

# Youths and crime 1995–2005

Results from six self-report studies among  
Swedish year nine pupils

**Report 2007:8**

**Translation of the Swedish report 2006:7  
"Ungdomar och brott åren 1995–2005"**

**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention – centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures.**

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society by producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime and crime prevention work.

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# Preface

The extent of, and trends in, youth crime constitute important and recurrent themes in the social debate. Producing as accurate a picture of youth crime as possible is therefore of central importance to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet – Brå). It is now well-established that many of the offences committed by young people are never detected, reported and registered. This means that official crime statistics, although important in their own right, can never provide a complete picture of youth crime. Self-report studies provide an important source of knowledge on the actual extent and character of youth crime, and of trends in youth crime over time, and serve as a complement to the information contained in official statistics.

In 1995 and 1997, the Department of Criminology at the University of Stockholm conducted the first nationally representative Swedish self-report surveys of youth in their final year of compulsory education (year nine). Since 1999, these studies have been conducted biennially by the National Council for Crime Prevention. The completion of the 2005 study has concluded the first decade of this survey series. The combined data from these surveys make Sweden one of only a few European countries that are able to describe trends in youth crime on the basis of anything other than official crime statistics alone.

The overarching objective of the study presented in this report has been to describe trends in the proportion of youths who have themselves participated in crime and other problem behaviours, and to describe the proportion of youths who have been exposed to crime, over the period 1995–2005.

The report's target audience comprises persons working within the justice system and the social services, as well as others who have an interest in youth issues. The report has been written by Robert Svensson, Ph. D., who works at the National Council. Erik Grevholm has been the responsible Head of Division throughout most of the project. Felipe Estrada has been responsible for the final phase. Valuable comments on the manuscript have been provided by Professor Jerzy Sarnecki and Jonas Ring Ph. D., both of whom work at Stockholm University's Department of Criminology.

We would finally like to convey our thanks to all the school managers and teachers who have assisted us in the conduct of the surveys, and of course to all the youths who have shared their experiences with us.

Stockholm, May 2007

*Jan Andersson*  
Director-General

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Head of Division

# Introduction

It is difficult to know exactly how much crime is actually committed by young people. *Official crime statistics* constitute one important source of knowledge on the extent of youth crime. These include amongst other things information on persons suspected and convicted of criminal offences. Figure 1 presents data on the number of youths aged 15–17 suspected of offences in Sweden between 1990 and 2005. In general terms, this number has declined since 1995. The number of 15–17 year olds suspected of offences against the person has remained stable, however.<sup>1</sup> The pattern is the same for the number of youths convicted of offences.

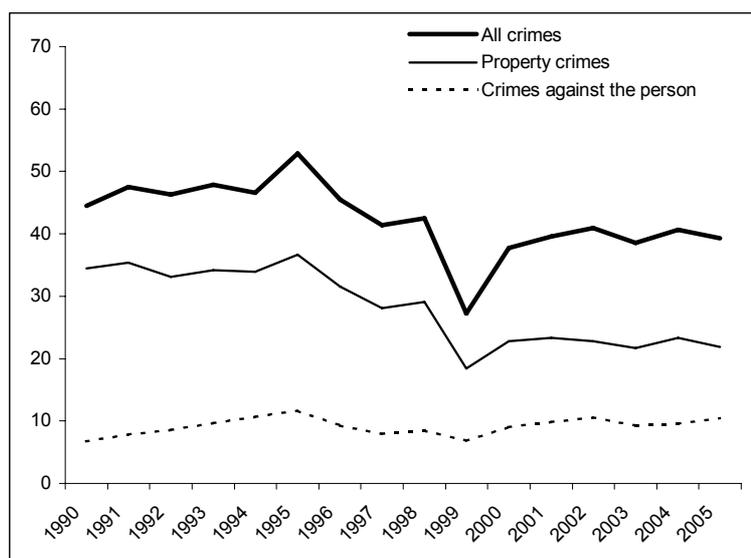


Figure 1. Persons aged 15–17 suspected of offences 1990–2005, per 1,000 of population in the relevant age group.

Since these data are drawn from sources at different points within the criminal justice system, they provide a limited picture of youth crime. Many offences are committed without being detected. Even if these crimes had been detected, it is not certain that they would have been reported to and registered by the police. And even if offences are reported, it is often not possible to link these crimes to a specific offender.

*Self-report studies* constitute an important complementary source of knowledge on the extent and character of youth crime, and of trends over time. The method allows us to produce a picture of the crime that is not reported to the police. Respondents are given a questionnaire and asked to choose the answers that best correspond to their own actions. Surveys of this kind are usually conducted in schools, and the youths complete the questionnaire anonymously. The method was introduced as a means of measuring criminal and deviant behaviour in the USA at the end of the 1940s (e.g. Porterfield, 1946). Use of this method in Sweden began at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s (Elmhorn, 1969; Olofsson, 1971). Since this time, self-report surveys have come to be utilised both in Sweden and other European countries in order both to study crime trends and to test hypothesis on why young people commit criminal acts.

<sup>1</sup> The number of persons aged 15–17 suspected of offences decreased dramatically in 1999. This reduction was due to administrative and technical factors.

In 1995 and 1997, the Department of Criminology at Stockholm University conducted two nationally representative questionnaire surveys of crime and other problem behaviours among youths in their final year of compulsory education in Sweden (year nine). Since 1999, these surveys have been conducted biennially under the administration of the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet – Brå; see Ring, 1999; Brå, 2000a; Brå, 2003; Brå, 2005).

The overarching objective of this study is, on the basis of the questions posed in these surveys, to describe trends in the proportion of youths in year nine reporting that they have participated in crime or other problem behaviours. The study will also analyse levels of victimisation among the students in relation to theft, violence, threats and bullying.

Previous results from this series of surveys indicate that the proportion of youths *not* committing offences has increased over time, a finding that is consistent with trends identified in Finland (Kivivuori & Salmi, 2005). In other studies (from Sweden and Denmark) some degree of polarisation has been noted, i.e. the proportion of youths committing large numbers of offences has become larger at the same time as the proportion committing no offences has also increased (Ward, 1998; Balvig, 1999, 2006). One question addressed in this article is whether those youths who have committed offences have become more criminally active over the period covered by the surveys. Has the small group that might be labelled high-frequency offenders become more active, and are there any differences in this regard between youths from different backgrounds? Previous research has also noted that the significance of certain environments or lifestyles varies across youths with different individual-level characteristics (Wikström, 2005). Against this background, it is interesting to examine the extent to which a high-risk lifestyle may involve a greater risk for involvement in crime for certain youths than it does for others.

# Material and method

## Sample and non-response

The 2005 survey is based on a systematic sample of Swedish schools with pupils in year nine. The sample comprised a total of 107 schools, 414 classes and 9,386 pupils. Of these 105 schools (98%) and 376 (91%) of the selected classes agreed to participate in the survey. Data were collected from a total of 7,449 students, giving a non-response rate of thirteen percent among the pupils in the *participating* classes.<sup>2</sup> A total of 52 percent of the participating pupils were male, and 48 percent female.

The 1995 survey was based on a sample of schools classes drawn by Statistics Sweden (SCB). All year nine classes in Sweden were first sorted by county and class size. A systematic sample was then drawn. The 1997 sample was drawn in the same way. The 1999, 2001 and 2003 samples were however based on samples of all schools in Sweden with year nine classes. In these surveys, the non-response rate was calculated on the basis of the number of pupils in the participating classes, and amounted to five percent in 1995, seven percent in 1997, thirteen percent in 1999, twelve percent in 2001 and fourteen percent in 2003.<sup>3</sup> Thus the non-response figure of thirteen percent for 2005 is very similar to that for the previous three surveys.

