

# The Barbados Crime Survey 2002 – International Comparisons

## Main findings

- Barbados has one of the lowest crime rates of the 35 industrialised and developing countries which recently took part in the International Crime Victimization Survey.
- The countries with the lowest crime rates were Barbados, Japan and Northern Ireland.
- Barbados has below average rates of vehicle theft, theft from vehicles, vehicle vandalism, robbery and assault.
- Barbados has well below average crime rates for personal theft, sex offences, consumer fraud and corruption.
- The only crime where Barbados has a relatively high rate is burglary (including attempts).
- Victims of crime in Barbados judge the crimes they have been victims of as more serious than victims in industrialised countries but less serious than victims in developing countries.
- Barbados has a much higher rate of reporting crime to the police than most other countries.
- Barbados has the highest reporting rates of all countries surveyed for robbery, sex offences and assaults and threats.
- Barbadians were more likely than people in most countries to think the police do a good job in controlling crime and in being helpful.
- Victims' satisfaction with the police handling of their case is about average for the countries surveyed – being lower than in the industrialised countries but higher than the developing countries.
- Sex offence victims had a very low opinion of the police handling of their case compared with other countries.
- Barbadians have an average feeling of safety in their area after dark but are more likely than people in industrialised countries to feel unsafe at home.
- Barbadians are more likely than people in most countries to see prison as a fitting sentence for a recidivist burglar.

## Executive Summary

The Barbados Crime Survey (BarCS) aims to discover the true level of crime experienced by households, the extent to which crime is reported to the police and the reasons underlying reporting rates, the effects of crime on victims and the attitudes of the public to crime and criminal justice agencies. It was carried out in 2002. 8000 people, chosen at random, were interviewed across Barbados.

The BarCS used the same questionnaire as was administered in similar surveys of 34 industrialised and developing countries (the International Crime Victim Survey – ICVS) so that information gleaned about crime and justice in Barbados could be compared with similar information from those countries.

This report, which is the first in a series on the results of the survey, examines crime in Barbados and the other countries that have carried out the survey so that crime in Barbados can be put into an international context.

The next report will examine crime in Barbados in detail – showing, among other things, how much more crime there is than is recorded by the police, how many crimes are reported to the police and how many are recorded by the police. It will examine in detail burglary, robbery, violence against the person and car crime. It will produce attitudinal information as well as crime facts; it will show who is most at risk of being a victim.

This report is divided into three sections. The first deals with victimization rates and crime seriousness, the second with reporting crime to the police and the third with popular attitudes and fears.

## Section 1 – victimisation rates

Section 1 shows that Barbados has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. Only Japan and Northern Ireland share both low incidence rates (i.e. the proportion of people who were victims of one or more crimes) and low prevalence rates (i.e. the number of crimes per head of population). 15% of Barbadians, 30% of Australians, 26% of the British and 21% of Americans were victims of crime in a recent year.

### **Household crimes**

These crimes include burglary and vehicle crime.

- Barbados has a relatively high burglary rate compared with industrialised countries – but it is much lower than in most developing countries.
- Barbados has much less vehicle crime (theft of cars, theft from cars, vandalism) than the vast majority of countries who have carried out the ICVS.

### **Personal Crimes**

- Barbados has lower rates of assaults and threats than most ICVS countries.
- Barbados has much lower rates of robbery, personal theft and sex assaults than most of the ICVS participants.
- Barbadians are much less likely than average to suffer from consumer fraud.
- Only a tiny proportion of Barbadians have been asked for a bribe by public officials.

## **Profiles of crime**

The profile of crime (i.e. the proportion of crime different types of crime represent) in Barbados is quite different from that in industrialised countries – it is more like that experienced in African countries. The reason for this is that vehicle crime makes up a much smaller proportion of crime in Barbados than in the industrialised countries while contact crime (i.e. violence against the person and robbery) makes up a larger proportion.

## **Crime Seriousness**

Victims of crimes were asked how serious the crime had been for them:

- Barbadians ranked crime seriousness in a very similar way to people in industrialised countries. In both cases victims of car theft where the car was not recovered were most likely to rank it as serious (100% in Barbados) while victims of theft from cars or car vandalism were least likely to do so. In general, however, Barbadians saw crimes as more serious than did people in industrialised countries.
- Barbadian victims saw crimes as being less serious than victims in most developing countries.
- There is a clear implication from the results that development status and perceived crime seriousness were strongly linked – i.e. the poorer the country the more serious victims saw crime.

## **Section 2 -Reporting crime to the police**

- On the whole Barbadians were more likely to report crime to the police than victims in other countries.

- Barbadians had the highest rates in the world for reporting robbery and sex offences to the police. This could be because they were more likely to know their attacker than people in other countries.
- In industrialised countries, Asia and Latin America there was a small positive correlation between perceived crime seriousness and reporting particular crimes to the police; in Africa and Barbados there were very strong relationships between perceived seriousness and reporting to the police.
- There is a strong negative correlation between being asked for bribes and generally reporting crimes to the police, i.e. reporting rates are higher in countries where fewer people report being asked for bribes

#### **Victim satisfaction with police response**

- Barbadian victims were not particularly satisfied with police response to their crime. About as many countries thought the police response to burglary was better than Barbadian victims as though it was worse, whereas victims of assault in Barbados were comparatively dissatisfied and victims of sex assaults were very dissatisfied.
- Victims in Barbados were more likely to give the reason for their dissatisfaction as “the police did not give enough information” or “were slow to arrive” than victims in other countries.

#### **Section 3 – Popular Attitudes and fears**

- Barbadians in general have a higher regard for the police than people in most countries – only 4 countries thought their police did a better job controlling crime – 30 thought they were worse.
- Barbadians feel fairly safe on the streets compared with most countries – but there are 16 countries where people feel safer.

- Barbadians perception of their chances of being burgled is much higher than the actual risk. This is common to every country that has carried out a survey but the gap between reality and perception is greater in Barbados than in most countries.
- Barbadians are more likely than people in most countries to believe that burglars should be sent to prison for their crime.

Our general conclusion is that, although many Barbadians believe crime is a major problem which is getting significantly worse, compared with most other countries who have collected information, crime is at a low level. This should be a source of pride and reassurance to Barbadians although, of course, if crime is rising, even from a comparatively low level, that is still a serious matter for concern and action. The relatively low level of crime could also be of economic benefit to Barbados given the contribution of tourism to the economy, since it underlines the enormous potential for Barbados to market itself as a highly safe destination in an ever more insecure world.

## Background

These are the first published results from the Barbados Crime Survey (BarCS). The BarCS is a survey of approximately 8000 people, aged 16 and over, chosen at random across Barbados. It was carried out with the objective of finding out how many of them were victims of crime in 2001. The purpose of the survey is to:

- estimate the true level of crime against households in Barbados,
- find out what the effects of crime was on victims,
- find out whether victims reported these crimes to the police and if not why not,
- discover whether victims were satisfied with their treatment by the police,
- discover what actions they take to prevent crime,
- find out how safe people feel in their neighbourhood and their home,
- find out what people think of sentences handed down by the courts,
- discover what the public knows about crime and justice,
- find out who is most at risk of being a victim of crime,
- show how resources can be targeted most effectively to reduce crime.

The amount information collected by the survey is vast and will be analysed for months and even years to come but we have decided to start the analysis by looking at how crime and the reaction to it in Barbados compares with that in other countries. We believe that understanding the international context will enable us to understand more clearly the detailed information on Barbados which will be published later.

The traditional way of analysing crime and crime trends in all countries has been to use the figures produced by the police of crimes recorded by them. This is fairly easy to do but it has several disadvantages:

- many crimes are not reported to the police,
- some crimes reported to the police are not recorded by them,
- police forces in different countries report and count crime in different ways,
- reporting rates to the police for different crimes vary over time,

These problems mean that police recorded crime figures can never give a true record of the number of crimes; that apparent changes in crime rates may be produced by changes in reporting and recording rates; and that it is impossible to make meaningful international comparisons except, possibly, for homicide (and there are even problems in this area).

So, in order to measure crime at all accurately and to be able to make meaningful international comparisons an alternative way of counting crime has been devised. It is the crime survey.

In a crime survey (which many industrialised and developing countries now carry out) a random sample of the population is asked about their experience of crime, usually over the past year. In order to make international comparisons countries have to agree to ask the same questions in the same way. This gives the best estimate possible of crime rates in different countries.



There are disadvantages though.

- The results are subject to the normal problems of sampling error
- The crimes described are crimes which happen to people. Most surveys do not deal with retail crime, commercial crime, fraud, drug crimes and other victimless crimes.

However the results of crime surveys for household crimes are more dependable than those from police recorded crime figures and we are proud that Barbados has joined the 35 countries which carry out comparable crime surveys.

The crimes covered for international comparisons are:

Household crime:

burglary  
attempted burglary  
vehicle theft  
theft from vehicles  
vandalism of vehicles  
bicycle theft  
motorcycle theft.

