

EXPERIENCES, FEAR AND ATTITUDES OF VICTIMS OF CRIME IN ITALY

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The aims of the survey

How many victims of crime are there in Italy? Is the number higher or lower than in other countries? Do victims in Italy have a greater or lesser tendency to report the crimes they have suffered than victims in other countries? And again, which crimes produce more victims in Italy and which factors generate a greater risk of falling victim to a crime? Which crimes are not reported to the police and why? How do Italians rate the work of the police? Do they feel safe as they go about their everyday lives? What steps do they take to defend themselves from crime and what kind of punishment would they prefer for criminals?

These questions, together with others, are discussed in this report on the experience of victims in Italy. This is the first wide-range research study conducted in Italy that deals with the other side of crime, that of the victims². The research in Italy was conducted by UNICRI with the assistance of the Department of Public Security of the Italian Ministry of the Interior, and is part of the international project on the condition of victims by the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute³. The research began in October 1991 with the adaptation of the international questionnaire and its translation into Italian. The data were gathered between February and April 1992, and elaborated and analysed between July and October 1992. The aim of the study was to interview people who, at least once between 1988 and 1992, had been the victim of at least one of the crimes considered to be part of what is commonly known as microcrime. The investigation was taken further by analysing the risk of becoming a victim, in other words by the identification of any factors relating to the victims which result in a greater or lesser exposure to this risk. The real number of victims was then used to analyse the dark figure of crime, a figure which allows us, in the light of these results, to estimate the difference between crimes committed and crimes reported. Any decision not to report a crime was also given close attention with a view to pinpointing, for each crime, the reasons underlying it and the factors influencing it. Such information is useful when considering the relationship between the public and the police, and explaining why the victims of

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² Research studies into the experience of victims in Italy have existed before this present one. They were usually conducted on samples limited to a small area or have been studies like the ISTAT multipurpose study on families which includes a questionnaire on crime covering a sample of 30,000 families and addressing just a few aspects of the problem.

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microcrime in Italy report so few of the crimes suffered to the police. The aspect of collaboration between the public and the police is a delicate one in which we need to invest in the future in order to enable the police to act effectively for the prevention and control of crime, certainly one of the main ways of improving the conditions of legality in our country.

About the report

This report aims to illustrate and describe the condition of victims and their attitudes towards crime and the institutions in Italy. The analysis of the characteristics of the victims is geared towards identifying the risk of becoming a victim. The combination of different variables can be used to outline the profile of the person at risk. For the purposes of this report, all the theoretical aspects linked to the working hypotheses which guided the empirical study and the subsequent analysis of the results in relation to these hypotheses have been excluded to avoid needlessly weighing down the discussion. The data are presented in graphic form and tables are rarely used to allow a ready grasp of the phenomena described.

After a brief description of the characteristics of the sample and the method of data acquisition and analysis, the report compares the situation of victims in Italy with that of other countries with similar socio-economic features and levels of development.

The situation of victims in Italy is then analysed crime by crime. For each crime the percentage of victims in the population as a whole is calculated and in certain cases the dynamics of the crime are examined. Again for each crime, the risk of becoming a victim is calculated on the basis of the characteristics of the victims which are significant in generating such a risk. And again for each crime, the magnitude of the dark figure is calculated, and an indication is given of the reasons declared by the victims for not reporting the crime to the police and the factors which may have prevented them from doing so.

Finally, the report concludes with a series of issues that have been empirically studied, such as the victims' evaluation of the work of the police, fear, prevention measures adopted by the victims and attitudes towards the punishment of criminals.

The methodology of the survey and the sample selected

The study was aimed at a representative, randomly selected sample of the Italian population aged 16 years or more. The CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) method used necessarily eliminated from the sample selection all those who had no telephone at the time of the study. For Italy, where the possession of a telephone is no longer an indicator of any social or economic significance, this factor is of little relevance.

An initial selection based on the telephone numbers of the entire country enabled the identification of 5,150 families living in cities of different dimensions in every region of Italy. 1,829 families were withdrawn from this sample as they were not significant for the purposes of the final selection. 3,321 families were thus identified who were contacted by interviewers specially trained in telephone interviewing. Of these, 2,024 completed the answers after one or more contacts.

The remainder refused to answer or failed to complete the questionnaire. The 61% response rate is quite high for protracted studies of this kind which touch upon delicate subjects that are sometimes of a personal nature. In each family interviewed the Troidahl-Carter method was used to make a random selection of the members of the family aged sixteen or over to whom the questions were to be addressed.

The composition of the specially "weighted" sample, required for the international comparison, is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Geographical area and size of cities (thousand inhabitants)

Size of city	North-West	North-East	Centre	Southern Islands	Total
<10,000	201	154	94	217	666
10-50,000	41	102	118	242	602
50-100,000	50	26	38	87	202
100-500,000	29	108	50	95	281
500,000-1,000,000	21	-	100	23	44
>1,000,000	102	-	91	36	229
Total	544	390	391	699	2,024

Table 2: Age and gender

Age group	16-29	30-54	55+	Total
Male	282	406	296	984
Female	270	433	337	1,040
Total	552	839	633	2,024

The questionnaire

A structured questionnaire comprising 300 questions with set answers was used. The version used for the international study was translated into Italian and adapted to the needs of the research in Italy with the addition of a number of questions. Particular care was taken to ensure that it was easy to understand and any imprecisions which, in the Italian language, could give rise to ambiguity in comprehension and hence to possibly irrelevant answers were eliminated. A specialised team of interviewers were trained for this study by a simulation of the interviews co-ordinated by the author of this report who, together with UNICRI, directed the conduction of the entire study, from the planning phase to the collection and analysis of data.

Victims in Italy and the other countries

An initial analysis which helps to provide an insight into the dimensions of the problem examined by this report derives from the comparison of the victims in Italy according to the type of crime and those in other countries at different latitudes. Because they were already definite by the time this report began to be written, data were included for European countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, the United

Kingdom and Sweden, as well as for the American continent, Canada, and Australia. The graphs reproduced in Figures 1 to 12 represent, in decreasing order, the percentages of victims for each crime considered. The position of Italy varies according to the crime, as does that of the other countries. More specifically, Italy occupies a medium-high position on the scale for vehicle thefts, medium for car vandalism, low for home burglary and attempted burglary and even lower for robbery and pick-pocketing. Italy is at the centre of the scale for indecent assault and rape and in last place for non-sexual assault, while it is in the highest position for commercial fraud.

Crimes reported in Italy and the other countries

The percentages of victims provide some idea of the differences in the crimes committed in the countries under survey. On the whole, the figures show that Italy's average position is similar to that of other countries with sufficiently similar rates of development.

One alarming point which will be further examined in the analysis of the Italian data concerns the position of Italy compared with the other countries in terms of the percentage of people who are victims of one of the crimes considered and have reported it to the police. This figure gives an idea of the discrepancy that exists between the number of crimes committed and the number of crimes reported or, in other words, reflected in the official crime statistics. Figures 13 to 24 represent in decreasing order the percentage of people who, in the various countries, have reported the crime of which they have been victim.

With the exception of car theft, for which the dark number is almost inexistent since it is in everyone's interest to report the theft to avoid consequences in terms of liability, Italy is always in last position. The only exception is for home burglaries, in which Italy is surpassed by Sweden, and for the theft of personal possessions and pick-pocketing, in which Italy is outrivalled in the number of unreported offences by Australia and Canada.

Victims in Italy. Methods used to calculate and analyse the risk of becoming a victim and the dark figure

Although, with the exception of rape, the crimes considered in this research belong to a homogeneous area of microcrime, their diversity prevents us from establishing the real number of victims. This summary indicator used for international comparisons is too much of an aggregation to be of any significance in explaining the Italian situation. Even within such broad categories of crimes as theft, robbery and assault, the different ranges of situations outlined by the questionnaire, if aggregated, do not allow for a convincing explanation of the phenomenon. It was therefore decided that an analysis should be made of each individual crime to identify the individual factors which play a role in generating a greater or lesser risk of becoming a victim. From the analysis of these factors and their random or repeated impact on the risk of becoming a victim it will then be possible to make a number of deductions in the course of the theoretical discussion.

In order to detect those variables which play a greater part in generating the risk of becoming a victim, the answers were analysed using a log-linear technique. This allows the relationship between any individual independent variable (for instance, income) and the dependent variable (in this case, becoming a victim) to be ignored, and every combination of the different variables (sex, age, frequency of evening outings, income, size of city in terms of population, geographical location and status of area of residence), instead, to be considered separately, so that the possibility of a significant relationship with the dependent variable can be examined. In this way, once the equal probability of becoming or not becoming the victim of a given crime was established as being equal to 1 for each variable, the risk of becoming a victim was determined. The further this value is below 1, the lower is the risk of becoming

a victim associated with that variable; in the same way, the further the value is above 1, the higher is the risk of becoming a victim.

An initial elaboration of the data reviewed all the variables under consideration. From this first analysis those variables were selected which in some way are significant in terms of the risk of falling victim to the crime considered. It was found, during this elaboration, that for certain crimes sex and age had no impact on the risk of becoming a victim, whereas for others they are indeed relevant. Conversely, other variables, such as frequency of evening outings, earning capacity, area of residence, size of population in a city, were associated in various ways with the risk of falling victim to all the crimes considered.

A second elaboration which yielded the graphs in Figures 25 to 36 considered the variables that were found to be of some significance; the figures permit an immediate understanding of their relevance.

A further problem considered is the calculation of the dark figure, namely the difference between the number of victims reporting and not reporting a given crime. One particular question in the questionnaire asked respondents who had been victims of a crime if they had reported it to the police, and those who had not done so were invited to explain why. Figure 37 represents the frequency of crimes reported/not reported and the differences for each individual crime. Figures 38 to 48 represent the reasons given by the victims of each crime for not having reported it. For those who did not report the crime an analysis was then made of the factors which presumably influenced this behaviour. Again, a log-linear technique was used, with 1 being taken as the point where the number of crimes not reported is equal to the number reported in order to determine the weight of each variable. The further the values of each variable are below 1, the lower is the number of victims not reporting a crime compared to the number reporting it; the further these values are above 1, the higher the number of those who did not report is compared to those who reported.

Victims of car theft

After establishing the number of car owners in the sample, the respondents were asked if they or anyone in the immediate family had been the victim of car theft in the last five years (between 1987 and 1991).

Taking as a basis for the analysis the car owners surveyed by the study, it was found that 7.6% had been the victim of at least one theft during the surveyed period. Of these, about 40% declared that the theft or thefts had taken place in 1991, 56% in the preceding years and the remaining 4% in 1992. For 54% of the victims the theft occurred close to their home.

The risk of becoming a victim

From a glance at Figure 25, which represents the factors that generate a greater or lesser risk of becoming a victim of car theft, it can be observed that this risk is greater for victims living in the southern regions of Italy. As far as the size of the cities is concerned, this variable is associated with the risk of becoming a victim only in the larger cities (with more than 500,000 inhabitants). The other factors

considered, such as frequency of evening outings, income and area of residence, did not prove to produce a particularly significant impact.

The dark figure

Car theft is one crime which is always or almost always reported in order to avoid problems of liability should use of the car by the thief produce penal consequences, or for insurance reasons. This is why only 4.4% of the car owners did not report this crime. Of these 6 persons, 29% failed to report the crime due to lack of confidence in the police, and a further 29% because they knew the thief (29%). On the whole, these reasons are not significant given the very low dark figure (see Figures 37 and 38).

Victims of the theft of car parts

In the five years under survey, 440 persons (i.e. 25% of the car owning victims) experienced this kind of theft. Of these, 32% of the thefts took place in 1991, and in 43% of the cases they occurred near the victims' home.

The risk of becoming a victim

For this crime, the risk of becoming a victim is increased by a higher frequency of evening outings, above average income (i.e. above the income earned by half of the Italian population), residence in large cities and in an area of southern Italy or on the islands (see Figure 26).

The dark figure

This crime was not reported by 58.6% of the victims (247 persons), whose reasons for not reporting were: the insignificance of the damage (47%), the lack of evidence with which to enable the police to act effectively (23%) and lack of confidence in the police (11%) (Figures 37 and 39).

Victims of motorcycle and bicycle thefts

In the five years under survey, this type of theft was experienced by 10% of the victims owning motorcycles (72 persons), and 11% of the bicycle owners (155 persons). Six percent of the motorcycle thefts, and 5% of the bicycle thefts took place in 1991.

The risk of becoming a victim

The higher risk of becoming a victim follows a different pattern for each of these two crimes. In the case of motorcycle theft, the higher risk is associated with more frequent evening outings, above average income, residence in a large city, and in southern Italy or on the islands (see Figures 27 and 28).

The dark figure

Motorcycle thefts were not reported by 16 persons, 23.6% of the victims of this crime. The reasons given are the insignificance of the damage (44%), lack of

evidence (25%) and knowing the offender (19%). With regard to bicycle thefts, 108 persons (72.2% of the victims of this crime) did not report the offence. In this case too, the insignificance of the damage and lack of proof were the main reasons for not reporting (see Figures 37, 41 and 42).

Victims of car vandalism

Twenty-one percent of the respondents suffered this type of crime in the five years considered. Of these, 13% had their car damaged in 1991. In 46% of the cases the crime was committed outside the respondents' home and in 37% of the cases in the city where they live (Figure 29).

The risk of becoming a victim

The risk of becoming a victim of this crime is greater for those who go out frequently at night, live in a high status residential area and in cities with between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants (Figure 29).