## Methodological problems

The non-response in self-report surveys, which is often selective, generally constitutes a problem. Youths who are absent from school tend for example to commit more offences than others and it is difficult to know whether the results would have been different if pupils absent on the day of the survey had in fact participated. The Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and other Drugs (CAN) has followed up the external non-response in national alcohol and drug use surveys on two occasions – in 1979 and 1993. Their findings showed that the youths included among the non-response reported a higher average level of drug consumption than those included in the study sample, but that the survey findings would not have been affected to any major extent by their inclusion (Andersson et al., 2000:33–34). In order to examine the significance that an increasing non-response rate may have for the current surveys, a non-response analysis has been conducted (see Table 2, Appendix 1). We will return to this question in connection with the presentation of results. There has been some discussion as to whether the use of school samples constitutes a problem in surveys of this kind. The criticism has focused on the fact that amongst other things such samples miss those pupils who do not attend school at all. It has been shown that such youths tend to commit more offences than those who attend ordinary schools (see e.g. Cernkovich et al., 1985; Hagan & McCarthy, 1997; Shannon, 2006).

Other methodological problems that are often discussed in this context include the possible extent of the over- and under-reporting of criminal behaviour. Under-reporting refers to a situation where youths fail to report offences they have committed, over-reporting to individuals reporting acts that they haven't

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<sup>2</sup> If all pupils in the schools and classes that decided not to participate in the survey are included, the non-response rate amounts to 20.6 percent. All of the completed questionnaires were examined prior to coding and a small number (1.3 %) of questionnaires that had clearly been completed dishonestly were excluded. These are counted among the non-response.

<sup>3</sup> Between 5,265 and 8,200 students have participated in the earlier surveys and approximately half of the participants have been males (see e.g. Brå, 2005).

actually engaged in. It is difficult to estimate the extent of these phenomena, but it is reasonable to assume that the pattern ought to be similar in connection with the six surveys conducted since 1995, and thus over- and under-reporting ought not to affect the validity of the findings as regards comparisons over time.

Thus the self-report method is subject to a number of sources of error, but even though researchers are well aware of these problems, the method is regarded as producing relatively reliable results. In its early years, the self-report method constituted a rather unsophisticated way of measuring crime, but the methodology has been developed and refined over more recent years, and has become an established source of knowledge on crime; many would argue that it is in fact one of the more reliable methods found within the social sciences (Thornberry & Krohn, 2000, see also Junger-Tas & Marshall, 1999). This assessment is based on the fact that researchers have often compared self-report data with data from other sources, such as registered crime, peer reports, parent reports, school/teacher reports and drug tests (see e.g. Agnew, 2001:25).

## The conduct of the survey

All six surveys have been conducted in December. The head of the sampled schools is first contacted by mail about the survey's objectives and is informed that the school in question has been selected. A few weeks later, the schools receive the questionnaires, together with an envelope for each pupil's completed questionnaire, a postage-paid package for returning the questionnaires, and instructions for the teachers in each class. The teachers distribute the questionnaires to the pupils, who complete the survey in the classroom during lesson time under conditions of anonymity.<sup>4</sup> Teachers are encouraged to give absent pupils the opportunity to complete the questionnaire at a later date. In general, the completed questionnaires were received within approximately one week. Five percent of participants answered the questionnaire at a later date. An analysis showed that the pupils who completed the questionnaire later than the rest of the sample did not report significantly higher average levels of crime.

## The questionnaire

The same questionnaire has been employed each year, with a few minor adjustments. The questionnaire items are well-tried and tested and have been used in similar national and international surveys. The questionnaire was originally formulated in line with an organised international comparative self-report survey of youth in thirteen countries (Junger-Tas et al., 1994). The questionnaire also collects data on the pupils' social situation, family, peer relations and leisure time activities. In addition, the questionnaire poses a large number of questions about whether the youths have committed criminal acts or engaged in problem behaviours, and if so, of what type. The majority of items have fixed response alternatives, so students with writing difficulties are spared having to give written answers. The number of open responses has been limited as a means of restricting the level of internal non-response (i.e. where students fail to answer all the questions). Internal non-response may be due to the sensitive nature of the questions, but may also be dependant on students having problems reading or writing. Generally speaking, the level of internal non-response is low in these surveys.

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<sup>4</sup> Previous research has not found it to make any difference whether questionnaires are distributed by teachers or research staff (Bjarnason, 1995).

# Involvement in crime

## No increases – instead signs of a decrease

Figure 2 presents trends over time for the proportion of youths reporting involvement in a number of broad crime categories.<sup>5</sup> In general, the proportion of youths reporting having committed one of the acts included in these categories has not increased since 1995, and there are several categories of offences where this proportion has decreased. The proportion of youths reporting some kind of theft has successively declined since 1995. The most prominent decreases have occurred in relation to the most common theft crimes, such as thefts from school<sup>6</sup> and from shops (Table 1, Appendix 1). Some decrease can also be noted in relation to the more uncommon types of theft. Involvement in vandalism has also decreased over time – primarily in relation to criminal damage and graffiti (non-mural) offences. The more unusual forms of vandalism, such as arson and having painted a graffiti mural, have remained stable at a relatively low level between 1995 and 2005. If we exclude the carrying of knives, the proportion of youths reporting having committed some form of violent offence has remained constant over this period. Youths reporting some form of drug offence during the period and the level of involvement in “other offences” has remained constant.

It has already been noted that the level of external non-response has increased over time. An analysis has been conducted in order to examine the potential effects of this increase. The analysis proceeds on the basis of two assumptions, the first of which should be viewed as a “worst case scenario” and which is not very realistic, particularly with regard to the more unusual offence types. This analysis quite simply estimated how large the proportion of offenders would have been in 1995 and 2005 if *all* those in the non-response group had committed the various types of offence. The second, more realistic assumption, is that the level of criminality is twice as high in the non-response group as it is among those participating in the surveys. These analyses show that the pattern remains largely the same. The proportion of youths reporting they have committed acts of theft or vandalism declines between 1995 and 2005 (irrespective of which assumption is made), whereas the level of involvement in violent crime is more stable (Table 2, Appendix 1).

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<sup>5</sup> These proportions include all youths who have committed any of the offences included in a given crime category at least once. The offence types included in the different crime categories are presented in Table 1, Appendix 1.

<sup>6</sup> The questionnaire provides no information on what the youths have stolen from schools, which means it might involve relatively insignificant items such as pens etc.

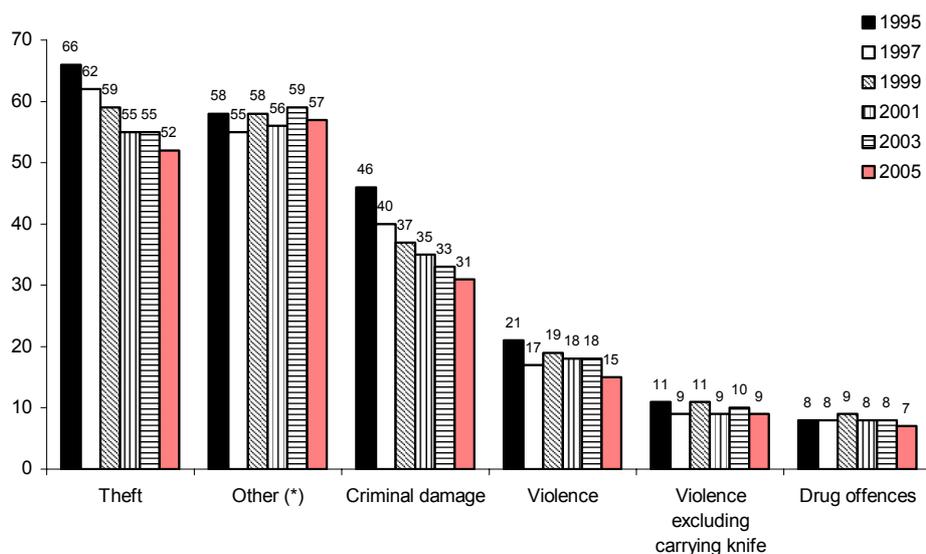


Figure 2. Proportion of youths reporting involvement in various types of offence (both males and females), 1995–2005. Percent.

