

GENERAL REPORT

Surveying Crime in the Global Village: Assumptions, Experiences and Ultimate Goals

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This report will not try to summarise the presentations and ensuing discussions but instead make a few observations about some of the Conference's main themes. We firstly will make some comments about the background of the survey and about its methodology. Subsequently we will discuss some of its key results and their theoretical and policy implications.

Background

Traditionally, court statistics and police statistics were the main sources of information about the state of crime. Quetelet's classical work on the social correlates of crime was largely based on the analysis of court statistics. In the twentieth century police forces across the western world started to collect statistics of crimes known to the police. These statistics opened new avenues for comparative analyses of local and national crime rates. Quite rapidly, however, old and new official statistics became discredited as sources of comparative information about crime. Both the legal definitions reporting patterns of the public and the recording practices of the police were found to vary greatly over time and space. Among criminologists a broad consensus emerged that "police figures" could not be used for comparative purposes. Since no alternative measures were available, comparative criminology got into a rut. In spite of improved opportunities for international communication, the criminology of the sixties, seventies and eighties seemed more parochial than that of the beginning of the century when, for instance, W. Bonger published his internationally oriented study of economic conditions and crime. Although some researchers continued to try and exploit police statistics to pursue questions of theory, they more often than not fell over their apologies for the data. Certainly, the work done had a minimal impact on policy-makers.

In the absence of credible indicators, public opinion is informed about crime more by crime reporters than by criminologists. Consequently, the debate about national crime problems in most countries is determined by media hype about recently committed heinous crimes rather than by a rational analysis of crime as a social phenomenon. Partly for this reason policy discourse is often heavily charged with emotion. Rising crime rates can also easily be politically exploited, since exaggerated claims cannot be refuted authoritatively. Credible, comparative measures of crime are indispensable for building a political platform for a more rational crime policy.

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According to opinion polls urban crime is amongst the most pressing concerns of the public in many industrialised countries. In many parts of the world the problems of internal security are presently viewed as more serious than those of the economy or of international affairs. Against this background it is even more striking that criminologists are unable to answer the straightforward question of policy-makers as to how their countries' crime rates compare with those of others. Many criminologists do not seem to bother. And, of course, much valuable criminological work can be done within a strictly national setting. Studies on "labelling" and on the effectiveness of penal sanctions can be carried out nationally. But for policy purposes some basic knowledge about the relative state of crime in one's country seems essential. It is hard to conceive of an influential policy adviser on economic affairs who denies any knowledge of his country's performance in an international perspective. Knowledge of international standards and trends has undoubtedly added to the credibility of economists as policy advisers. Perhaps the relatively small policy impact of the criminological community in many countries³ is not totally unrelated to its incapacity to assess national crime rates in a comparative perspective.

The absence of comparative crime data cannot be remedied by a harmonisation of police statistics about registered crime. Such a harmonisation would require a measure of standardisation of legal definitions and police practices across countries which is quite unrealistic. The official legal definitions of even the most common categories of crime defy standardisation. Even the fairly harmonised Scandinavian countries, for example, have given up on the standardisation of their police statistics. What is obviously needed is an alternative count of crime independent of the official agencies and their idiosyncratic legal definitions.

Briefly, the ultimate goal of the International Crime (Victim) Survey (ICS)⁴ is to provide such a measure. If the ICS succeeds, its results may help to improve the standing of criminology, both academically and within the political and bureaucratic community.

Methodological issues

The assumption of universality

The single most important question raised about the methodology of the ICS is whether the public's non-legal concepts of crime are sufficiently universal to allow a cross-cultural application. In the present climate of postmodern relativism such universality cannot be uncritically assumed⁵. The realities of crime, even more than other social realities, are socially constructed and, therefore, probably defined by a variety of culture-bound concepts. The question, then, is whether there is a kernel of common concepts in the public's definitions of crime, as assumed for example by

³ Petersilia, J. (1991) "Policy relevance and the future of criminology: the American Society of Criminology, 1990 Presidential Address" *Criminology* 29,1:1-15.

⁴ See Editors' Introductory Notes.

⁵ Cohen, S. (1990) *Intellectual skepticism and political commitment: the case of radical criminology*, Strichting W.A. Bongers-Lezingen, Amsterdam.