Personal crime:

robbery  
theft from the person  
assault and threats  
sexual assaults

consumer fraud  
bribery/corruption.

And we have surveyed an additional crime – criminal damage to the home.

In 2000 the following industrialised countries took part in the ICVS:  
(This report follows the United Nations model of classifying countries as  
“industrialised” and “developing”). People were chosen at random from the  
whole country.

Australia  
Belgium  
Canada  
Spain (Catalonia)  
Denmark  
England and Wales  
Finland  
France  
Japan  
Netherlands  
Northern Ireland  
Poland  
Portugal  
Scotland  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
United States of America.

In 1997 people living in cities in the following developing countries  
were surveyed:

Asia:  
China

Africa:

Botswana

Egypt

Tanzania

Tunisia

Zimbabwe.

Latin America:

Argentina

Bolivia

Brazil

Colombia

Paraguay.

In the following countries people were interviewed in both rural and urban areas:

Asia:

India

Indonesia

The Philipines

Africa:

Uganda

Latin America:

Costa Rica

As can be seen in some developing countries only people in cities were interviewed. This will result in a higher victimisation rate than if a random selection had been made from the whole country. However, given Barbados' very high density of population and the fact that a high proportion of the population lives in urban areas comparisons with the results from the developing countries is legitimate.

The Barbados Survey took place in 2002 asking questions about crime experiences in 2001, so is the most up to date of the surveys. It is also the first to be carried out in the Caribbean. We hope that other countries in the region will join the ICVS so that we can get a better understanding about crime and justice in the Caribbean as a whole.

## Section 1

### VICTIMISATION RATES

Barbados has one of the lowest crime rates of all the countries surveyed. And this probably means one of the lowest crime rates in the world.

Clearly not all the countries in the world participated in the ICVS but the rates for crimes in the countries, which were surveyed, will be roughly representative of the regions they come from. Missing areas are the old Soviet Union and the Middle East. The old Soviet Union probably has high rates but we have no way of knowing rates in the Middle East (although Egypt has, on the whole, higher crime rates than Barbados).

Crime surveys use two ways to describe the level of crime in a country.

The **prevalence rate** is the percentage of those aged 16 or more who experienced one or more crimes in the period under study.

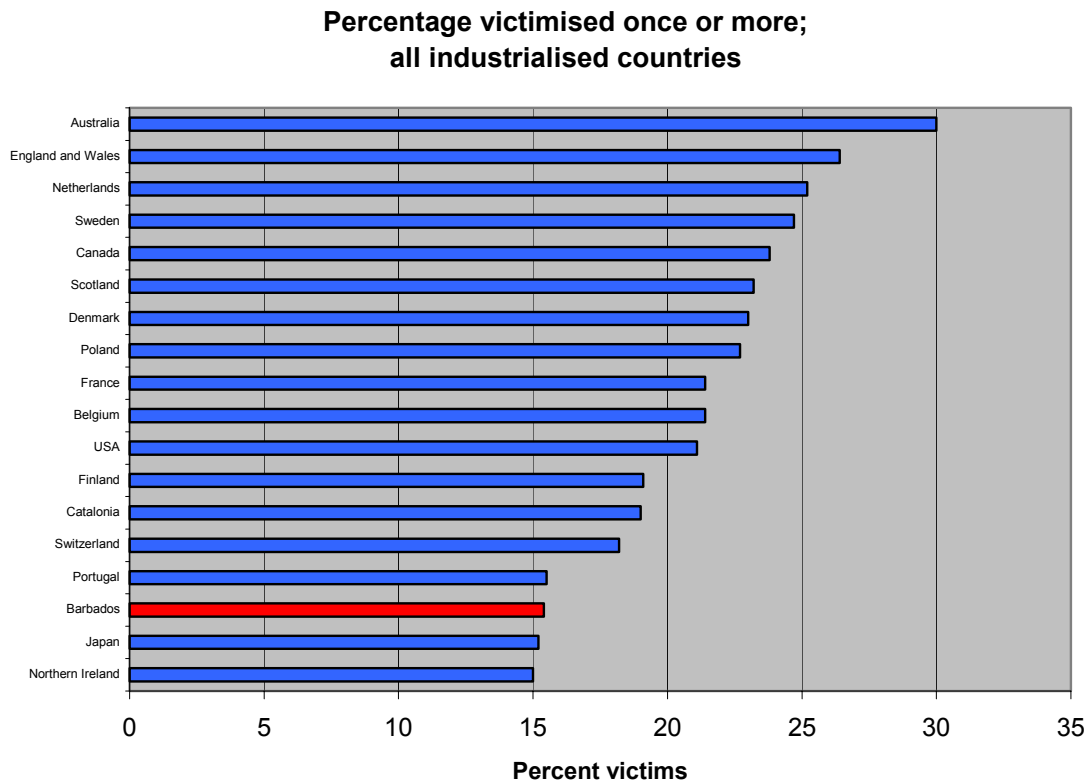
The **incidence rates** express the number of crimes experienced by each 100 people in the sample. These rates count all incidents against victims and therefore take into account those who might have experienced more than one incident.

For example, if a person was robbed twice and had their car stolen three times in a year, for prevalence calculations, they would be counted once in terms of a measure of overall (or any) victimisation; or once for robbery and once for car theft. For<sub>14</sub> incidence calculations, they would

contribute five crimes to the number of all crimes per 100 people, two for the incidence rate of robbery and three for the incidence rate of car theft.

### Overall crime rates

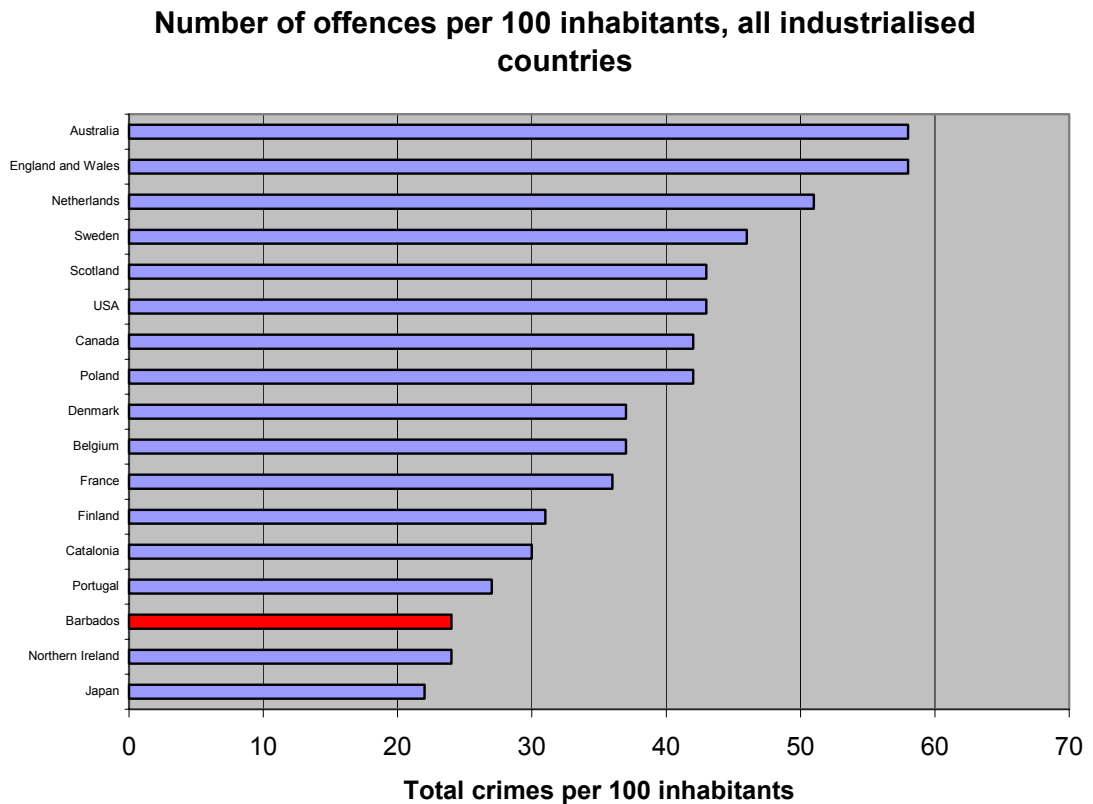
Chart 1 shows the prevalence of crime in the industrialised countries and Barbados – that is the proportion of the population which experienced one or more crimes in the year of the survey. (Overall prevalence and incidence rates are not published for the developing countries in the ICVS).



The chart show that while 30% of Australians, 26% of the British and 21% of Americans were crime victims only 15.4% of Barbadians were. Only Japan and Northern Ireland had 15% lower prevalence rates – although

these rates and that of Portugal, were not statistically significantly different from that of Barbados.

Chart 2 shows the incidence of crime in the same countries (i.e. the total number of crimes per 100 inhabitants).



Once again Barbados has a low rate (24) compared with the industrialised countries (average 38) – and once again there is no statistical difference between Barbados, Northern Ireland and Japan.