The dark figure

Vandalism was not reported by 314 persons, i.e. 84.8% of the victims of this offence. The reasons given were the insignificance of the damage (58%), lack of evidence (25%) and lack of confidence in the police (7%). On the whole, those who did not report the crime live in central and northern Italy (see Figures 37 and 40).

Victims of home burglary or attempted burglary

In the five years considered, 8.6% of the respondents had their homes burgled at least once. 6.7% of the sample were victims of attempted burglary. Of those who were victims of a burglary, 4.6% occurred in 1991, while 6.4% were victims of an attempted burglary in 1991. With regard to the value of the goods stolen, this amounted to between 2 million and 50 million lire for 31.8% of the victims, and in 40% of the cases the home and its furnishings were also damaged.

The risk of becoming a victim

In the cases of both burglary and attempted burglary, the risk of becoming a victim is greater for those who live in a high status residential area, in cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants in central and northern Italy, and who often go out in the evening (Figures 30 and 31).

The dark figure

Home burglary was not reported by 59 respondents, i.e. 34.1% of the victims of this crime. The reasons given are lack of evidence (32%), the insignificance of the damage (26%), lack of confidence in the police (9%). The variable which most influenced the decision not to report is below average income. With regard to attempted burglary, 105 (78.8% of the victims of this crime) did not report the crime

and declared, as the reasons for this, the insignificance of the damage (54%), lack of evidence (22%) and lack of confidence in the police (86%) (see Figures 37, 43 and 44).

Victims of robbery, bag-snatching, and the dynamics of the crime

In the five years under consideration, 1.5% of the respondents had been the victim of at least one robbery, and 3.2% of at least one bag-snatching incident. 27.5% of these crimes were committed in 1991. In 46% of the cases, the robbery or bag-snatching took place near home, 36% in the city of residence and 16.3% in another Italian city. In 41.5% of the cases, two offenders were involved, in 34% only one and in 22% three or more. 80% of the victims declared that they did not know the person who committed the robbery or bag-snatching. 63.5% of the victims stated that the robber was unarmed; however, 33% declared that the robbery had been carried out under the threat of a weapon. When asked which weapon was used, 62.2% responded a gun, 28.9% a knife and 6.2% the needle of a syringe. In 81% of the cases the robbery resulted in the loss of some item for the victim.

The risk of becoming a victim

The risk of becoming a victim of robbery or bag-snatching is higher for women who go out frequently in the evening, live in a high status residential area, and increases with the size of the city (the larger the city population, the greater the risk of becoming a victim), mainly in southern Italy and on the islands (Figure 32).

The dark figure

Robbery or bag-snatching was not reported by 57 persons, i.e. 57.4% of the victims of this crime. The main reasons provided by the victims for not reporting were lack of evidence (35%), minor nature of the damage caused (23%), the offender was known to them (9%) and lack of confidence in the police (9%). The variables which most influenced the decision not to report are below average income and residence in a city with more than 500,000 inhabitants (Figures 37 and 45).

Victims of petty theft and pickpocketing

In the five years covered by the survey, 9.8% of the respondents were the victim, at least once, of petty theft or pick-pocketing. 5.7% of these offences were committed in 1991 and 58% of the offences were committed in the city of residence, 22% in Italy, 14.5% near home and 4.1% abroad.

The risk of becoming a victim

The risk of becoming a victim of pick-pocketing is higher for women living in low status residential areas in cities with 500,000 inhabitants or more (Figure 32).

The dark figure

Pick-pocketing was not reported by 113 persons, i.e. 56.1% of the victims of this crime. The reasons given for this were mainly the insignificance of the crime (40%), lack of evidence (25%), knowing the offender (10%) and lack of confidence in the police (7%) (Figures 37 and 46).

Victims of indecent assault and rape, and dynamics of the crime

In the five years covered by the study, 67 women (i.e. 6.4% of the respondents) experienced at least one indecent assault or rape. More specifically, of the 67 incidents, 9.1% were cases of rape, 28.6% indecent assault, 62.3% offensive conduct. Of all the women who were victims of offensive conduct, 52.2% considered it to be a crime. 13.2% of all the victims of one of these crimes experienced the offence in 1991. In 53.8% of the cases, the rape or assault took place in the city of residence, in 30% near the home, and in 13.2% in a city of Italy. In two cases (3.1%) the rape or assault was committed in the victim's own home. In 94.5% of the cases there was only one offender and in 34% the victim knew him only by sight or by name. Those who said they knew the name of the offender were asked further questions. Of the twelve cases considered, one was the partner, one a relative, and in two cases a close friend. In the other eight cases the person who committed the crime, although known by name to the victim, did not belong to any of the above-mentioned categories.

The risk of becoming a victim

The risk of becoming a victim of indecent assault and rape is higher for women aged between 16 and 29 years who go out more frequently at night and live in one of the regions of central-northern Italy (Figure 34).

The dark figure

Of the 67 victims of indecent assault or rape, 64 (95.7%) did not report the crime to the police. The reasons declared were that it was not a serious matter or in any event was of little significance (32.8%), that the victim knew the person who committed the assault or rape (23.8%), that due to lack of evidence, the police would not have been able to do anything (15.5%), as well as fear of retaliation (6.7%) and lack of confidence in the work of the police (4.9%) (Figures 37 and 47).

Victims of violent assault and dynamics of the crime

In the five years considered by the study 69 persons were the victim of at least one form of violent assault (3.4% of the nationwide sample) and, of these, 22% took place in 1991. In 7.6% of the cases the assault occurred in the victims' home, and in 32.6% near the victims' home. For 38% "elsewhere" was always in the city of residence. On the whole, these assaults were carried out by one person only (57.6%) or two persons (22.7%). A "gang" assault by three or more persons took place for 16% of the victims. 63.3% of the victims did not know their assailant, 10.3% knew him by sight and 17.9% by name. Among those who knew their assailant by name (a total of 12 victims), it was mainly a close friend (8 cases), a partner (in one case), or a relative. As regards the dynamics of the assault, 73.2% of the victims were threatened and force was used in 23.4% of the cases. In 21% of the 51 assaults conducted under threat, a weapon was used. In 42.5% of the cases in which violence was used, the victim was wounded, and in 65.2% of these cases the intervention of a doctor was required.

The risk of becoming a victim

The risk of becoming a victim of violent assault or rape is greater for men aged between 16 and 29 who live in a high status residential area in cities with between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants, mainly in southern Italy and on the islands (Figure 35).

The dark figure

Violent assault was not reported by 53 persons, i.e. 74.6% of the victims of this crime. The reasons for not reporting are the insignificance of the damage (35%), knowing the assailant (19%), lack of confidence in the police (12%), lack of evidence (10%) (Figures 37 and 48).

Victims of consumer fraud

214 respondents were victims of fraud at least once during the five years under consideration. 5% of the cases were fraud related to home repairs, 4% were fraud by car mechanics, 3.7% were fraud in a hotel or restaurant, and 61.4% were frauds in shops when purchasing goods.

The risk of becoming a victim

For this crime, the risk of becoming a victim does not seem to be related to a particular extent to the variables considered. Those factors which, more than others, may have an impact on becoming a victim of this crime are: being aged between 16 and 29, and living in a high status area in a city with between 10,000 and 500,000 inhabitants (see Figure 36).

The dark figure

Fraud is the crime for which the research registered the highest dark figure. The frauds considered, in fact, had not been reported by 96% of the victims.

Victims' evaluation of the damage caused by the experienced offence

One important aspect covered by this research concerns the victims' evaluation of the damage caused by an experienced offence. This evaluation is often not related to the personal characteristics of the victim and is based more on the type of crime and the way in which it is committed. A distinction is made between violent acts, such as robbery and rape, on the one hand, and crimes of an economic nature, such as the various types of theft, on the other. In the first case, most of the victims evaluated the criminal acts as extremely serious, whereas in the second case the evaluation was based more on the total amount of the damage suffered, which was generally slight in economic terms and was thus judged as not particularly serious.

Assistance received by the victims

A number of questions in the questionnaire asked if the victims, after experiencing the crime, had received any form of assistance and from whom. This question is particularly important in establishing whether and how assistance is provided for victims of crime in Italy. Table 3 gives an indication of the support received by the 1,107 people in the sample who were victims of at least one crime in the course of the five years considered by the study.

Table 3: Type of assistance received by victims

Assistance/support received from	%
Relatives/friends/neighbours	38.3
Police	14.1
Social welfare organisations	0.6
Religious organisations	0.8
Voluntary associations	0.4
Specialised victim support associations	0.1
Other people or organisations	1.7

These figures reveal the lack of attention paid to the problem of victims of crime by the institutions in Italy. When a crime occurs the victim turns mainly to the private circuit of relatives, friends, neighbours, and as far as the public institutions are concerned, the police. This attitude is probably due to the absence of specialised institutions, on the one hand, and the culture itself on the other. Although there is a lack of specialised institutions, there is also a widespread attitude which tends to "privatise" efforts to resolve problems associated with crime victims, and this is manifested by the private solidarity circuits in our country. For this reason, the demand for support expressed by victims is contradictory. In fact, when the victims of one of the crimes described were asked whether they considered specialised victim support agencies to be useful, the answer was positive in 44%, negative in 44%, and uncertain in 15% of the cases. From a comparison of this figure with the answers to the same question formulated in other countries in which support agencies for crime victims have been set up some time ago, it emerges that the Italian victims believe more in the agencies than the victims of the other countries. Indeed, only 15% of the victims consider them to be of use in Sweden, 11% in the Netherlands, 21% in Canada, and 25% in the United Kingdom.

The victims' evaluation of the work of the police

It has already been shown that a substantial lack of confidence in the police often leads victims not to report the crime suffered. This fact calls for reflection and has led to the search for ways to re-establish a relationship of trust between the public and the police, which is the necessary basis of effective police action against crime. In the course of the research, those who had been the victim of a crime and had reported it to the police were asked if they were satisfied with the way in which

the police had dealt with the report. 41.2% of the victims declared they were satisfied, 50.7% were dissatisfied and 8.1% uncertain. Comparing these answers with the equivalent answers formulated in other countries, on the basis of the same questionnaire, it can be noted that victims in Italy express a lower level of satisfaction than those in other countries. In fact, satisfaction was expressed by 68.8% of the victims in all the other countries considered at the time of writing⁴. From an analysis of the aggregation of data by continent, it can be observed that satisfaction is expressed by 66.4% of the victims in the European countries, by 75.5% in the Americas (Canada), and by 75.2% in Australia.

This figure is confirmed by the replies to another question which asked for a brief evaluation of the ability of the police to control the area in which the victim lived. 49.5% of the sample replied that the police do a good job (an overall average of 60.7% for the countries considered, including Italy). A negative judgment was expressed by 40.3% of the Italians and by an overall average of 22.2% in the countries considered.

The respondents were also asked whether they thought the police sufficiently controlled their area of residence. 40.8% of the Italians gave a positive answer (an average of 52% for all the countries).

Fear of crime

Microcrime generates fear, thus modifying people's behaviour in relation to their perception of themselves as potential victims of one type of crime or another. The resulting psychological costs and loss of opportunities are considerable. Although it is difficult to quantify these losses, it is possible to note every day how people's behaviour is modified by the existence of crime; how much freedom they deny themselves due to cautiousness and how many restrictions they impose upon themselves because of fear! People go out less often in the evening, accept the "necessary" company of other people, take taxis rather than use public transport, and make many other sacrifices, great and small, which have a deep impact on the quality of their lives. If one were to sit down at a desk and try to imagine life without crime, it would be realised that by abolishing all the fears and sacrifices which have now become more or less normal, one's behaviour in both significant and apparently insignificant situations would change substantially for the better.

It is difficult to measure crime since it involves a mixture of perceptions and attitudes that are not easy to evaluate. An attempt was made to do so by asking the whole sample two questions that are aimed precisely at quantifying fear. First, the respondent was asked how safe he/she felt when out walking at night. 27.7% of the respondents felt very safe, 37.2% safe enough, 21.5% felt slightly unsafe, and 13.5% felt very unsafe. The second question asked the respondents to recall whether the last time they were out at night in their area of residence they had deliberately kept away from streets, places or persons for safety reasons. 38.6% replied that they had and 50.7% that they had not. These figures indicate that the greater part of the Italian sample shows no particular signs of any fear of crime. However, comparatively speaking, the fear expressed is greater than in the other

⁴ Sweden, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Canada, Australia.

countries. The Italian figure for "safe on the whole" (65.4%) is below the average for all the countries, including Italy (74.9%); similarly, more Italians avoid places or persons for safety reasons (38.6%) than the overall average for the other countries (23.5%).

Prevention measures adopted by the victims

A series of questions raised the issue of prevention measures. Table 4 compares the prevention measures adopted by Italians with the overall average situation for all the countries, including Italy, considered by the study.

Table 4: Prevention measures adopted by the victims

Prevention measures	Italy (%)	Overall average for all countries (%)
Alarm	12.5	12.5
Reinforced door or special shutters	35.9	47.5
Window grills or bars	10.9	17.1
Guard dog	12.3	20.2
High fence	3.8	13.6
Security guard	5.4	4.3
Refuse to answer	1.5	3.2
None of these	45.0	31.3

It emerges from these data that Italians adopt fewer prevention measures than the average in the countries considered. And this does not only apply to prevention methods since, if we consider the answers to the question of whether they had asked anyone, a guard or a neighbour, to keep an eye on their home while they were away for a couple of days, it can be noted that an affirmative answer was given by 33.4% of the respondents (compared to an overall average of 54.7% for all the countries).

With respect to the possession of firearms in the respondent's family, the figures for Italy are similar to the averages in the other countries.