Newman and Braithwaite⁶, or not. Rather than to philosophize about this "universality assumption", we have put it to an empirical test by actually designing and piloting a questionnaire covering the common element in crime experiences of the public in all corners of the industrialised world. The first test of this initiative was whether researchers from a variety of Western countries could agree on the contents of a common questionnaire, to be translated and used in their own language. Although drafting sessions were long and exhausting, we did not come across vital concepts of crime in the English or Dutch language which could not be transposed into other national cultures. The bulk of conventional crimes to which ordinary citizens are exposed, appears to be defined fairly universally across Western cultures. In fact, insiders may have noticed that the resulting questionnaire bears the signs of those previously used in the USA, the Netherlands, the UK, Switzerland, France and Finland among others. The ICS questionnaire can fairly be described as the common denominator of the existing national crime survey questionnaires used in Western countries. This feature by itself testifies to the existence of a fairly large measure of communality in the public's experiences of ordinary crimes.

The ICS questionnaire was carefully piloted in several languages and eventually applied across the industrialised world in 1989. Interviewers were closely monitored and instructed to report any problems with questions not readily understood by the respondents. The experiences of the data collection have not brought to the surface any major problems of interpretation of the questionnaire's core items. In no countries did particular concepts prove to be incomprehensible to the interviewers or respondents. Neither did subsequent data analysis reveal any major inconsistencies suggesting serious problems of interpretation. The core questions of the 1988 survey could be retained for the second sweep of the survey with only some minor modifications.

We cannot, of course, rule out the possibility that some questions were interpreted somewhat differently across countries. The questions about sexual incidents in particular may have been affected by culture-bound perceptions and sensitivities. By and large, however, the collective experience of some twenty dedicated criminologists in successfully completing the survey in their own countries goes some way to confirming our basic assumption that certain concepts of crime are fairly universal.

In the first sweep the ICS was carried out in developed countries only. For the sake of curiosity one small pilot study was carried out in Indonesia. Somewhat to our surprise, the national co-ordinator did not meet with any insolvable problems with the ICS instruments in his home town, Surabaya, although some adjustments had to be made. This experience raised the question whether the prevailing skepticism about the applicability of Western questionnaires in developing countries was fully justified. Perhaps the image of developing countries in social science circles is unduly influenced by anthropological studies of social life in remote villages. In reality large parts of the population in developing countries live in "megacities". Just as elsewhere, life in such urban environments is characterised by

⁶ Newman, G.R. (1976) *Comparative deviance*, Elsevier, New York; Braithwaite, J. (1989) "The state of criminology: theoretical decay of renaissance" *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 22:129-135, September.

a high level of anonymity and by stark contrasts between the rich and poor. In addition, the citizens of these cities are exposed to the same daily television menu of American soap operas and video clips as their counterparts in North America and Europe. Urban dwellers across the world may nowadays suffer from quite similar social problems and may perceive them similarly too⁷. The concepts of vehicle theft, robbery, burglary and assault may indeed be shared by those in all urban centres of the world.

In the preparatory phase of the second sweep, experts from several developing countries joined our drafting sessions. It proved feasible to preserve most of the core questions of the survey. Although the application of the ICS in developing countries is still at an experimental stage, the experiences so far have been encouraging. Perhaps, then, there is even globally much more universality in the public's key moral concepts than in the legal definitions of governments. Perhaps crime in the global village has indeed to some extent become a fairly universal phenomenon.

Other issues

During the Conference several specific questions were raised about the accuracy and comparability of the ICS crime estimates. A plea was made for the construction of the ICS's "error structure". Some elements of the error structure will hopefully be remedied in future sweeps of the survey. In many areas, such as sampling and the handling of refusals, there is definitely scope for further improvement. Other elements of the error structure of the ICS will prove to be intrinsic to a survey of this type. Considerations of costs will preclude the introduction of desirable improvements such as the use of larger samples and of bounded interviews. A list of specific caveats will have to become part of the survey users' instructions.

At this point three aspects of the survey's methodology that are not always duly acknowledged should be stressed. According to Killias et al.⁸, the accuracy of crime survey data is less dependent on the methods of interviewing than on the quality of the interviewees themselves. This observation is probably true in many other respects as well. A survey's methodological quality is determined by factors such as sampling design, the design of the questionnaire and the method of data collection. However, at the end of the day much depends on the quality of the human interactions which make up the actual interviewing. Interviewers need to possess the intellectual and social skills and, most important of all, the determination to get sincere and accurate answers from their respondents. The interviewers' job motivation may well be the most important success factor of crime surveys generally. This human factor in crime surveying needs more attention than is usually given in textbooks. The control of the human factor in data collecting is one of the essential responsibilities of the national co-ordinators of the surveys. In future

⁷ Bottoms, A.E. (1992) "Concluding reflections" in Heather, S. and J. Vernon (eds.) *International trends in crime: East meets West*, pp. 163-179, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

⁸ Killias, M. et al. (1987) "Nouvelles perspectives methodologiques en matière de sondages de victimisation l'expérience de enquêtes Suisses" *Deviance et société* II, 3: 311-330.

work the selection, briefing and monitoring of interviewers needs to be given even greater attention. Without the dedicated co-operation of our national partners the methodological integrity of the ICS will be at stake.