(\*) Fare-dodging, driving without license, using false ID card.

## Crime trends among males and females

The next question addressed is that of whether the finding of a decrease in the level of offending between 1995 and 2005 (most clearly found in relation to certain types of theft and vandalism) holds for both male and females. The figures presented in Table 1 indicate that the general pattern is largely the same for both boys and girls. It can also be seen that the trend in the two groups is similar for theft and drug offences. The decrease in vandalism offending has been greater among females than among males, however. Violent offending has decreased somewhat more among the boys than among the girls, particularly when the carrying of knives is excluded. It should also be noted that the levels of participation in theft, vandalism and drug offending among the males in 2005 lie at much the same level as they did among the female respondents in 1995. By contrast, levels of violent offending are substantially higher among the boys in 2005 than they were among the girls in 1995.

Table 1. Proportion of youths reporting that they have engaged in different types of offence over the past, by gender. 1995-2005. Percent.

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<i>Males:</i>						
Theft	73.0	67.1	65.5	60.7	61.6	58.1
Criminal damage	53.1	47.5	44.0	43.9	40.1	37.7
Violence	29.8	23.5	27.9	27.2	26.2	21.6
Violence excluding carrying knife	16.4	12.8	16.1	14.1	13.6	12.1
Drug offences	9.1	9.6	10.8	9.2	8.7	7.1
<i>Females:</i>						
Theft	58.9	55.5	52.1	49.0	48.6	46.3
Criminal damage	37.7	31.4	29.4	26.8	25.9	23.1
Violence	11.4	9.7	10.3	9.0	10.8	8.7
Violence excluding carrying knife	6.0	4.6	5.5	4.5	5.8	4.9
Drug offences	7.3	7.2	7.7	7.8	8.1	6.0

## The proportion of non-offenders has increased

The majority of the youths who have committed offences have done so only on one or a few occasions, while a minority have committed a large number of crimes. This section presents data describing the distribution of youths according to their offending frequencies. Figure 3 presents a detailed description of the total level of crime on the basis of a restrictive offending scale.<sup>7</sup> The youths have been divided into groups on the basis of their offending frequencies over the past twelve months. It is clear from the figure that the proportion of youths who have not committed any of the acts included in the crime scale has increased over time. The proportion of youths reporting having committed offences remains relatively stable, or decreases, irrespective of differences in offending frequency.

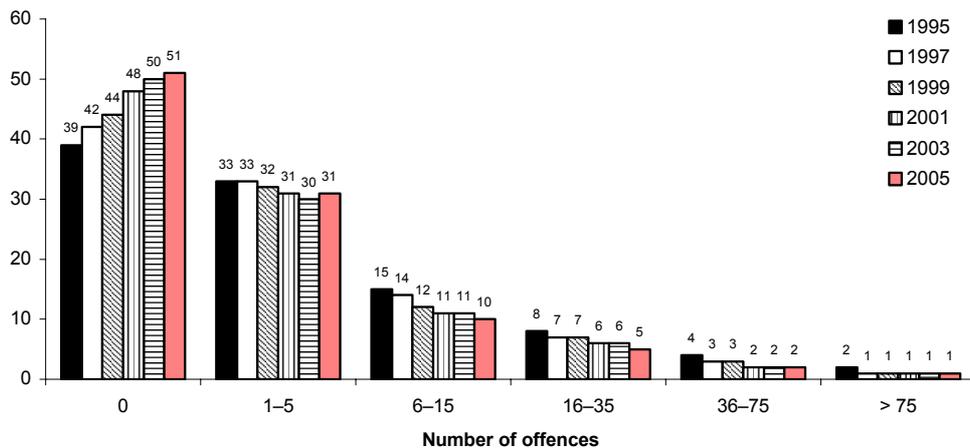


Figure 3. Distribution of offending frequencies (restrictive index). 1995–2005. Percent.

## Fewer offenders, but no more active

It has been shown that the number of law-abiding youths has increased over time. The question of trends in offending frequencies will now be examined in more detail. This question is perhaps particularly important in relation to the most active young offenders. This section presents among other things an analysis of whether the youths committing offences today commit more offences than their counterparts of ten years ago. The question of whether there have been any changes over time within the group of high frequency offenders is also addressed, as is that of whether the group of high frequency offenders has become more active over time, and whether they are committing more serious offences today than they were ten years ago.

### Youths today commit fewer offences

Table 2 presents the mean and median numbers of reported offences for those youths reporting at least one criminal act in each of the years covered by the survey.<sup>8</sup> The average number of offences committed by those reporting some

<sup>7</sup> The scale is based on 24 offence types. A number of offences have been excluded because they are viewed as being of secondary importance and because they may otherwise exert an undue influence on the results. The offences that have been excluded are: thefts from school, from home, graffiti, fare-dodging and having driven a car/motorcycle without a licence. The offences included in this restrictive scale are presented in Appendix 2. The scale is a summative index, with the lowest value for each response category having been employed when calculating an individual's offending frequency. This produces a minimum estimate of the frequency of offending for each student.

<sup>8</sup> The median is also presented due to the skewed distribution of the crime variables.

level of involvement in crime has successively decreased since 1995. The decrease can be seen in both the mean and median numbers of offences, and the same pattern is also clear in relation to theft offences. No clear pattern is visible in relation to the number of reported violent offences, however. On the basis of the total crime measure, it appears safe to say that today's criminally active youth are committing fewer offences than their counterparts from the mid 1990s.

Table 2. Mean and median number of offences among youths reporting at least one crime. 1995–2005.

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<i>All offences (restrictive index):</i>						
Mean	12.8	11.5	11.9	11.0	10.3	9.7
Median	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0
<i>Theft:</i>						
Mean	10.2	9.4	9.3	8.4	7.8	7.8
Median	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
<i>Violence (excluding carrying knives):</i>						
Mean	4.5	4.3	4.2	3.8	3.4	3.7
Median	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Has offending increased or become more serious among high-frequency offenders?

This analysis focuses on whether the youths reporting high levels of offending are committing more offences today than previously, and whether they have become responsible for an increasing proportion of the more serious offences committed by the youth population. The first stage of the analysis involves defining the group of high-frequency offenders. On the basis of the previous division of youths into groups with different offending frequencies (Figure 3), Table 3 presents the size of the offence-frequency groups, and the proportion of the total number of crimes (restrictive crime scale) committed by the entire sample that each of the offence-frequency groups accounted for in the different years of the survey. We have chosen to define high-frequency offenders as those who report having committed 36 or more offences over the course of the previous year. The results show that a large proportion of the offences reported by the sample as a whole are committed by a relatively small group of offenders. Over the period covered by the study, between six and nine percent of the offenders account for between 40 and 48 percent of the total number of reported offences. The pattern is also consistent with established findings from the research literature (e.g. Brå, 2000b).

Table 3. Proportions of offences committed by different offending frequency groups, (proportion each group comprises of the number of youths reporting at least one offence in parentheses). 1995–2005. Percent.

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
1–5 offences	9 (53)	11 (57)	10 (58)	11 (60)	12 (60)	14 (63)
6–15 offences	19 (25)	19 (23)	18 (22)	19 (21)	20 (22)	20 (20)
16–35 offences	24 (13)	25 (12)	24 (12)	26 (12)	27 (12)	25 (10)
36+ offences	48 (9)	45 (7)	48 (8)	44 (7)	40 (7)	42 (6)

In order to study the level of criminal activity among the high-frequency offenders, mean and median offending levels for all offences, serious theft<sup>9</sup> and violent offences<sup>10</sup> are presented in Table 4 for each of the years of the survey. The table also presents the proportion of the high-frequency offenders who report having committed at least six serious thefts or violent offences. The results do not indicate any clear trends, suggesting that the youths in this group have become neither more or less active over time. The proportion reporting a large number of serious theft offences has decreased somewhat over the past four years (as reflected in the two most recent surveys). As regards violent offences, no clear trend is visible.