Table 5: The possession of firearms

Possession of firearms in the home (%)	Italy	Overall average in all countries (%)
No weapon	82.4	84.4
Hand gun	5.5	3.0
Rifle	1.8	6.2
Shotgun	10.7	8.5

When those possessing firearms were asked whether this weapon was kept as a means of protection from crime, an affirmative answer was given by 23.4% of the sample (compared to an overall average of 16.4% for all the countries).

Briefly, the profile of the Italians can be characterised as follows: they are afraid, adopt fewer personal prevention measures, but make greater use of firearms.

The attitudes of victims towards the punishment of criminals

The questionnaire outlined the case of a 21-year-old youth found guilty of theft for the second time. On this occasion he had stolen a colour television set. The respondents were asked to indicate which sentence was most appropriate. Table 6 shows that the degree of severity among Italians (expressed through the preference for a prison sentence) is slightly below the overall average of the countries under survey.

Table 6: Attitudes of victims towards punishment

Appropriate punishment	Italy (%)	Overall average for all countries (%)
Fine	9.6	10.2
Prison sentence	22.4	29.1
Community service or other alternatives to prison	46.5	45.0
Conditional discharge	3.6	5.8
Other sentence	5.4	4.3

Concluding remarks

Although it is possible to reason in aggregate terms for different types of crime, it can be stated, on the basis of the results of this research, that the variables which most frequently produce a greater risk of becoming a victim are the following: residence in a southern region or on an island; in a large city; in a high status residential area; high income and frequent evening outings. This is the characteristic profile of an affluent victim who is logically more exposed to the type of microcrime aimed at producing income.

This victim profile confirms the theory of criminal opportunities which holds that the risk of becoming a victim is dependent on the supply of affluence produced in a certain sense by the potential victim. The greater the opportunities, the more numerous the victims. This figure can be decreased, however, by the intervention of the prevention variable. In fact, greater use is made of private prevention by people with a high income, a university-level education, and who live in large cities.

A further aspect is the geographical variable, in other words the concentration of victims of certain crimes in southern areas, where there are wider inequalities in the distribution of income and where a greater demand for crime is ascertained by the criminal statistics. In fact, from a comparison of the percentage of crimes reported in terms of the offender's place of birth and the place where the crime was committed, in the criminal statistics for various years it is noted that the southern regions show a negative balance and the northern regions a positive balance. In other words, the number of people born in the southern regions who are involved in crime is greater than the number of crimes committed in those regions, while the number of people born in the northern regions who turn to crime is lower than the number of crimes committed there. This figure reflects the effects of migratory flows in terms of crime.

The geographical variable exercises a contradictory effect on the risk of becoming a victim, and is an aspect that needs further examination if we are to understand whether inequalities in income, which are more pronounced in the

southern regions, generate an increased risk of becoming a victim. In fact, the difference between the income (high) of the victims and hence the opportunities for creating victims, and the income (low) of potential criminals, resulting in an increased demand for crime, could be the factor which increases the opportunities for creating victims of such crimes as theft of cars, car parts, motorcycles, and robbery, in southern Italy and the islands.

In conclusion, however, we can observe that variations in the real number of victims are produced by the interweaving of the opportunity (supply of potential victims) and the demand for crime (demand for potential victims), although it is difficult to distinguish which of the two components is greater. A subsequent analysis of the data collected during this research will allow clearer answers to be given to this question.

FIGURES

Figure 1: Victims of theft of car. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

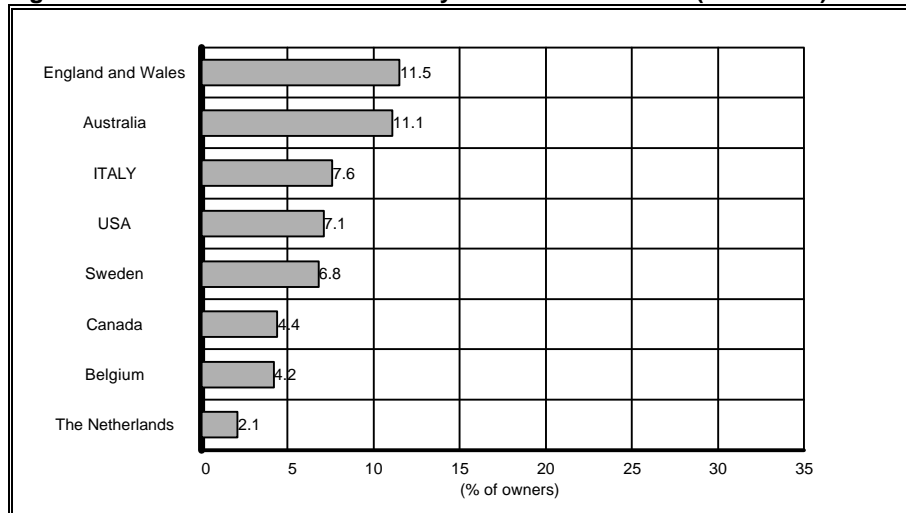


Figure 2: Victims of theft from car. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

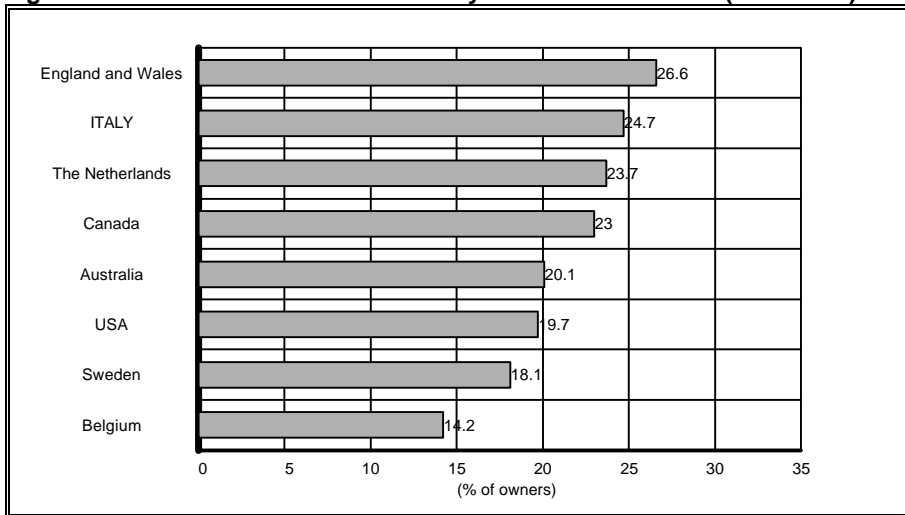


Figure 3: Victims of theft of motorcycle. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

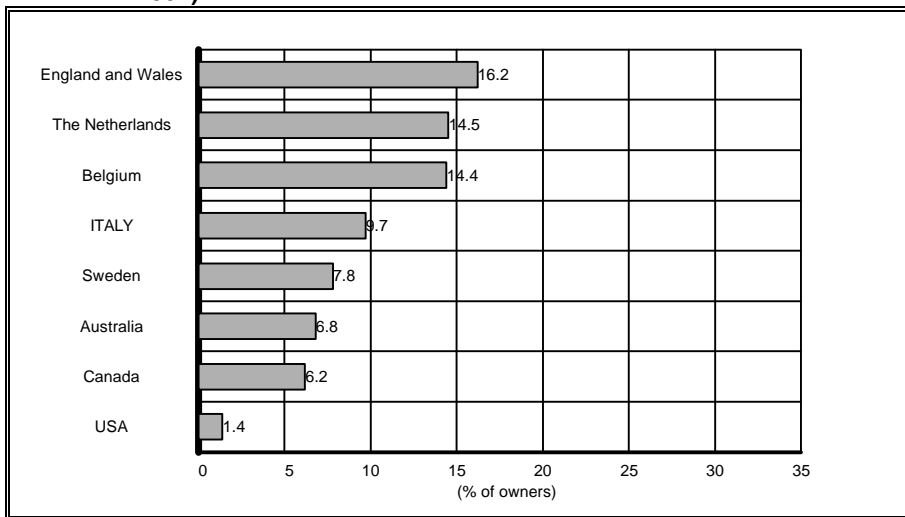


Figure 4: Victims of theft of bicycle. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

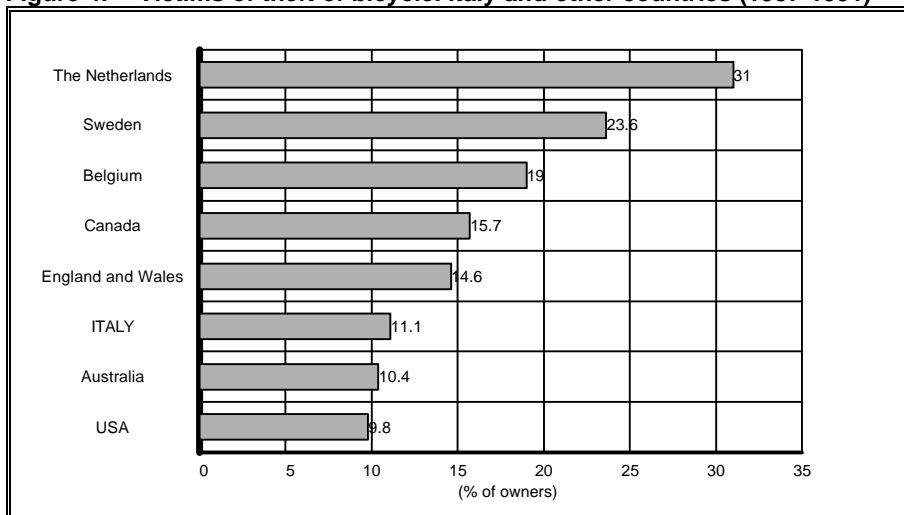


Figure 5: Victims of car vandalism. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

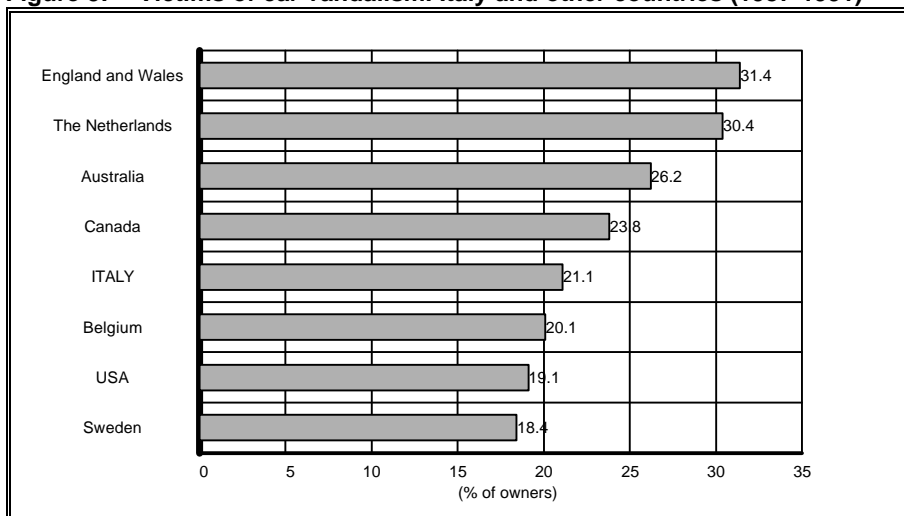


Figure 6: Victims of burglary with entry. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

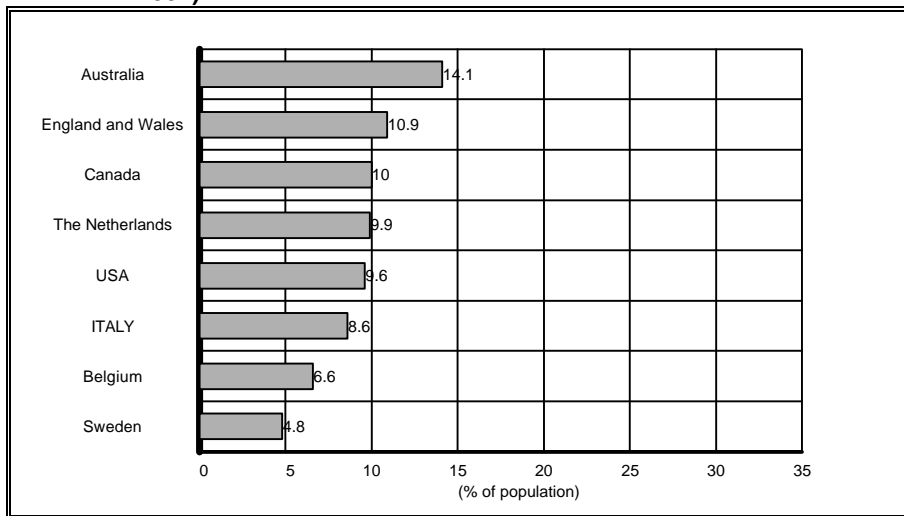


Figure 7: Victims of attempted burglary. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

