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Onderzoek en beleid

Criminal Victimization in International Perspective

Key findings from the 2004-2005 ICVS and EU ICS

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5 Victimization by contact crimes

In this chapter victimisation rates are presented for contact crimes. The three contact crimes in the ICVS 2005 are robbery, sexual incidents, and assaults & threats. Sexual incidents are divided into sexual assault and what victims described as offensive sexual behaviour. Assaults & threats can be separated into assaults with force and threats only. Where available, rates from previous years have been added to determine possible trends over time. Results from the main city surveys are presented separately.

5.1 Robbery

The question on robberies was formulated as follows:

'Over the past five years has anyone stolen something from you by using force or threatening you, or did anybody try to steal something from you by using force or threatening force?'

The average victimisation rate for robbery is 1% at the country level and 2.4% in participating cities. Rates in cities in developing countries are notably higher (6.1%). Robbery is one of the types of crime that is much more prevalent in larger cities than in rural areas and can therefore be characterized as a typical manifestation of urban problems of crime.

Figure 15 shows that robbery rates tend to be significantly higher in main cities than in the country as a whole. The difference is most pronounced in the USA where New York's rate (2.3%) is almost four times the national rate (0.6%). Notable exceptions are Dublin, Stockholm and Athens. Table 11 shows the distribution across countries and cities.

The risk of robbery was comparatively low in almost all countries and differences between developed countries are small. At country level, risks were highest in 2004 in Mexico. Risks were lowest in Japan, Italy, Finland, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands (0.5% or lower). Among main cities the top six places are all taken up by cities in developing countries with Buenos Aires first place with an annual victimisation rate of 10%. Rates are also high in the two participating cities of Brazil. All rates of participating countries or cities from Latin America are comparatively high (from 3% in Mexico nationwide to 10% in Buenos Aires).

Trends over time are mainly downwards, but not universally. Significant drops in robberies were observed in Spain (compared to 1988), Poland, the USA and Estonia. Rates in the England & Wales, Northern Ireland and Sweden seem to have remained stable or increased slightly.

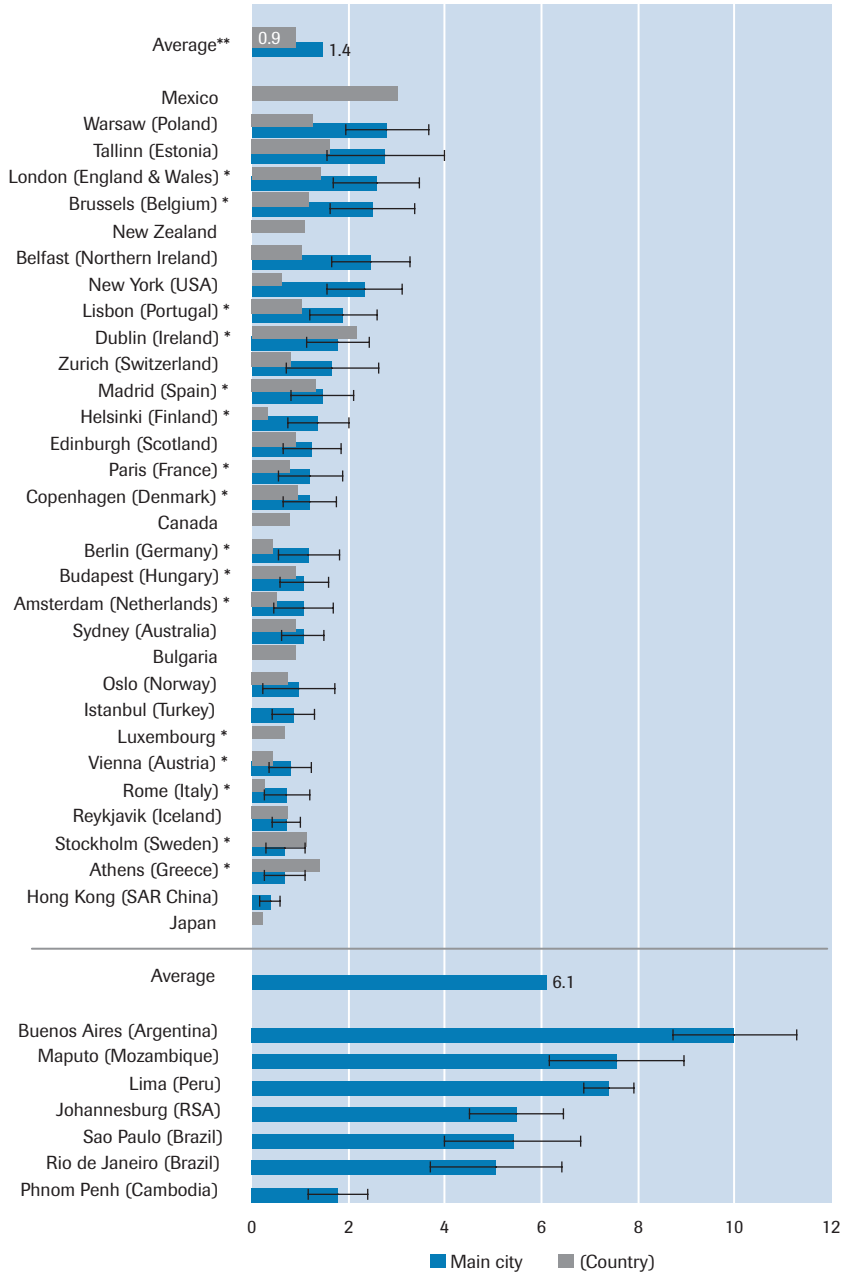
Table 11 Robbery; one year prevalence rates in 2003/04 (percentages) in countries and main cities and results from earlier surveys. 1989-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS*

