

SUMMARY

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The Swedish Crime Survey 2006

Victimization, fear of crime and public confidence
in the criminal justice system

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

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) 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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Foreword

Crime and the fear of crime are social issues that are attracting an increasing amount of attention, and the demands being made on society's capacity to prevent these problems are increasing. There is also a growing need to monitor and analyse crime and the fear of crime. Developments in the criminal justice system must be based on a sound knowledge not only of the nature and extent of the crime problem, but also of trends in crime and the consequences of crime.

In 2005, the Swedish Government commissioned the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) and other criminal justice agencies to plan and implement an annual survey of exposure to crime and levels of public safety (the Swedish Crime Survey) in Sweden.

The Swedish Crime Survey covers a very broad range of issues, and this report presents only the first overall results relating to victimization, the fear of crime and public confidence in the criminal justice system. The results are nonetheless interesting even at this early stage, and the report indicates that the survey has a great potential both to supplement existing knowledge and to provide valuable new insights.

Knowledge of victimization, fear of crime and public confidence provides an important basis for developing and improving the criminal justice system and other agencies, and may help to reduce crime and increase perceptions of safety.

The development of the Swedish Crime Survey and the preparation of this report have been undertaken by Madeleine Blixt, Malena Carlstedt and Annika Töyrä, all research analysts at the National Council. Madeleine Blixt has supervised the project. Annika Töyrä's primary contribution has been to the chapter on Victimization. Malena Carlstedt has written the chapter on the Fear of Crime and was responsible for supervising the planning of the survey. The National Council's Coordination Director, Erik Grevholm, has also made valuable contributions. The English summary was compiled by Lars Westfelt, also a research analyst at the National Council. Professor Hanns von Hofer, of the Department of Criminology at Stockholm University, has reviewed the report and provided valuable feedback.

Finally, we would like to thank the 8,000 or so people who took part in the first wave of the Swedish Crime Survey, thereby making studies of this kind and reports such as this one possible.

Stockholm, June 2007

Jan Andersson
Director-General

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Introduction

Crime and the fear of crime constitute social issues that are attracting an increasing amount of attention, and the demands being made on society's capacity to prevent these problems are increasing. Exposure to crime, the fear of crime and public confidence in the criminal justice system all thus constitute a natural focus for crime policy. Reducing levels of victimisation and of the fear of crime constitute important objectives for government initiatives. In this context, it is important to develop a more detailed knowledge of the groups that are most commonly exposed to different types of offences, the groups that are most negatively affected by the fear of crime, and the groups that profess the lowest levels of confidence in the criminal justice system. This knowledge provides opportunities for society and politicians in general, and for the agencies of the criminal justice system in particular, to implement crime prevention measures where they are most needed.

In 2005, the Swedish Government commissioned the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) and other agencies of the criminal justice system to plan and implement an annual survey of levels of exposure to crime and public safety. The survey, known as the Swedish Crime Survey, is based on telephone interviews conducted with a large random sample of the population (16–79 years). This summary presents the central findings relating to levels of exposure to crime, fear of crime and public confidence in the criminal justice system from the first (2006) wave of the survey. Almost 80 percent of the 10,000 individuals aged between 16–79 years who were included in the 2006 survey sample completed the interview (for the most part by telephone). Since this constitutes the first wave of survey, the report includes a detailed description of the data.

In the long term, the Swedish Crime Survey will reflect the progress of the overall crime policy goals of reducing crime and improving perceptions of public safety. But even in this presentation of findings from the first wave of data collection, a number of concrete questions have been answered, including:

- What proportion of the population is exposed to crime over the course of a year? What differences exist between different groups in the population?
- What types of victimization are least often reported to the police?
- What factors characterize the robbery and fraud offences that affect the general public?
- Which population groups are most affected in their everyday lives as a result of concerns about crime?
- Is the level of confidence in the agencies of the criminal justice system similarly high across different social groups?

Background to the Swedish Crime Survey

National crime victim surveys have long constituted an important source of knowledge in a number of other Western countries. A number of different surveys on victimization and fear of crime are currently carried out in Sweden. It has become clear, however, that these surveys do not provide a sufficient basis for analysing people's experiences of crime to the extent that is actually required. One of the prime objectives of the Swedish Crime Survey is that of producing a new data series that can serve as a complement to official data on reported offences when assessing crime trends. Other important objectives include developing an indicator of trends in people's perceptions of safety, and acquiring knowledge about both exposure to

crime and the experiences of crime victims in areas such as their contacts with the criminal justice system. Another objective is that of producing an overview of public confidence in the different agencies of the criminal justice system.

Objectives and questions addressed

The report presents the overall results from the first wave of data collection that took place in the autumn of 2006. As of 2007, data will be collected from twice as many respondents, and increasingly detailed results will be presented together with more in-depth analyses. After a few years it will be possible to study crime trends and make closer comparisons with crime statistics.

Objectives

The presentations in this report have three overall objectives, specifically to describe

- exposure to crime
- fear of crime and
- public confidence in the criminal justice system.

Questions

The central questions addressed in the report are:

- What proportion of the population was exposed to crime in the course of 2005 and how is this exposure to crime distributed across different types of offences? Are there differences in levels of exposure to crime across different groups in the population, and what are the circumstances surrounding the offences?
- How prevalent is the fear of crime in the Swedish population, and how much do people worry about different types of offences? Does the fear of crime affect people's behaviour and if so in what ways? Are there differences between different segments of the population, and are there differences associated with people's own experiences of crime and their attitudes towards the criminal justice system?
- How high is public confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole, in the individual agencies of the justice system and in how well they perform their respective functions? Are there differences between different segments of the population? Are there differences associated with people's own experiences of crime and whether or not they have themselves been in contact with the criminal justice system?