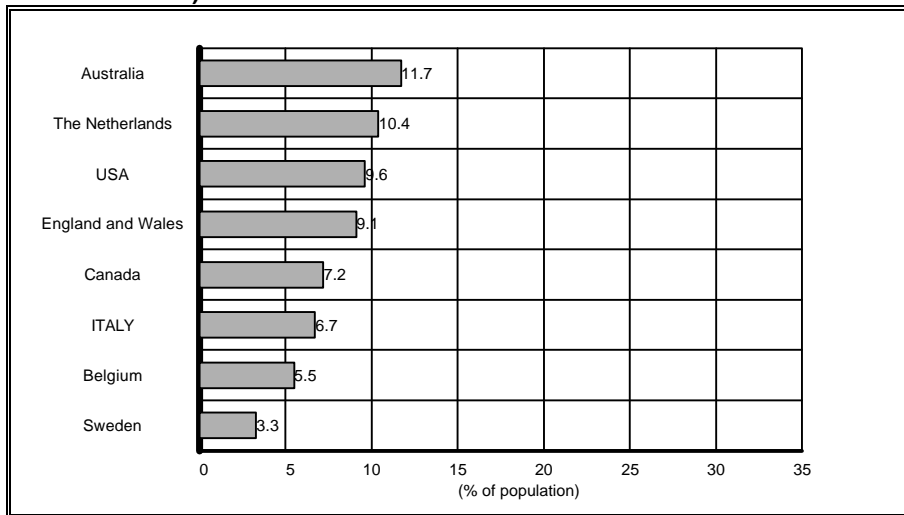


Figure 8: Victims of robbery. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

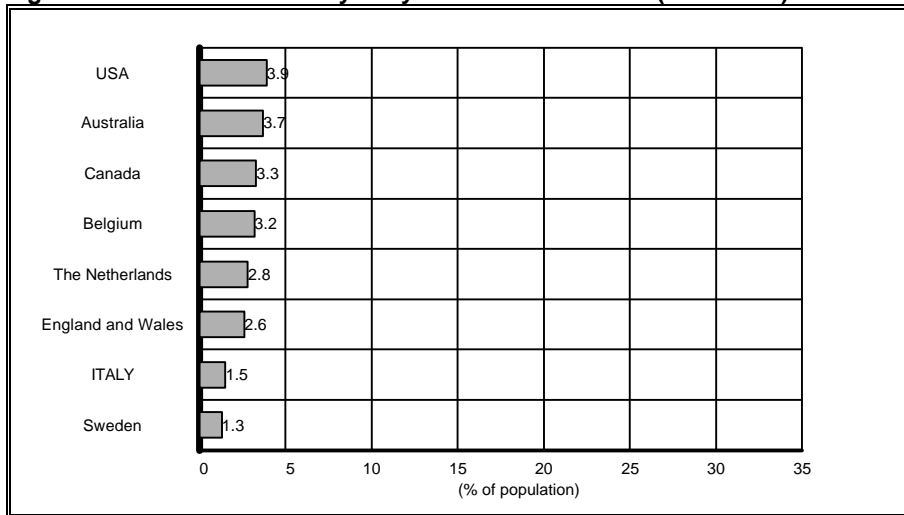


Figure 9: Victims of personal theft and pickpocketing. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

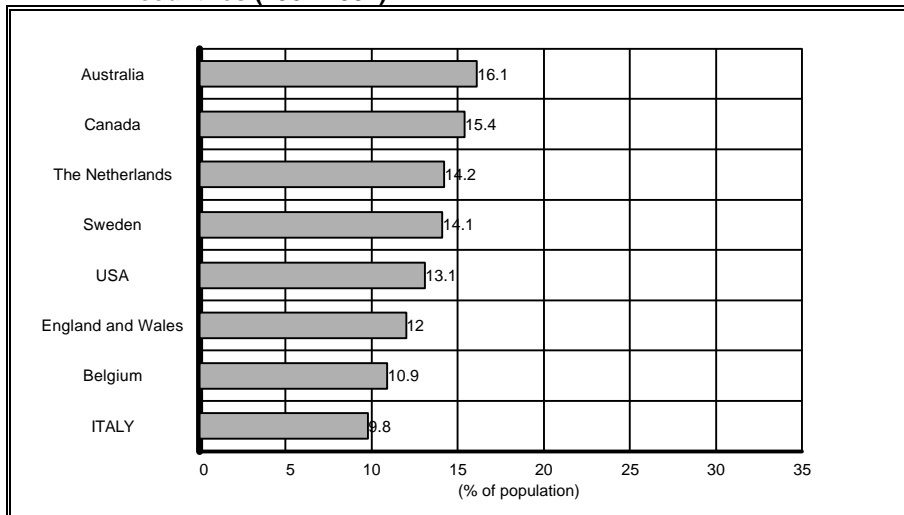


Figure 10: Women victims of sexual incidents. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

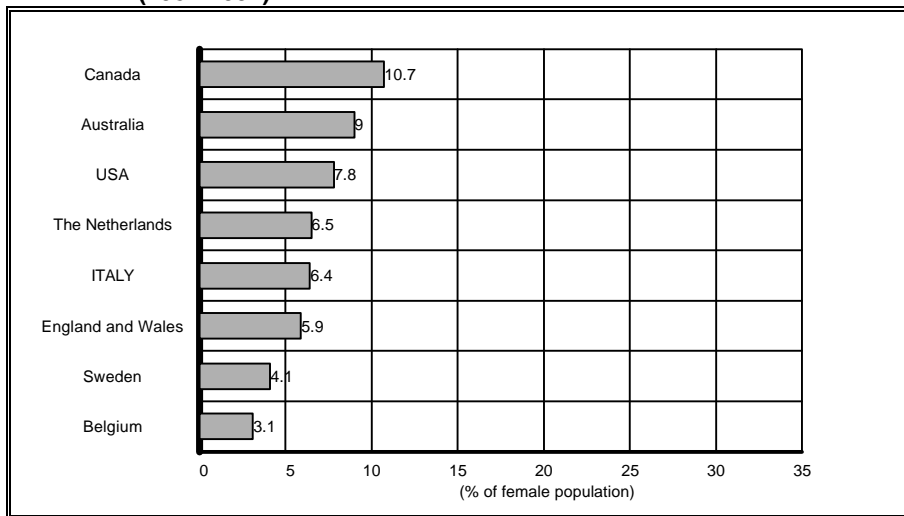


Figure 11: Victims of assaults. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

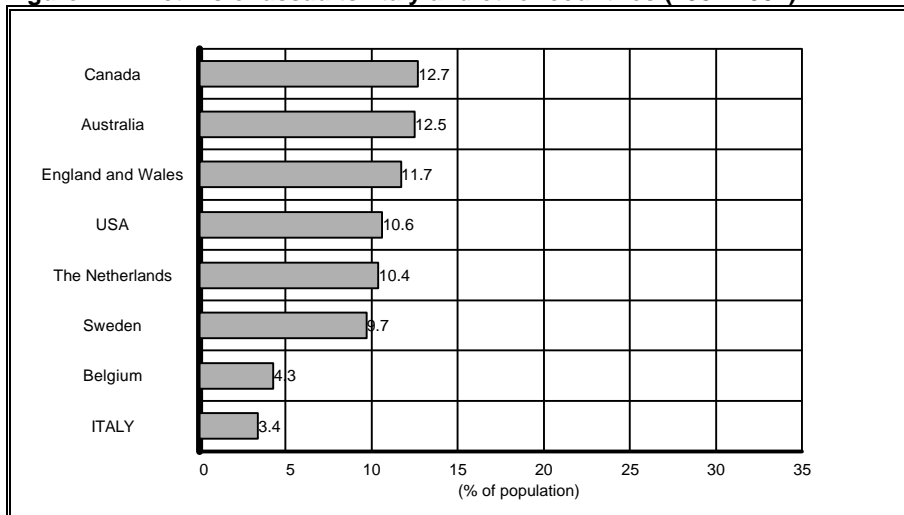


Figure 12: Victims of fraud. Italy and other countries (1987-1991)

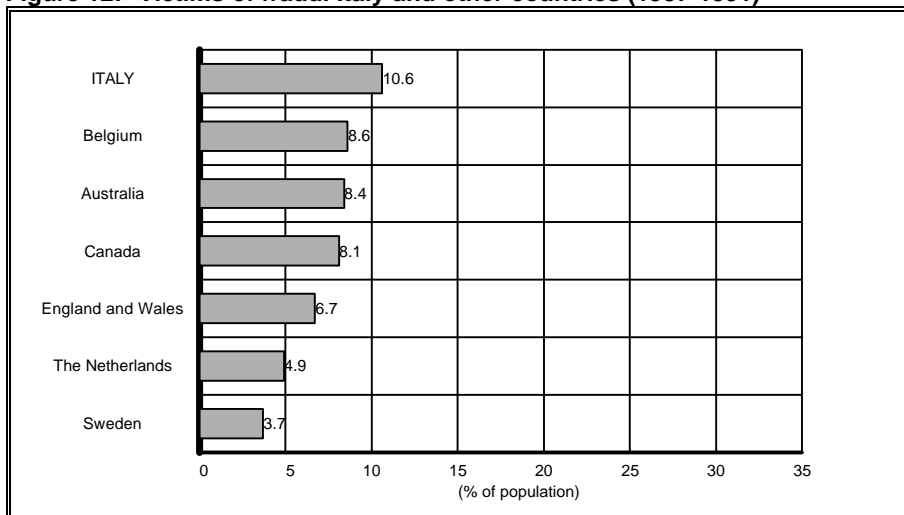


Figure 13: Reported cases of theft of car. Italy and other countries (1991)

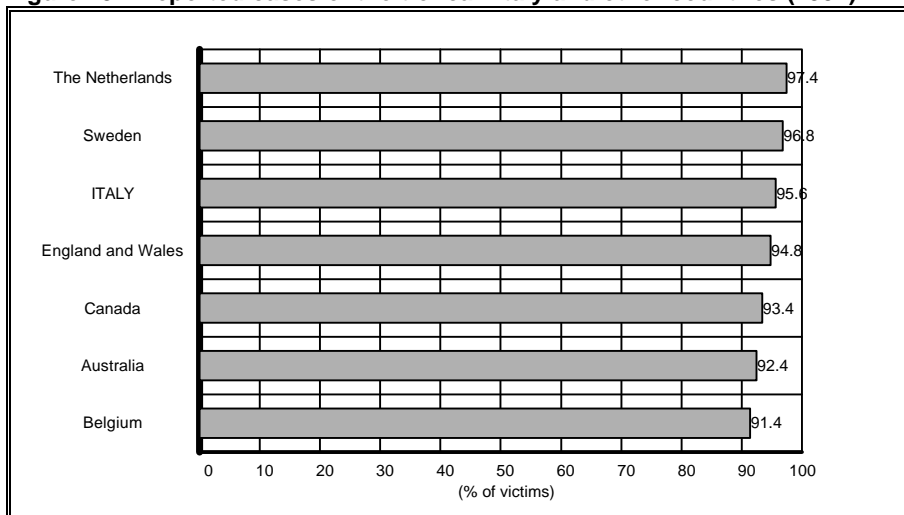


Figure 14: Reported cases of theft from car. Italy and other countries (1991)

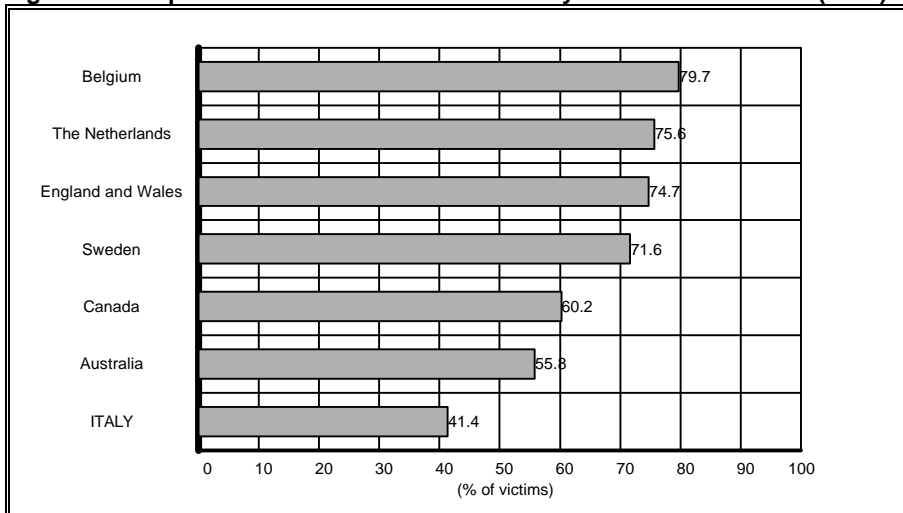


Figure 15: Reported cases of motorcycle theft. Italy and other countries (1991)

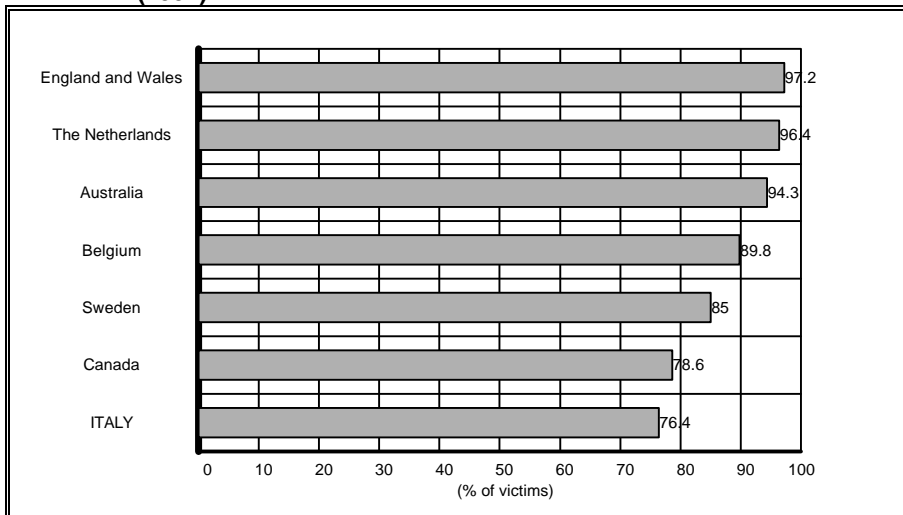


Figure 16: Reported cases of bicycle theft. Italy and other countries (1991)

