

# 11 Fear of crime

## 11.1 The likelihood of burglary

The ICVS provides a measure on concern about burglary by means of a question asking respondents the likelihood of their houses being burgled in the coming year. Inhabitants of main cities feel more at risk of having their houses burgled than national populations. Results will therefore be presented separately for countries and cities. Table 26 and figure 26 show the percentage of people in countries and main cities who rated the chance of burglary as 'very likely' or 'likely'.

**Table 26** Percentage of public who consider a burglary in their houses in the coming year to be likely or very likely in 2004/05 and results from earlier surveys in countries and main cities. 1989-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS\*

<i>Countries</i>	1989	1992	1996	2000	2004-2005	<i>Main cities</i>	2001-2005 surveys
Greece					49 *	Istanbul (Turkey)	75
Japan				34	48	Athens (Greece)	73 *
Italy		38			43 *	Helsinki (Finland)	59 *
France	36		53	44	38 *	Rome (Italy)	46 *
Mexico					37	Lisbon (Portugal)	40 *
New Zealand		53			36	London (England)	40 *
Australia	44	47		36	36	Tallinn (Estonia)	40
England & Wales	35	45	41	33	35 *	Dublin (Ireland)	39 *
Portugal				58	35 *	Brussels (Belgium)	38 *
Luxembourg					34 *	Vienna (Austria)	36 *
Belgium	28	31		45	33 *	Paris (France)	34 *
Ireland					33 *	Belfast (Northern Ireland)	33
Bulgaria					31	Madrid (Spain)	33 *
Estonia		34	28	43	30	Sydney (Australia)	33
Northern Ireland	23		29	26	29	Warsaw (Poland)	27
Spain	41				26 *	Hong Kong (China)	26
Switzerland	46		29	27	26	Berlin (Germany)	25 *
Poland		40	24	26	25	Stockholm (Sweden)	25 *
Canada	33	33	30	29	25	Zurich (Switzerland)	25
Germany	54				23 *	Oslo (Norway)	24
Hungary					23	Amsterdam (Netherlands)	22 *
Austria			13		21 *	Budapest (Hungary)	21 *
Norway	21				21	Edinburgh (Scotland)	19
Scotland	30		28	23	21	New York (USA)	16
Netherlands	28	28	27	19	18 *	Copenhagen (Denmark)	14 *
Sweden		34	16	16	17 *	Average	35

**Table 26 (Continued)**

Countries	1989	1992	1996	2000	2004-2005		2001-2005 surveys
USA	31		23	16	16	<i>Cities in developing countries</i>	
Denmark				20	14 *	Sao Paulo (Brazil)	72
Finland	9	14	11	13	na *	Lima (Peru)	70
						Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	58
						Maputo (Mozambique)	56
						Buenos Aires (Argentina)	48
						Johannesburg (RSA)	46
						Phnom Penh (Cambodia)	20
Average*	35	41	29	31	29	Average	53

\* Source: van Dijk, J.J.M., Manchin, R., van Kesteren, J.N., Hideg, G. (2007). The Burden of Crime in the EU, a Comparative Analysis of the European Survey of Crime and Safety (2005 EU ICS). Brussels, Gallup Europe.

\*\* The average is based on countries taking part in each sweep. As countries included vary across sweeps, comparisons should be made cautiously.