Method

This section describes the methods employed in the first wave of the Swedish Crime Survey in 2006. For a more detailed presentation of the survey methods, see the Technical Report for the 2006 wave of the Swedish Crime Survey (Brå, 2007:15).¹

Content of survey questionnaire items

Exposure to crime

The section of the survey dealing with exposure to crime begins with a number of “screening” questions, whose objective is to determine whether the respondent has experienced exposure to a number of different types of crime – and if so, on how many occasions – over the course of the previous year (in this case 2005).

The screening questions contain ten types of offences. To simplify the questions, the act is usually described rather than naming the type of offence. The choice of offence types was to some extent determined by the crime categories used in the official crime statistics that allow for the formulation of unambiguous questions. Otherwise, the choice has been influenced by the types of offences that have been considered most relevant for various reasons, such as offences that are very common or particularly serious, or that generally invoke fear. The Swedish Crime survey focuses on the following ten offence types:

Threats; Assault; Sexual offences; Robbery; Harassment²; Car theft; Theft from motor vehicles; Bicycle theft; Burglary and Fraud

For some offences types, the respondents were asked whether *anyone in their household* had been victimized. This is the case for those property offences where several people in the household are considered to have been victimized in some way and where they have knowledge of the offence; the offences include vehicle-related crimes, burglary and bicycle thefts. For offences against the person such as threats and assault, the survey items focus exclusively on whether the individual respondent has been victimized him- or herself.

The offence categories included in the survey allow for the study of a broad range of types of exposure to crime. Offences against the public at large, the government and businesses are not covered by the survey however. In the official statistics on reported offences, the crime categories included in the Swedish Crime Survey account for slightly over 40 percent of the penal code offences reported to the police. In addition to these offence categories, the survey interview also includes a question asking respondents whether they have been subject to *one or more other offences* during the period covered by the survey.

One of the factors that steered the formulation of most of the screening items was a desire to facilitate comparability with official statistics on reported offences. The formulation of the items does not correspond exactly with the official crime statistics, however, since this would have made them too complex. Previous experience also shows that it is unrealistic to attempt to capture exactly the same type of incidents as those recorded in official statistics on reported offences. The

¹ The technical report is at present only available in Swedish.

² For a definition of harassment, see the section on harassment in Chapter 3.

ambition has thus been to create a sufficient degree of conformity to allow for a comparison of *trends* in the relevant crime categories over time. The possibilities for comparing levels of crime are limited, however.

The respondents who answered that they had been subjected to one or more of the ten selected offence types were asked additional questions about the offence or offences in question. The follow-up questions are slightly different for each offence type, but usually ask where and when the crime took place, whether the crime was reported to the police, about possible injuries, damage or loss, resulting from the offence, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, the victim's need for support, etc. Thus the follow-up questions focus on both the circumstances surrounding the crime and the victim's experiences.

In order to avoid subjecting the respondents to excessively long interviews, the follow-up questions have been asked in relation to a maximum of three of the offences disclosed by the respondent. Previous experience shows that most people report only one or a few different offences and the majority of respondents can therefore be expected to provide a more detailed account of all of the offences that they have experienced.³ A specific order of priority was used to determine the types of offences about which the respondents were asked follow-up questions. For the most part, more serious and unusual types of offences were given priority over less serious and more common offence types, and people who had experienced a number of different types of crime were not asked follow-up questions exclusively in relation to the same type of offence. Within each category of offences, the most recent incident or incidents were given priority.

Fear of crime

As had been mentioned, the Swedish Crime Survey also includes questions about feelings of insecurity and fear of crime. These questions are not limited to a concrete fear of exposure to crime but also focus on a more general sense of insecurity, provided that this is associated with crime. The questions deal with fear of being exposed to crime oneself, as well as fears relating to the victimisation of friends and relatives and with fear of crime in general. The survey also asked whether the respondents' insecurity had affected their behaviour. Most of the questions refer specifically to crime. In cases where the questions do not refer to crime, the context clearly indicates the kind of fear that is in focus.

Public confidence in the criminal justice system

The third section of the survey focuses on confidence in the criminal justice system. It includes items about confidence in the criminal justice system in general, and in the various agencies of the justice system in particular (the police, the prosecution service, the courts and the Prison and Probation Service). Since the public has limited contact with these agencies, however, not all respondents can be expected to have definite views.

Finally, there are also a number of items that focus on the respondents' confidence in the way the criminal justice system performs various tasks (such as its treatment of suspects and crime victims).

³ Refer to the section on risk of multiple victimization in Chapter 3 of this report.

Survey design and implementation

The sample

The Swedish Crime Survey is based on a nationally representative, random sample of people aged between 16 and 79 years. Crime victim surveys usually require large samples because the majority of respondents have not been victimized. In 2006, 10,000 people were selected from the population register administered by Statistics Sweden. In order to achieve the objectives of the survey, future waves of data collection will be based on a sample comprising approximately 20,000 respondents.

Young persons and the elderly have been over-sampled, and are thus over-represented in the survey sample. When analysing the material, cases are weighted both to account for this over-representation and also to adjust for differences in levels of non-response among different groups within the sample. The weighting procedure ensures that the survey results are as representative as possible of the survey population as a whole.

Implementation and data collection

The survey items have been formulated by the National Council in consultation with other agencies within the criminal justice system. Feedback has been provided by scientific advisors. The questions were also tested in Statistics Sweden's technical test lab and in a small pilot survey conducted in the spring of 2006.

The data collection was carried out by Statistics Sweden, for the most part by means of telephone interviews. Shorter questionnaires were sent to members of the sample who could not be reached, and to those who did not wish to be interviewed over the telephone.

The data were collected between August and October 2006. A cover letter was sent to those included in the sample a few weeks prior to their being contacted by phone by the interviewers employed by Statistics Sweden. The cover letter described the survey and explained that participation was voluntary but important. In addition to the interview data, certain data were also collected from existing registers including the respondents' age, place of residence and level of education.