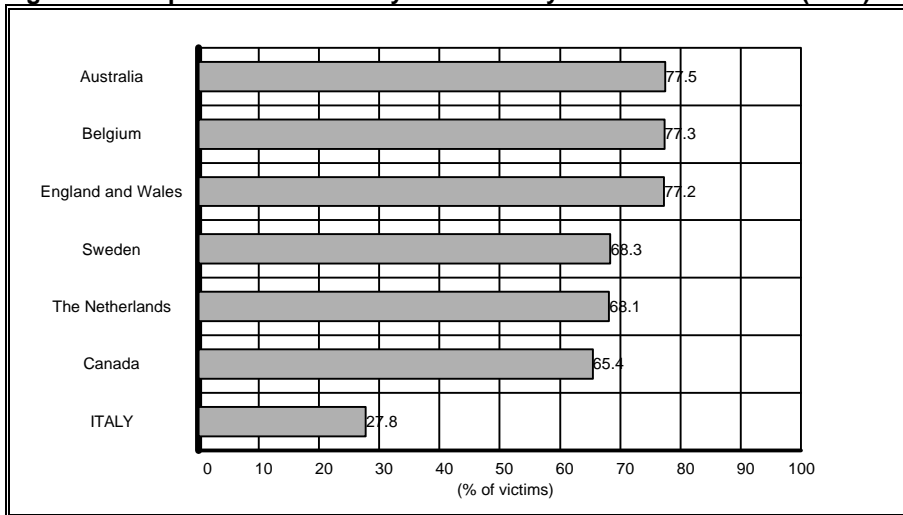


Figure 17: Reported acts of car vandalism. Italy and other countries (1991)

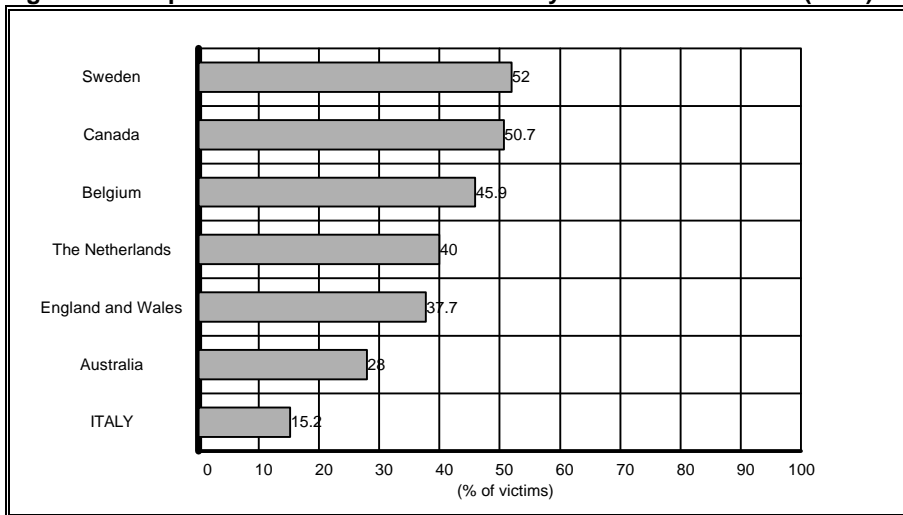


Figure 18: Reported cases of burglary with entry. Italy and other countries (1991)

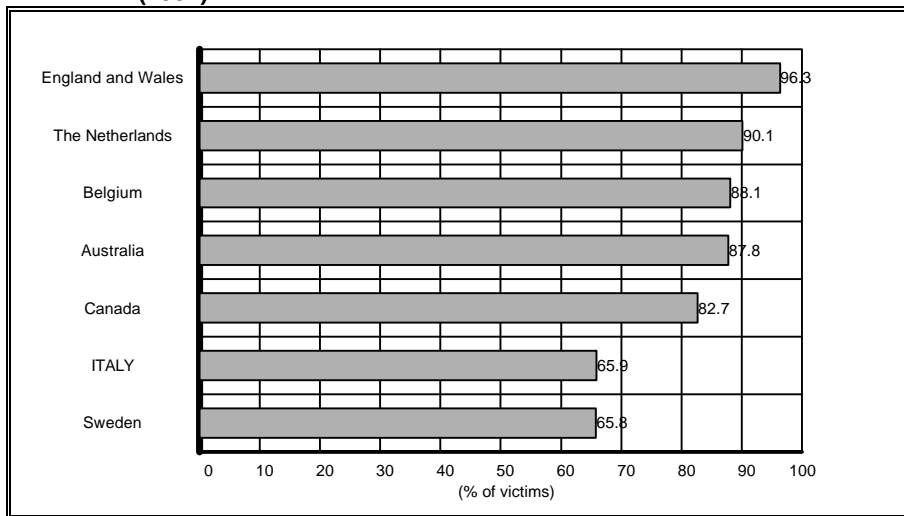


Figure 19: Reported cases of attempted burglary. Italy and other countries (1991)

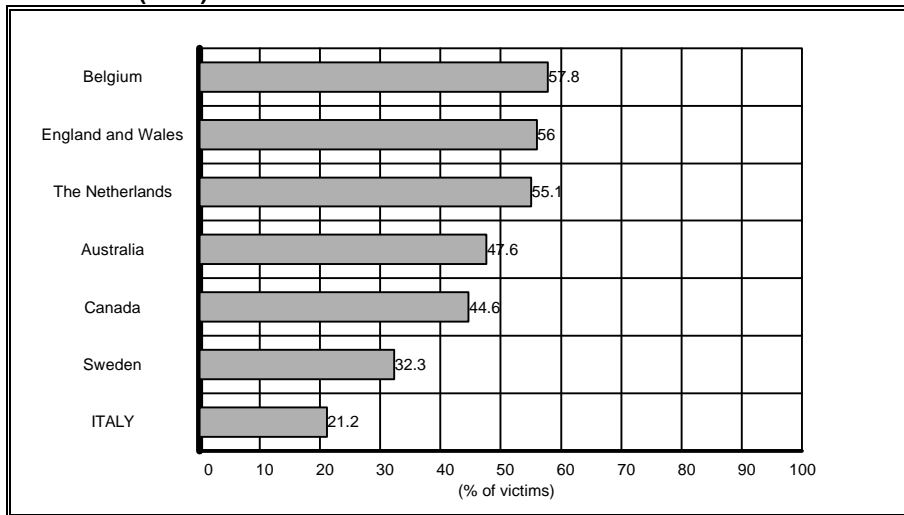


Figure 20: Reported cases of robbery. Italy and other countries (1991)

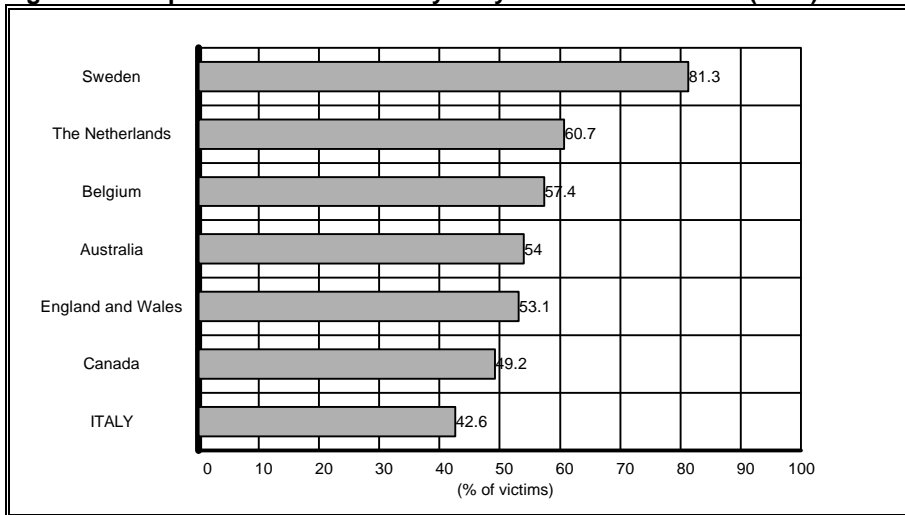


Figure 21: Reported cases of personal theft and pickpocketing. Italy and other countries (1991)

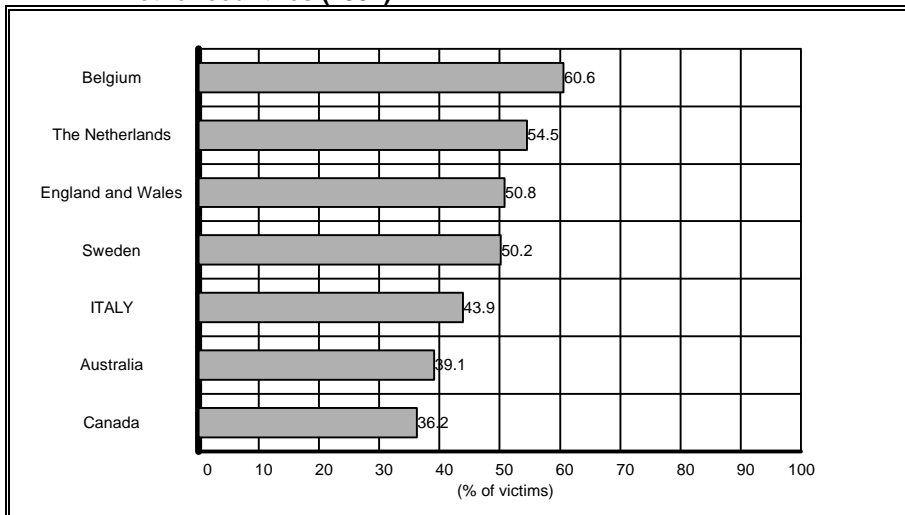


Figure 22: Reported cases of sexual incidents against women. Italy and other countries (1991)

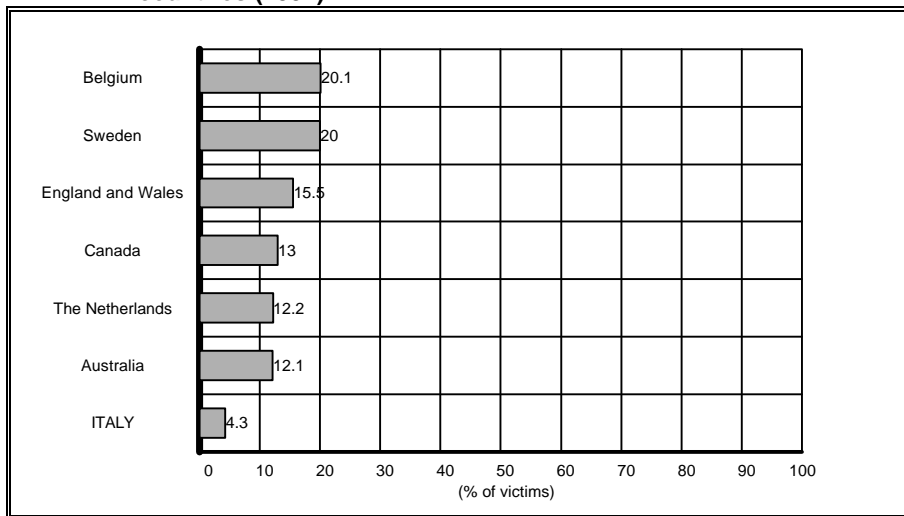


Figure 23: Reported cases of assaults. Italy and other countries (1991)

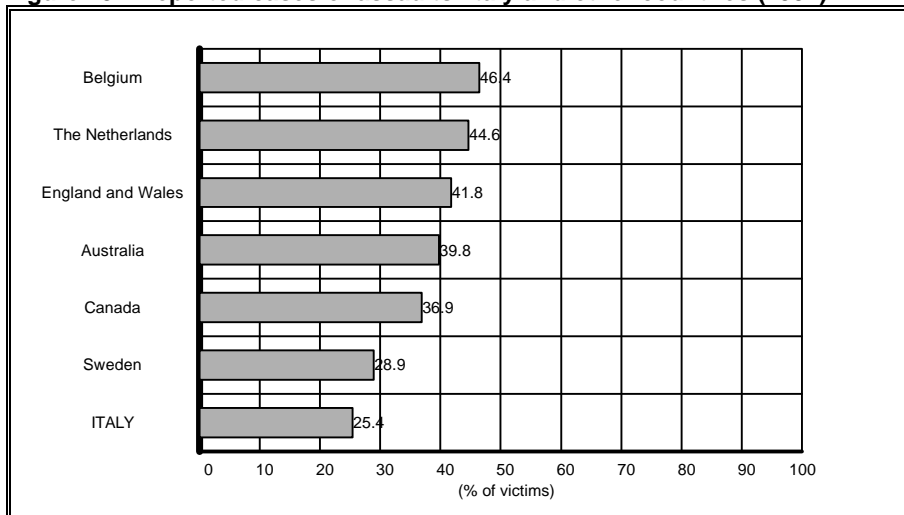


Figure 24: Reported cases of fraud. Italy and other countries (1991)