The second point deals with the dynamic character of surveying crime. Over the years social and technological changes will permanently change the contingencies of data collection. For example, in many countries the high levels of fear of crime constitute a serious problem for face-to-face interviewing. Interviewers are unwilling to enter dangerous neighbourhoods in the evening and some respondents are unwilling to open the door to strangers. On the other hand, state-of-the-art computer technology opens a range of new possibilities. Since the researchers' challenges and tools are constantly changing, the idea of a perfect methodology is a mirage. The methodology of crime surveys will need to be permanently monitored and modified. Surveying crime cross-nationally will never become a technical affair to be left safely in the hands of a commercial polling agency. A project like the ICS needs methodological maintenance. This requires a consistent input from committed experts from all participating countries. For this reason too the forging of an international community of dedicated partners is the essence for the methodological integrity of the ICS. Conferences such as the present one are an indispensable means to this end.

One common point of criticism levelled against the ICS is that victimisation rates per capita misrepresent the realities of crime by not taking into account differences in national rates of car or bicycle ownership or levels of urbanisation. In our view rates per capita are the purest measures of "national" crime in the sense that they offer information on the costs of crime borne by the public and on the case load of the criminal justice system. Specific rates such as owners' victimisation rates or urban area rates are of great interest but should not substitute per capita rates. Both per capita and specific rates have their distinct place and their use depends on the purpose of analysis and the level of comparability. Thus, an attempt towards comparison presented below is based on city and urban area rates.

Table 1: Overview of participation in the International Crime Survey (1988 - 1992)

	First survey	Sample size	Standardised ¹	Method	Second survey	Sample size	Standardised ¹	Method
Australia	1988	2012	Y	CATI	1992	2006	Y	CATI
Belgium	1988	2060	Y	CATI	1992	1485	Y	CATI
Canada	1988	2074	Y	CATI	1992	2152	Y	CATI
England & Wales	1988	2006	Y	CATI	1992	2001	Y	CATI
West Germany	1988	5274	Y	CATI			Y	
Finland	1988	1025	Y	CATI	1992	1620	N	CATI
France	1988	1502	Y	CATI			Y	
Netherlands	1988	2000	Y	CATI	1992	2000	Y	CATI
Northern Ireland	1988	2000	Y	F/F			Y	
Norway	1988	1009	Y	CATI			Y	
Scotland	1988	2007	Y	CATI			Y	
Spain ²	1988	2014	Y	CATI/F /F			Y	
Switzerland	1988	1000	Y	CATI			Y	
USA	1988	1996	Y	CATI	1992	1501	Y	CATI
Japan ³	1988	2411	N	F/F	1992	2382	N	F/F
Czechoslovakia					1992	1841	N	F/F
Italy					1992	2024	Y	CATI
New Zealand					1992	2048	Y	CATI
Poland					1992	2033	N	F/F
Sweden					1992	1707	Y	CATI
Warsaw (Poland)	1988	500	N	F/F				
Surabaya (Indonesia)	1988	600	N	F/F				