Barbados is one of the countries where there is not a great difference between the prevalence and the incidence rate (a difference of 9 percentage points compared with a difference of 28 percentage points for Australia and 32 percentage points for England and Wales). This means that not many Barbadians were victims of more than one crime.

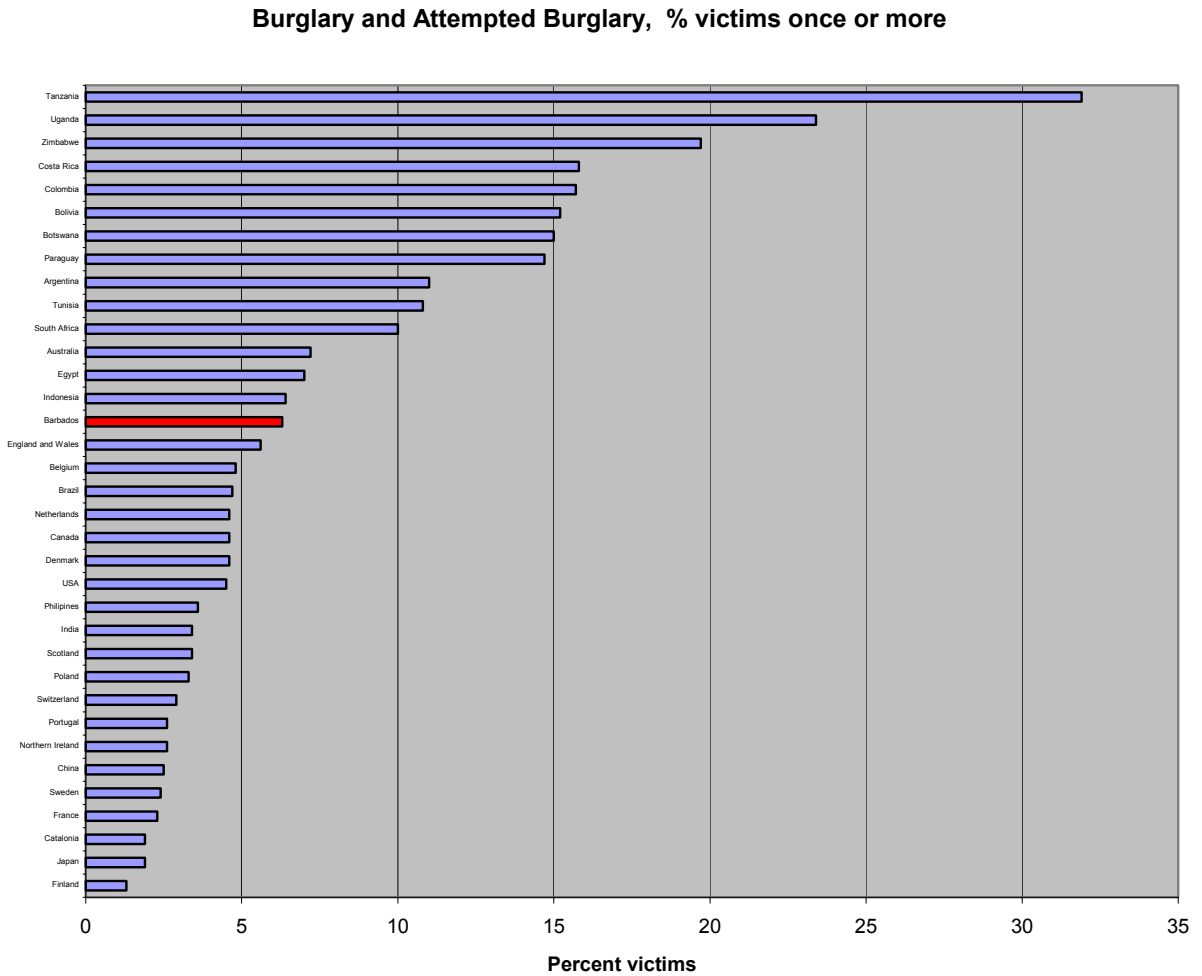
The low rates for Northern Ireland and Japan have been commented on many times and these countries are given as examples of places where strong informal social controls keep down crime levels. Barbados will join them now and probably for the same reason – in a country where many people know each other and communities are strong, crime will be kept down.

### Household Crimes

In the survey those interviewed were asked about two different types of crime – those that affected their household e.g. burglary and car crime and those that affected them personally e.g. robbery (see p 9-10 for a list of the crimes).

In this section we discuss household crimes.

## Burglary and attempted burglary



Burglary is the one crime where Barbados (with a prevalence rate of 6.3%) is above the average for industrialised countries (3.3%) and it is also above the average for the Asian developing countries. Barbados, is, however well below the average for Latin American countries (11.6%) or African countries (15.6%).

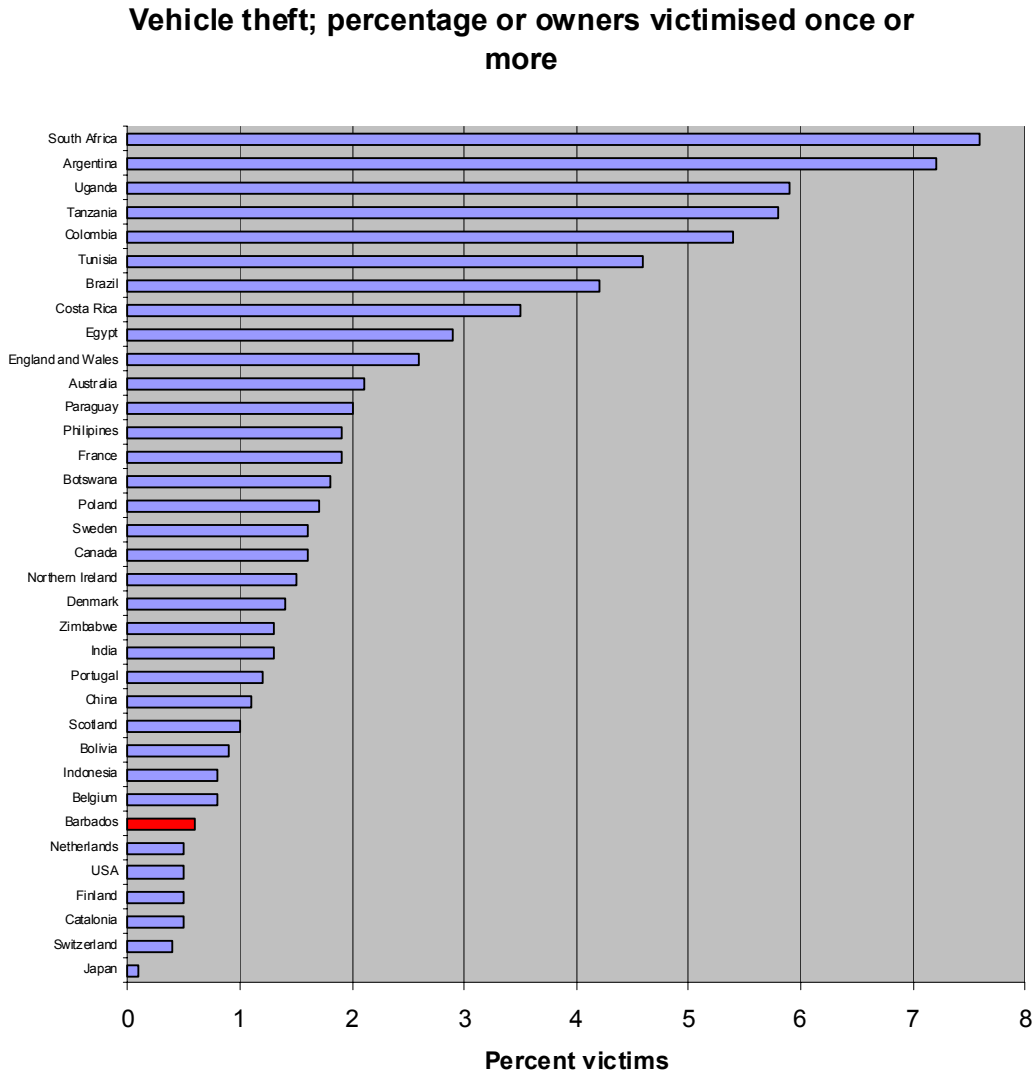
The extremes are Finland with only 1.2% of households burgled and Tanzania with 31.9%. One industrialised country (Australia) has a higher rate than Barbados, and England and Wales had a rate of 5.2%. Barbados, however, had a higher rate of burglaries with entry than any of the industrialised countries.

Why Barbados should have a comparatively high burglary rate is not yet known. As we will see it has very low rates of other acquisitive crimes so it may be that there are factors which discourage crimes like car theft (the size of the island) and robbery (face to face crime is too risky because people know each other) which do not work for burglary. Also, of course, many houses are very insecure and could present easy opportunities for the potential burglar – but we will have to look at this matter in more detail in a later bulletin.

