantling of societal institutions, schooling, and care and healthcare.

Police reports and other reporting

The PTU examines how common it is for the incidents to be reported to the police, or to be reported in any other way. The respondents are also asked to describe their personal experiences of the police, and to state why they chose not to report an incident to the police. The results are presented as a proportion of incidents.

Police reports

- A total of 16 per cent of incidents in 2020 that concerned either threats and harassment or violence, vandalism and theft were reported to the police. The results do not show any differences between men and women.
- In previous years, the proportion of incidents reported to the police was 17–19 per cent, which means that the level for 2020 is the lowest yet recorded.
- A total of 47 per cent of incidents that included violence, vandalism or theft were reported to the police, compared to 12 per cent of those that involved threats and harassment.

Experiences of the police

- In the majority of the instances in which those victimised in 2020 were in contact with the police, they had very or quite positive experiences of the police (53 per cent). The proportion of instances in which those victimised in 2020 had very or quite negative experiences of the police was 21 per cent.
- There are no apparent differences between men and women for instances where those victimised had very or quite positive experiences of the police, but very or quite negative experiences were reported by a somewhat higher proportion of men.

- Up until 2016, there was a decrease in the proportion of incidents that resulted in positive experiences of the police (from 56 per cent in 2012 to 42 per cent in 2016). In 2018, however, the proportion increased to 55 per cent, and then decreased again to 53 per cent in 2020.

Why incidents were not reported to the police

- Those victims who did not report incidents to the police most often stated that they did not believe that doing so would lead anywhere. Many also regarded the incident as a trivial matter, or as just part of the role of being an elected representative.
- There was a higher proportion of incidents aimed at men that were not reported to the police because they did not believe it would lead anywhere or because the incident was regarded as a trivial matter, whilst there was a higher proportion of incidents aimed at women that were not reported to the police because they regarded them as just part of the role of being an elected representative.

Other reporting of incidents

- In total, 45 per cent of incidents in 2020 were reported to a party other than the police. Of these incidents, a higher proportion had been aimed at women than at men (47 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively).
- The most common outcome was that the incident had been reported to a security officer, either within the political institution or within their own party.

Support and security measures

The elected representatives are also asked to state whether they are aware of the existence of either an action plan for the victimisation of elected representatives or a person with responsibility for security whom they could contact. They are also asked questions about their need for support and whether they have received support, as well as which security measures have been implemented. The reference period is the previous calendar year (2020), with the exception of the question relating to security officers and action plans, where the question concerns the actual response to the questionnaire (2021). The results for support and assistance are presented as a proportion of incidents, whilst the results relating to security officers, action plans and security procedures are presented as a proportion of people.

Awareness of security officers and action plans

- A total of 20 per cent of the elected representatives did not know whether or not an action plan existed, whilst 16 per cent did not know whether or not there was a security officer whom they could contact.
- Both proportions have decreased successively with time, which means that awareness has increased.
- Among those who were not aware of the existence of an action plan or security officer, there was a higher proportion of women than men.

Support and assistance

- A total of 9 per cent of the incidents in 2020 resulted in a quite or very large need for support or assistance. In 26 per cent of the incidents, the need was very or quite small, and in 66 per cent of incidents, there was no need for support or assistance.
- A higher proportion of women than men stated that they had needed support and assistance. For 2020, a quite or very large need for support and assistance was reported in 11 per cent of the incidents aimed at women, and in 7 per cent of incidents aimed at men.
- In 44 per cent of cases, those reporting a quite or very large need for support and assistance stated that they had received the support and assistance they needed. In 23 per cent of cases, however, they had not received any support at all.

Security measures

- A total of 23 per cent of those victimised during 2020 stated that security measures had been implemented afterwards.
- The proportion was higher among victimised women than among victimised men.
- The most common measures were that the victimised person changed their routines or behaviour, and that they were given information about security and the exercising of caution.



Brottsförebyggande rådet/National Council for Crime Prevention

Box 1386/Tegnégatan 23, SE-111 93 STOCKHOLM

Tel +46 (0) 8 527 58 400, info@bra.se, www.bra.se

urn:nbn:se:bra-1012