Surveys organised by UNICRI

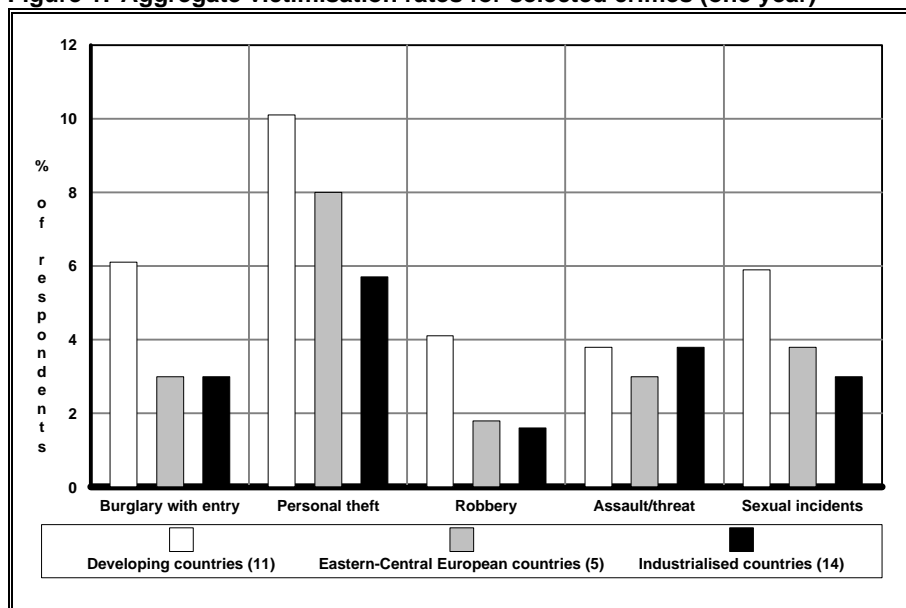
Buenos Aires (Argentina)					1992	1000	(Y)	F/F
Bombay (India)					1992	1040	(Y)	F/F
Cairo (Egypt)					1992	1000	(Y)	F/F
Costa Rica					1992	963	(Y)	F/F
Dar Es Sajaam (Tanzania)					1992	1004	(Y)	F/F
Indonesia ⁴					1992	3750	(Y)	F/F
Kampala (Uganda)					1992	1023	(Y)	F/F
Manila (Philippines)					1992	1503	(Y)	F/F
Papua New Guinea					1992	n.a.	(?)	F/F
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)					1992	1017	(Y)	F/F
Greater Pretoria (South Africa)					1992	200	(Y)	F/F
Tunis (Tunisia)					1992	150	(Y)	F/F
Other city and national surveys, independently organised								
Athens (Greece)	1990	345	N	F/F				
Germany (New States)	1990	4999	N	F/F				
Germany (Old States)	1990	2027	N	F/F				
Hungary	1990	5000	N	F/F				
Ljubljana (Slovenia)					1992	2000	N	CATI ⁵
Moscow (Russia)					1992	1000	N	F/F
Republic of Georgia					1992	(1100)	N	F/F
Seoul (South Korea)	1991	1000	N	F/F				

- Standardised surveys are those supervised by the Working Group and/or InterView, or UNICRI. Data from the standardised surveys have been analysed using similar procedures. Most countries counted as having standardised surveys used survey companies contracted by InterView.
- Spain: number of face-to-face interviews: 1179; number of telephone interviews: 862.
- In the 1992 survey in Japan, respondents were only asked about crime over the last year. In 1988 only those aged 21 or more were interviewed.
- Jakarta 1 000, Surabaya 750, Medan 500, Palembang 400, Pontianak 300, Ujung Pandang 300, Manado 300, Ambon 200.
- Interviews in Slovenia were done through computer-assisted personal interviews (i.e. face-to-face interviews with interviewers using laptop computer programmed as for the CATI interviews).

Towards a comparative perspective

The ICS has so far been carried out in more than thirty countries covering all the major geographical areas of the world (Table 1). At the Conference, the results from the industrialised, developing and Eastern and Central European countries were presented separately. At this juncture, a truly global comparison is fraught with many difficulties particularly related to methods of data collection and sampling designs. In industrialised countries the survey was carried out on a national sample using Random Digit Dialing and computer-assisted telephone interviewing. In many developing countries population surveys cannot easily be carried out on a national scale. In these countries, as well as in Russia and Slovenia, the ICS was carried out amongst the inhabitants of one major city only using face-to-face interviewing. The ensuing differences in methodology used preclude straightforward comparison. The survey was based on a population sample of, on average, between 1,000 and 2,000 respondents in each area surveyed.

Figure 1: Aggregate victimisation rates for selected crimes (one year)



In view of the great theoretical and policy relevance of comparing data from different countries we will present an attempt towards global comparison. In order to increase the comparability of data from industrialised countries with those from city surveys, special victimisation rates were calculated for the urban areas in industrialised and Eastern and Central European countries (urban areas with more than 100,000 inhabitants). Although sampling designs were not geared towards

urban areas in particular, in all relevant countries the urban area rates for 1988 and 1992 were based on samples of at least 200 respondents. Since victimisation rates in "megacities" are expected to be higher than in statistically defined urban configurations with a larger than 100,000 population, the urban area rates are not valid equivalents of the city rates. In the present situation of limited sample size, a comparison of city rates from developing countries (as well as Russia and Slovenia) with urban rates from other countries is the best possible option for a global comparative overview. Obviously, the results of this comparison must be interpreted with caution.