### **Motor vehicle Crime**

The extent of vehicle ownership clearly affects the amount of crime related to it – a country with few cars will have a lower motor vehicle crime rate than one with many cars. So in this section we are only examining crimes against vehicle owners as opposed to the entire population. Thus although Barbados has a lower vehicle ownership rate (about 50%) than any of the industrialised countries (but considerably higher than many developing countries) we can make direct comparisons by examining the victimisation of owners.

## Vehicle Theft



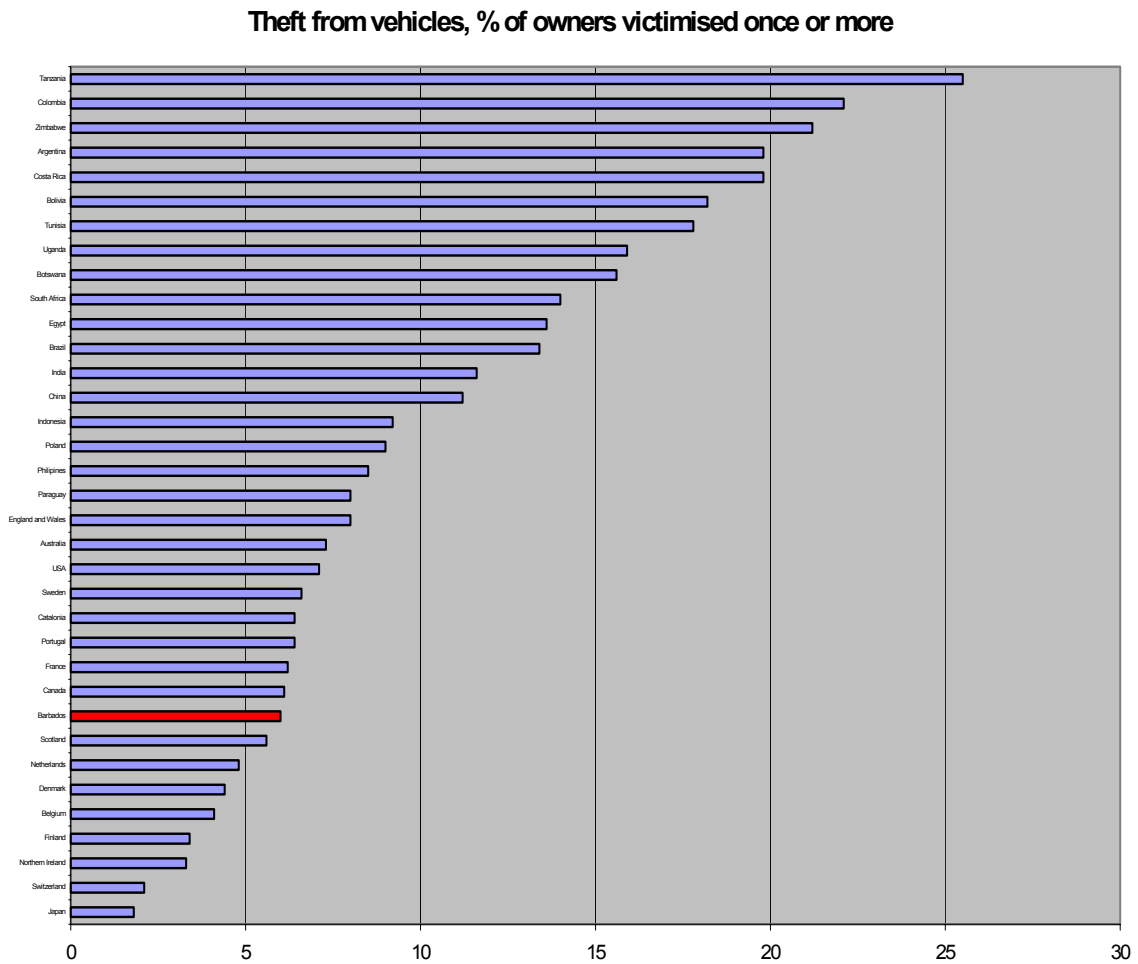
Vehicle theft is not a major problem in Barbados (236 were stolen in 2001) and Barbados has one of the lowest rates of the ICVS countries.

As can be seen Barbados has a vehicle theft rate per vehicle owner (0.6%) very similar to the Netherlands, United States of America, Finland and Catalonia and it contrasts with South Africa (7.6%), Argentina (7.2%) and England and Wales (2.6%).

It is not difficult to see why Barbados should have such a low rate. The size of the country undoubtedly limits the places to hide stolen cars.

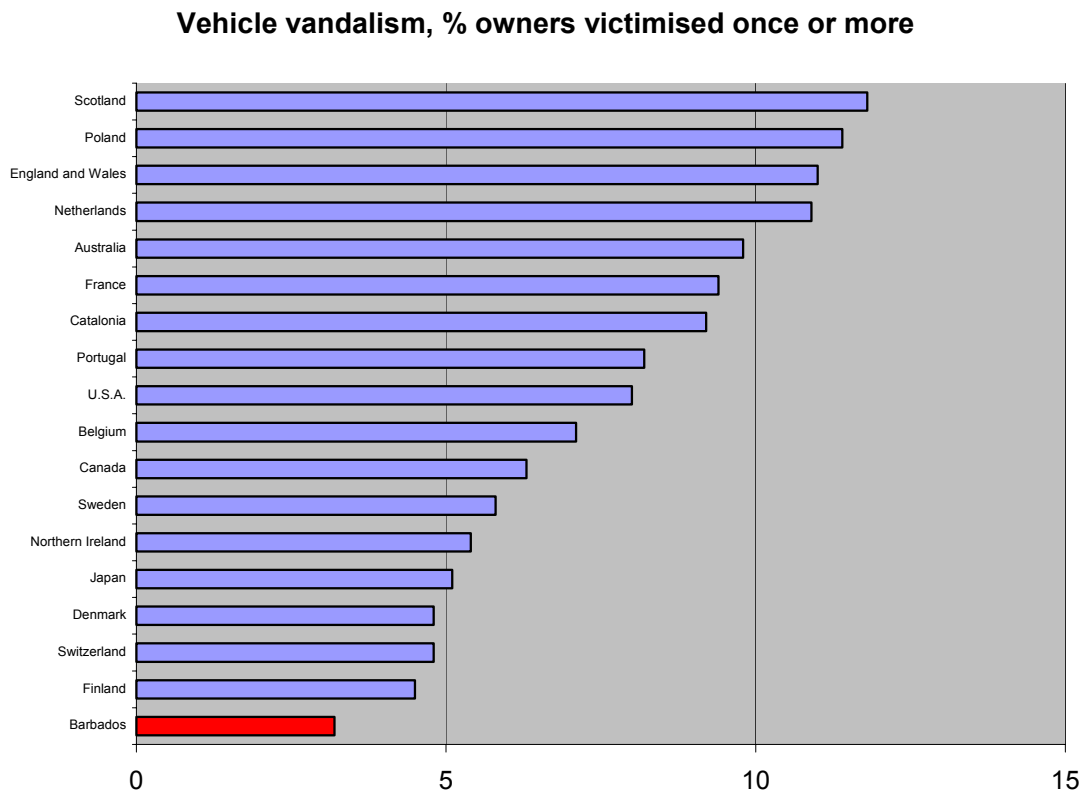
### Theft from vehicles

Here of course, the size of Barbados has no influence on the level of the crime and the prevalence rates are higher than for car theft.



Nevertheless, Barbados is in the lowest quarter of countries for theft from cars with a rate per car owner (6.0%) that is lower than in any developing country and is round about the average for industrialised countries (5.5%). It is lower than in United States of America, England and Wales and Australia.

## Vehicle Vandalism



No rates for vandalism of vehicles related to vehicle ownership are available for developing countries so we can only compare Barbados' experience with that of the industrialised countries. As can be seen the Barbados rate is considerably lower than that of any industrialised country. And Barbados and Sweden are the only countries where the vandalism

rate is lower than the theft from vehicle rate. In places like the United Kingdom the vandalism rate is over three times that of Barbados.

### **Bicycle and Motor Bicycle Theft**

Again no rates are published for the developing countries for the theft of bicycles and motor bicycles. The Barbados rate is lower than the industrialised countries average for motorcycle theft (1.7% compared with 1.9%) but a little higher for bicycle theft (5.9% compared with 4.7%).

One of the reasons for the low motor cycle rate may be that few people know how to drive motorcycles (only 1½% of households own one) and the higher rate for bicycles will be related to the relatively high bicycle ownership rate and the relatively low motor car ownership rate. It has been shown that there is an inverse relationship between car theft rates and bicycle theft rates; Barbados has a very low car theft rate.