Non-response

Questionnaire surveys always involve a certain level of non-response because not everyone who is included in the sample wants, or is able, to participate (unit non-response), or because some people who do participate do not answer all of the questions (item non-response).

Unit non-response

Several measures have been taken to reduce the level of unit non-response. For example, the respondents were given the opportunity to choose when their interviews would take place. They could also choose to be interviewed in English and to receive a copy of the cover letter in different languages. A shorter questionnaire (excluding follow-up questions) was also sent to those members of the sample who could not be reached or did not want to answer the questions by telephone, but who could consider answering in writing.

The total non-response for the 2006 wave of the survey amounted to 22 percent of the sample (Table 1), giving a response rate of 78 percent. Around five percent participated by completing a postal questionnaire. A response rate of almost 80 percent is to be considered very high for this type of survey.

Table 1. Sample and non-response.

	N	Percent
Total sample	10 000	
– over-sample (deceased/moved abroad)	109	
Net sample	9 891	100
Respondents	7 687	77.7
thereof via questionnaires	461	4.7
Non-response	2 204	22.3
thereof		
unable to take part	257	2.6
not found	783	8.0
declined	1 164	11.7

An analysis of the non-response shows that respondents differ somewhat from non-respondents. For example, women and people born in Scandinavia were generally somewhat more likely to respond than men and people born outside of Scandinavia (see the *Technical Report* for more information, Brå, 2007:15). To reduce the skewing effect of the non-response, and to reduce sampling and coverage errors, weights were calibrated for use when analysing the material. Briefly, this technique employs a number of auxiliary variables (based on register data) to increase the weight assigned to the answers provided by groups that are under-represented in the sample. The following auxiliary variables were used as the basis for this calibration: county, gender, age, country of birth, marital status, income and metropolitan area. The calibration weights also take account of the deliberate over-sampling of certain groups of respondents (see above).

Item non-response

The item non-response in the survey includes the answer alternatives Don't know/Don't want to answer. The item non-response for the postal questionnaires includes cases where answers have been left blank. Where the item non-response is low (at most 3 percent), this is not noted in the report. Where the item non-response is greater than three percent, this is noted in connection with the presentation of the results. High levels of item non-response were primarily noted in relation to the items concerning public confidence in the criminal justice system.

Reliability and comparability

Reliability

The sources of error that affect sample surveys comprise sampling errors, coverage errors, non-response, measurement errors and processing errors. To reduce measurement errors, the length of the questionnaire was restricted and questionnaire items have been tested in several different ways. The interviewers have been specially trained for the survey and are able to assist the respondents if anything is unclear. The questionnaire is stored in a computer system to ensure that the jumps between different items automatically follow the correct pattern. During the interview, the interviewer enters the answers into the computer and possible mistakes can for the most part be directly identified in the system, which minimises processing errors.

The main problems are rather the respondent's desire and ability to provide correct answers. The survey contains questions about sensitive incidents that the victim may not wish to recall. Above all, this constitutes a problem in relation to different types

of violent and sexual offences, particularly those that have taken place in the context of intimate relationships. But other questions too, such as those relating to attitudes, can be difficult to answer and respondents will sometimes provide “socially desirable” answers, for example that an offence has been reported to the police. A respondent may also answer incorrectly unintentionally as a result of memory errors. Incidents can be repressed, forgotten or their timing may be remembered incorrectly. Respondents may not be familiar with incidents that have affected other household members, and incidents can be incorrectly defined as offences. The number of criminal incidents may be subject to both over- and under-reporting. The survey employs a recall period of one year, which previous experience has found to be appropriate and which is also the most common recall period employed in surveys of this kind. However, conducting the interviews during the second half of 2006 (August–October) involves a greater risk for reporting errors than if they had been conducted at the beginning of the year 2006, since the interviews would then have been conducted much closer to the recall period.

The most common data collection methods employed in crime victim surveys are face-to-face interviews or postal questionnaires. The fact that interviews in the Swedish Crime Survey are conducted by telephone rather than face-to-face may mean that sensitive crimes are underreported if the respondents do not trust the interviewer over the phone, or if the surrounding environment is distracting. Telephone interviews also involve a greater risk of respondents providing answers that have not been thought through than do face-to-face interviews. As has already been mentioned, a number of steps have been taken to minimise problems of these kinds, such as the training of interviewers and the use of a cover letter to explain that respondents can themselves choose the time of their interview or can elect to fill in a postal questionnaire.

Because of the problems associated with surveys of this kind, the results should be studied and interpreted with a certain degree of caution.

How confident can we be in the results?

The 7,687 people (of the 10,000 in the sample) who answered the questions in the 2006 wave of the Swedish Crime Survey are highly representative of the almost 7 million people in the Swedish population aged between 16 and 79 years and of their perceptions of public safety and attitudes towards the criminal justice system – as well as in terms of their experiences of crime at national level. The 2006 wave of the Swedish Crime Survey also provides an opportunity to study differences between different groups in the population with a high degree of certainty, particularly in relation to the fear of crime and confidence in the criminal justice system, since the results in these areas are based on all those participating in the survey. Uncertainties arise in relation to comparisons between different groups primarily when these comparisons focus on the more unusual types of offences where the number of victims interviewed is low. Breaking down the results for several subgroups of respondents while at the same time studying the circumstances surrounding the offence, e.g. looking at the experiences of serious assault specifically among young men in metropolitan areas, is associated with a substantial degree of uncertainty in the current data set. The larger the number of victims involved, and the greater the differences between the different groups examined, the higher the level of certainty associated with the results. “Power analyses” were conducted prior to the specification of the sample size in order to ensure that the results of the Swedish Crime Survey would be sufficiently stable after a few waves of data collection, and that the level of uncertainty associated with the findings would not be too great.

