

LJUBLJANA (SLOVENIA)

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The International Crime Survey in Ljubljana (Slovenia) was implemented by the Institute of Criminology, School of Law in Ljubljana. The principal researcher and co-ordinator of the Survey was Dr. Zoran Pavlovic.

Description of the sample

A total of 1,000 interviews were completed in the city of Ljubljana, the capital of the Republic of Slovenia. Ljubljana counts approximately 350,000 inhabitants, while the population of Slovenia amounts to a total of 2 million inhabitants.

The average age of the respondents was 42.5 years; 25% were 32 years old or less (the youngest being 16 years old) and 25% were 58 years old or more (the eldest being 90 years of age). 43.7% of the respondents were male and 56.3% were female.

The status of the residential area was assessed by the respondents in the case of telephone interviewing, and by the interviewer in the case of face-to-face interviewing. It was assessed that 15% of the respondents lived in "upper" class areas, 77.4% in "middle" class areas, and 6.6% in "lower" class areas.

Data collection technique

Data were collected using both the CATI and face-to-face technique: from 1,000 households in the final net sample, 700 were interviewed by phone and 300 by the face-to-face method. The two samples were independent, for example the face-to-face sample included households regardless of their possession of a telephone. The "random walk" technique was used for face-to-face interviews, while for CATI interviews the phone numbers of respondents were randomly selected from the Ljubljana telephone directory. In both cases computers were used (portables for the face-to-face interviews) with identical software for data collection (BLAISE 2.3).

Interviewing team

The actual interviewing was carried out by the Center for Methodology and Informatics of the School of Social Sciences (University of Ljubljana). The team consisted of a professor of methodology, three assistants (specialised in different aspects of methodology - sample, data collection, and team management) and ten highly motivated students of the School. The team was eager to obtain a high quality of data, since the design and requirements of the study would enable them to test various methodological hypotheses, particularly the differences between the phone and face-to-face approach, use of computers in field work, etc.

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Training of the interviewers

The students, who were already acquainted with social science methodology, received a two-day course, during which they received detailed instructions on procedures related to the interview, computers and software. Emphasis was given to the particularly delicate nature of the topics covered by the survey.

Problems

No particularly difficult problems were encountered. Various measures were adopted to gain the trust of the respondents. For example, a short letter was sent to all respondents in the sample, announcing that an interviewer would visit or call them, describing the purpose of the survey, and explaining that the member of the household whose birthday was coming next, would be interviewed. This letter proved very helpful. The local police were informed of the survey, but were extremely rarely contacted by the respondents. During the face-to-face interviews, the interviewers carried with them formal certificates issued by the Institute, as proof of their involvement in the survey in case of any doubt on the part of the respondents, but in fact these were very seldom required.

In general, respondents were friendly and co-operative. After receiving the letter, many called to fix appointments for the interview. Nevertheless, in some cases certain questions related in particular to the possession of weapons and security devices, raised suspicion among the respondents, and in one case the respondent reacted rather aggressively. Therefore, the answers to these questions, as well as those related to family income and the status of the area of residence, cannot be considered very reliable and their inclusion in a further survey might require reconsideration.

Lower status areas of the town that were felt to be less safe were visited by interviewers in couples.

Period of data collection

Data collection, which took three weeks, was carried out in September 1992. The interviews were carried out in the Slovene language.

Response rate and re-contacting

Gross sample

In the case of the CATI technique, in order to reach a net sample of 700 units, 834 private phone numbers were used. Of these, 24 (3%) were business numbers, the rest being numbers of private homes. Nobody replied to 52 numbers (6%), even after 20 attempts. Between 91% and 97% of the numbers used were eligible, depending on the proportion of unsuccessfully tried numbers that actually represent a household. 782 numbers were successfully reached.

In the case of the face-to-face technique, 370 household units in 24 local communities in Ljubljana were chosen, of which 359 were eligible (eligibility rate 97%)

Non-response and refusal rate

When using CATI, out of 782 eligible and successfully contacted numbers, response was not obtained from 47 respondents; 20 individual respondents were not accessible, 16 were unable to co-operate due to bad health, old age, lack of knowledge of the language and 21 refused co-operation. The non-response rate was therefore between 8% and 13% (depending on the assessment of eligibility), and the refusal rate was only 3%.

In the case of face-to-face interviewing, 31 individual respondents were not accessible, 4 were unable to co-operate and 21 refused co-operation. The non-response rate was thus 16%, and the refusal rate only 6%.