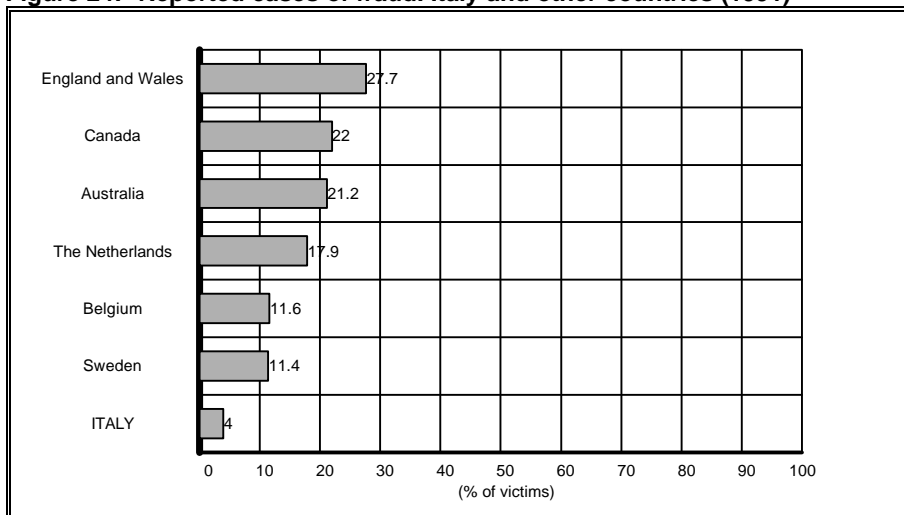


Figure 25: Victimization risk for car theft. Italy (1987-1991)

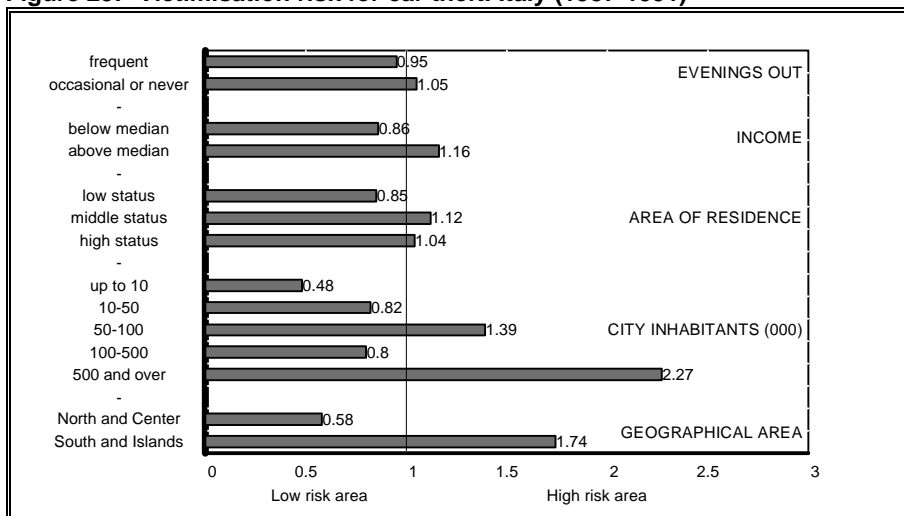


Figure 26: Victimisation risk for theft from car. Italy (1987-1991)

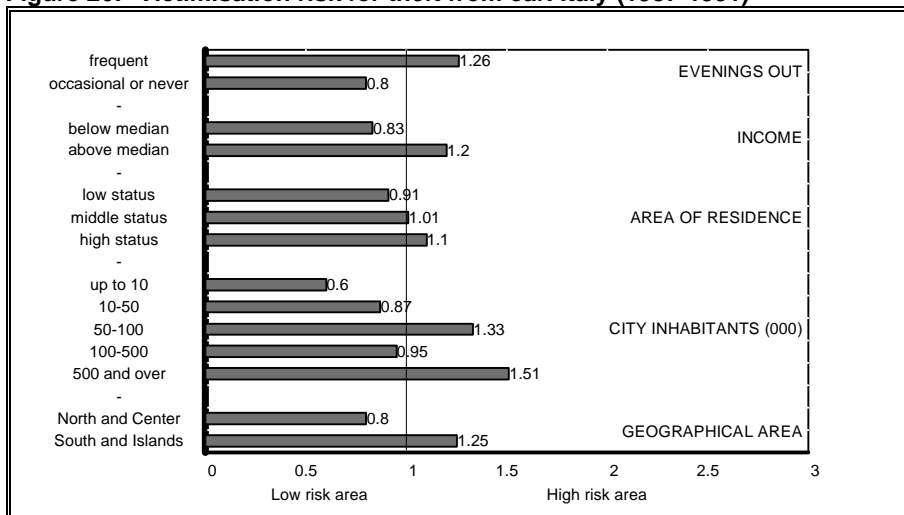


Figure 27: Victimisation risk for theft of motorcycle. Italy (1987-1991)

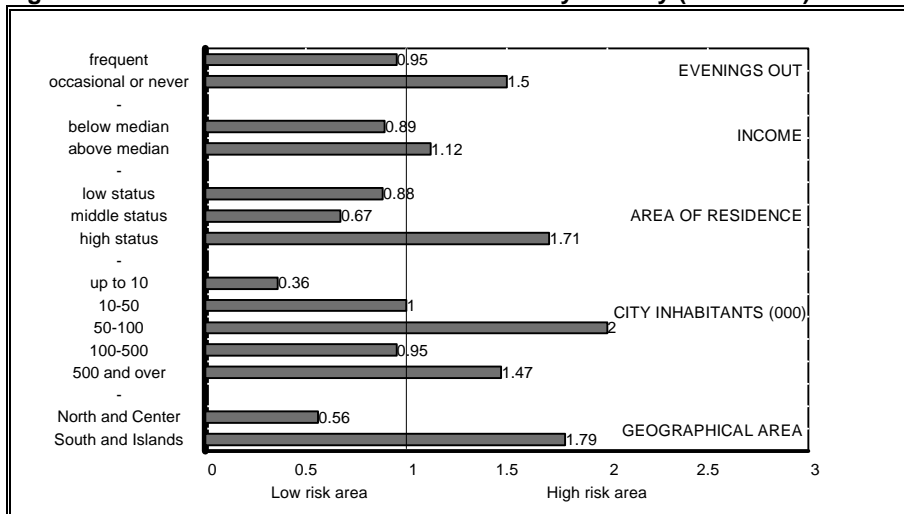


Figure 28: Victimisation risk for theft of bicycle. Italy (1987-1991)

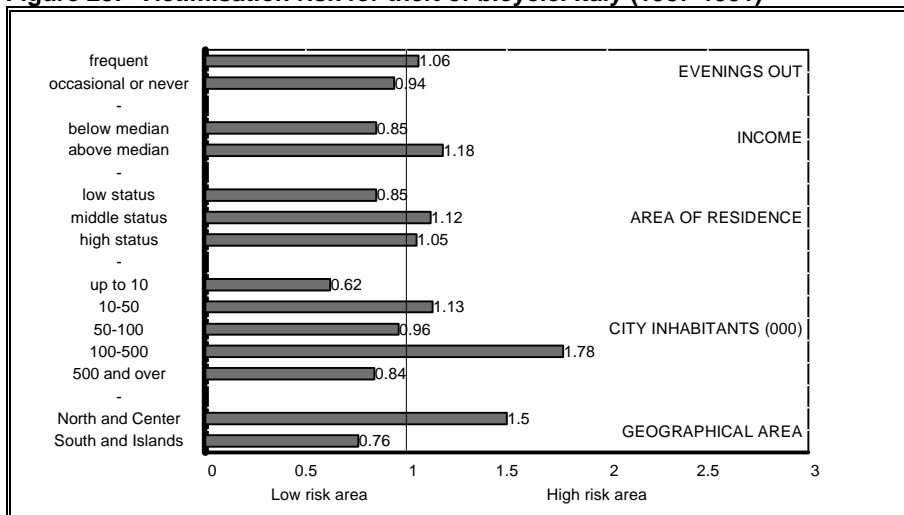


Figure 29: Victimisation risk for acts of vandalism. Italy (1987-1991)

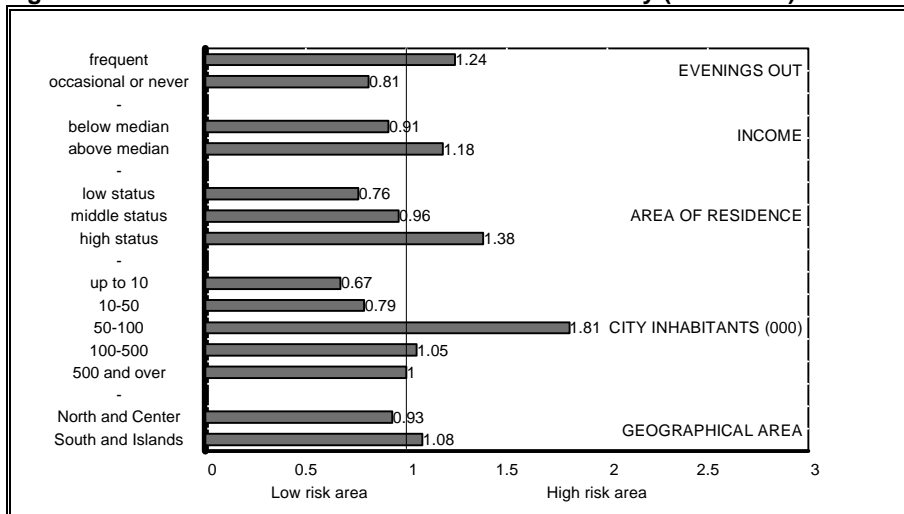


Figure 30: Victimisation risk for burglary with entry. Italy (1987-1991)

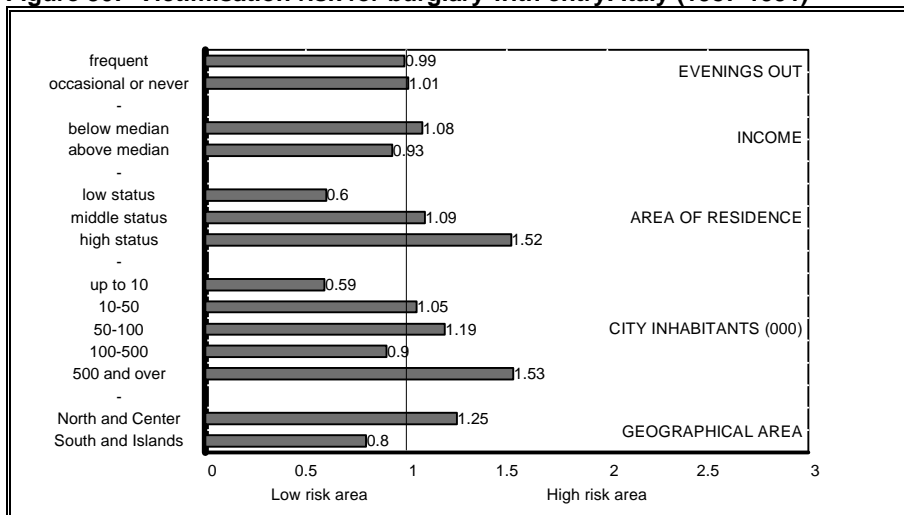


Figure 31: Victimisation risk for attempted burglary. Italy (1987-1991)

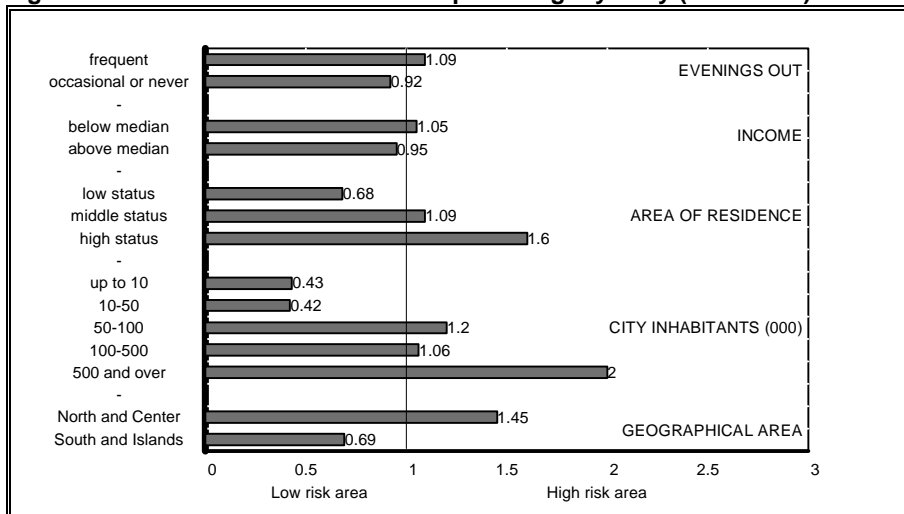


Figure 32: Victimisation risk for robbery. Italy (1987-1991)

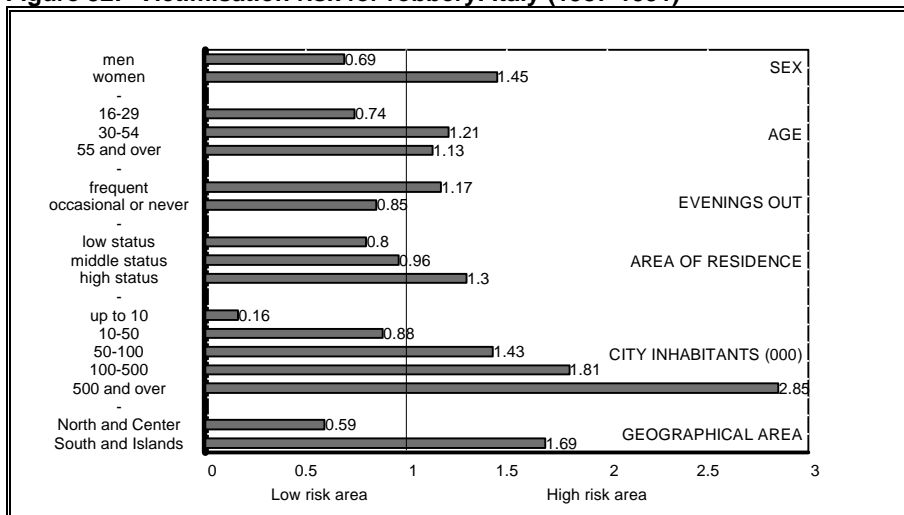


Figure 33: Victimisation risk for personal theft and pickpocketing. Italy (1987-1991)