Comparability with other sources

As this report is based exclusively on information from the first wave of data collection conducted within the framework of the Swedish Crime Survey, comparisons with previous years are not yet possible. Once the survey has been repeated over a number of years, however, trends will become the prime focus for the presentation of findings. The Swedish Crime Survey is one of several sources that can be used to describe crime, fear of crime and public confidence in the criminal justice system. In general, at this early stage of a survey when data have only been collected in a single wave, comparisons with findings based on other sources should be viewed with caution.

Presentation of results

The presentation of the main results is broken down into sections relating to victimization, fear of crime and public confidence in the criminal justice system. Confidence intervals and significance tests are not presented in this report. As of 2007, when the sample will be larger and the work of quality-assurance will have been developed further, the intention is to include confidence intervals in the presentation. For further discussion and tables with the approximate size of the confidence intervals, please refer to the technical report (Brå, 2007:15).

It may also be noted that statistical significance testing is usually used to ensure that differences between different groups, such as men and women, are not the result of random fluctuations. The large sample employed in the Swedish Crime Survey means that even small differences are often significant, provided that the comparisons are based upon answers from a large number of respondents. This is one of the reasons why significance levels are not presented, and an assessment of whether the differences noted are large or small can instead be made on the basis of the size of the percentages presented in the tables, and also from the description of the findings presented in the text.

Reference groups

The findings are for the most part presented on the basis of the following background information and sub-groups of the population:

- *gender* (male or female)
- *age* (16–24 years, 25–44 years, 45–64 years, 65–79 years)
- *ethnic background* (born in Sweden with one/both parents born in Sweden, born in Sweden with both parents born outside of Sweden, foreign-born)
- *level of education*, the highest level attained (pre-further education, further education or post further education)
- *marital status* (living with partner or single, with or without children)
- *type of housing* (owned or rented)
- *size of locality/degree of urbanization*, based on “H regions” (cities, larger towns, smaller towns/rural)

Most of the information about the respondents’ background has been collected from existing registers. The only background information collected in the Swedish Crime Survey itself relates to marital status and type of housing.

Different units employed in the survey

With regard to victimization, it is important to remember that the survey units – and therefore the presentation – are different for the different types of offences.

- People who are victimized

Questions relating to offences against the person (assault, threats, sexual offences, robbery and harassment) and fraud, refer to the victimization of the individual respondent. The presentation of results for these types of offences is thus based on the proportion of the population who were victimized in 2005.

- People in households who are victimized

Questions relating to property offences, with the exception of fraud, (i.e. car theft, theft from motor vehicles, bicycle theft and burglary), refer to the victimization of the respondent's entire household. The presentation of results for these types of offences is based on the proportion of people living in victimized households in 2005.

The use of different survey units for different types of offences affects estimations of the number of offences involved.

- Number of offences (incidents)

For each type of offence, the respondent is asked how many times the incident occurred during the year. The answers are not limited by fixed intervals but there is a ceiling (a maximum of between 20 and 365 incidents can be reported depending on the type of offence). As regards offences against the person, the number of such offences committed against the population as a whole is estimated on the basis of the information collected on the number of times the incidents occurred within the sample. As of 2007, information about household composition will also be collected so that the number of property offences committed against the total population of individuals or households can also be estimated.

Results

Victimization

The Swedish Crime Survey data indicate that 26 percent of the population (16–79 years) were exposed to crime⁴ in 2005. The differences between the different types of offences are substantial, however, and victimization is not evenly distributed within the population. By specifically asking about ten different types of offences, the survey captures a substantial proportion of the crimes to which the public were exposed in 2005.

Offences against the person

Threats and harassment are the most prevalent types of offence against the person. Around five percent say they have experienced incidents of these kinds over the course of 2005 (Table 2). Only one fifth of the offences against the person that were reported in the Swedish Crime Survey were also reported to the police, but there are substantial differences between the different types of offences involved. For example, the results indicate that only a very small proportion of sexual offences (11 percent) were reported to the police.

Table 2. Victimization within the population (16–79 years) for different types of offences against the person, estimated number of incidents and proportion of incidents reported to the police in 2005 according to the Swedish Crime Survey data.

	Percentage victimized		Approximate estimate of number of incidents within the population	Percentage of incidents reported
Threats	4.6 (n=383)		650 000	19
Assaults	2.7 (n=249)		390 000	32
of which serious*	28 (0.8) (n=62)		110 000	68
Sexual offences	0.9 (n=89)		185 000	11
Robbery	0.7 (n=58)		70 000	33
Harassment	5.2 (n=409)		360 000**	19***
All offences against the person	11.2 (n=921)		1 680 000	21

*Refers to serious injury that required medical or dental treatment. **Estimated number of *victimized individuals*. ***Proportion of *victims* who reported one or more incidents to the police.

Threats and assaults

According to the survey, 2.7 percent of the population (16–79 years) were subjected to an assault in 2005 (Table 3). Of these, slightly more than twenty-five percent (or 0.8 percent of the population) report that the assault was serious (requiring medical or dental treatment). Almost twice as many, 4.6 percent, say they were subject to threats over the course of the year.

⁴ In addition to offences against the person, this figure also includes exposure to burglary, and car and bicycle thefts that affect other members of the household.

Table 3. Victims of threats and assaults in 2005 according to the Swedish Crime Survey. By age and gender. Proportion in percent.

	Victims of assault	Victims of threats		Victims of assault	Victims of threats
All, 16–79 years	2.7	4.6	All, 16–79 years	2.7	4.6
AGE			GENDER AND AGE		
16–19 years	8.5	8.4	Men, 16–79 years	3.7	4.6
20–24 years	7.1	8.7	16–24 years	11.0	8.2
25–34 years	4.1	5.3	25–44 years	4.5	5.4
35–44 years	2.5	5.5	45–64 years	0.8	3.3
45–54 years	1.5	4.5	65–79 years	0.1	1.7
55–64 years	0.8	2.5			
65–74 years	0.0	1.9	Women, 16–79 years	1.8	4.6
75–79 years	0.2	0.9	16–24 years	4.1	8.9
			25–44 years	1.9	5.4
			45–64 years	1.6	3.6
			65–79 years	0.0	1,5

In many cases, the results relating to the victimization of different sub-groups of the population, and to the circumstances surrounding threat and assault offences, are in line with those reported in previous surveys. For example, twice as many men as women report they have been subjected to assault, whereas exposure to threats is equally common among male and female respondents.