### **Personal Crime**

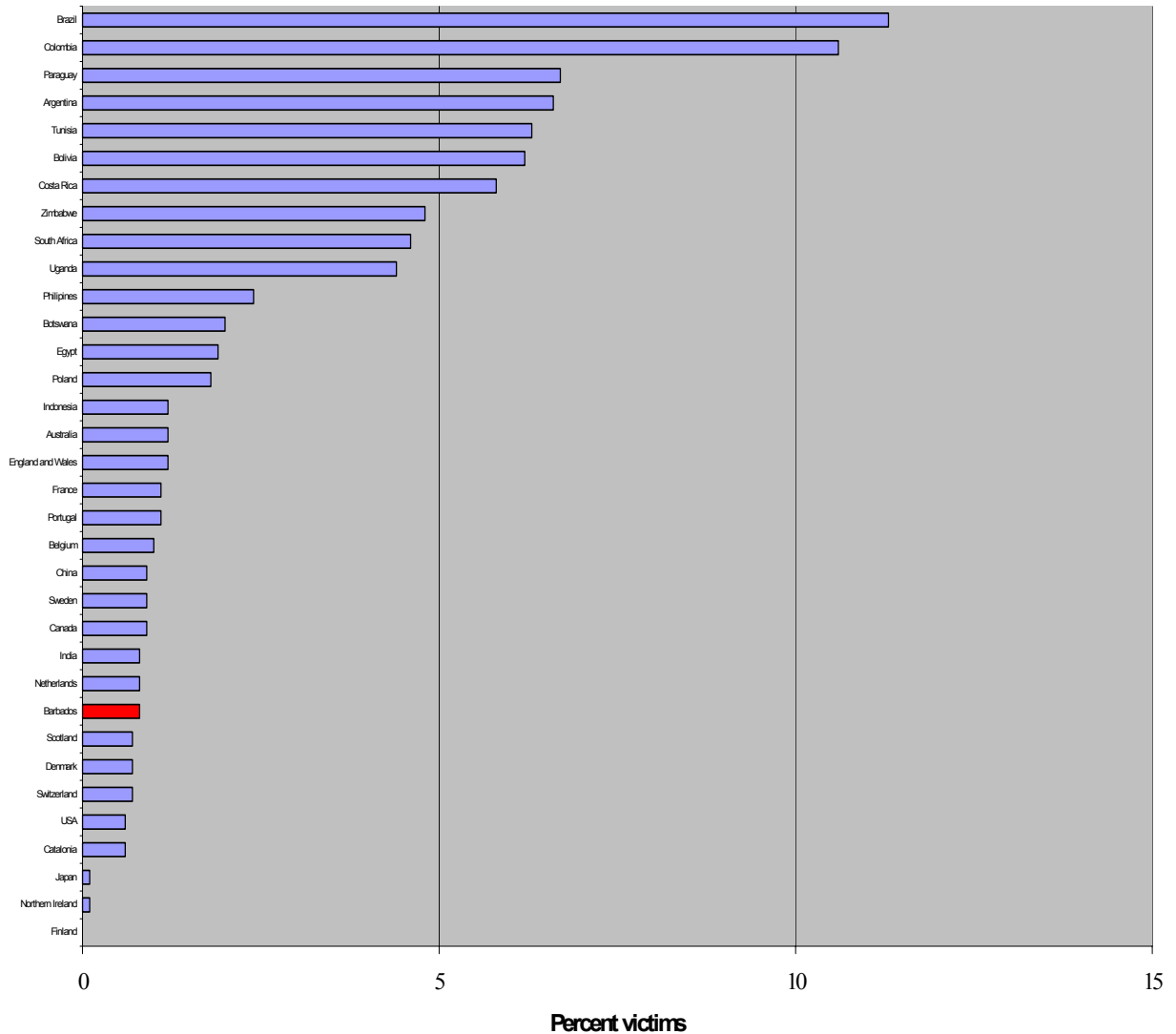
This section deals with crimes against people rather than against households and includes robbery, assaults and threats, theft from the person and sexual assaults against women.

#### **Robbery**

Robbery is theft or attempted theft from the person using force or threat of force. It is thus one of the most serious personal crimes.

The risk of robbery was comparatively low in all the industrialised countries and Barbados and in India and China.

### Robbery, percentage victimised once or more



Barbados once again comes in the lowest quarter of the countries (with 0.8% chance of being robbed) but there really is little to differentiate the risk of robbery for the lowest 20 countries. The area with the greatest risk is clearly Latin America where rates vary between 5.8% in Costa Rica to 11.3% in Brazil.

The ICVS for the industrialised countries has some details related to robberies.



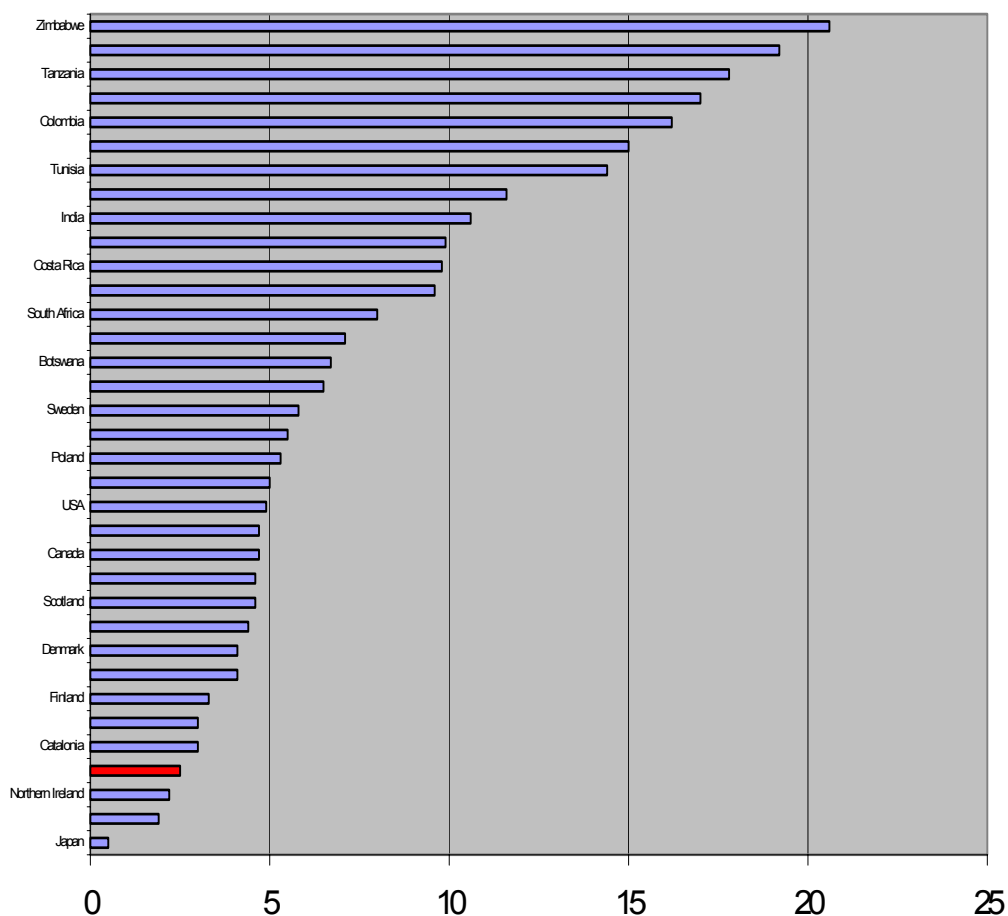
- On average 60% of victims said that more than 1 offender was involved. In Barbados 50% said it was more than one.
- On average just over 33% of victims in industrialised countries said that the offender had a weapon and 20% said they had a gun. In Barbados the figures were higher. 56% said the offender had a weapon and 28% said they had a gun.

[There will be detailed discussion on robberies in Barbados in the next publication on the BarCS].

### **Theft of personal property**

Personal thefts involve the theft of personal property (such as a wallet, clothing from the beach or a purse at work) without the use of force.