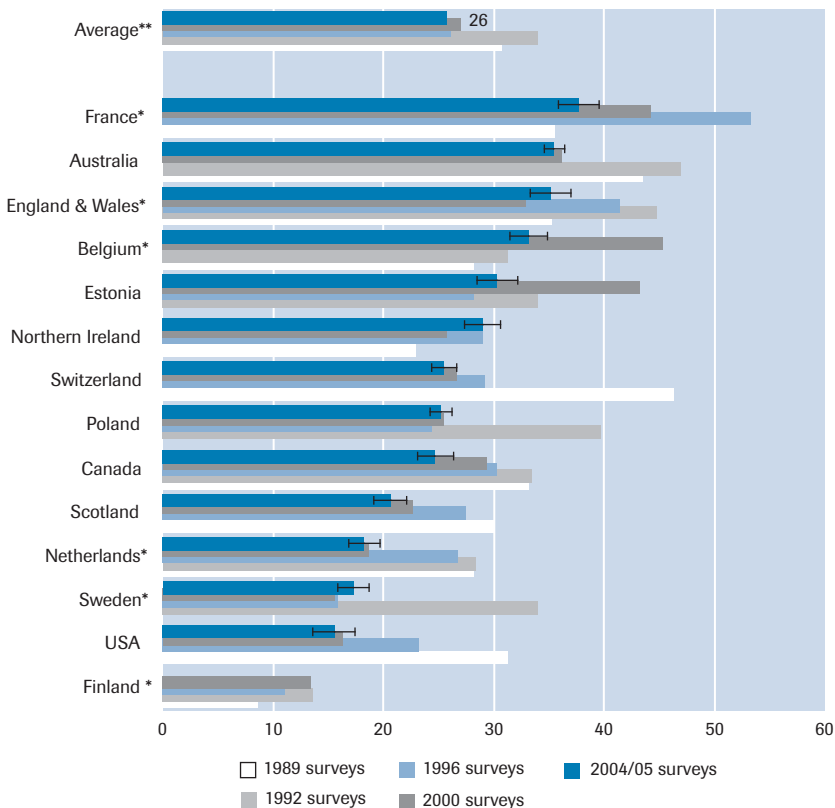
On average 29% of respondents deemed a burglary in the next twelve months likely or very likely. Among inhabitants of main cities in developed nations this was 35% and 53% in cities in developing countries. The national populations of Greece, Japan, Italy, France and Mexico were most concerned about burglary. There was least concern in the Scandinavian countries (under 21%), the USA and the Netherlands. At the city level, concern was most widespread in Istanbul, Sao Paulo, Lima, Rio de Janeiro and Maputo.

Figure 25 shows trends in feelings about the likelihood of burglary for several countries that have participated in the ICVS more than once. Concern about burglary has changed over time – essentially rising in general between 1989 and 1992 and falling thereafter. Concerns about burglary have dropped almost universally in the Western world since 2000. Relating ICVS trends in national burglary levels to trends in worry about burglary shows that perceptions of the likelihood of burglary broadly match trends in ICVS burglary levels. In the countries in which there was the strongest fall in concern, actual levels of burglary also fell more than elsewhere.

## 11.2 Relationship with national burglary risks and victimisation experience

The ICVS has previously found that perceptions of the likelihood of burglary at national level are strongly related to national ICVS risks of burglary: i.e., countries where the highest proportions feel vulnerable to burglary in the coming year are those where risks are highest. In the 2000 sweep, a relationship was again found between the proportions of those

**Figure 26** Percentage of public who consider a burglary in their houses in the coming year to be likely or very likely in 2004/05 and results from earlier surveys in countries that participated at least 3 times. 1989-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS\*

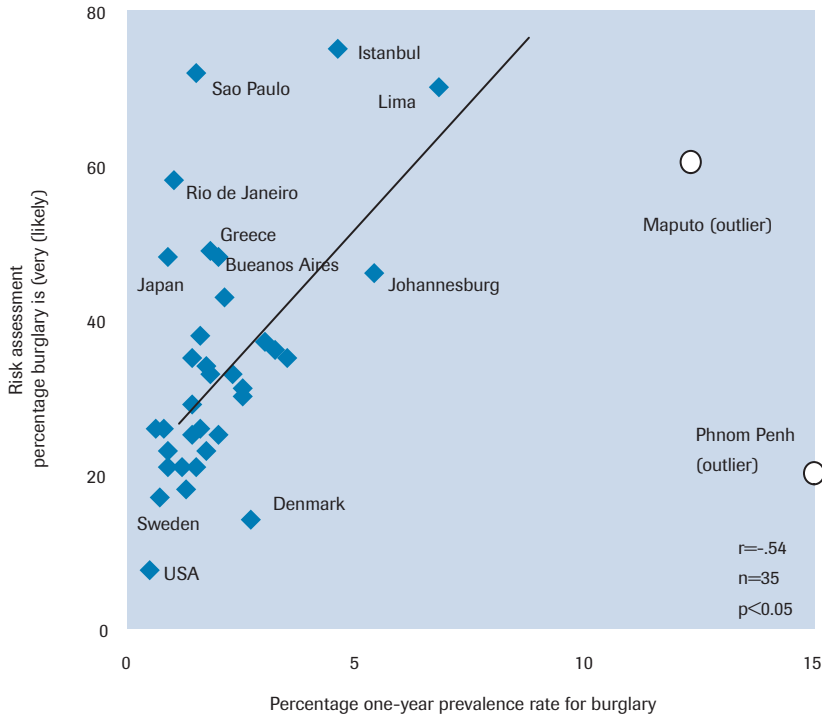


\* Source: van Dijk, J.J.M., Manchin, R., van Kesteren, J.N., Hideg, G. (2007). The Burden of Crime in the EU, a Comparative Analysis of the European Survey of Crime and Safety (2005 EU ICS). Brussels, Gallup Europe.