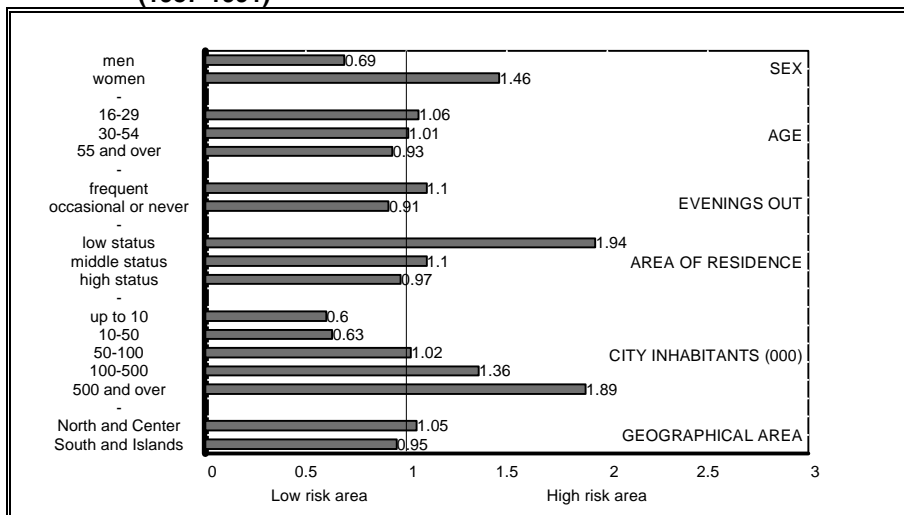


Figure 34: Victimisation risk for sexual incidents - women only. Italy (1987-1991)

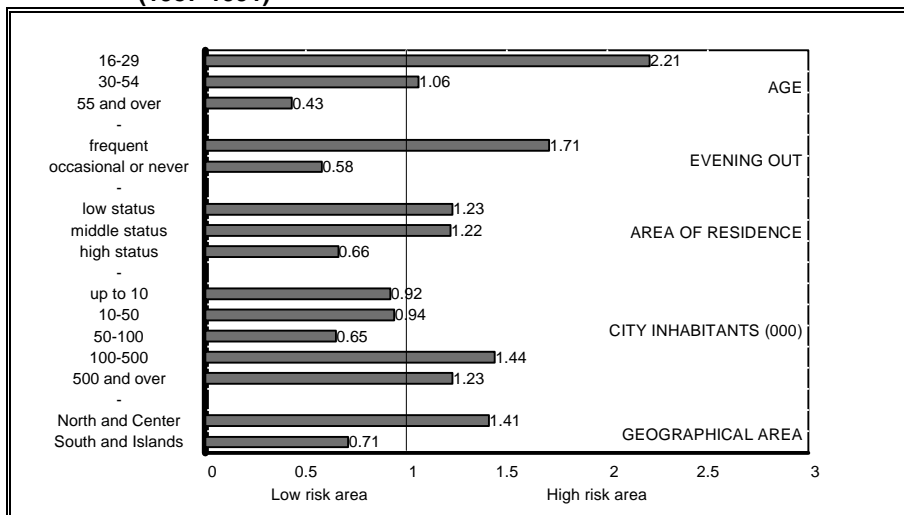


Figure 35: Victimisation risk for assaults. Italy (1987-1991)

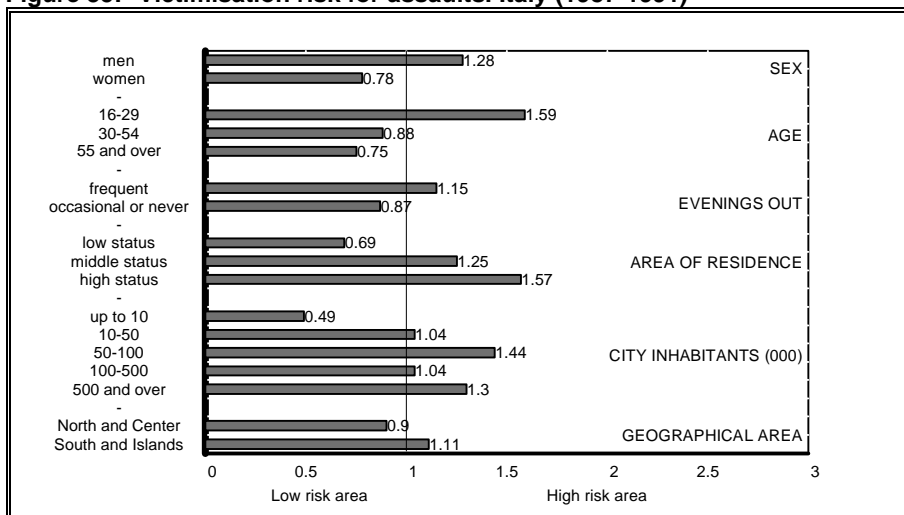


Figure 36: Victimisation risk for fraud. Italy (1987-1991)

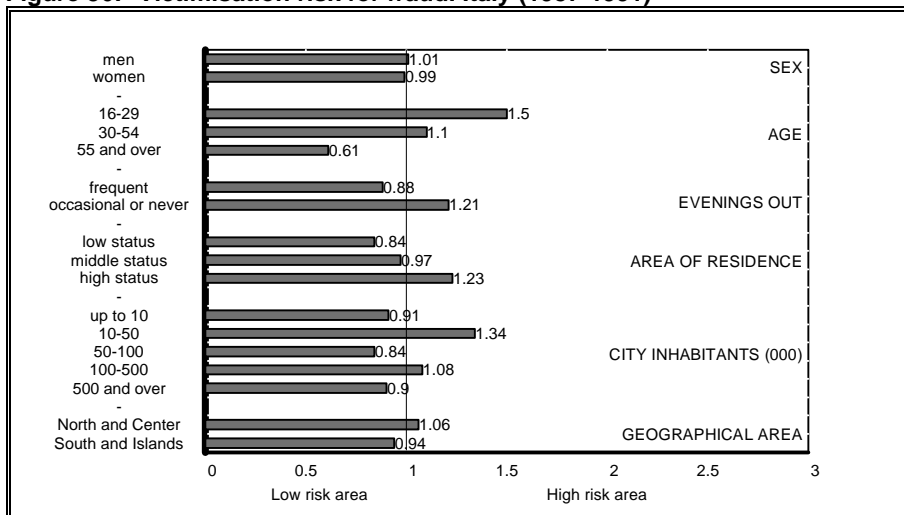


Figure 37: The "dark" figure of crime - reported and unreported cases according to type of offence (last incident). Italy (%)

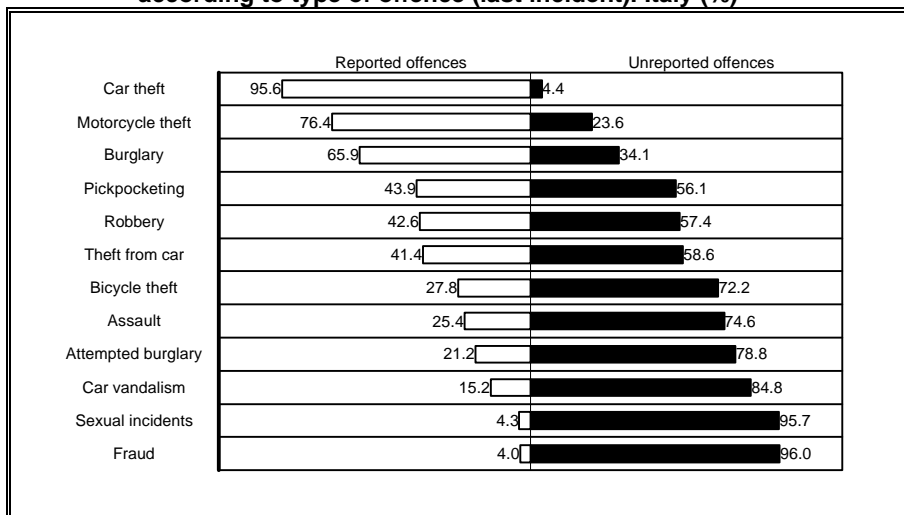


Figure 38: Car theft - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

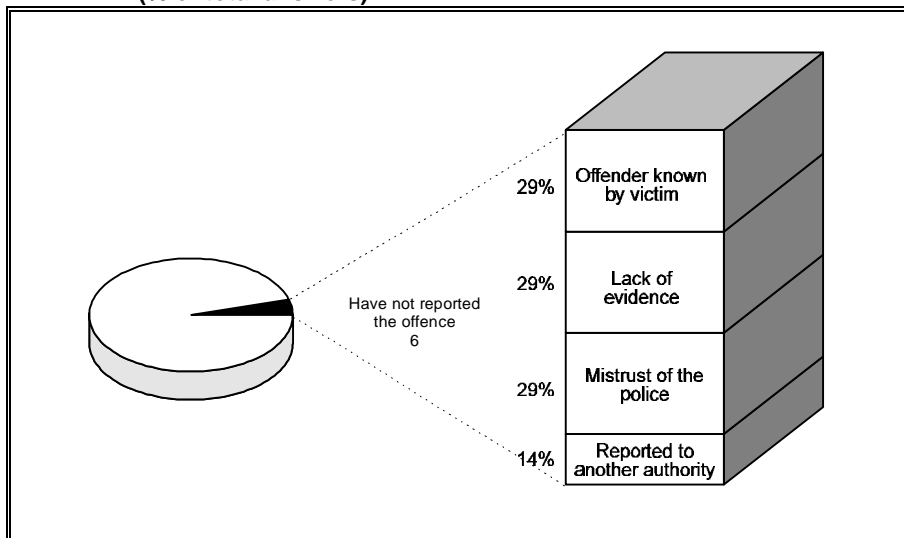


Figure 39: Theft from car - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

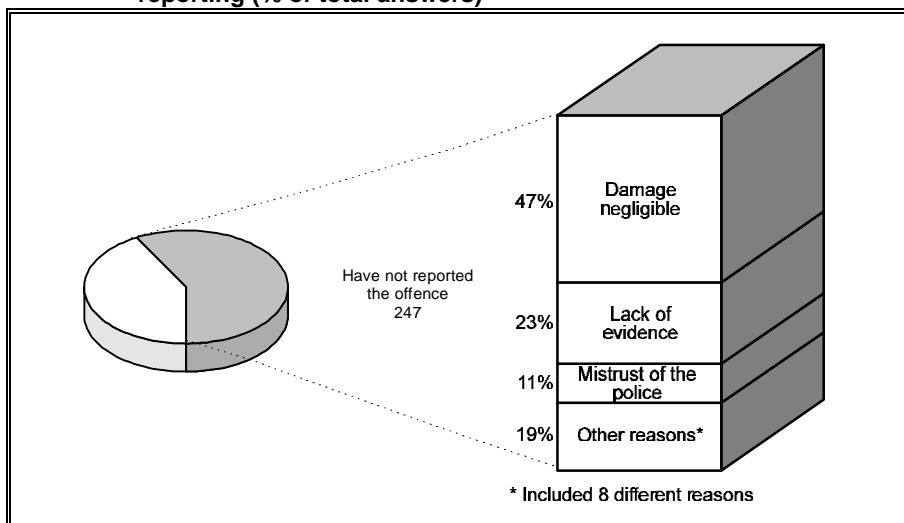


Figure 40: Car vandalism - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

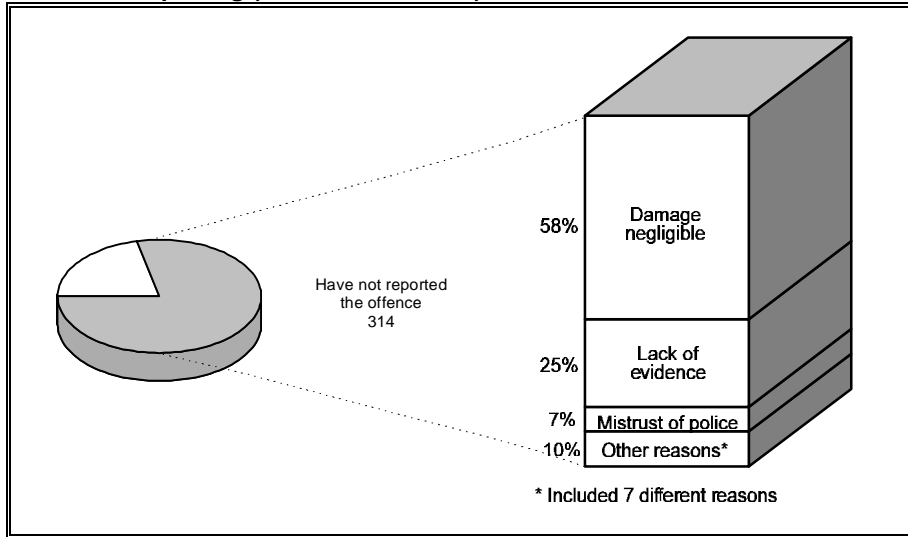


Figure 41: Motorcycle theft - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