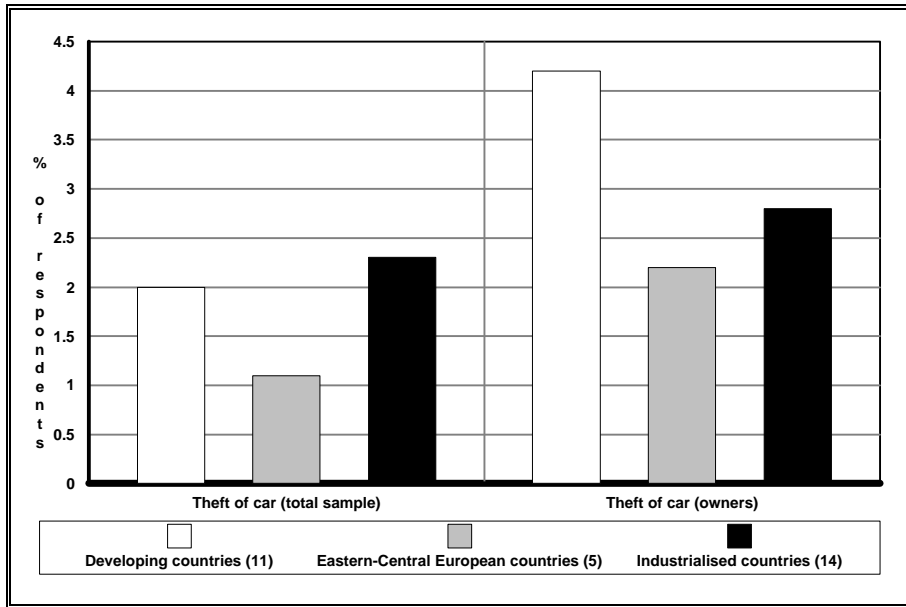
Figure 1 depicts the aggregated rates for selected crimes from industrialised, developing, and Eastern and Central European countries. These are calculated by averaging the available city or urban area rates.

It is apparent that developing countries have higher victimisation rates for most selected types of crime, except assault/threats. Urban areas in industrialised countries appear to be at lower risk in comparison to both developing and Eastern/Central European urban sites for theft of personal property and sexual incidents. Eastern and Central European and industrialised countries exhibit almost identical levels of victimisation risk for burglary and robbery. The smallest difference between the groups of countries relates to assault/threat, for which developing and industrialised countries exhibit equivalent risks.

Vehicle-related crimes

Concerning vehicle-related crimes, comparison is further complicated by drastically different ownership rates and structure. There is a certain correlation between risk of car theft and levels of car ownership. It is apparent that industrialised countries have higher per capita car theft rates in conjunction with higher ownership

Figure 2: Aggregate victimisation rates for car theft (one year)



levels (on average above 80%). However, in developing and Eastern and Central European countries (with an average ownership rate of less than 50%) the probability of car owners being victims is higher because of the unequal ownership structure and scarcity. Other factors will influence the owners' risks (e.g. quality of cars, usage of security devices, workings of the criminal justice apparatus, etc.). Thus, for example, in Eastern and Central European countries local cars may be less attractive targets for car theft than Western cars. The demand for stolen cars is partly redirected at owners in the West with the consequence of increasing car thefts both in the West and East. Moreover, stolen car recovery rates appear to indicate different usage of stolen cars: a high rate implies a prevalence of theft for the purpose of joy-riding, while few cars recovered may indicate further marketing of stolen cars. The latter, in turn, may also indicate a presence of organised crime involved in trafficking cars both in the domestic market and across the borders. In general, higher car ownership levels per country seem to result in reduced risks for individual owners but in higher overall rates of car theft. Certainly, the dynamics of car theft merit further analysis in terms of demand and supply.

In industrialised countries, the risk of having a car stolen was highest in England and Wales, Australia, New Zealand and Italy. In Eastern and Central European countries somewhat lower rates were found, with the exception of Georgia, where a civil war was raging at the time of fieldwork. In the developing countries, ownership rates are more informative than per capita rates. Car owners in Buenos Aires, Dar es Salaam, Kampala and The Greater Pretoria run the highest risk of theft among developing cities.

The per capita rates for theft from cars (covering both theft of car parts and of items left inside the car) were highest in Dar es Salaam, The Greater Pretoria, and Buenos Aires, as well as in the urban areas of the Netherlands, England, Canada and the USA; the highest per capita rate for former socialist countries was found in Poland. Owners' exposure to theft from car were highest in Dar es Salaam, Tunis, Moscow, Kampala and the urban areas of Spain and the Netherlands.