<i>Countries</i>	1988	1991	1995	1999	2003-2004	<i>Main cities</i>	2001-2004
Mexico					3.0	Warsaw (Poland)	2.8
Ireland					2.2 *	Tallinn (Estonia)	2.8
Estonia		3.1	3.4	2.8	1.6	London (England)	2.6 *
England & Wales	0.7	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.4 *	Brussels (Belgium)	2.5 *
Greece					1.4 *	Belfast (Northern Ireland)	2.5
Spain	3.1				1.3 *	New York (USA)	2.3
Poland		1.7	1.8	1.8	1.3	Lisbon (Portugal)	1.9 *
Belgium	1.0	1.0		1.0	1.2 *	Dublin (Ireland)	1.8 *
Sweden		0.3	0.5	0.9	1.1 *	Zurich (Switzerland)	1.7
New Zealand		0.7			1.1	Madrid (Spain)	1.5 *
Northern Ireland	0.5		0.5	0.1	1.1	Helsinki (Finland)	1.4 *
Portugal				1.1	1.0 *	Edinburgh (Scotland)	1.2
Denmark				0.7	0.9 *	Paris (France)	1.2 *
Australia	0.9	1.3		1.2	0.9	Copenhagen (Denmark)	1.2 *
Scotland	0.5	.	0.8	0.7	0.9	Berlin (Germany)	1.2 *
Bulgaria					0.9	Budapest (Hungary)	1.1 *
Hungary					0.9 *	Amsterdam (Netherlands)	1.1 *
Switzerland	0.5		0.9	0.7	0.8	Sydney (Australia)	1.1
Canada	1.1	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.8	Oslo (Norway)	1.0
France	0.4		1.0	1.1	0.8 *	Istanbul (Turkey)	0.9
Iceland					0.8	Vienna (Austria)	0.8 *
Norway	0.5				0.8	Rome (Italy)	0.7 *
Luxembourg					0.7 *	Reykjavik (Iceland)	0.7
USA	1.9	1.5	1.3	0.6	0.6	Stockholm (Sweden)	0.7 *
Netherlands	0.8	1.0	0.6	0.8	0.5 *	Athens (Greece)	0.7 *
Austria			0.2	.	0.4 *	Hong Kong (SAR China)	0.4
Germany	0.8				0.4 *	Average	1.4
Finland	0.7	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.3 *	<i>Cities in developing countries</i>	
Italy		1.3			0.3 *	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	10.0
Japan				0.1	0.2	Maputo (Mozambique)	7.6
						Lima (Peru)	7.4
						Johannesburg (RSA)	5.5
						Sao Paulo (Brazil)	5.4
						Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	5.1
						Phnom Penh (Cambodia)	1.8
Average**	1.0	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.0	Average	6.1

* 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.

Figure 15 Robbery; one year prevalence rates in 2003/04 (percentages) in countries and main cities. 2001-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS*



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

** The average is based on countries and cities taking part. Since there is not for every country a main city and for some countries only a main city, comparing this total average should be done with caution. There are 23 countries with both national and main city data.

Details of robbery

Many robberies are committed by groups of perpetrators. About six in ten victims said that more than one offender was involved – similar to previous sweeps. Something was actually stolen in about half of the cases.

