On the integration of Victim Surveys and Police Data

the case of the Netherlands

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The challenge

- **How to measure the number of crimes committed?**

- **Ideally all crimes should be reported by the victim and recorded by the police:**

VICTIM APPEAL

COULD THE PERSON WHO WAS MUGGED HERE LAST NIGHT PLEASE REPORT THE CRIME TO THE POLICE

grizelda

The challenge

- In practice this is not true: not every crime is recorded

- A more direct method – at least for crimes with a victim – is a victim survey

- But how reliable are the results from such a survey?

The research and the data

- This research was part of a larger project assessing the crime and safety situation in the Netherlands

- The objective of this research is to look at the *relative* numbers of crimes per offence type

- The idea is to look at a large (sample 200k, respondents 80k) victim survey and to investigate the validity of the results by linking the survey to police registration

- The actual linking and the basic analyses were done by Carin Reep (Statistics Netherlands)

Three mechanisms investigated

- The difference in respons behaviour between victims and non-victims and in particular the offence dependencies, e.g.: "Are victims of theft more (or less) willing to participate in a victim survey than victims of sexual offences?"

- Have those victims – who are victim according to the police registration – that responded to the victim survey indeed mentioned the offence in the survey as well? And is this different according to offence type?

- Can offences that were mentioned by respondents of the victim survey as been reported to the police indeed be found in the police registration. And are there differences according to offence type?

1) Respons rates victims and non-victims

Offence type	N	Resp%	Resp vict / non-victim	Correction
Violent	1010	30.5%	0.78	1.31
Sexual	69	35.3%	0.91	1.13
Robbery	203	39.7%	1.02	1.00
Theft	5901	39.7%	1.03	1.00
Burglary	1081	44.5%	1.14	0.90
Public order	1560	42.9%	1.10	0.93

2) Victims in police reg and found in survey

Offence type	N	Found in survey	Correction
Violent	173	67.8%	0.87
Sexual	12	33.7%	1.74
Robbery	43	59.2%	0.99
Theft	1671	58.7%	1.00
Burglary	352	87.6%	0.67
Public order	464	67.0%	0.88

3) Victims in survey and found in police reg

Offence type	N	Found in police reg	Correction
Violent	516	35.4%	0.72
Sexual	29	10.3%	0.21
Robbery	76	31.6%	0.64
Theft	4336	49.2%	1.00
Burglary	1656	53.6%	1.09
Public order	1208	41.1%	0.83

Corrections relative to theft

Offence type	1)	2)	3)	Total
Violent	1.31	0.87	0.72	**0.82**
Sexual	1.13	1.74	0.21	0.41
Robbery	1.00	0.99	0.64	0.64
Theft	1.00	1.00	1.00	**1.00**
Burglary	0.90	0.67	1.09	**0.66**
Public order	0.93	0.88	0.83	**0.68**

Conclusion

Relative to theft, there seems an over-reporting of other offence types in victim surveys, in particular for burglary and public order offences

Discussion

- The major problem here is that we only look at crimes reported: respons behaviour and validity could be different for crimes where the victim did not report the crime.

- It would be useful to repeat this study for other years & other countries