Rates of bicycle and motorcycle theft are also positively correlated to national ownership rates. National ownership rates of two wheelers vary even more than those of cars. Rates of bicycle theft are the highest in places where cycling is a common means of transport such as the urban areas in the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, England, Finland and South Africa. In these countries the risks for bicycle owners are relatively high, too. They are also high in Manila, Dar es Salaam, Kampala and Tunis. In the case of bicycle theft, the owners' risks are not reduced in an environment where such vehicles abound as is the case with cars. As a consequence the correlation between national ownership rates and bicycle theft rates is particularly strong.

Rates of motorcycle theft are the highest in Japan, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands; as well as in Tunis, Buenos Aires, Bombay and Dar es Salaam. In these places the ownership of such vehicles is rather common, and the ownership victimisation rates are also high. These are relatively high in some places where motorcycles are not so common, notably in Moscow and Kampala.

Other property crimes

Burglaries from homes were reported most often in African cities (> 10% in Kampala and Dar es Salaam) as well as in the urban areas of former Czechoslovakia, England, New Zealand, France, the USA, Canada and Australia.

Citizens of Ljubljana, Bombay, Sweden, France, Czechoslovakia and Slovenia were the least likely to fall victim to robbery, which is among the most serious crimes covered in the survey. At the other extreme, residents of Rio de Janeiro, Dar es Salaam, Kampala, Pretoria, Buenos Aires and the urban areas of Spain run the highest risks for this type of crime.

Two African cities (Kampala and Dar es Salaam), Moscow and urban Poland showed the highest rates of victimisation for simple theft of personal property including pickpocketing. All urban areas in industrialised countries had significantly lower rates.

Assault/threats and sexual incidents

Risk of assaults and frightening threats were highest in Kampala, Dar es Salaam and Moscow, as well as in urban areas of New Zealand, the Netherlands, Canada, the USA and Australia. The safest places in these terms were, among cities, Bombay, Manila, Jakarta and Ljubljana, and urban areas of Belgium, Italy and Japan.

Women were also asked about their experience with sexual victimisation. It should be noted, however, that this issue is highly sensitive in some cultural settings. An additional complication results from different cultural perceptions of sexually offensive behaviour, and the propensity both to report it for the survey, as well as to the authorities. Therefore, the effects of over- and under-reporting should not be disregarded. Women in urban Canada, Finland, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands and Australia, and particularly in African cities, reported the highest levels of risk. The majority of women consider their victimisation to be serious or very serious.

Corruption and consumer fraud

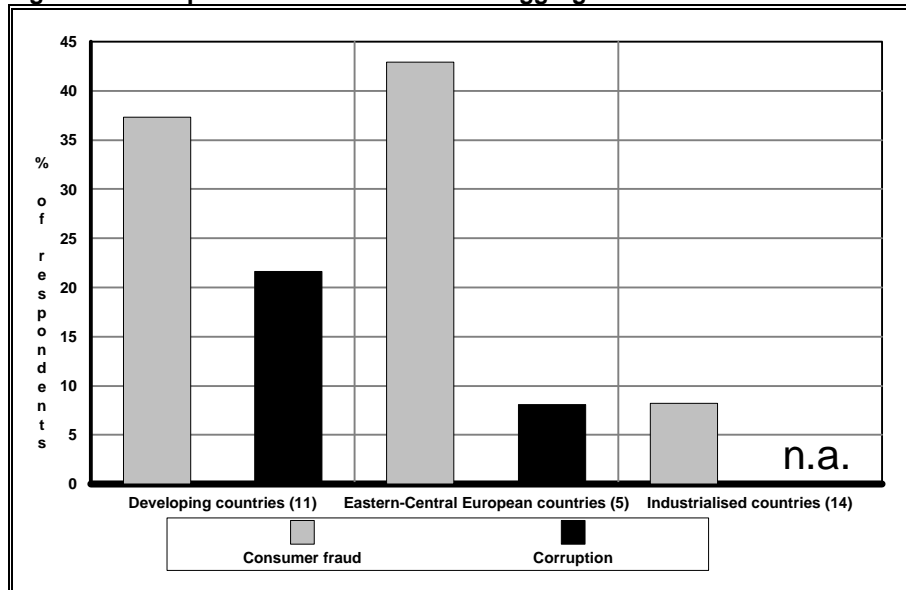
Corruption is an ubiquitous problem, although, in the 1992 survey corruption was dealt with only in developing and Eastern and Central European countries. The question was related to personal experience with public officials asking for or accepting bribes. There was a plight of corruption in the developing world in particular, in which it is one of the commonest forms of citizen victimisation. It is also frequently reported in Georgia and Moscow. This form of victimisation appears to indicate the ways in which people go about, or are made to go about, in satisfying their needs and accomplishing their rights.