On average, a weapon was present in 28% of the robberies committed in the 30 countries over a period of five years. In half these cases this was a knife (14% of all robberies) and in one in six it involved a gun (5.5% of all robberies). Although numbers are small, there appears to be significant variation in the extent to which weapons were present across countries. The range goes from 0% in Japan to 63% in Mexico. In Mexico 30% of all robberies were committed with a gun.

Of the robberies committed in main cities, 39% involved a weapon (one in two a knife and one in four a gun). Of all robberies in main cities on average 19% involved a knife and 12% a gun. In several cities more than half of all robberies involved a weapon: Rio, Sao Paulo, Phnom Penh, Lima, Rome, Madrid, Istanbul and New York and Johannesburg.

Cities with the highest proportions of robberies at gun point are Phnom Penh (66%), Rio (56%), Sao Paulo (51%), Johannesburg (47%) and New York (27%). In these cities, the five year prevalence rate for gun robberies is above 1% (Phnom Penh: 4.8%; Rio: 9.7%; Sao Paulo: 9.0%; Johannesburg: 9.4%; New York: 1.6%).

For details, see appendix 9.4, table 22.

5.2 Sexual offences

The question¹ put to respondents was:

'First, a rather personal question. People sometimes grab, touch or assault others for sexual reasons in a really offensive way. This can happen either at home, or elsewhere, for instance in a pub, the street, at school, on public transport, in cinemas, on the beach, or at one's workplace. Over the past five years, has anyone done this to you? Please take your time to think about this.'

In the 2004/05 sweep of the ICVS / EU ICS the question on sexual offences was put to both female and male respondents. Positive answers from male respondents were much lower than from women. On average 0.5% of male respondents recorded a sexual incident. There was little variation but

1 Sexual offences were not asked in the Australian survey, see Challice & Johnson (2005).

somewhat higher percentages were recorded in Denmark (1.9%) and the Netherlands (1.4%). On average 1.7% of women reported victimisation. To maintain comparability with results of previous sweeps the rates presented here are calculated for women only. Details of sexual victimisations of men are given in appendix 9.1, tables 1-8.

Measuring sexual incidents is extremely difficult in victimisation surveys, since perceptions as to what is unacceptable sexual behaviour may differ across countries. Contrary to popular belief, there is no indication that asking for victimisation by sexual offences over the phone causes problems, provided skilled interviewers are used for the fieldwork. Previous multivariate analyses have, however, shown that gender equality is inversely related to victimisation by sexual offences (Kangaspunta, 2000). The finding that women in some societies with greater gender equality such as Sweden report more such victimisations may suggest that women in countries where gender equality is more advanced are more inclined to report sexual incidents, especially minor ones to interviewers. Such effect would seriously deflate national rates of developing countries and compromise any attempt at global comparisons.

In many countries dedicated surveys, using more extensive questionnaires, have been conducted on experiences of women with sexual abuse and other forms of violence by men (United Nations, 2006). Secondary analyses of these surveys have confirmed that intimate partner violence is most prevalent in developing countries, a finding seemingly at odds with ICVS results on sexual offences. The ICVS measures on sexual violence, then, need to be interpreted with more than usual caution. An additional reason to exercise great caution is the recurrent finding that rates of sexual offences of countries are less stable over the years than those of other types of crime. This finding may indicate that responses to the question on sexual incidents are susceptible to events or media campaigns that may have temporarily raised awareness about this issue.

Respondents reporting victimisation by sexual offences were asked for details about what happened. Sexual incidents can be broken down into sexual assaults and incidents of a less serious nature. Sexual assaults (i.e., incidents described as rape, attempted rape or indecent assaults) were less common than sexual behaviour that was deemed to be 'just offensive'. It seems plausible that cultural factors play a lesser role in reporting on the most serious types of sexual incidents. In order to reduce biases in the findings resulting from differential definitions and perceptions, we will focus our presentation on sexual assaults only. It should be borne in mind that risks are based on smaller numbers of respondents (females only) and are relatively low for sexual assaults. Firm conclusions about vulnerability of countries or cities are therefore hard to draw. Triangulation of

ICVS findings with results of dedicated, standardised surveys of violence against women as promoted by inter alia HEUNI, are called for (Nevala, forthcoming 2007). Table 12 shows the results on sexual assaults against women.