Table 4. Mean and median number of offences among high-frequency offenders (those reporting at least 36 offences). 1995–2005.

High-frequency offenders	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<i>All offences (restrictive index):</i>						
Mean	69.4	72.3	72.6	72.6	63.2	66.9
Median	55.0	59.0	56.0	58.0	53.0	51.0
<i>Serious theft:</i>						
Mean	8.9	9.3	8.8	9.5	7.1	7.5
Median	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.0	4.0
Six or more offences (%)	46.8	47.0	44.3	47.2	36.5	35.3
<i>Violent offences:</i>						
Mean	9.0	8.9	8.1	8.0	6.6	7.9
Median	6.0	6.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.5
Six or more offences (%)	37.7	33.5	37.8	35.3	30.1	35.0

## The youths' background and level of criminal activity

We have seen that the total level of criminal activity has decreased somewhat over time. The question addressed now is that of whether this is the case in all socio-demographic groups, or whether there are different patterns across groups defined on the basis of e.g. parental occupation<sup>11</sup>, housing type<sup>12</sup>, family structure<sup>13</sup> and ethnicity<sup>14</sup>. Previous Swedish research has noted, for example, that exposure to crime, and exposure to violent crime in particular, has followed different trends in different social groups (Nilsson & Estrada, 2006). This might indicate that the general trend noted above may be concealing a polarisation of levels of criminal activity within different social groups. Against this background, this section of the article examines to what extent these social background factors have had an impact on the propensity for crime.

<sup>9</sup> The serious theft scale comprises moped/motorbike thefts, thefts of and from cars, and burglary.

<sup>10</sup> The violent offending scale is comprised of bag-snatching, using threats to obtain valuables, having hit a non-family member, and having injured someone with a weapon.

<sup>11</sup> *Parental occupation* is classified on the basis of Statistics Sweden's socio-economic classification (SCB, 1989). If the youth lives with both parents, he or she is classified on the basis of the parent with the highest socio-economic status. The analysis compares only the two extreme groups, i.e. unskilled blue-collar workers and high-grade white collar workers (which here include the self-employed and those with an academic profession).

<sup>12</sup> *Housing type* compares those living in detached houses with those living in flats.

<sup>13</sup> *Family structure* is defined in the following way: Non-broken homes are those where the parents live together, and the youth lives with them. Broken homes include single-parent households and households with step-parents or other guardians.

<sup>14</sup> *Ethnicity* is defined in the following way: Youths with an immigrant background are defined as those with at least one parent born outside Sweden. Youths with a non-immigrant background are defined as those both of whose parents were born in Sweden.

Table 5 presents the proportion of youths from different backgrounds that have committed sixteen or more offences during the six years of the survey. The findings show that in 2005 the proportion of youth from unskilled blue collar homes reporting a large number of offences (at least sixteen) is twice as large as the proportion from the homes of high-grade white collar workers. It can also be seen that the proportion of high-frequency offenders is larger among youths who live in flats, have an immigrant background or come from a broken home, than among those living in detached houses, from non-immigrant backgrounds or from non-broken homes. The table also presents a summative composite index of the four background factors that have been shown to involve a higher risk for high-frequency offending. The index ranges from zero to four, with four indicating that the youth has an unskilled blue collar, immigrant background, lives in a flat, and comes from a broken home. In summary, the table shows that there are indeed differences between different background groups, and that these differences are most clear in relation to differences in the composite risk factor index.

The findings also show a decline in the proportion of youths reporting sixteen or more offences in each of the socio-demographic groups. The proportion of high-frequency offenders from an immigrant background, for example, has decreased from nineteen to twelve percent between 1995 and 2005. The proportion of high-frequency offenders from a non-immigrant background has decreased from twelve to seven percent. This same decline is also found if theft offences are examined separately. In relation to violent offences, however, the proportions remain relatively constant. The findings show that the proportion of high-frequency offenders among youths with three or four of the background risk factors has declined from 22 to 14 percent.

Table 5. Proportions of youths in different socio-demographic groups reporting sixteen or more offences (restrictive index). 1995–2005. Percent.

Socio-demographic groups	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<i>Parental occupation:</i>						
High-grade white collar	10.6	7.7	8.5	6.0	6.6	5.0
Blue collar (unskilled)	16.4	13.4	15.0	13.4	11.1	10.3
<i>Housing:</i>						
Detached house	11.3	10.1	9.2	7.6	7.9	6.7
Flat	19.7	14.4	15.7	15.0	13.3	11.3
<i>Ethnicity:</i>						
Non-immigrant background	12.2	9.9	10.2	8.3	7.8	6.9
Immigrant background	19.1	16.1	13.9	15.5	14.0	12.4
<i>Family structure:</i>						
Non-broken home	11.7	9.1	8.5	7.6	7.4	6.2
Broken home	18.1	16.7	17.1	15.3	13.5	11.4
<i>Number of structural background risk factors:</i>						
0	10.1	7.6	7.2	5.8	5.9	4.7
1	13.8	13.0	11.7	10.8	9.9	8.7
2	17.8	14.0	16.2	15.1	14.0	11.9
3–4	22.3	18.0	18.1	18.2	15.4	14.0

## Criminal activity is associated with grade scores and attitudes

This section presents a description of the correlation between the youths grade scores<sup>15</sup>, their attitudes to crime and other problem behaviours<sup>16</sup> and their involvement in crime. Grades and attitudes to crime and other problem behaviours have long been found to be strongly associated with differences in levels of involvement in crime. Table 6 shows that the proportion of youths reporting large numbers of offences (sixteen or more) is substantially larger in the group with low grades than among youths with high grade scores. The proportion of high-frequency offenders is also significantly larger among those with a positive attitude towards crime and other problem behaviours than it is among those with a more negative or neutral attitude. The results of this analysis also show that the proportion of youths with low grades reporting large numbers of offences has decreased over time. The same downward trend is also found among youths with high grades and grades in the mid-range. Corresponding trends are also found among youths with a positive attitude towards crime and other problem behaviours. The pattern remains the same if the focus is directed at the mean number of offences committed by the individuals in each group, or at serious theft or and violent offences. In addition, the youths' attitudes towards their friends' involvement in the majority of offences and problem behaviours examined have become more negative over time (Table 7, Appendix 1).

Table 6. Proportion of youths reporting sixteen or more offences, by grade scores and attitudes to crime and other problem behaviours (restrictive index). 1995–2005. Percent.

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<i>Grades:</i>						
High	6.8	4.1	3.8	3.4	3.7	3.7
Mid-range	11.6	7.5	8.7	8.0	6.7	6.3
Low	21.3	18.0	18.5	16.4	16.7	13.3
<i>Attitudes to crime and other problem behaviours:</i>						
Negative/Neutral	–	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.1	2.7
Positive	–	35.6	31.6	28.4	29.7	28.1

<sup>15</sup> Grades in Swedish, English, Maths and Chemistry.

<sup>16</sup> The youths' attitudes to crime and other problem behaviours are measured using a summative index of the youths answers to seven questions. These questions are intended to measure the extent to which the youths would think it was okay if their friends engaged in a number of different offences and problem behaviours.

# Victimisation

## Many youths exposed to theft and acts of violence

Just under one-third of the youths in the 2005 survey report having been exposed to one of the three types of theft specified in this section of the questionnaire (of a bicycle, purse/wallet or another valuable possession) over the past twelve months (Figure 4). No change can be seen in this regard over time. A closer examination of the individual theft items shows that there is a certain decrease over time in relation to bicycle and purse/wallet thefts, but a slight increase in relation to other thefts in relation to the figures for 1995.

