

English summary

International comparisons of Criminal victimisation

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The International Crime Victimization Survey, ICVS, is currently the most trustworthy source for comparing crime in different countries. The present report summarises and collates the results of the most recent Survey, which was carried out in 1996. Eleven countries took part in the Survey. These were Austria, England & Wales, Canada, Finland, France, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. The Survey focused on eleven so-called traditional crimes whose victims are private persons namely car theft, theft from cars, causing damage to cars, personal theft, bicycle theft, burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, sexual offences and assaults or threats.

The pattern of crime throughout shows Sweden to lie close to the average for the eleven countries. The proportion of Swedes who reported that they had been the victims of a crime during previous year was 24 %. The proportions reported from the other participating countries varied between 17 % (Northern Ireland) and 31 % (England & Wales). Variation was also found for the individual offences. Thus, for example, the proportion of interviewees who had been victims of burglary in Sweden was markedly lower than the average, the proportions victimised by car theft and theft from a car lay at the average and the proportions victimised by assaults and threats were above the average.

A comparatively large proportion of crime that can be considered to be less serious theft characterizes the Swedish crime profile. Bicycle theft and theft of

personal property comprises a relatively large amount of Sweden's crime, a pattern that also is to be found in the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The Survey also makes comparisons between the various countries concerning other questions of interest for crime policy. So, for example, it appears that Swedes who had their cars stolen had a better chance of getting them back than similar victims in other countries. Swedes were also those who felt safest when out and about in their own residential areas at evening time. This was so despite the fact that Sweden lay above the average for assault and threat victimisation. Another finding of crime policy interest was that it was less common in Sweden for private persons to take crime prevention measures.

Comparisons were also made of the tendency to report crimes to the police, that is the proportions of interviewed victims who had reported "their" crime to the police. The results show that the difference between countries were relatively small, but if they are rank ordered, reporting tendencies were greatest in Sweden. The most important reason for not reporting to the police was that the incident was not sufficiently important. This was true even of Sweden, but a relatively large proportion of Swedes also gave as a reason that they considered it inappropriate to call in the police or had solved the matter themselves.

Swedes were also comparatively satisfied with the way in which the police dealt with the cases reported to them. Moreover, Swedish opinion on the way in which the police carry out their duties in general has become more positive between 1992 and 1996.

Keywords:

Comparisons, crime, crime prevention, fear of crime, ICVS, police, victimisation.