The most common type of location reported for threats and assaults is public places. Women report being victimized at home to a significantly greater extent than men however. In more than half of the cases, victims report that the offender was a complete stranger; in around 30 percent of the cases, the offender was a casual acquaintance and in six percent the offender was someone the victim knew well. Once again, there are significant differences between men and women. Women report that the offender was someone they know well significantly more often than men. Given that women are more often victimized by someone they know well in their homes, and given that this type of offence is notoriously difficult to talk about, it is very likely that the level of victimization among women is higher than is shown by the results of the survey.

Sexual offences

Slightly over one percent of respondents reported that someone had “forced, attacked or molested them sexually” over the course of 2005 (Table 4). Women reported that they were subject to sexual offences to a significantly greater extent than men. The younger age groups predominate among those reporting this type of victimization.

Table 4. Victims of sexual offences in 2005 according to the Swedish Crime Survey. By gender and age. Proportion in percent.

	Victims of sexual offences		Victims of sexual offences
All, 16–79 years	0.9		
GENDER			
Men	0.3		
Women	1.6		
AGE (all)		AGE (women)	
16–24 years	2.6	16–24 years	4.9
25–44 years	1.2	25–44 years	1.8
45–64 years	0.3	45–64 years	0.6
65–79 years	0.1	65–79 years	0.1

As was the case with threats and assaults, over half of the sexual offences occurred in a public place, around one quarter at the victim's workplace or school, and around one sixth in the home. The offender was a stranger in almost two thirds of these incidents, a casual acquaintance in one quarter, and was well-known to the victim in slightly more than one tenth of incidents. There is also reason to suspect that incidents where people were victimized by someone they know well are underrepresented in the survey data because experiences of this kind can be difficult to talk about, particularly if they occurred so recently as within the past year.

Robbery

As regards robbery, 0.7 percent report being exposed to this form of victimization in 2005 (Table 5). Most victims were subject to a single incident of robbery over the year. In around 40 percent of the robberies, the victims say they were hit, kicked or exposed to some other kind of physical violence in connection with the offence. The use of knives, firearms or other weapons is not unusual in robberies (45 percent).

Table 5. Victims of robbery in 2005 according to the Swedish Crime Survey. By gender and age. Proportion in percent.

	Victims of Robbery
All, 16–79 years	0.7
AGE	
16–24 years	2.3
25–44 years	0.4
45–64 years	0.3
65–79 years	0.0
GENDER	
Men	0.8
Women	0.4

Harassment

Harassment is described as “repeated incidents of being pursued or of unsolicited visits, telephone calls, messages and similar”. More than five percent say they were subjected to harassment over the course of 2005 (Table 6). About half experienced these incidents as very or fairly alarming. Victimization of this kind appears to be particularly common among young women.

Table 6. Victims of harassment in 2005 according to the Swedish Crime Survey. By gender and age. Proportion in percent.

	Victims of harassment
All, 16–79 years	5.2
GENDER AND AGE	
Men, 16-79 years	4.4
16–24 years	5.2
25–44 years	5.0
45–64 years	3.6
65–79 years	3.7
Women, 16-79 years	6.0
16–24 years	10.6
25–44 years	7.6
45–64 years	3.9
65–79 years	3.2

In almost half of the cases, the perpetrator was a stranger and almost equally as often the victim was acquainted with the perpetrator. Less than one tenth of victims reported that the perpetrator was someone close to them. Almost one fifth of the victims say they were harassed because of their occupation. Most (two thirds) of the harassment victims were subjected to ten incidents or less. A small group (around one tenth of the victims), however, reported having experienced a very large number of incidents (100 or more).

Property offences

The results show that sixteen percent of households reported being subjected to one of the property offences included in the survey in the course of 2005 (Table 7). The most common forms of victimization involve the respondents or someone else in their household having been subjected to bicycle theft or theft from a vehicle (more than five percent), whereas burglary and car theft are the least common offence types (around one percent). Generally speaking, property offences are reported to the police significantly more often than offences against the person. Not surprisingly, car theft and burglary are the offences that are reported most often.

Table 7. Proportion of persons in the population (16–79 years) exposed to different types of property offences, estimated number of incidents and proportion of incidents reported to the police in 2005, Swedish Crime Survey.

	Proportion of population in victimized households	Approximate estimate of number of incidents within the population*	Proportion of incidents reported
Burglary	1.0 (n=66)	-	72
Vehicle theft	0.8 (n=56)	-	94
Theft from vehicle	6.0 (n=451)	-	62
Bicycle theft	7.6 (n=627)	-	39
Fraud	2.8 (n=205)	225 000	40
All property offences	16.1 (n=1 249)	-	50

*As of 2007, information about household types will be obtained to allow for estimates of the number of incidents for the population.

Vehicle-related offences

According to the Swedish Crime Survey data, over six percent of the population (16–79 years) live in households that were subject to theft from vehicles and eight percent in households that were exposed to bicycle theft (Table 8). For most vehicle-related offences (more than 60 percent), the victims reported that the incident took place in their own neighbourhoods. Over half of the bicycle thefts reportedly occurred in public places and over 40 percent on private property.

Table 8. Victims of vehicle-related offences and bicycle theft in 2005 according to the Swedish Crime Survey. By type of family, type of housing and place of residence. Proportion in percent.