The proportion of youths reporting that they have been hit, kicked or exposed to some other form of violence so that they were hurt but did not need to seek medical attention has remained relatively constant since 1999. The proportion of youth exposed to violence was somewhat lower however in the first two surveys (one possible explanation may be the relatively high internal non-response and subsequent reformulation of the questions following the surveys of 1995 and 1997). Between 1995 and 2005 between five and six percent of youths report having been exposed to more serious violence requiring them to seek medical attention (e.g. seeing a nurse). No major changes can be seen since 1995 in relation to exposure to threatening behaviour.

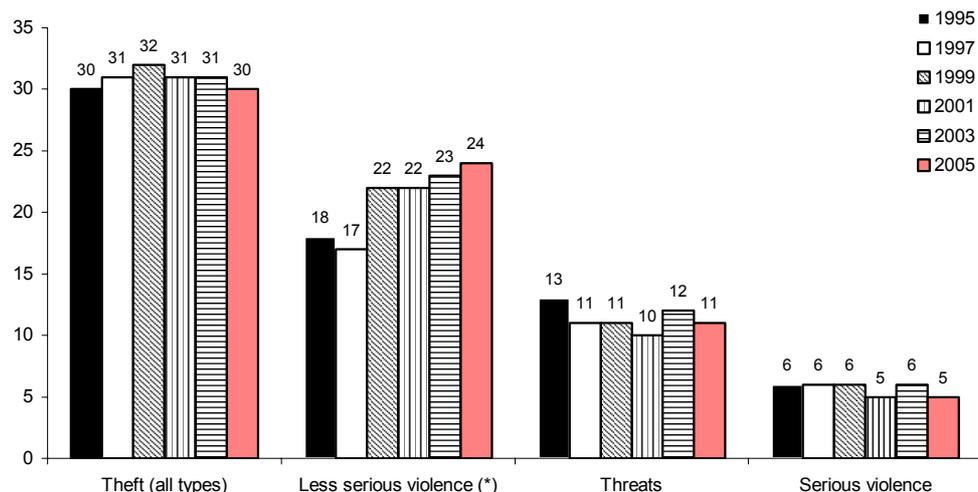


Figure 4. Proportion of youths reporting exposure to theft, threats and violence. 1995–2005. Percent.

(\*) Levels of internal non-response were relatively high in relation to the question on less serious violence in 1995 and 1997 compared with subsequent years.

## More males than females exposed to violence

In general, boys are exposed to theft offences more often than girls (Table 7). Males have also more often been exposed to both minor and more serious acts of violence. This finding is not unexpected given that boys are involved in violence more often than girls. By contrast, male and female youth are exposed to threats to the same extent. Among males, the number exposed to less serious acts of violence has remained relatively constant since 1999. Among the females, however, there has been an increase over time. As regards more serious violence, the trend over time has been the same for males and females.

Table 7. Exposure to theft, violence and threats over the past twelve months by gender and survey year. 1995–2005. Percent.

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<i>Males:</i>						
All thefts	33.7	33.0	35.0	34.2	31.6	31.5
Bicycle theft	20.9	20.6	21.5	19.6	17.8	18.7
Theft of wallet	6.9	6.0	5.7	5.6	4.4	4.1
Other theft	15.7	16.1	18.0	19.6	18.2	17.3
Serious violence	7.3	8.1	7.8	7.0	7.9	7.2
Less serious violence*	22.5	20.5	27.3	25.3	27.2	26.9
Threats	13.6	10.5	10.8	9.5	11.1	10.0
<i>Females:</i>						
All thefts	26.4	28.3	29.4	28.6	29.6	27.6
Bicycle theft	14.9	15.5	13.8	13.7	14.3	12.7
Theft of purse	4.7	5.8	5.2	4.5	4.6	3.9
Other theft	13.4	15.3	17.6	17.0	18.2	17.1
Serious violence	4.0	3.0	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.5
Less serious violence*	13.3	13.3	17.2	17.9	19.4	20.4
Threats	11.3	10.8	10.2	10.1	12.2	11.4

\*Relatively high levels of internal non-response in 1995 and 1997 compared with later years.

## Those who commit offences are also exposed to crime

To what extent is it the same youths who commit thefts and acts of violence that are also exposed to these offences? Previous research has found a clear correlation between involvement in crime and victimisation in youth populations (Brå, 2000a; Wikström and Butterworth, 2006). Table 8 presents the proportions exposed to thefts and violence among those reporting involvement in crime. The analysis in this section is based exclusively on data from 2005, but the results are the same in the other years of the survey. The findings show that the risk of exposure to crime is greater among those youths who report committing offences.

Table 8. Proportion of victimised youth among those reporting involvement in crime and non-offenders. 2005 sample.

	Also exposed to (less serious) violence
Committed act of violence*	48.0
Not committed act of violence	21.5
	Also exposed to (serious) violence
Committed act of violence*	21.5
Not committed act of violence	3.9
	Also exposed to theft
Committed theft	37.9
Not committed theft	20.5

\* Excluding carrying of knives.

## Fewer youths report having been bullied

Bullying is one particular form of victimisation that is often the subject of discussion. Bullying can take a number of forms, from repeated teasing and being sent to Coventry to physical assault (see e.g. Olweus, 1999; 1991:84; 1988). The self-report surveys include questions on both exposure to and involvement in bully-

ing. The questions proceed from the respondents' own perceptions and definitions of what bullying consists in. The response alternatives are: never, quite rarely, sometimes, often. Unlike the other questions, no time restrictions were placed on the respondents experiences in this area.

Both the proportion of youths who report ever having been exposed to bullying, and the proportion who report having themselves bullied others has decreased over time (see Table 9). This is the case among both male and female respondents. No major differences can be seen over time regarding the proportion of youths reporting that have been bullied sometimes or often, or that they have bullied others sometimes or often. The research in this area has also noted the existence of youths who are both bullies and victims (e.g. Svensson, 1999; Haynie et al., 2001). In the 2005 survey sample as a whole, nine percent are only bullies (sometimes or often), nine percent are only victims (sometimes or often), and two percent are both bullies and victims.

Table 9. Exposure to and involvement in bullying. 1995–2005. Percent.

Bullying	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<b>Have you been bullied?</b>						
<i>Males:</i>						
No, never	61.8	62.8	67.6	66.6	69.7	69.5
Quite seldom	28.5	27.4	22.4	22.8	21.0	20.9
Sometimes	7.3	7.8	7.5	8.1	7.3	7.4
Often	2.3	2.0	2.5	2.6	2.0	2.2
<i>Females:</i>						
No, never	60.5	60.7	64.9	64.5	67.7	68.0
Quite seldom	27.9	26.1	19.5	21.7	19.9	19.5
Sometimes	8.5	9.6	11.7	10.1	9.4	9.0
Often	3.2	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.1	3.6
<b>Have you bullied others?</b>						
<i>Males:</i>						
No, never	44.1	45.2	50.9	54.4	55.5	56.5
Quite seldom	41.2	41.2	34.5	31.5	30.6	30.2
Sometimes	12.0	11.5	12.1	11.8	11.6	11.0
Often	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.3
<i>Females:</i>						
No, never	61.8	64.0	67.8	69.2	71.4	70.8
Quite seldom	31.3	29.3	24.9	23.9	20.6	20.9
Sometimes	5.9	5.8	6.4	6.2	7.0	7.4
Often	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.0

# A high-risk lifestyle more critical for some than others

Previous research has noted the importance of focusing on both environmental factors and individual characteristics when explaining criminal behaviour (Wikström, 2006). In the present context the focus is directed at the criminality of certain types of individuals in certain types of environment, something which we still know relatively little about.<sup>17</sup> The report examines the extent to which there is an interaction between individual characteristics and individuals' lifestyles which may effect levels of involvement in crime, i.e. whether lifestyle has a different impact on levels of involvement in crime for youths with different individual characteristics. A high-risk lifestyle is operationalised in terms of often spending time in the town-centre or similar meeting-places at night, spending time with peers who commit offences, and often drinking to the point of intoxication. The individual level risk factors examined are: having a tolerant attitude towards crime and problem behaviours, an absence of feelings of guilt, and having a restless, risk-taking or aggressive disposition. The results show that youths with a more tolerant attitude to crime and other problem behaviours, for example, and youths characterised by high levels of impulsiveness are more often involved in crime than others. In addition, the results show a strong correlation between an index of individual-level risk factors and an increased risk for involvement in crime. They also indicate the existence of a correlation between the three lifestyle measures and criminal activity. In order to produce a more unified measure of lifestyle, an index was produced comprising all three components. The pattern that emerges is such that the more time youths spend in the town-centre with delinquent peers, and the more often they drink alcohol, the greater the risk for involvement in crime.