Consumers are cheated and badly treated in particular in Dar es Salaam, Tunis, Georgia, former Czechoslovakia and Moscow. In industrialised countries substantially fewer respondents expressed such complaints. Most likely, vendors and shopkeepers in unstable markets have less incentive to establish and maintain a favourable and durable reputation among their clients than their counterparts operating in more regular and competitive markets. Retailers in some developing and former socialist countries seem to be particularly prone to sharp business practices.

Fear of Crime

Fear for safety is generally seen as an important element of the social cost of crime and crime prevention policies are geared not only towards reducing and controlling crime and crime-generating opportunities, but also anxiety and feeling of insecurity. Rio de Janeiro and the African cities are perceived to be the least safe to walk around after dark; similarly, cities in Australia, Italy, England, Poland, former Czechoslovakia and the USA. The perceived likelihood of falling victim to burglary in the near future was highest in Australia, England, former Czechoslovakia, and the African cities. By and large, perceptions of risks and feelings of insecurity seem to correspond to actual risks per country, although there are some notable deviations.

Figure 3: Corruption and consumer fraud. Aggregated data for 1991.



Citizens' experience and satisfaction with police

The frequency of reporting to the police differs according to the perceived seriousness of the event, which in general is linked to the type of crime (thus, for example, the higher percentage of car thefts reported as compared with pickpocketing), as well as to many factors related to the actual or expected police behaviour. Therefore, on average, crimes are not reported because they are deemed "not serious enough". Frequently, in the majority of developing and Eastern and Central European countries, it is a belief in the lack of effectiveness of the police which figures prominently. In general, people in industrialised countries report

a much higher satisfaction with police performance than in developing and Eastern and Central European countries. In these countries, the majority of respondents were not satisfied with the police and showed a marked lack of confidence in law enforcement capacities, capabilities and willingness to serve the community. While the relationship between the police and citizenry is a very complex one, there is a need for further efforts to improve police/community relations, including training and education of the police personnel. The United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme can assist in this task.

Attitudes towards punishment

A question was put to respondents about their opinions on sentencing. In contrast with the stereotypical image of public demand for imprisonment, community service is seen in most of the industrialised world as the most suitable punishment for a recidivist burglar aged 21. This was particularly evident for Germany, Belgium and France. Support for imprisonment was highest in the USA, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and conspicuously so in all developing, Eastern and Central European countries.

Substantive issues

Theory

The core products of the ICS are alternative estimates of crime, fear of crime and attitudes towards crime prevention and control. As such, the survey serves primarily descriptive purposes. At the same time information is assembled about the social context of crime and crime-related attitudes. The ICS, thereby, opens new avenues for theories about crime at the level of individuals, national regions and nations⁹. During the Conference several suggestions were made for further analyses. In the first sweep, items were included concerning some of the key factors inherent in criminal opportunity theory. Hypotheses about the relationships between vehicle ownership and vehicle crime, and between detached houses and burglary were largely confirmed at different levels of aggregation. In the 1992 sweep of the ICS some new questions were added about income satisfaction and social integration with a view to testing other current theoretical perspectives. These factors may well prove to be particularly relevant for analysis of crime rates in the less affluent countries. As suggested, the available data seem to ask for an analytical model which combines factors determining opportunities to offend ("supply factors") with factors relevant for the inclination to offend ("demand factors"). The current perspectives of routine activity, opportunity theory and situational crime prevention must be reconciled with the theoretical heritage of Bonger, Merton et al¹⁰. The development of such an integrated model is one of the major challenges set by the ICS datafile. In order to enable other criminologists to work with us on these and other theoretical questions, we will make available the full dataset for secondary analyses in due time.

Policy

⁹ Fattah, E.A. (1991) *Understanding criminal victimization: an introduction to theoretical victimology*, Prentice-Hall Canada, Scarborough (Ontario); Shelley, L. (1981) *Crime and modernization: the impact of industrialization and urbanization on crime*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale; Bennett, R.R. (1991) "Development and crime: a cross-national, time series analysis of competing models" *Sociological Quarterly* 32,3:343-363.