\*\* The average is based on countries taking part in each sweep. As countries included vary across sweeps, comparisons should be made cautiously.

thinking burglary was very likely and national burglary rates. In the 2005 data this relationship is confirmed. Among the 30 countries and 12 cities combined, perceived risks for burglary and actual risks were moderately strongly related ( $r = 0.54$ ;  $n = 35$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The two Brazilian cities stand out because fear of burglary seems somewhat out of proportion of actual victimisation. In Maputo fear levels are high but the level of actual victimisation is comparatively high as well. People in Phnom Penh are exposed to high burglary risks but seem not to be very concerned. Japan emerges as a country where fear of burglary is higher than actual risks would predict. See figure 27.

**Figure 27** Plot of percentage of one year prevalence rates for burglary in 2003/04 and percentage of the population who consider a burglary next year to be likely or very likely in countries and main cities. 2002-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS



### 11.3 Feelings of safety on the streets

Since 1992, the ICVS has asked the below question, often used in other crime surveys, to measure vulnerability to street crime:

*‘How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark? Do you feel very safe, fairly safe, a bit unsafe or very unsafe?’*

On average, a quarter of national populations felt very or a bit unsafe. The percentage is higher among inhabitants of main cities (37%), especially those in developing countries (61%). Details are in Table 27. Fear of street crime was lowest in the Scandinavian countries, Canada, the Netherlands, the USA and Austria. At the country level feelings of unsafety were most widespread in Bulgaria, Poland, Greece, Luxemburg, Japan and Italy.

**Table 27** Percentage of the population feeling unsafe or very unsafe on the street after dark in 2004/05 and results from earlier surveys in countries and main cities. 1992-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS\*

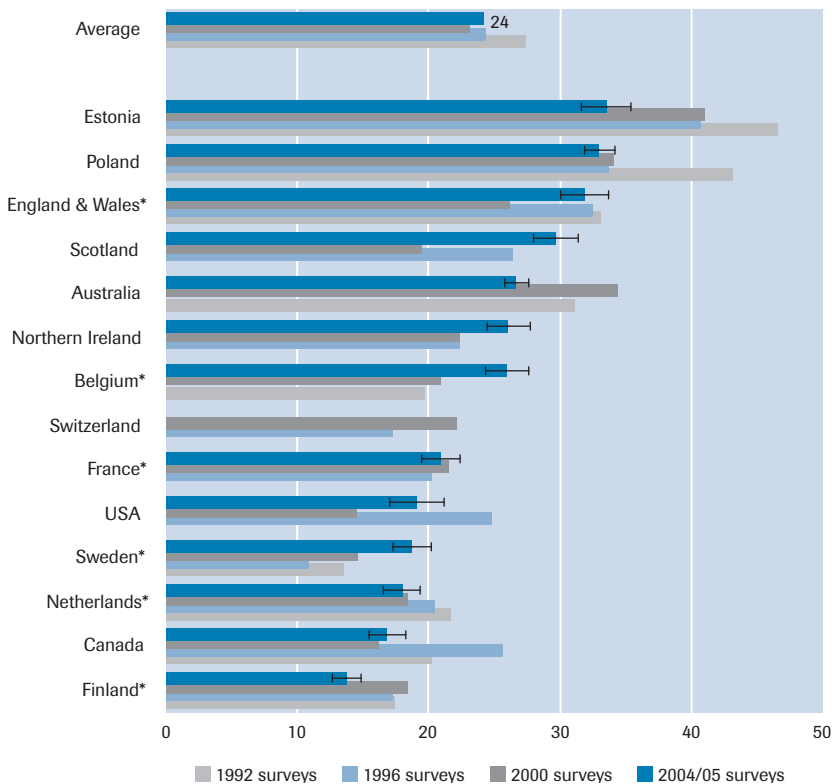
<i>Countries</i>	1989	1992	1996	2000	2004-2005	<i>Main cities</i>	2001-2005 surveys
Bulgaria					53	Athens (Greece)	55 *
Greece					42	Istanbul (Turkey)	51
Luxembourg					36 *	Tallinn (Estonia)	49
Japan				22	35 *	Lisbon (Portugal)	49 *
Italy		35			35	Lima (Peru)	48
Mexico					34 *	Madrid (Spain)	47 *
Portugal				27	34	Rome (Italy)	44 *
Estonia		47	41	41	34 *	London (England)	42 *
Poland		43	34	34	33	Warsaw (Poland)	41
Spain					33 *	Budapest (Hungary)	39 *
England & Wales		33	32	26	32 *	Belfast (Northern Ireland)	34
Germany					30 *	Brussels (Belgium)	33 *
New Zealand		38			30	Berlin (Germany)	31 *
Scotland			26	19	30	Dublin (Ireland)	29 *
Ireland					27 *	Sydney (Australia)	27
Australia		31		34	27	Helsinki (Finland)	25 *
Hungary					26 *	Edinburgh (Scotland)	24
Northern Ireland			22	22	26	Paris (France)	22 *
Belgium		20		21	26 *	New York (USA)	22
Switzerland			17	22	.	Amsterdam (Netherlands)	22 *
France			20	22	21 *	Vienna (Austria)	21 *
Austria			20		19 *	Stockholm (Sweden)	21 *
USA			25	14	19	Copenhagen (Denmark)	21 *
Sweden		14	11	15	19 *	Oslo (Norway)	18
Netherlands		22	20	18	18 *	Reykjavik (Iceland)	9
Denmark				17	17 *	Hong Kong (SAR China)	5
Canada		20	26	16	17	Average	32
Norway					14	<i>Cities in developing countries</i>	
Finland		17	17	18	14 *	Sao Paulo (Brazil)	72
Iceland					6	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	66
						Maputo (Mozambique)	65
						Johannesburg (RSA)	57
						Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	57
						Phnom Penh (Cambodia)	48
Average		29	24	22	27	Average	61