Table 12. Correlations between individual-level and lifestyle risk factors and criminal involvement (restrictive crime scale), 2005 sample. Percent.

Number of offences	<i>Proportion within each offence frequency group</i>					Total	Gamma
	0	1-5	6-15	16-35	>35		
<b>Individual risk factors:</b>							
High tolerance for crime/problem beh.	9	27	50	70	87	24	0,64*
Lack of feelings of guilt	11	27	45	63	77	24	0,55*
Preference for physical risk-taking	23	31	35	42	49	28	0,22*
High restlessness/impulsiveness	14	31	45	63	76	26	0,52*
Propensity for aggression	15	25	32	43	44	22	0,33*
HIGH INDIVIDUAL RISK	8	28	50	72	85	24	0,68*
<b>Lifestyle risk factors:</b>							
Many criminal peers	6	23	47	64	82	21	0,70*
Often in town centre in evening	7	16	26	39	55	15	0,48*
Often drinks alcohol	9	30	50	65	77	25	0,61*
HIGH-RISK LIFESTYLE	7	28	53	72	89	24	0,75*

\*  $p < 0,001$ .

<sup>17</sup> Previous research has found that individual characteristics and lifestyle factors interact in the explanation of youth crime (Wikström & Butterworth, 2006).

The question then is whether the relationship between lifestyle and involvement in crime may vary depending on a given youth's individual-level risk characteristics. As a means of examining this question, Figure 5 presents the relationship between lifestyle and crime (the proportions reporting having committed at least sixteen offences) for youths with low, medium and high levels of individual risk. The results show a weak relationship between lifestyle and crime for youths with a low-level of individual risk. The relationship between lifestyle and crime is somewhat stronger for youths with an individual risk score in the mid-range, and it is strongest for youths classified as having high levels of individual risk. Only a few of the youths with a low level of lifestyle risk have committed a large number of offences, irrespective of whether they are characterised by a high or low level of individual risk. Among youths with a high score on the lifestyle risk index, only three percent of those with a low individual-risk score have committed sixteen offences or more, as compared with 41 percent of youths with high levels of both lifestyle risk and individual-level risk.<sup>18</sup> These findings may be interpreted as indicating that youths with a low level of individual risk are better “protected” against the effects of a high-risk lifestyle, i.e. they are more able to engage in a lifestyle of this kind without being affected by it. By contrast, youths with high levels of individual risk appear to be more susceptible to the effects of a high-risk lifestyle, and the risk of involvement in crime increases substantially where this combination is present.

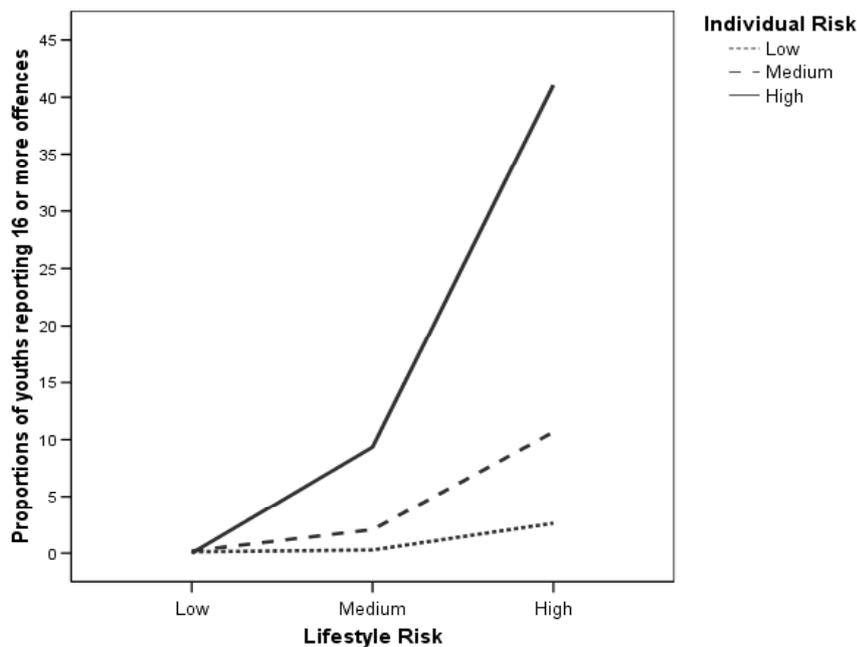


Figure 5. Interaction between individual and lifestyle risk in the explanation of involvement in all forms of crime (restrictive scale). 2005 sample.

<sup>18</sup> This same interaction is also found in a multiple regression analysis of the same data.

# Summary and discussion

The findings show that a large proportion of youth report having committed some kind of offence over the course of the previous year. The most common offences involve thefts from schools and shops. It is more unusual for youths to commit more serious offences such as car thefts. It is also relatively uncommon for them to commit acts of violence or to report having taken drugs. Male and female youth commit the same types of crime. Males are responsible for a larger proportion of the more serious offences however (violence and serious thefts). Sex differences are small in relation to more common crimes (thefts from shops and non-mural graffiti). The proportions of males and females reporting drug use are very similar. Approximately one-third of the surveyed youths have been exposed to theft. Exposure to serious violence and threats is less common however.

One central question in the crime policy debate is that of whether youth crime is increasing or decreasing (Estrada, 2001). Since 1995, official statistics indicate a declining trend in the number of 15–17 year-olds suspected of offences. The number of youths suspected of crimes against the person has remained stable, however. The current study, which is based on a ten-year series of self-report surveys (1995–2005) largely confirms this picture. The survey data show the level of involvement in violent crime to have remained stable while levels of theft and vandalism offending have declined.

Comparisons between youth crime in Sweden and that in other countries are difficult, since few countries carry out repeated nationally representative school surveys of the kind conducted in Sweden. The majority of comparisons of offending over time are based on official statistics (Estrada, 2001). Most of the school surveys that are conducted today are based on relatively small, single-city samples conducted on a one-off basis, which restricts the opportunities available to study crime trends. Similar surveys have also been conducted in Finland, however, with these also showing a decline in levels of involvement in theft and vandalism and unchanged proportions of youth reporting having committed acts of violence for the period 1995–2004 (Kivivuori & Salmi, 2005). Similar trends have also been found in Denmark and Holland (Balvig, 1999, 2006; Van der Laan, 2006). In the Swedish surveys, drug related offending has remained relatively unchanged over time. By contrast, drug offending in Finland has increased somewhat.