Table 12 Sexual assault against women; one-year prevalence rates in 2003/04 (percentages) in countries and main cities and results from earlier surveys. 1989–2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS*

<i>Countries</i>	1988	1991	1995	1999	2003–2004	<i>Main cities</i>	2001–2004
USA	1.4	0.6	1.2	0.4	1.4	New York (USA)	1.5
Iceland					1.4	Copenhagen (Denmark)	1.4 *
Sweden		0.5	1.5	1.1	1.3	Helsinki (Finland)	1.4 *
Northern Ireland	0.3		0.5	0.1	1.2 *	Reykjavik (Iceland)	1.3
Norway	0.3				0.9	Istanbul (Turkey)	1.1
England & Wales	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.9	0.9 *	London (England)	0.9 *
Switzerland	0.6		1.2	0.6	0.9	Zurich (Switzerland)	0.9
Japan				0.1	0.8	Oslo (Norway)	0.8
Ireland					0.8 *	Belfast (Northern Ireland)	0.8
Canada	1.2	1.6	0.9	0.8	0.8	Hong Kong (SAR China)	0.7
New Zealand		1.3			0.7	Edinburgh (Scotland)	0.6
Scotland	0.6		0.2	0.3	0.6	Rome (Italy)	0.6 *
Netherlands	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.6 *	Amsterdam (Netherlands)	0.5 *
Poland		1.5	0.6	0.2	0.5	Berlin (Germany)	0.4 *
Denmark				0.4	0.5 *	Stockholm (Sweden)	0.3 *
Luxembourg					0.4 *	Athens (Greece)	0.3 *
Greece					0.4 *	Tallinn (Estonia)	0.3
Austria			1.2		0.4 *	Paris (France)	0.2 *
Germany	1.1				0.4 *	Madrid (Spain)	0.1 *
Finland	0.3	1.5	1.0	1.1	0.4 *	Dublin (Ireland)	0.1 *
Belgium	0.5	0.9		0.3	0.4 *	Budapest (Hungary)	0.1 *
Italy		0.6			0.3 *	Brussels (Belgium)	0.1 *
Estonia		1.4	1.0	1.9	0.3	Vienna (Austria)	0.1 *
France	0.4		0.4	0.7	0.3 *	Lisbon (Portugal)	0.1 *
Portugal				0.2	0.2 *	Average	0.6
Spain	0.6				0.1 *	<i>Cities in developing countries</i>	
Bulgaria					0.1	Maputo (Mozambique)	1.8
Hungary					0.0 *	Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	1.3
Mexico					0.0	Lima (Peru)	1.3
						Phnom Penh (Cambodia)	1.2
						Sao Paulo (Brazil)	1.1
						Johannesburg (RSA)	1.0
						Buenos Aires (Argentina)	0.8
Average**	0.6	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.6	Average	1.2

* 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.

For all countries combined, only 0.6 % reported sexual assaults. About one in a hundred women in the USA, Iceland, Sweden, Northern Ireland, Australia, Norway, England & Wales and Switzerland reported sexual assaults in the context of a general survey on crime. Differences between these countries are statistically negligible.

Rates of sexual assault are equally rare in main cities (0.7% on average, 0.6% in cities in developed countries and 1.2% in cities in developing countries). Cities with rates of 1% or higher are mainly found in developing countries as well as New York, Copenhagen and Helsinki. Maputo stands out with a rate of 1.8%.

Details of sexual offences

Looking at what women said about the 'last incident' that had occurred, and taking all 30 countries together, offenders were known to the victim in about half of the incidents described as both offensive behaviour and sexual assault. In over a third they were known by name and in about a tenth by sight only.

In cases where the perpetrator was known by name, it was an ex-partner (spouse or boyfriend) in 11%, colleague or boss in 17%, current partner in 8% and close friend in 16% of the cases. These results are similar to those in the previous sweeps.

Most sexual incidents involved only one offender (78%). In 8% of the cases three or more offenders were involved. Weapons were only rarely involved in sexual offences (8%). A gun was on average present in 1.1% of all assaults and a knife in 0.5%. The USA stands out with a presence of a gun in 4.5% of the cases.

Weapons are not very often used in sexual offences (in 3% of cases in countries and in 7.3% in main cities). If a weapon was used, it was more often a knife than a gun. Cities that stand out with significantly higher proportions sexual offences with the use of weapons are Johannesburg (41%), and Maputo (26%). The five year prevalence rate for a gun related sexual attack is 1.6% in Johannesburg and 0.6% in Maputo.

For details, see appendix 9.4, table 22.