	Victims of vehicle-related offences	Victims of bicycle theft		Victims of vehicle-related offences	Victims of bicycle theft
All, 16–79 years	6.5	7.6	All, 16–79 years	6.5	7.6
TYPE OF FAMILY			TYPE OF HOUSING		
Cohabiting no children	6.2	4.7	Owned	6.3	6.1
Cohabiting with children	7.0	9.5	Rented	6.7	9.7
Single no children	6.1	8.5	PLACE OF RESIDENCE		
Single with children	8.1	11.6	City	8.6	7.6
			Larger town	6.3	8.5
			Smaller town/ rural area	3.9	6.7

Burglary

According to the Swedish Crime Survey data, one percent of the population (16–79 years) live in households that were burgled over the course of 2005 (Table 7). Marital status and type of housing do not account for any differences in burglary

victimization. People living in cities reported experiences of burglary to a slightly greater extent than others, however.

Fraud

The Swedish Crime Survey respondents were asked whether “you as a private person were defrauded of money or other valuables during the past year”. Less than three percent reported having been subjected to fraud over the course of 2005 (Table 9). Most of those who were victims reported only a single incident of fraud over the course of the year. The most common amount lost was between SEK 500–2,000, a figure that was reported by around one third of the respondents. One third reported losing SEK 10,000 or more. There are many different methods for defrauding individuals. One sixth of the incidents reported in the Swedish Crime Survey involved bank or credit card fraud, and a similar proportion involved internet fraud.

Table 9. Victims of fraud in 2005 according to the Swedish Crime Survey. By gender and age. Proportion in percent.

	Victims of fraud		Victims of fraud
All, 16–79 years	2.8	All, 16–79 years	2.8
AGE		GENDER AND AGE	
16–19 years	3.9	Men, 16–79 years	3.0
20–24 years	4.1	16–24 years	4.3
25–34 years	3.0	25–44 years	3.4
35–44 years	2.5	45–64 years	2.6
45–54 years	3.4	65–79 years	1.9
55–64 years	1.9	Women, 16–79 years	2.5
65–74 years	2.5	16–24 years	3.7
75–79 years	0.7	25–44 years	2.1
		45–64 years	2.6
		65–79 years	2.0

Repeated victimization

Multiple victimization is more prevalent for offences against the person than for property offences; 11 percent and 2.8 percent of victims respectively reported having been subject to four or more offences in 2005.

Seventy percent of offences against the person affect individuals who are victims of more than a single offence. The corresponding figure for property offences is around 50 percent. A significant proportion of offences against the person (40 percent) affect a very small proportion of the population (0.9 percent) comprised of individuals who report having experienced five or more offences over the course of 2005.

Fear of crime

Fear of crime does not represent a single unitary concept, but rather involves a complex set of feelings and attitudes. This complexity makes fear of crime difficult to measure and describe. The Swedish Crime Survey captures many – but by no means all – of the dimensions of fear and anxiety about crime that have not previously been measured at the national level. In general, the survey indicates that most of the adult population feels safe. To take one example, three quarters feel quite safe or very safe when they go out alone after dark in their own neighbourhoods (Table 10). Further, most respondents (over 80 percent) do not consider that the fear of crime has a negative effect on their quality of life.

Table 10. General fear of crime, Swedish Crime Survey 2006. Proportion in percent.

WORRIED ABOUT CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY		WORRIED ABOUT CRIME WHEN GOING OUT AT NIGHT	
Yes, to a great extent	29	Very safe	32
Yes, to some extent	53	Fairly safe	44
No, not at all	18	Fairly unsafe	10
		Very unsafe	2
		Do not go out due to fear of crime	7
		Do not go out for other reasons	5

The proportion of those who feel safe or unsafe is determined to a large extent by the way in which the question is formulated. The results are most interesting when it becomes possible to make comparisons, such as in trends over time or differences between different groups within the population. The presentation of findings thus has the principal objective of providing an indication of whether there are groups that feel particularly anxious about crime.

Substantial differences between different groups

The results of the Swedish Crime Survey confirm that there are substantial differences in levels of fear of crime across different groups within the population, but that there are also differences between the different dimensions of the fear of crime measured in the survey.

Most women report that they feel considerably more unsafe than men. In the Swedish Crime Survey, this difference is manifested quite clearly in the findings relating to the general level of anxiety about going out late at night and the fear of being attacked or assaulted (Table 11).

Table 11. Fear of crime by gender and age, Swedish Crime Survey 2006. Proportion reporting being fairly worried or very worried in percent.

	BURGLARY	ATTACK/ ASSAULT	CAR THEFT/ VANDALISM	WORRIED ABOUT FAMILY AND FRIENDS
GENDER				
Men	14	8	21	26
Women	20	23	23	38
AGE				
16–24 years	9	23	15	26
25–44 years	17	16	27	33
46–64 years	21	13	22	37
65–79 years	15	11	17	23

The results indicate that fear of crime exists across all age groups but that the nature of this fear differs slightly. Young people are particularly concerned about violent offences, whereas middle-aged respondents are more concerned about burglary. One consistent finding is that residents in larger towns and cities are more concerned than residents in smaller towns and rural areas. Age is also linked to the way in which people deal with the fear of crime they feel in relation to going out. As respondents get older, the proportion reporting that they stay at home because they are worried increases. Younger people tend to a much greater extent to go out and feel unsafe, rather than staying at home because they are worried. Thus a larger proportion of younger people report that they feel fairly worried or very worried when they go out, whereas older people tend to answer that they do not go out because they feel unsafe.

Respondents who have been victimized during the past year feel more unsafe than others (11 percent and 5 percent respectively, see Table 12). This is particularly true of the victims of offences against the person. People with indirect experience of

victimization, such as those who have witnessed a crime or those with a relative who has been the victim of a serious crime, are also more worried than those with no such experience. Most of the respondents who report that they are worried about crime have no experience of victimization however.

Table 12. Fear of crime (index) among persons with varying experiences of victimization, Swedish Crime Survey 2006. Proportion reporting being worried about crime in percent.*

EXPERIENCE OF VICTIMIZATION	PERCENTAGE WHO ARE WORRIED
Not victimized	5
Victimized	11
Victim of specific offences affecting personal integrity**	15
Has a close friend or relation who has been victimized during the past year	10
Witness to violence	9

* Please note that the categories in this table are not mutually exclusive.