Why then has there been a decline over the course of the period examined in the proportion of youths committing theft and vandalism offences? This is naturally a difficult question to answer and the search for empirical explanations for the decrease has not been among the objectives of the study. One reasonable explanation may however be that youths' general attitudes towards crime have become less tolerant, something which this study has also shown to be the case. Another explanation may be that youths have developed an increasing insight into the importance of trying hard in school and have been subjected to increasing pressures to do well. In Finland, where similar patterns have also been found, it has been argued that the reduction may also be a result of an increase in formal controls in schools and shops, and of crime prevention measures and effective policing strategies (Kivivuori & Salmi, 2005). A further explanation might instead focus on changes in leisure time activities among young people. Ward (1998) notes, for example, that as an increasing proportion of youths' free time becomes devoted to indoor, computer-related activities there is inevitably a corresponding reduction in the opportunities available to commit more traditional theft and vandalism offences.

The current study has also examined whether the youths involved in offending today report more offences than their counterparts of a decade ago. The findings show that the proportion of law-abiding youth has increased over time. This finding is consistent with results presented in both Denmark and Finland (Balvig, 1999, 2006; Kivivuori & Salmi, 2005). No indication was found that those youths who commit offences have become more active over time. Nor was any substantive support found for the existence of a trend towards increased polarisation between different socio-demographic groups, which has otherwise been found in studies of victimisation focusing on the Swedish population aged over fifteen (Nilsson & Estrada, 2006).

Previous research has emphasised the importance of attending to the role of both individual characteristics and environmental factors in the explanation of criminal behaviour (Wikström, 2006). It has been found that the effects of certain environments or lifestyles varies across youths with different individual characteristics. The results of the analysis presented above indicate that youths with a high-risk lifestyle are at increased risk of committing a large number of offences if they also present high levels of individual risk factors. By contrast, no such relationship is found where the level of individual risk is low. This knowledge may be important for the development of effective prevention measures. It is not a question of simply knowing who youths are and what risk factors they have at the individual level. It is also important to know where they are and what kind of lifestyle they lead. The results of the analysis indicate that it may be particularly important to focus preventive measures on youths with a high-risk lifestyle who also have high levels of individual risk factors. On the basis of these results, there would appear to be less justification for focusing scarce crime prevention resources on youths with low levels of individual risk factors, or youths characterised by higher levels of individual risk but who do not have high-risk lifestyles.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Tabela

Table 1. Proportion of youths reporting involvement in various types of offence and other problem behaviours. Past twelve months. Percent

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
Theft from school	39.4	34.1	30.6	28.1	29.0	26.3
Theft from shop	37.0	35.2	30.7	24.8	24.4	21.6
Theft from own home	24.7	20.7	20.9	19.4	21.5	20.6
Other theft	21.2	19.1	18.2	16.1	16.3	15.0
Deceived to obtain money	20.0	18.6	20.0	18.2	17.0	16.0
Bought something stolen	18.8	19.2	18.7	14.5	11.9	10.6
Bicycle theft	13.8	13.0	12.9	12.9	12.2	13.5
Sold something stolen	11.3	11.0	10.5	8.3	7.0	6.2
Burglary	14.2	10.3	9.9	8.9	9.0	8.2
Pick pocketing	8.8	7.7	8.2	6.7	6.9	6.0
Theft from vend. machine	7.5	4.8	5.3	3.3	3.0	3.3
Theft from car	5.9	4.8	5.0	4.5	4.2	3.3
Theft of moped/mc	3.3	2.9	2.7	2.7	1.9	1.7
Car theft	2.7	2.6	2.2	2.2	1.9	1.5
<i>All theft offences</i>	66.2	61.5	58.8	55.0	55.1	52.4
Carried a knife	15.6	12.3	14.5	14.3	14.2	11.1
Hit someone*	7.9	5.9	7.0	6.3	6.3	5.8
Threats to obtain valuables	3.3	3.0	3.8	2.6	2.5	2.1
Injured with a weapon	2.4	2.0	2.3	2.0	1.9	1.8
Hit family member	2.3	1.7	2.7	1.8	2.0	2.1
Bag snatching	2.0	1.5	1.7	1.3	1.1	1.3
<i>All violent offences</i>	20.9	16.9	19.1	18.3	18.5	15.4
<i>All violent offences excluding carrying knives</i>	11.4	8.8	10.8	9.4	9.7	8.6
Vandalism	31.6	26.7	24.9	24.0	22.9	21.9
(non-mural) Graffiti	31.7	26.9	25.3	24.1	20.8	18.1
Arson	6.0	5.3	5.8	5.4	5.4	4.9
Graffiti mural	–	4.7	4.5	5.0	4.4	3.8
<i>All criminal damage</i>	45.6	39.8	36.8	35.5	32.9	30.7
Smoked hash	7.4	7.5	8.2	7.5	7.4	5.3
Used other drugs	2.6	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.5
Sold hash	2.1	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.1	1.8
Sold other drugs	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.3
<i>All drug offences</i>	8.2	8.5	9.3	8.5	8.4	6.6
Fare-dodging	41.8	39.1	43.6	42.3	46.3	42.0
Driving without license	32.8	30.1	31.1	29.0	29.2	32.0
Using false ID card	7.0	6.4	6.2	5.4	4.3	4.8
<i>All other offences</i>	57.7	55.1	58.5	56.1	59.4	57.0
Alcohol intoxication	64.5	64.2	65.1	61.8	57.2	52.6
Truancy	43.6	43.4	41.1	38.9	37.1	36.0
Smoking or using snuff	23.3	19.3	22.7	20.5	18.6	14.3
Solvent abuse	9.1	7.3	7.7	6.8	7.2	5.5
<i>Total other problem behaviours</i>	72.7	72.9	72.2	69.9	66.0	62.8

\* Non-family member.

Table 2. Corrections for external non-response for years 1995 and 2005.

Year	Existing data	If all non-respondents committed offences	If twice as many non-respondents committed offences
<i>Theft</i>			
1995	66.	267.8	–
2005	52.4	58.5	–
<i>Criminal damage</i>			
1995	46.6	48.2	47.9
2005	30.7	39.5	34.6
<i>Violence</i>			
1995	20.9	24.6	21.8
2005	15.4	26.2	17.3
<i>Violence excluding carrying knives</i>			
1995	11.4	15.6	11.9
2005	8.6	20.3	9.7
<i>Drugs</i>			
1995	8.2	12.6	8.6
2005	6.6	18.5	7.4

Table 3. Proportion of boys reporting involvement in various types of offence and other problem behaviours. Percent