### Personal theft; percentage victimised once or more

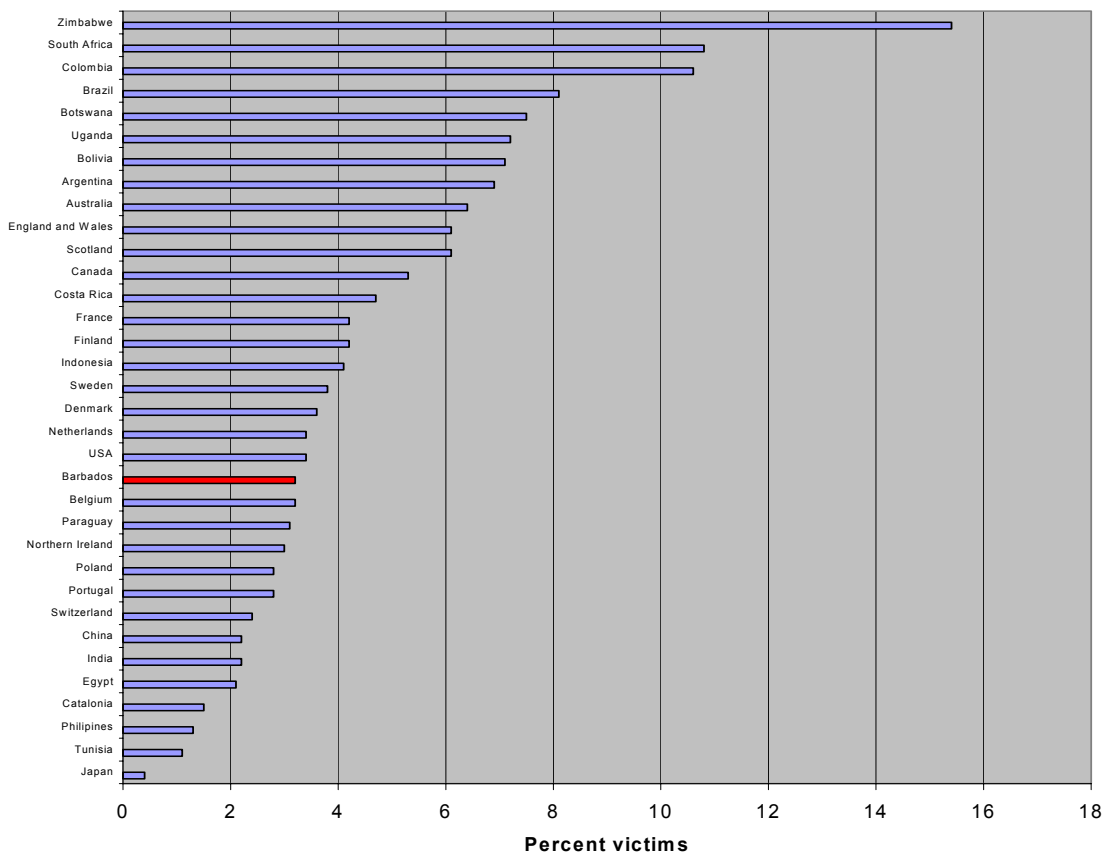


As can be seen from the chart Barbadians reported a much lower incidence of this crime (2.5%) than in the great majority of other countries. Only Japan reported a significantly lower proportion victimized. Once again African and Latin American countries reported rates five to eight times as high as Barbados. Zimbabwe has the highest rate – 20.6%.

### Assaults and threats

The questionnaire asked, “were you personally attacked, or threatened by someone in a way which really frightened you”? Unlike robbery this violence does not involve a monetary motive.

### Assault and Threats; percentage victimised once or more

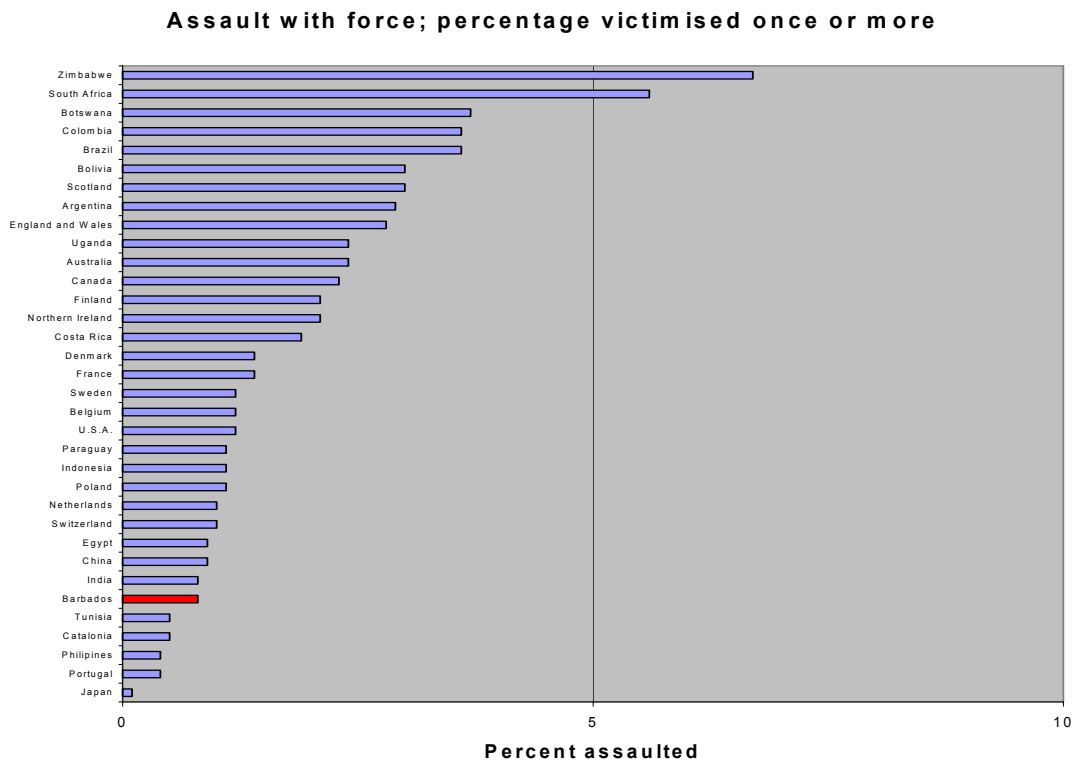


As can be seen from the chart for assaults and threats Barbados comes out relatively high up the chart, although fourteen countries, including Barbados came within 1 percentage point of each other.

Canada (5.3%) England and Wales (6.1%) Australia (6.4%) South Africa (10.8%) and Zimbabwe (15.4%) were among the countries with significantly higher rates than Barbados.

## Assaults with force

We also asked whether force was actually used. The percentage victimization rates dropped dramatically. Barbados victimization rate went down from 3.2% when threats were included to only 0.8% when they were not.



When only assaults with force are examined Barbados drops down the chart significantly because a lower proportion of the threats were carried out here than elsewhere. In Barbados only 25% of possibly violent confrontations ended in violence. This is much lower than Northern Ireland (70% ended in actual violence), Finland (50%), and in England and Wales (46%). The only country where fewer potentially violent situations ended in violence was Portugal at 14%.

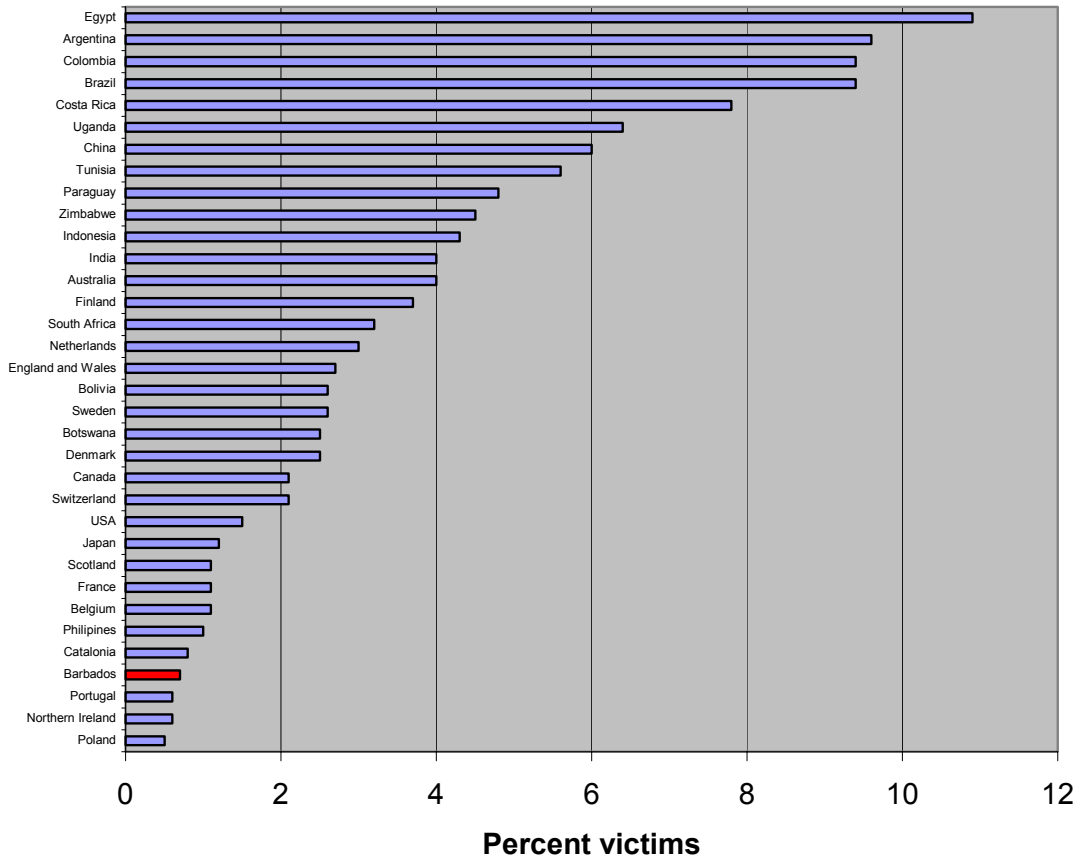
In the industrialised countries, on average, about 50% of the offenders were known by the victim. In Barbados it was 79% and 60% knew the offender by name! Only 18% did not know the offender.