** Offences include threat, assault, sexual offences, robbery, harassment and/or burglary during 2005 (n=968). Threats and assaults account for almost 60 percent of these offences.

Those who feel that crime has increased over the past three years are clearly more worried than those who feel that the crime level has remained unchanged or fallen (Table 13). Those who feel that crime has increased dramatically report particularly high levels of concern. Among these respondents, ten percent are found in the “very worried” category, which can be compared with slightly over two percent of those who feel that crime levels have remained unchanged or have fallen. People’s confidence in the criminal justice system also varies according to their own perceptions of safety. The proportion of respondents who report experiencing fear of crime is more than twice as large in the group reporting little confidence in the justice system as it is in the group reporting a high level of confidence in the criminal justice system.

Table 13. Fear of crime (index) presented by perceptions of crime trends and the criminal justice system; Swedish Crime Survey 2006. Proportion reporting being worried about crime in percent.

PERCEPTION OF CRIME TRENDS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS	PERCENTAGE WHO FEAR CRIME	CONFIDENCE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM	PERCENTAGE WHO FEAR CRIME
Increased dramatically	10	High or fairly high	5
Increased slightly	5	Neither high nor low	6
Unchanged or fallen	2	Very or fairly low	11

Public confidence in the criminal justice system

Previous research shows that public confidence in the criminal justice system and in some of its constituent parts is relatively high in Sweden. The Swedish Crime Survey provides a more complete picture of public confidence in the criminal justice system and its various agencies however.

The results of the Swedish Crime Survey show that public confidence in the criminal justice system in general and confidence in the police, prosecutors and courts in particular is relatively high. On average, over half (54 percent) of respondents reported being very confident and fifteen percent reported having little confidence. In other words, the majority of people have a considerably more positive than negative view of the criminal justice system. The exception is the Prison and Probation Service where the proportion of those with reporting low levels of confidence is relatively large. One notable result is that many citizens, around one-quarter to one-fifth, have no definite view as to how much confidence they have in the prosecution service and the courts or in the Prison and Probation Service.

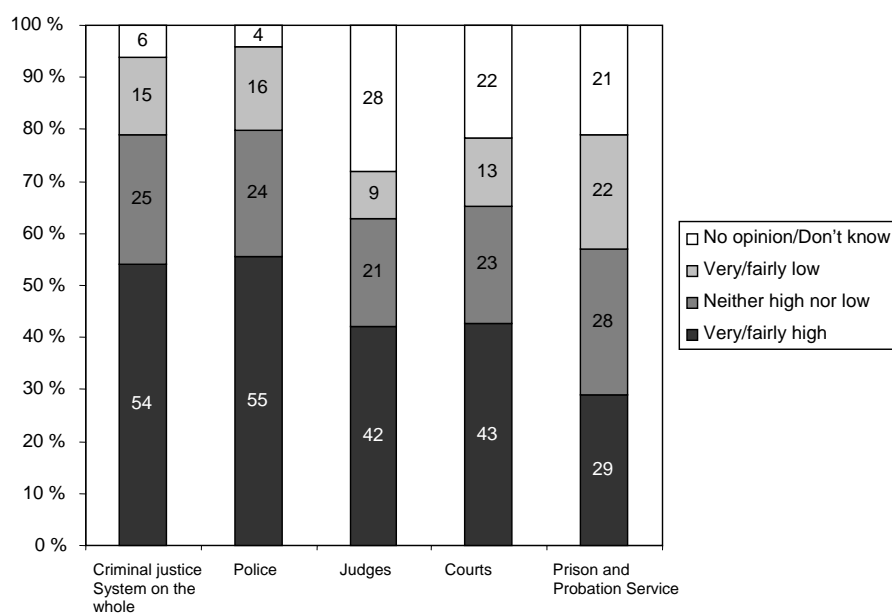


Figure 1. Public confidence in the criminal justice system; Swedish Crime Survey 2006. Proportion in percent.

In general, the survey indicates only minor differences across various social groups. The background factor that appears to be most significant is the respondent's level of education. Generally speaking, respondents with higher levels of educational achievement report slightly higher levels of confidence in the criminal justice system in general, and in the prosecution service and the courts in particular. As regards the other background factors (gender, age, Swedish/non-Swedish background and place of residence), the differences are in most cases very small.

Factors associated with people's experience of crime, and particularly with offences against the person, appear to play a somewhat more important role. Crime victims report less confidence in the justice system than the rest of the population (Table 14). This does not however signify the existence of a major crisis of confidence among the Swedish population. Even the majority of those with experience of crime have confidence in the criminal justice system. The group that reports the lowest levels of confidence in almost all of the different agencies of the justice system comprises those respondents who have themselves been indicted for criminal offences.

Table 14. Confidence in the criminal justice system among people with different experiences of crime; Swedish Crime Survey 2006. Proportion in percent.

<i>Very or fairly confident</i>	Criminal justice system as a whole	Police	Prosecution service	Courts	Prison and Probation Service	The criminal justice system treats suspects fairly	The criminal justice system treats victims well
Victimized during 2005							
yes (n=2032-2034)	46	50	37	39	25	41	27
No	57	57	44	44	31	47	31

The public reports the lowest levels of confidence in relation to the question of how well the criminal justice system treats crime victims. Less than one third of the population report high levels of confidence in this respect (Figure 3.2). No matter which sub-group of the population is studied, comparatively few report that they are fairly or very confident that the various agencies of the criminal justice system treat crime victims well. As regards the question of whether the criminal justice system

treats suspects fairly, almost half of the population are very confident that this is the case.