5.3 Assaults & threats

The question asked of respondents to identify assaults & threats follows the one on sexual incidents/offences and was:

'Apart from the incidents just covered, have you over the past five years been personally attacked or threatened by someone in a way that really frightened you, either at home or elsewhere, such as in a pub, in the street, at school, on public transport, on the beach, or at your workplace?'

Table 13 provides an overview of the key findings.

Overall, 3.1% of the respondents at the country level indicated that they had been a victim of an assault with force or a threat of force. There were higher than average rates in Northern Ireland, Iceland, England & Wales, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the USA (4% and above). Levels were lowest in Italy, Portugal, Hungary, and Spain (below 2%). The mean city rate in developed countries was very similar (3.7%). Rates in developing countries tend to be higher (mean 6.1%).

As with sexual incidents, differences in definitional thresholds cannot be ruled out in explaining the pattern of results. However, this should not be overstated. When asked to assess the seriousness of what had happened, there is fair consistency across countries in how seriously incidents are viewed (Van Kesteren, Mayhew, Nieuwbeerta, 2000).

Respondents were asked whether during the incident force was actually used. For the sub-set of incidents which are described as amounting to assaults with force, the mean rate was 0.9%. Figure 16 shows national rates for threats and assaults combined and assaults only.

Details of assaults & threats

Looking at what was said about the 'last incident', and again taking all 30 countries together, offenders were known to the victim in about half the incidents of both assaults and threats. Men, though, were less likely to know the offender(s) than women. The latter finding indicates that violence against women is of a different nature. One offender is involved in 60% of violent crimes against women, compared to 40% in cases of violence against men.

On average a weapon was present in 17% of cases of assault or threat in countries (based on cases over the last five years). Of all incidents 6.4% involved a knife and 2.4% a gun. Mexico, the USA and Northern Ireland stand out with the highest percentages gun-related attacks (16%, 6% and 6% respectively).

In the main cities 22.6% of all attacks involved a weapon; in 9.4% a knife was involved and in 5% a gun. Cities with the highest percentages gun attacks are Rio (39%), Sao Paulo (35%), Phnom Penh (13%), Johannesburg (13%), Istanbul (10%), New York (10%), Brussels (10%), Maputo (7%), and Belfast (6%). In these cities the five year prevalence rates for gun attacks was 1% or higher (Rio: 2.7%; Sao Paulo: 2.5%; Johannesburg: 2.2%; Maputo: 1.6%; New York: 1.3%; Belfast: 1.2%, Brussel: 1%).

For details, see appendix 9.4, table 22.

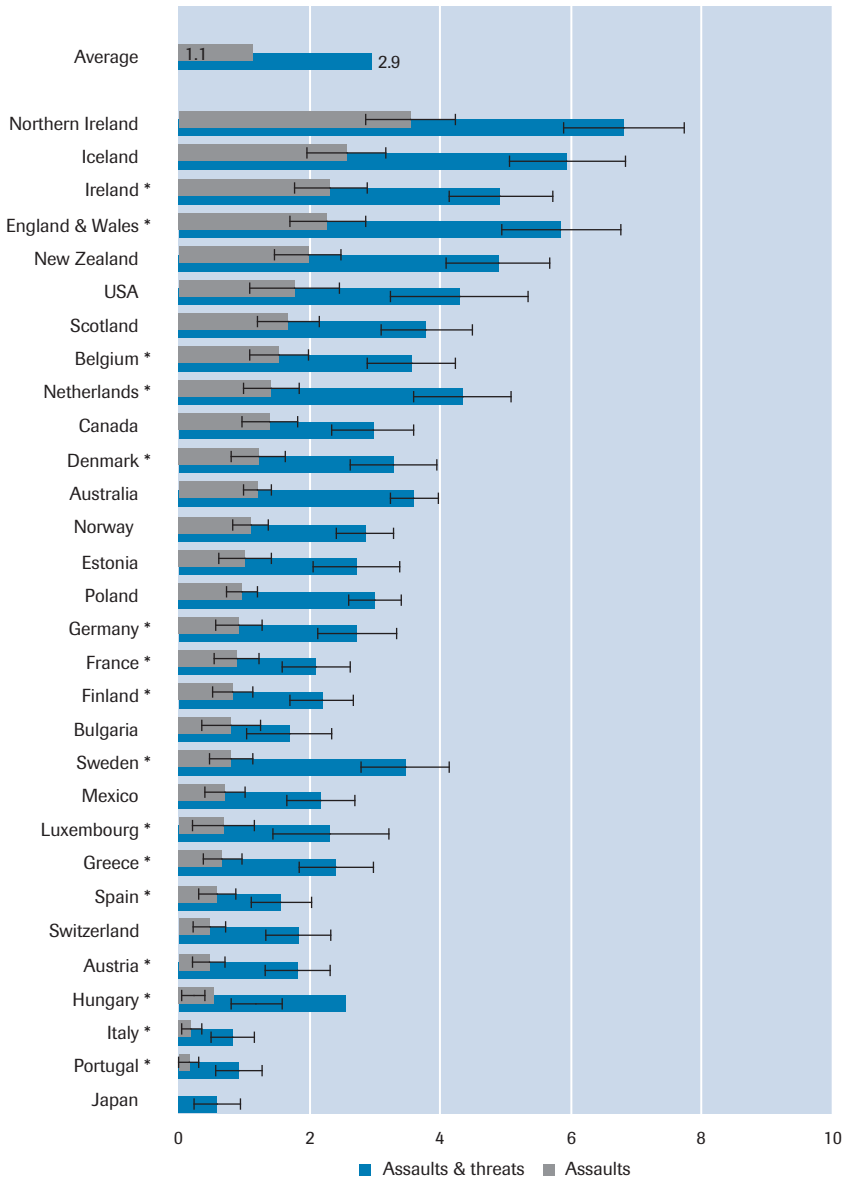
Table 13 Assaults & threats; one year prevalence rates in 2003/04 (percentages) in countries and main cities and results from earlier surveys. 1989-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS*