In the industrialised countries a weapon was said to be used (if only as a threat) in 25% of cases. In Barbados it was 38%.

### **Sexual Assaults**

Women (only) were asked whether they had been grabbed, touched or assaulted for sexual reasons in a really offensive way. The chart below shows the proportion who said “yes”.

**Sex Offences (women only); percentage victimised once or more**



The chart shows that Barbados was very close to the bottom – in a group of six countries where less than 1% of the women said they had been sexual assaulted. At the other extreme was Egypt where 11% said they had. Costa Rica, Brazil, Colombia and Argentina all reported more than 7%.

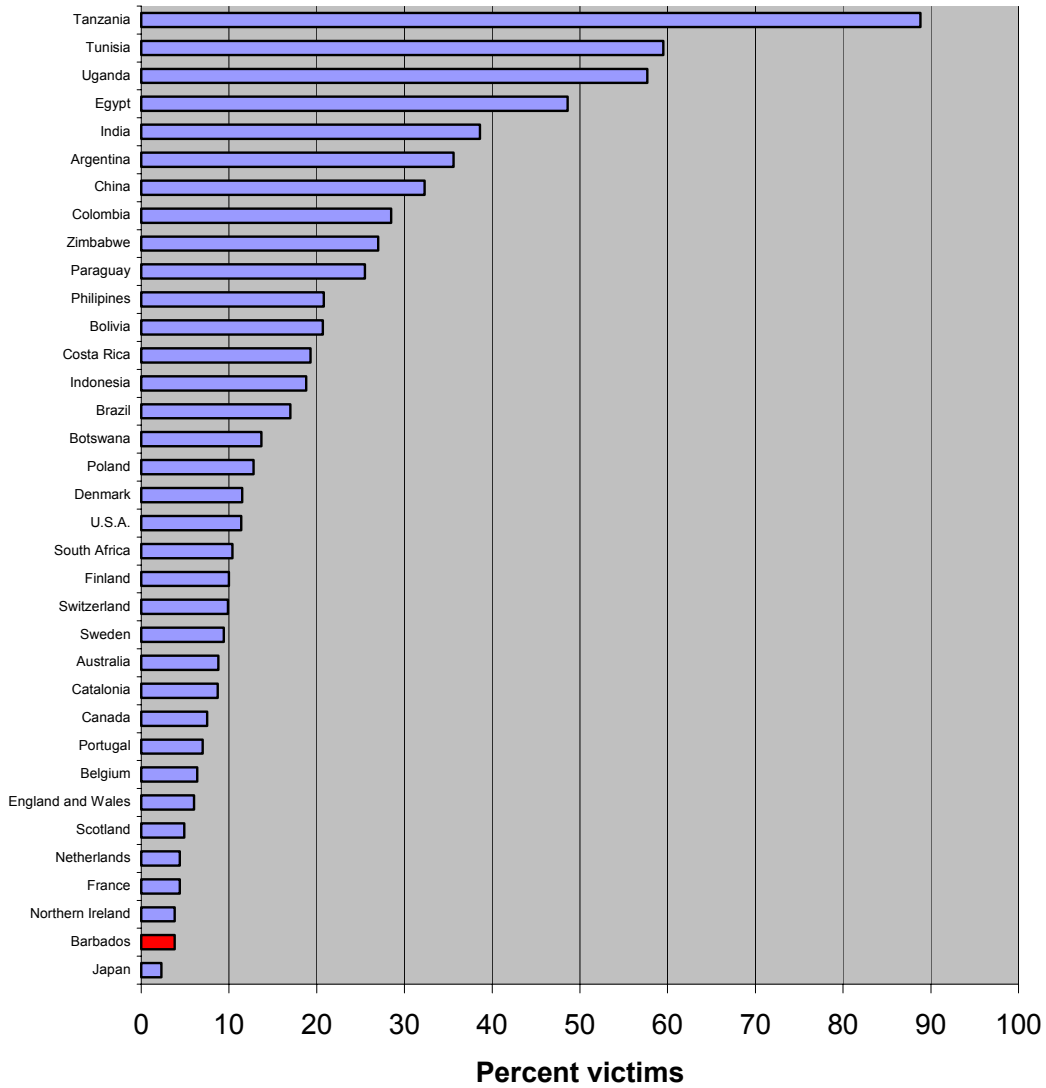
Caution should be exercised in interpreting this information, however. It is possible that women in Barbados were unwilling to tell the BarCS interviewers about sexual assaults. However the response rate given to male and female interviewers was very similar so at least we know there was no bias introduced by the gender of the interviewer.

In the industrialised countries about a half of the offenders were known to the victim and third by name. In Barbados it was 64% who were known and 60% were known by name. As with non-sexual assaults Barbadian victims were much more likely to know their assailant by name than in other countries.

### **Consumer Fraud**

The BarCS asked about consumer fraud. People were asked whether someone – when selling them something, or delivering a service – cheated them in terms of quantity or quality of the goods or services.

## Consumer Fraud



As can be seen there was a huge range of positive answers to this question. Once again Barbados was very low (along with Japan and Northern Ireland) with 3.8% of people saying they had been the victim of a consumer fraud. This compares with 11% in United States of America, 10% in Switzerland, 39% in India and 89% in Tanzania!



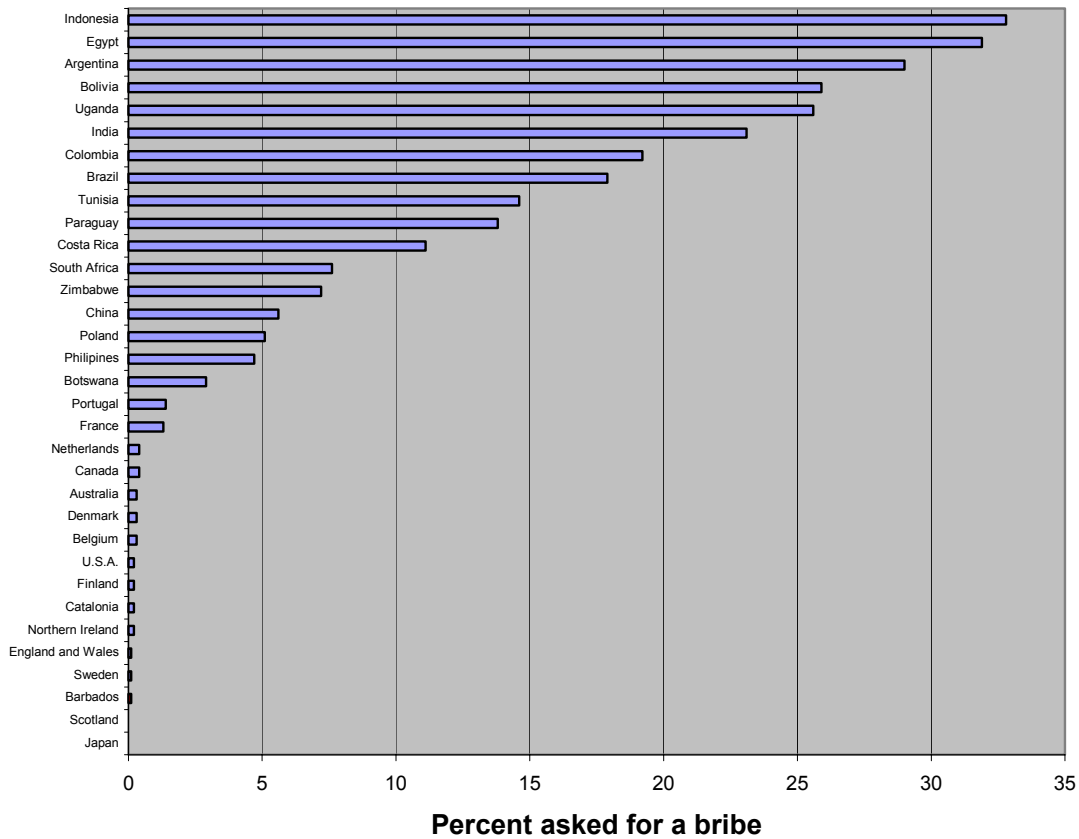
One point to consider in relation to this question is how do expectations of service in Barbados compare with expectations in the most industrialised countries. In countries where expectations are higher then the proportion saying 'yes' to this question may be higher.

### **Corruption.**

Corruption in each of the ICVS countries was approached by the question.

“Has any government official, for instance a customs officer, police officer other government official or private sector interest asked you or expect you to pay a bribe for his/her service?”

## Corruption



Nearly 20% of people in the developing world reported incidents involving corruption – going as high as 33% in Indonesia, 32% in Egypt and 23% in India. However corruption was very uncommon in the industrialised countries – the highest proportion being 1.4% in Portugal and 1.3% in France. In the United States of America it was 0.2%; in Barbados it was 0.1% (i.e. only 11 out of the 7962 people interviewed). An extraordinarily good result for a country where the public service is not paid as well as in Europe and North America.