Recontacting

On some occasions more than 20 recontact attempts were made in the case of the CATI technique, and up to 7 attempts in the case of face-to-face interviews.

Completed interviews

Seven hundred phone and 300 face-to-face interviews were successfully completed.

Victimisation rates

In the 5-year period, 64.3% of all respondents (or the members of their households) were victims of one or more of the listed criminal incidents (excluding consumer fraud and corruption). Victimisation rates are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Victim support

41.8% of the victims received no support whatsoever. Hopefully, this number refers to victims of less serious crimes, although this can only be confirmed after further detailed analysis.

Victims received help from their relatives in 34.1% cases, and from friends in 20.7% cases. This was followed by assistance from neighbours and the police with 9.3% and 8.6% respectively (multiple answers were possible). All the other sources put together amounted to less than 3%.

49.4% of the victims thought that specialised agencies for victim support would be useful, 45.0% did not think so, and 5.6% could not decide.

Attitudes towards the police

Satisfaction with reported crimes

Only 242 (37.6%) of the 643 "last criminal events" were reported to the police. In 52.1% of these cases the respondents were satisfied with police performance, 3.3% were unable to decide, and 44.6% (i.e. 108 respondents) were not satisfied. The

reasons for their dissatisfaction (multiple answers were possible and at least 3 reasons were actually given) were as follows:

- didn't do enough	44.4%
- were not interested	39.8%
- didn't find or apprehend the offender	31.5%
- didn't treat me correctly/were impolite	25.9%
- didn't keep me properly informed	20.4%
- didn't recover my property (goods)	17.6%
- were too slow to arrive	13.0%
- other reasons	8.3%

Among the main reasons for dissatisfaction provided by the respondents, "didn't do enough" was the most salient with 36.1%. However, this answer can be regarded as a general statement, and the other options as its specifications. Among these, "were not interested" leads with 20.4% as the first answer, and with 39.8% of the total.

Satisfaction regarding crime control

Half (49.9%) of the respondents thought that the police do a "good job"; 27% disagreed, while 23% could not make an assessment.

31.2% of the respondents saw the police patrolling their street at least once a day, 22.1% at least once a week, 10.5% at least once a month, 13.3% less than once a month, 16.6% never saw a patrol, and 6.3% did not know.

40.9% of the respondents thought that the police are sufficiently present, 51.7% would like them to appear more frequently, only 1.3% would like to see less of them, while 6% could not decide.

Fear of crime

Regarding "walking alone in your area after dark", 21.7% of the respondents said that they felt very safe, 45.1% felt fairly safe, 18% a bit unsafe, and 4.9% very unsafe. 10.3% did not know, or insisted that they never go out after dark. Thirty-five percent avoid certain areas or people when they go out after dark. 53.3% don't avoid them and 10.7% never go out. 22.3% go out with somebody for reasons of safety and 77.6% do not.

While these data give the impression that people generally do not fear crime too much outdoors (some groups may fear it more than others, which remains to be analysed), they do not feel that their property is equally safe: 60.9% think it is likely that somebody will try to break into their home over the next twelve months; a further 11.1% consider it very likely and only 24.1% consider it unlikely.

Crime prevention

The respondents were asked to describe the crime prevention measures they had adopted; these are shown in Table 6.

Attitudes towards punishment

When described the case of a recidivist burglar who had stolen a colour TV set, 12.8% of the respondents stated that they would fine him, 31.2% favoured a prison sentence, 35.2% (the largest single group) would give him a community service order, 6.3% preferred a suspended sentence, 11.1% would choose some other sentence, and 3.4% could not decide on the issue.

Those respondents who were in favour of imprisonment supported the following sentences:

- 1 month or less	9.9%
- 2 to 6 months	29.2%
- 6 months to 1 year	19.2%
- 1 year	18.3%
- 2 years	9.3%
- 3 years	2.9%
- 4 years or longer	6.9%

Concluding remarks

This was the first International Victimization (Crime) Survey to be carried out in Slovenia. The preliminary results proved interesting, and the methodological experience valuable.

However, these results are based solely on a simple frequency distribution. Since it was not possible to carry out the actual interviewing before September 1992, there was not enough time for more detailed analysis to be presented on this occasion, and therefore a lot remains to be done in the near future. A valuable pool of data has been collected, to be used for comparison with the official police records, previous and present experiences of the International Victim survey in other countries and results of previous studies on the issue in our country; the data need to be cross-tabulated and analysed through internal relations of variables. The international comparison in particular should be interesting.