<i>Countries</i>	1988	1991	1995	1999	2003-2004	<i>Main cities</i>	2001-2004
Northern Ireland	1.8		1.7	3.0	6.8	Belfast (Northern Ireland)	9.2
Iceland					5.9	London (England)	8.6 *
England & Wales	1.9	3.8	5.9	6.1	5.8 *	Reykjavik (Iceland)	7.0
Ireland					4.9 *	Amsterdam (Netherlands)	5.9 *
New Zealand		5.7			4.9	New York (USA)	5.1
Netherlands	3.3	4.0	4.0	3.4	4.3 *	Edinburgh (Scotland)	4.6
USA	5.4	4.7	5.7	3.4	4.3	Helsinki (Finland)	4.5 *
Australia	5.2	4.7		6.4	3.8	Berlin (Germany)	4.1 *
Scotland	1.8	.	4.2	6.1	3.8	Oslo (Norway)	4.1
Belgium	2.1	1.8	.	3.2	3.6 *	Dublin (Ireland)	3.9 *
Sweden		2.7	4.5	3.8	3.5 *	Tallinn (Estonia)	3.7
Denmark				3.6	3.3 *	Copenhagen (Denmark)	3.6 *
Poland		4.2	3.7	2.8	3.0	Zurich (Switzerland)	3.5
Canada	3.9	4.8	4.0	5.3	3.0	Stockholm (Sweden)	3.2 *
Norway	3.0				2.9	Paris (France)	3.1 *
Germany	3.1				2.7 *	Madrid (Spain)	2.9 *
Estonia		5.0	5.7	6.3	2.7	Sydney (Australia)	2.8
Switzerland	1.2		3.1	2.4	2.5	Brussels (Belgium)	2.6 *
Greece					2.4 *	Vienna (Austria)	2.5 *
Luxembourg					2.3 *	Athens (Greece)	2.4 *
Finland	2.9	4.4	4.1	4.2	2.2 *	Budapest (Hungary)	1.6 *
Mexico					2.2	Lisbon (Portugal)	1.3 *
France	2.0		3.9	4.2	2.1 *	Rome (Italy)	1.2 *
Austria			2.1		1.8 *	Hong Kong (SAR China)	1.2
Bulgaria					1.7	Istanbul (Turkey)	0.6
Spain	3.1				1.6 *	Average	3.7
Hungary					1.2 *	<i>Cities in developing countries</i>	
Portugal				0.9	0.9 *	Johannesburg (RSA)	11.2
Italy		0.8			0.8 *	Lima (Peru)	11.0
Japan				0.4	0.6	Phnom Penh (Cambodia)	6.8
						Maputo (Mozambique)	6.2
						Buenos Aires (Argentina)	3.2
						Sao Paulo (Brazil)	2.6
						Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	1.5
Average**	2.9	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.1	Average	6.1

* 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.

Figure 16 Assaults & threats and assaults only; one year prevalence rates in 2003/04 (percentages) in countries and main cities. 2004-2005 ICVS and 2005 EU ICS*



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