\* Source: European Survey of Crime and Safety (2005 EU ICS). Brussels, Gallup Europe.

\*\* The average is based on countries taking part in each sweep. As countries included vary across sweeps, comparisons should be made cautiously.

This question about how people feel has typically been shown to paint a different picture of ‘fear of crime’ to that from questions about perceptions of risk. Typically, women and the elderly emerge as most fearful on this ‘street safety’ question. This may be because for some people the prospect of being out after dark evokes anxiety about a greater range of mishaps (e.g., accidents as well as crime). Also male respondents might be less inclined to admit feelings of fear or anxiety than females. For cross-country comparisons, though, exactly what the ‘street safety’ question measures is secondary insofar as it is likely to be similarly interpreted.

**Figure 28** Percentage of population feeling very safe on the street after dark in 2004/05 and results from earlier surveys in countries that participated at least three times. 1992-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS\*



\* Source: van Dijk, J.J.M., Manchin, R., van Kesteren, J.N., Hideg, G. (2007). The Burden of Crime in the EU, a Comparative Analysis of the European Survey of Crime and Safety (2005 EU ICS). Brussels, Gallup Europe.

\*\* The average is based on countries taking part in each sweep. As countries included vary across sweeps, comparisons should be made cautiously.

There are several countries for which trends can be examined since 1992. Figure 28 gives the results.

Trends are not uniform across countries. In most countries the level has remained stable. Estonia, Australia, the USA and Canada are showing decreases. Fear of crime seemed to have gone down during the nineties in Poland but is now back to the level of 1992. In Belgium and Northern Ireland the trend between 2000 and 2004 seems to have gone up. The ranking of countries is relatively stable over the years. Those in Poland, Italy, Estonia and The United Kingdom consistently show the highest levels of unease, whereas those in Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Finland show least fear. A Eurobarometer study conducted in 2003 used the same question and showed an identical ranking of the countries (EORG, 2003).

#### **11.4 Relationship with national risks and victimisation experience**

As has been the case in previous sweeps of the ICVS, this measure of street safety is not consistently related to levels of contact crime (robbery, sexual incidents, and assaults & threats) ( $r = -.07$ ;  $n=28$ ; n.s.). In Portugal, for instance, risks are low, but fear of street crime is much higher than, say, in Sweden where actual national risks of contact crime are greater. One reason for this lack of a relationship between anxiety and risks is that fear of street crime may be influenced by non-conventional forms of crime such as drugs dealing in public or other incivilities. The EU ICS 2005 included a question on personal contacts with drug-related problems such as seeing people dealing drugs, taking or using drugs in public spaces or finding syringes left by drug addicts. These findings were discussed in chapter 6. The correlation coefficient between this variable and feeling unsafe is strong ( $r=0.79$ ,  $n=17$ ) (Van Dijk, Manchin, Van Kesteren & Hideg, 2007). The results indicate that in Europe exposure to drug-related problems is a major source of fear of street crime. Relationships between personal contacts with drug-related problems and fear of crime have previously also been found at the level of individuals (Van Dijk, 1996).