It is also necessary to analyse the effects of the methodological approach adopted. It is already clear that the use of portable computers in face-to-face interviewing has a secure future: none of the respondents objected to this technique and, on the contrary, the survey was received rather favourably by them. What remains to be established is whether, and in what way, the results of each technique (CATI and face-to-face) differ. The survey was a very positive experience and it is hoped that the next sweep will cover the whole Republic of Slovenia and not only Ljubljana.

TABLES

Table 1: Prevalence victimisation rates (5 years)*

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	1.2
Theft from car	19.3
Car vandalism	27.1
Theft of motorcycle	2.7
Theft of bicycle	14.4
(Owners)	
Theft of car	1.5
Theft from car	24.6
Car vandalism	34.5
Theft of motorcycle	13.2
Theft of bicycle	18.3
Burglary with entry	7.2
Attempted burglary	8.5
Robbery	1.6
Personal theft	13.6
Sexual incidents	9.8
Assault/threat	8.5

* Prevalence - percentage of respondents who have been victims of a specific form of crime once or more.

Table 2: Prevalence victimisation rates (1 year)*

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	0.3
Theft from car	5.7
Car vandalism	7.2
Theft of motorcycle	0.4
Theft of bicycle	3.5
(Owners)	
Theft of car	0.4
Theft from car	7.3
Car vandalism	9.2
Theft of motorcycle	2.0
Theft of bicycle	4.4
Burglary with entry	1.8
Attempted burglary	2.5
Robbery	0.2
Personal theft	3.8
Sexual incidents	3.2
Assault/threat	1.8
Consumer fraud	24.3

Corruption	0.6
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* Prevalence - percentage of respondents who have been victims of a specific form of crime once or more.

Table 3: Reported crimes (percentage based on victims)

	%
Theft of car	91.7
Theft from car	58.0
Car vandalism	20.3
Theft of motorcycle	96.3
Theft of bicycle	55.6
Burglary with entry	68.1
Attempted burglary	20.0
Robbery	18.8
Personal theft	36.0
Sexual incidents (women only)	7.3
Assault/threat	29.4

Table 4: Reasons for not reporting*

	Theft of car %	Theft from car %	Car vandalism %	Theft of motorcycle %	Theft of bicycle %	Burglary with entry %	Robbery %	Personal theft %	Sexual incidents %	Assault/threat %
Not serious enough		46.3	45.3		21.3	13.0	15.4	27.9	45.1	21.7
Solved it myself		6.3	9.8	100.0	3.3	13.0	7.7	7.0	5.9	11.7
Inappropriate for police		3.8	14.0		8.2	8.7	15.4	5.8	11.8	16.7
Other authorities		1.3	1.4			8.7		8.1		
My family solved it		1.3				7.7				
No insurance		1.3	0.9							
Police could do nothing	100.0	43.8	38.8		39.3	34.8	23.1	33.7	19.6	28.3
Police won't do anything		10.0	7.9		16.4	4.3		10.5	3.9	10.0
Fear/dislike police		3.8	2.8		1.6	4.3	15.4	2.3	3.9	5.0
Didn't dare			0.9		1.6			2.3		1.7
Other reasons		11.3	8.9		22.9	17.4	23.1	11.6	17.6	16.7
Don't know		5.0								

* Percentages calculated on victims who said they had not reported the last incident of each type of crime to the police - multiple answers possible.

Table 5: Crime seriousness*

	Theft of car %	Theft from car %	Car vandalism %	Theft of motorcycle %	Theft of bicycle %	Burglary with entry %	Attempted burglary %	Robbery %	Personal theft %	Sexual incidents %	Assault/threat %
Very serious	91.7	34.2	21.8	44.4	43.8	66.7	36.5	68.8	41.9	30.9	52.9
Fairly serious	8.3	37.3	35.8	40.7	33.3	25.0	40.0	18.8	40.4	32.7	28.2
Not serious		28.5	42.4	14.8	22.2	8.3	23.5	12.5	17.6	36.4	18.8

* Percentage based on victims of specific crimes.

Table 6: Crime prevention measures*

	%
Installed burglar alarm	5.2
Installed door locks	35.4
Installed window/door grills	5.31
Maintain watchdogs	13.0
High fence	2.8
House has a caretaker	0.3
None of these	48.2
Others	2.3
Ask somebody to watch home	49.6
Neighbours watch anyway	10.5
Possession of firearms	5.8
House insured against burglary	26.3

* Percentages based on the total sample of respondents - multiple answers possible.