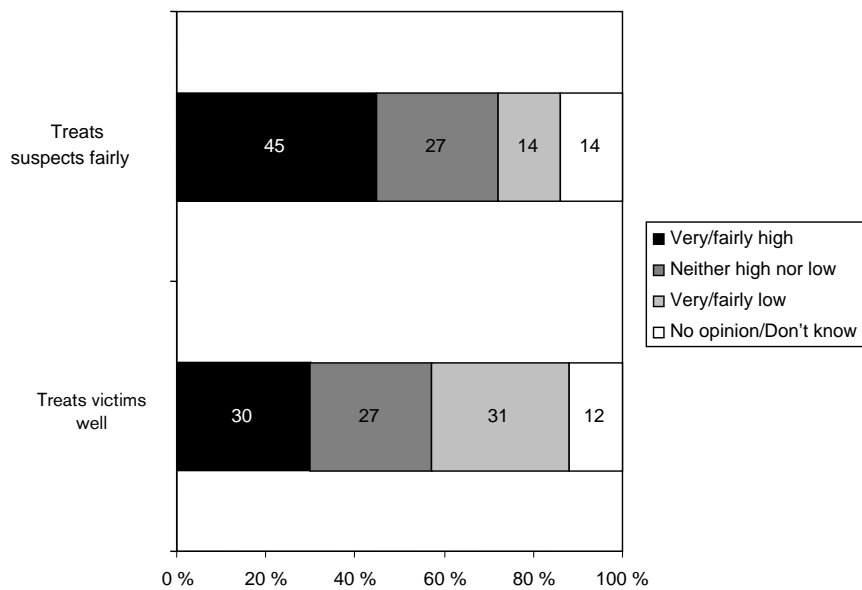


Figure 2. Public confidence in how well the criminal justice system performs its various tasks; Swedish Crime Survey 2006. Proportion in percent.

One factor that is highly significant for variations in levels of confidence relates to different groups' perceptions of crime trends. Confidence in the criminal justice system is considerably lower among people who say they believe that crime is on the increase, than it is among those who say that crime levels have not increased (Table 15).

Table 15. Confidence in the criminal justice system among people with different perceptions of crime trends over the past three years; Swedish Crime Survey 2006. Proportion in percent.

Perception of crime trends over the past three years	The criminal justice system as a whole	Police	Prosecution service	Courts	Prison and Probation Service	The criminal justice system treats suspects fairly	The criminal justice system treats victims well
Increased dramatically (40 %)	45	51	36	35	26	39	27
Increased slightly (39 %)	57	57	44	45	30	47	32
Unchanged or fallen (19 %)	66	60	54	56	35	55	33

These results have previously been discussed in more detail in the report *Public confidence in the criminal justice system* (Brå 2007:9). The report highlights the impact of media coverage on crime, and the work of criminal justice system, as well as the climate of public opinion and the importance of confidence in the justice system being based on knowledge. The report also emphasizes the importance of objective and strategic informational measures in relation to Swedish crime and the work of the criminal justice system in general, and in

relation to crime victims in particular, in order to reduce levels of distrust and improve public confidence in the criminal justice system.

Future possibilities

The contents of the Swedish Crime Survey are comprehensive and this report presents no more than the first overall results relating to victimization, fear of crime and public confidence in the criminal justice system. As of 2007, the size of the sample will be doubled and will thus provide even greater opportunities for presentations and analyses. It will be possible, for example, to study levels of victimization and fear of crime on a county by county basis, to present more detailed information on the circumstances surrounding offences and also to present the findings separately for different groups within the population for relatively uncommon types of crime. As the size of the survey database increases, it will become possible to study offence types that are not covered by this report such as hate crimes and the most serious form of sexual offence – rape.

Based on the 2007 data collection, it will also be possible to present results from the section of the Swedish Crime Survey that focuses on how people with experiences of crime and the agencies of the criminal justice system (police, prosecutors and courts) perceive these agencies.

One of the most important tasks of the Swedish Crime Survey, however, is to monitor crime trends, and levels of fear of crime and public confidence in the justice system over the longer term and across different groups within the population. A more detailed study of the propensity to report offences to the police and a comparison with official crime statistics are being planned in connection with the 2007 wave of the Swedish Crime Survey, so that the survey can serve as the complement to the official crime statistics that is currently needed in order to better monitor the development of crime trends in Sweden.

The material will also provide opportunities for studying the factors that are most significant for differences in levels of victimization, fear of crime and confidence in the justice system. The present report has exclusively employed simple, descriptive methods. But more powerful statistical analyses will become possible as the survey database expands. This might, for example, include a study of the relative significance of various individual-level and area-level factors for victimization, fear of crime or public confidence. As of 2007, the data collected by the Swedish Crime Survey will be substantially larger and will provide a basis for studies of this kind. It may also be of interest in the future to supplement the Swedish Crime Survey findings with qualitative studies focusing on people's fear of crime, for example, or their confidence in the justice system. Other survey methods such as focus groups could be employed to explore the factors that underlie the experiences of a specific group or that are associated with a specific opinion, such as elderly people's fear of crime or lack of confidence, or why people hold no definite view of a certain agency within the criminal justice system.

In a few years' time – once the survey database has grown sufficiently to provide a stable foundation – it will also be possible to include a special focus on certain areas of interest, offence types or population groups in the survey questionnaire, either on a regular or a one-off basis.

Even though a large amount of the information that was gathered in the first wave of data collection has not yet been presented, and a number of interesting questions remain to be studied, this report nonetheless presents the central results from the first wave of the survey on levels of exposure to crime, fear of crime and public

confidence in the criminal justice system in Sweden. Over the longer term, the results from the Swedish Crime Survey will come to constitute an invaluable tool for monitoring trends, identifying problems and finding solutions both within and outside of the criminal justice system. Knowledge relating to the public's exposure to crime, fear of crime and their levels of confidence in the justice system will provide an important basis for developing and improving the criminal justice system and its agencies, and may help to reduce crime and to improve perceptions of public safety.

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