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
Theft from school	45.8	39.6	35.9	33.3	34.6	32.4
Theft from shop	40.6	36.7	34.2	26.9	26.8	23.1
Theft from own home	24.8	20.2	20.5	17.9	20.8	19.6
Other theft	25.9	24.0	22.7	19.4	19.1	17.5
Deceived to obtain money	25.4	23.2	24.6	22.3	21.2	20.0
Bought something stolen	28.2	27.3	27.6	21.4	17.6	14.7
Bicycle theft	19.8	18.2	18.9	18.4	16.7	18.2
Sold something stolen	17.3	17.1	16.7	13.5	11.0	9.5
Burglary	20.8	15.0	15.0	13.2	12.7	11.1
Pick pocketing	10.9	9.5	9.6	7.8	7.5	6.9
Theft from vend.machine	10.4	7.1	7.4	5.0	4.0	4.6
Theft from car	9.9	7.4	8.3	7.1	6.3	4.6
Theft of moped/mc	5.8	5.0	4.7	4.8	3.1	2.9
Car theft	4.5	4.4	3.7	3.8	3.2	2.3
<i>All theft offences</i>	73.0	67.1	65.5	60.7	61.6	58.1
Excl. theft from school, home, deceived to obtain money	60.2	55.9	53.1	47.5	45.9	42.1
Carried a knife	22.6	17.1	21.7	21.6	20.9	16.1
Hit someone *	11.8	8.8	11.0	9.7	9.1	8.8
Threats to obtain valuables	5.4	4.7	6.0	4.2	3.9	3.0
Injured with a weapon	3.6	3.0	3.5	3.1	2.5	2.8
Hit family member	2.7	2.0	3.4	2.2	2.2	2.6
Bag snatching	3.2	2.1	2.7	1.9	1.8	1.7
<i>All violent offences</i>	29.8	23.5	27.9	27.2	26.2	21.6
<i>All violent offences excluding carrying of knives</i>	6.4	12.8	16.1	14.1	13.6	12.1
Vandalism	44.5	37.9	36.4	34.2	32.7	30.2
Non-mural graffiti	31.4	28.1	26.5	26.6	21.7	19.8
Arson	9.4	7.5	9.2	8.5	7.8	7.4
Mural graffiti	–	7.7	7.5	8.5	7.0	5.8
<i>All criminal damage</i>	53.1	47.5	44.0	43.9	40.1	37.7
Smoked hash	7.9	8.7	9.4	8.3	7.8	5.8
Used other drugs	2.9	3.1	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.4
Sold hash/marijuana	3.0	3.4	3.4	2.8	2.3	2.4
Sold other drugs	1.8	1.9	2.3	1.7	1.5	1.7
<i>All drug offences</i>	9.1	9.6	10.8	9.2	8.7	7.1
Fare-dodging	42.8	39.4	43.7	43.0	47.5	42.5
Driving without a license	45.8	42.1	42.9	38.3	40.0	40.3
Used false ID card	8.0	7.4	7.2	6.3	4.9	5.1
<i>All other offences</i>	64.6	61.4	63.4	60.6	65.1	60.4
Alcohol intoxication	64.3	62.5	64.4	60.1	55.8	50.6
Smoking or using snuff	24.3	21.1	25.0	22.5	19.6	14.9
Smoking	14.3	12.7	13.5	9.7	7.7	6.1
Using snuff	14.6	12.4	16.4	16.3	15.4	12.5
Solvent abuse	9.5	7.4	8.2	7.7	7.5	6.2
Truancy	40.3	39.7	38.8	36.2	34.4	33.1
<i>All problem behaviours</i>	72.1	70.6	71.4	68.4	64.5	60.8

\* Non-family member.

Table 4. Proportion of girls reporting involvement in various types of offence and other problem behaviours. Percent.

	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
Theft from school	32.5	28.1	25.2	22.6	23.5	19.7
Theft from shop	33.2	33.4	27.3	22.7	22.0	19.9
Theft from own home	24.5	21.1	21.3	20.9	22.1	21.7
Other theft	16.2	13.7	13.8	12.7	13.5	12.2
Deceived to obtain money	14.2	13.5	15.4	14.0	12.8	11.8
Bought something stolen	8.9	10.5	9.7	7.5	6.3	6.1
Bicycle theft	7.4	7.4	6.8	7.2	7.8	8.4
Sold something stolen	5.0	4.4	4.3	2.9	3.0	2.5
Burglary	7.3	5.1	4.6	4.4	5.3	5.0
Pick pocketing	6.5	5.7	6.9	5.6	6.3	5.0
Theft from vend. machine	4.3	2.4	3.1	1.5	2.0	1.9
Theft from car	1.6	1.9	1.6	1.7	2.1	1.9
Theft of moped/motorbike	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.5
Car theft	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.7
<i>All theft offences</i>	58.9	55.5	52.1	49.0	48.6	46.3
Excluding theft from school, own home and deceived to obtain money	44.1	42.4	38.3	34.0	33.1	31.8
Carried knife	8.3	7.1	7.3	6.6	7.6	5.7
Hit someone*	3.8	2.7	2.9	2.7	3.5	2.5
Threats to obtain valuables	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.0	1.2	1.1
Injured with a weapon	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.6
Hit family member	2.0	1.3	1.9	1.4	1.8	1.5
Bag snatching	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.8
<i>All violent offences</i>	11.4	9.7	10.3	9.0	10.8	8.7
<i>All violent offences excluding carrying knives</i>	6.0	4.6	5.5	4.5	5.8	4.9
Vandalism	18.1	14.6	13.4	13.4	13.2	13.0
Non-mural graffiti	32.0	25.5	24.1	21.6	19.9	16.3
Arson	2.5	2.8	2.4	2.1	3.1	2.1
Mural graffiti	–	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.6
<i>All criminal damage</i>	37.7	31.4	29.4	26.8	25.9	23.1
Smoked hash	6.8	6.3	7.0	6.7	7.0	4.7
Used other drugs	2.3	2.7	2.2	2.6	2.9	2.5
Sold hash/marijuana	1.1	1.4	1.1	1.1	1.8	1.1
Sold other drugs	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.0
<i>All drug offences</i>	7.3	7.2	7.7	7.8	8.1	6.0
Fare-dodging	40.6	38.7	43.5	41.6	45.2	41.5
Driving without license	19.2	17.1	19.2	19.3	18.5	23.1
Used false ID card	5.9	5.3	5.1	4.5	3.8	4.5
<i>All other offences</i>	50.3	48.2	53.5	51.6	53.7	53.4
Alcohol intoxication	64.7	66.2	65.8	63.5	58.7	54.9
Smoking or using snuff	22.1	17.4	20.4	18.5	17.7	13.7
Smoking	21.8	17.0	20.1	18.1	17.0	12.6
Using snuff	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.4	2.2	2.8
Solvent abuse	8.6	7.1	7.2	5.9	6.8	4.8
Truancy	47.1	47.5	43.4	41.7	39.7	39.0
<i>All problem behaviours</i>	73.4	75.3	73.1	71.4	67.4	65.1

\* Non-family member.

Table 5. Proportion of youths who think it is quite or completely okay that friends engage in certain deviant behaviours, 1997–2005, by gender.

Would you consider it quite or completely okay if your friends...	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005
<i>Boys:</i>					
...got drunk	72.3	71.6	70.3	65.9	62.1
...played truant for a couple of days	47.2	49.7	45.8	42.0	39.8
...took something from a shop	35.3	34.0	31.4	29.5	27.9
...tried hash	13.3	16.4	17.7	15.3	12.9
...took a car	14.2	17.5	15.6	14.5	12.0
...knocked a drunk over	19.6	24.4	23.7	21.8	20.6
...painted a large graffiti mural	38.8	39.7	38.7	35.4	32.6
<i>Girls:</i>					
...got drunk	67.4	66.6	65.6	59.1	54.1
...played truant for a couple of days	36.0	35.7	31.8	26.2	26.0
...took something from a shop	18.9	18.4	13.2	14.1	12.3
...tried hash	7.3	9.1	8.5	7.6	6.0
...took a car	3.5	4.5	3.7	4.2	2.9
...knocked a drunk over	4.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	4.9
...painted a large graffiti mural	19.2	21.1	23.9	22.5	18.8

## Appendix 2. Offending frequency (the restrictive index)

*How many times have you done the following over the past twelve months?*

Deliberately destroyed a telephone box, street lamp, window, somebody's bicycle or something else that wasn't yours?

Stolen something from a shop or store?

Used a false ID card?

Obtained money by deceiving people?

Stolen money from a public telephone or vending machine?

Stolen a bicycle?

Stolen a moped or motorbike?

Stolen a car?

Stolen something *from* a car?

Stolen something from somebody's pocket?

Snatched a bag, wallet, purse or similar from someone you don't know?

Stolen something else we haven't asked about?

Broken into a house or some other building?

Bought something you know was stolen?

Sold something you know was stolen?

Carried a knife with you (as a weapon) when you went out?

Threatened to hit someone or threatened them with a weapon in order to obtain money or other valuables?

Set fire to something valuable without permission, e.g. a barn, car, wooded area, or building that didn't belong to you?

Deliberately hit someone (not a member of your family) so you think that he/she needed medical attention?

Deliberately injured someone with a knife or other weapon?

Smoked hash or marijuana?

Used other drugs (e.g. speed, heroine, ecstasy or other similar substances)?

Sold hash or marijuana?

Sold other drugs?

Response alternatives for each question: none, 1–2 times, 3–5 times, 6–10 times, 11 or more times