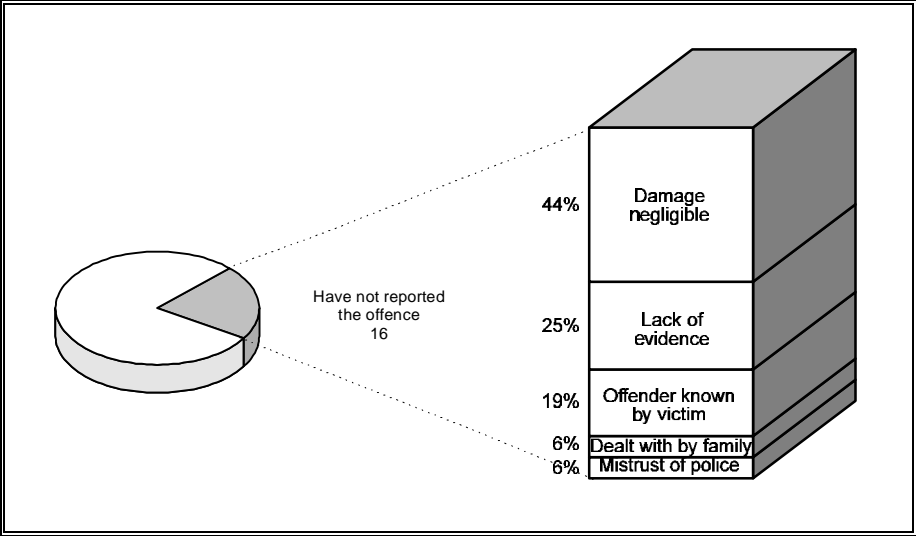


Figure 42: Bicycle theft - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

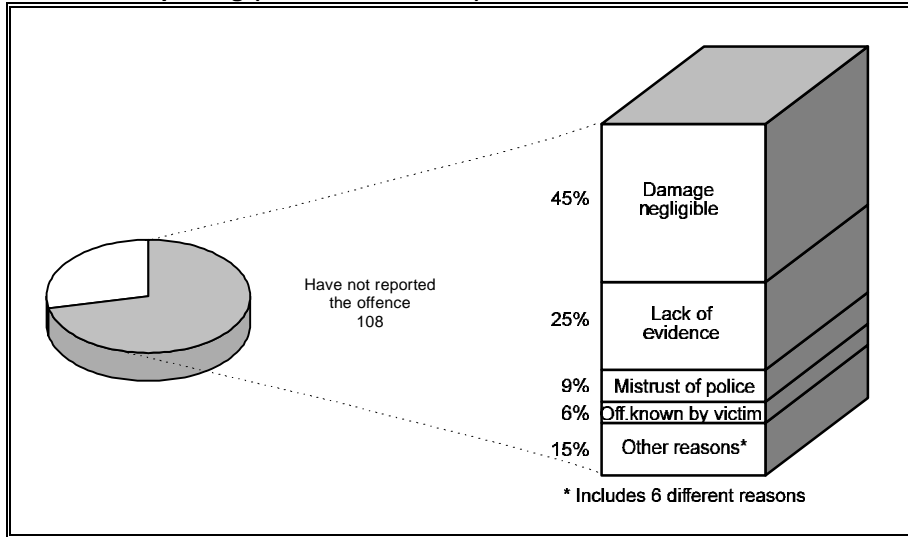


Figure 43: Burglary - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

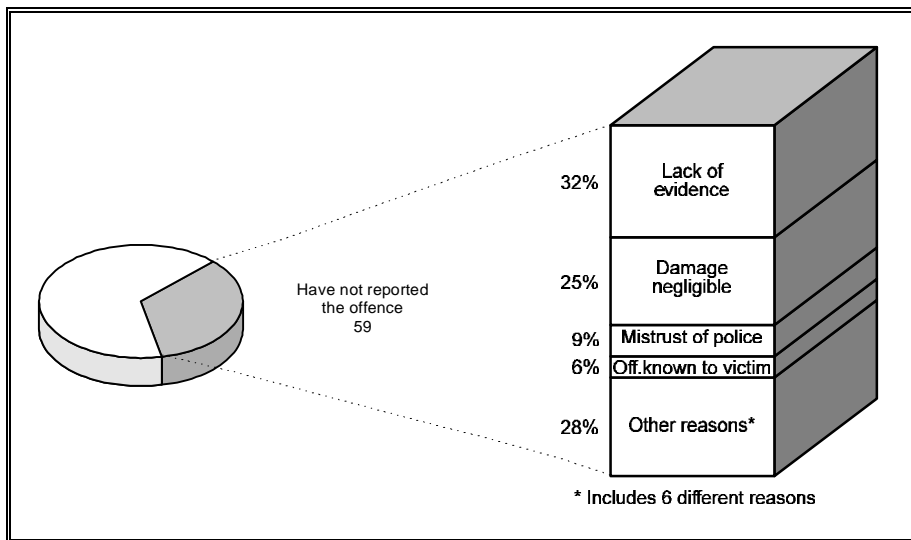


Figure 44: Attempted burglary - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

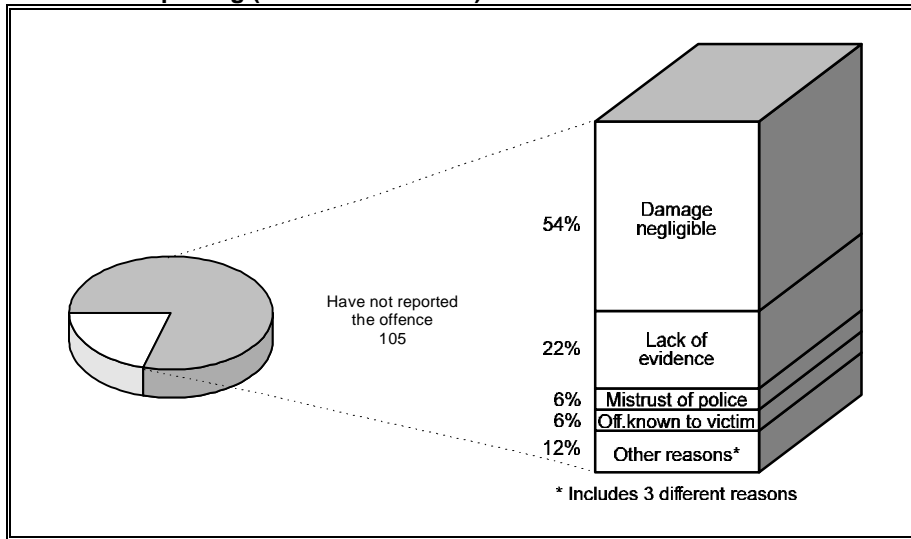


Figure 45: Robbery - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

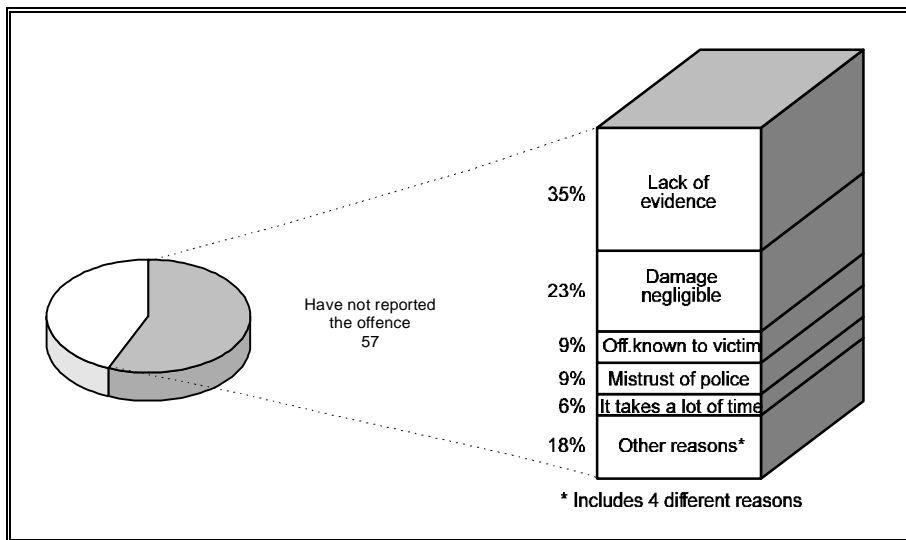


Figure 46: Pickpocketing - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

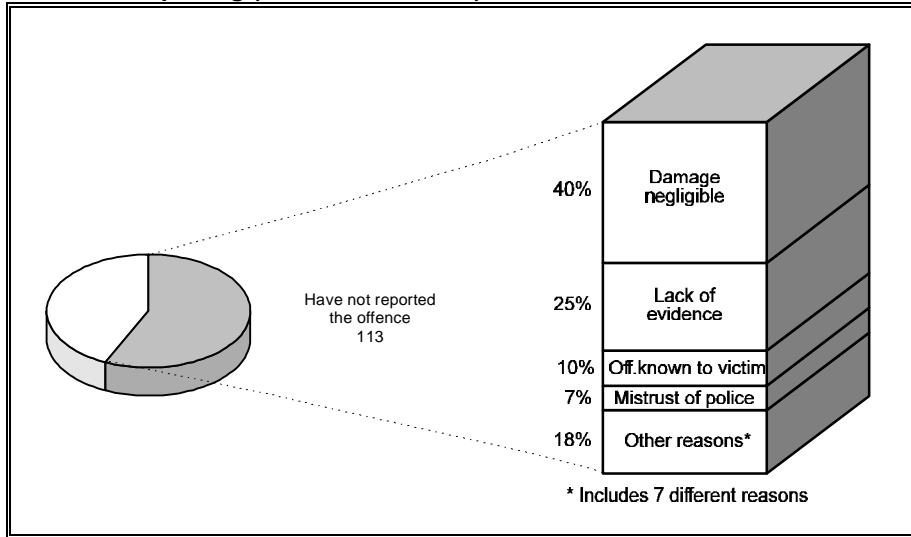


Figure 47: Women victims of sexual incidents - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)

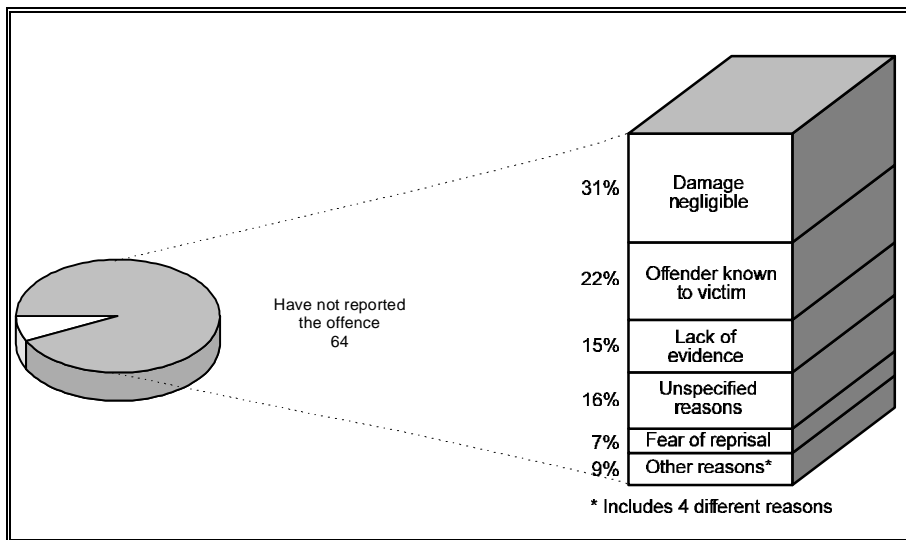
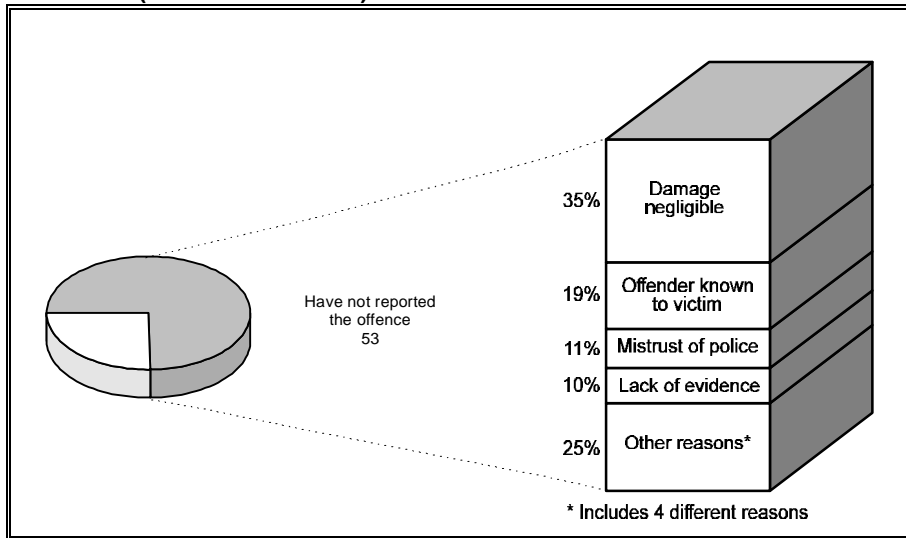


Figure 48: Assaults - unreported cases (a.v.) and reasons for not reporting (% of total answers)



PART TWO

Research and Policy Issues

Research Issues