¹⁰ van Dijk, J.J.M (1991) *Criminaliteit als keerzijde: een theoretische en empirische verkenning van de relaties tussen welvaart en criminaliteit*, (in Dutch), Gouda Quint, Arnhem.

For the policy-makers in high-crime countries the ICS results may cause embarrassment in the short term. In 1989 the high position on the international crime list of some countries were widely and somewhat sensationally reported by the mass media. Bad news of this sort is usually not welcomed by governments. But in this respect the ICS results are no different from other social or economic indicators. In the long term governments will come to terms with the reality reflected by the indicators and try to address it with new policies.

As mentioned in the report on the industrialised countries, the key results of the ICS may be disturbing for some governments but reassuring for others. Some governments will be satisfied that their country's crime problems are minor compared to those of others. For other governments it is reassuring to know that, on an annual basis, in nearly all societies with large urban concentrations roughly one in every four or five citizens is hit by crime. Most countries show a unique crime profile, determined by special opportunity structures, social problems and cultural traditions. A high level of conventional property crime, however, appears to be a common feature of today's urban centres across the world. With the exception of some Asian countries, such as Japan and Indonesia, the overall national crime rates do not vary much. The newly established democracies in Eastern Europe may be reassured by the knowledge that countries with peaceable reputations such as New Zealand and the Netherlands fare no better in terms of conventional crime.

The less reassuring message given out by the ICS is that the extent of victimisation by crime in many countries has reached a level which the public finds unacceptable. In many countries fear of burglary and street violence is high among important segments of the public. In the same countries confidence in the police is gradually eroded. In the more affluent societies the middle classes have, for sound reasons, started to invest heavily in their own protection against crime. In most countries the current boom of crime prevention measures is inspired by the self-interest of individual citizens and businesses, and is neither planned nor guided by government. There are reasons to doubt the effectiveness of such personal initiatives in actually reducing crime. Extreme forms of self-protection such as vigilantism may even be counterproductive and constitute a threat to the rule of law. National and local governments, as well as the business sector, need to introduce integrated crime control policies¹¹.

Attention should be drawn to the questions in the ICS about the aftermath of a criminal victimisation, satisfaction with the police and the need for specialised aid. In many countries thirty or more percent of crime victims expressed dissatisfaction with the way the police dealt with their reports. In all countries many victims would have welcomed more specialised support than they actually got. These results are a reminder that in most parts of the world crime victims are still a forgotten group whose special needs are not sufficiently catered for by either the helping professions or the criminal justice system¹². Victim support is still widely regarded as a luxury

¹¹ van Dijk, J.J.M (1991) "More than a matter of security: trends in crime prevention in Europe" in Heidensohn, F. and M. Farrell (eds.) *Crime in Europe*, pp. 27-42, Routledge, London; Clarke, R.V. (ed.) (1992) *Situational crime prevention: successful case studies*, Harrow and Heston, New York.

¹² van Dijk, J.J.M. (1988) "Ideological trends within the victims movement: an international perspective" in Maguire, M. and J. Pointing (eds.) *Victims of crime: a new deal?*, pp. 115-226, Open University Press, Milton Keynes; van Dijk, J.J.M. (1989) "The United Nations Declaration on Crime Victims: priorities for

which overloaded criminal justice systems can ill afford. The point is neglected that a person's readiness to assist law enforcement agencies and to obey the law is eroded by negative experiences with the system¹³. Even in a crime control perspective, a better deal for crime victims is of the highest importance.

Interviewing the public about criminal victimisations is primarily a means of measuring crime levels independently of the police. Enhancing of our understanding of crime is in itself a worthy goal. In addition, the ICS is meant to sensitise the public and governments to the practical and emotional realities of crime victims. Through the questions on satisfaction with the system, the ICS gives victims an opportunity to voice their criticism. It is this additional goal of the ICS which lifts it above an interesting comparative statistical exercise on crime levels alone. The potential use of the ICS as a vehicle for the international victims movement will hopefully be an additional incentive for our partners in the ICS to continue their co-operation in the years to come. It may also persuade others to join us in our efforts.

policy makers" in Cherif Bassiouni, M. (ed.) International protection of victims, pp. 117-127, International Association of Penal Law, Pau; Ben David, S. and G. F. Kirchoff (eds.) (1992) International faces of victimology, World Society of Victimology, Monchengladbach.

¹³ Tyler, T.R. (1990) Why people obey the law, Yale University Press, New Haven.

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