[A result like this must encourage outside investment].

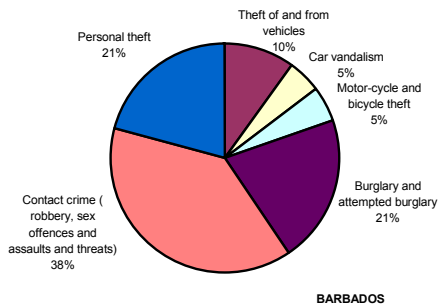
## Profiles of Crime

The 'profile' of crime in a country reflects the pattern of victimisation risk and the frequency of one type of victimization relative to another. It is calculated by measuring the incidence of each crime and working out the proportion of total crime different types of crime represent. It does not say anything about relative levels of victimization but it is a useful way of showing how the burden of crime differs between countries.

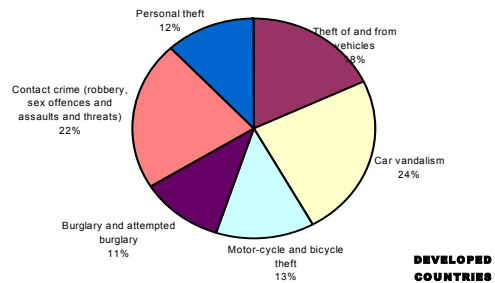
### Proportions of crimes of a particular type

	BARBADOS	INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES	ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
Theft of and from vehicles	10	18	10	13	16
Car vandalism	5	24	5	6	11
Motor-cycle and bicycle theft	5	13	17	5	5
Burglary and attempted burglary	21	11	17	27	19
Contact crime (robbery, sex offences and assaults and threats)	39	22	22	27	27
Personal theft	21	12	31	23	21
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100

**Profile of Crime**



**Profile of Crime**



The profile of crime in Barbados differs very significantly from the profile in the industrialised countries. This is clear from the pie charts above.

In the industrialised countries crime of all types related to motor vehicles makes up over 50% of all crime. In Barbados it makes up only 20% of all crime.

This is for two reasons:

- vehicle ownership is lower in Barbados than in the industrialised countries, and,
- vehicle crime is very low even after taking account of ownership levels.

As we have seen above, vehicle theft and vehicle vandalism, in particular, are very low compared to other countries.

Given that vehicle crime is so low then the remaining crimes must make up a greater proportion of crimes experienced by the public – even though the absolute levels are low (except for burglary). Thus contact crime (robbery, sex offences and assaults and threats) make up a much higher proportion of all crime in Barbados (39%) than they do in the industrialised countries (22%).

As can be seen from the table the Barbados crime profile is most like that of the African countries in the ICVS. This is because the African countries, like Barbados have a relatively low amount of vehicle crime (24% of all crime).

While Japan and Barbados have a very similar overall victimisation level the contrast between the Barbados profile and the Japanese profile could hardly be greater. In Japan motorcycle and bicycle theft makes up 40% of crime compared with 5% in Barbados, while theft of personal property is 2% of crime in Japan and 21% of crime in Barbados.

### Crime Seriousness

In the BarCS and the ICVS victims were asked to assess the seriousness of what happened to them through the question:

“Taking everything into account, how serious was the incident for you (or your household). Was it very serious, fairly serious or not very serious?”

Given that not all crimes are seen as equally serious the original purpose of the question was to try to get an alternative view of the impact of crime to that given by simply counting the number of household and personal crimes. In this way it was hoped that if two countries had the same number of crimes, but the type of crime in one was more serious than in the other e.g. in one most of the crimes were theft of a bicycle or car vandalism while in the other most were assaults with force or robberies then it might be suggested that crime was a more serious problem in the second country even though the number of victims was lower. However this assumes that victims in both countries did not see bicycle theft as such a serious crime as robbery. If victims in country 1, however, saw bicycle theft as equally serious as the people in the second country saw robbery, then this comparison would lose its point.

It seems to me because of this that the attempt to measure crime impact in this way is not altogether successful. However, something equally interesting comes out of the data. It is that victims in different countries

judge apparently similar crimes to have different levels of seriousness while at the same time they rank crimes similarly in terms of their seriousness.

For example in the industrialised countries 74% of burglary victims saw their burglary as “very serious” or “fairly serious” compared with 92% of victims in African countries, 85% of victims in Latin American countries, 73% of people in Asian countries and 87% of victims in Barbados. And this is a general pattern. For virtually all crimes which were compared victims in industrialised countries saw them as less serious than victims in developing countries. Barbados tended to come between them.

The ‘seriousness’ rating was also used to see how people in different countries ranked crimes.

The table below shows the ‘seriousness’ rank of crimes in Barbados and the industrialised countries (comparable data was not available for the developing countries) based on the proportion of victims who rated the impact on them as very or fairly serious.

CRIMES, % regarded as serious	BARBADOS	INDUSTRIALISED (average)
Vehicle theft, not recovered	100	88
Robbery, weapon	94	79
Assault, force	87	75
Burglary	87	74
Sex assaults	82	84
Threats	78	64
Vehicle theft, recovered	77	82
Attempted burglary	77	51
Pickpocket	76	55
Bicycle theft	72	52
Other theft personal property	70	68
Robbery, no weapon	65	70
Theft from vehicle	62	48
Car vandalism	55	44
Offensive sex behaviour	28	51

For both Barbadian victims and victims in industrialised countries vehicle theft, where the vehicle was not recovered, was judged to be the most serious crime. For Barbados robbery with a weapon was the next most serious while it was the 4<sup>th</sup> most serious for the industrialised countries. For the industrialised countries the second most serious crime was sexual assault, while it came 5<sup>th</sup> for Barbados.

The three least serious crimes for Barbadians were theft from a vehicle, car vandalism and offensive sexual behaviour – the same as in the industrialised countries. There is clearly a high level of agreement as



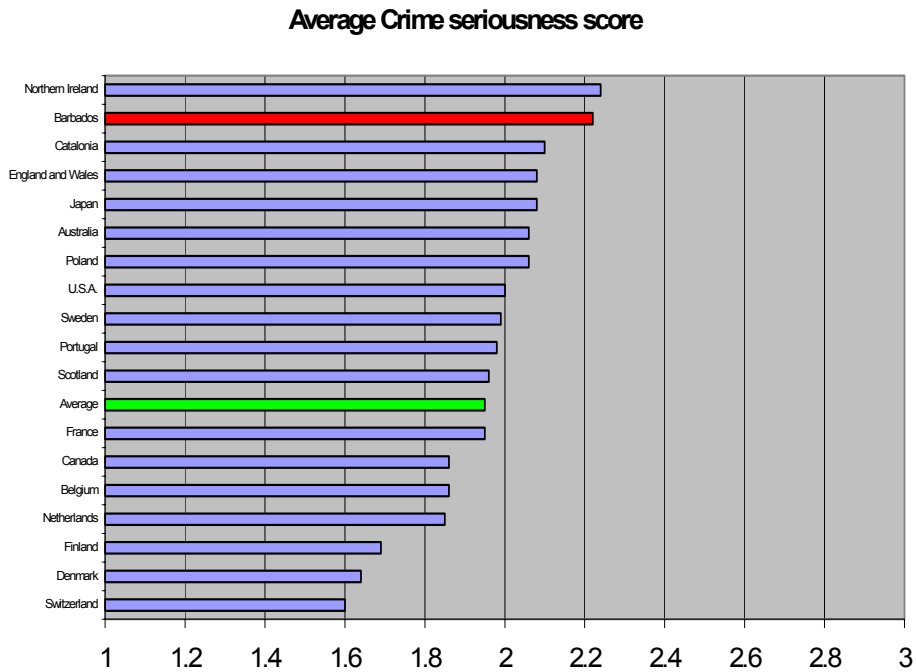
to the relative seriousness of different crimes and the correlation between the order for Barbados and for the industrialised countries is 0.71.

However as can be seen from the table above the order may have been similar but the percentage judged very or fairly serious shows some significant differences. For example 94% of Barbadians thought robbery with a weapon serious compared with 79% of those in industrialised countries. For burglary the rates were 87% and 74% of victims in industrialised countries; for attempted burglary the rates were 77% and 51% and for bicycle theft 72% and 52%.

Nevertheless four out of the 15 crimes were seen as less serious by Barbadians. They were sexual assaults, offensive sexual behaviour, vehicle theft where the vehicle was recovered and robbery when no weapon was used.

To take this analysis further we have analysed the Barbados data in a similar way to that for the industrialised countries in order to get a seriousness 'rating' for the different crimes. This was done by giving to each crime mentioned by victims in different countries a score for seriousness. (The scores were based on a three-point scale with a score of 3 for a 'very serious' rating, 2 for a 'fairly serious' rating and 1 for a 'not serious' rating. Totalling the seriousness score for each crime and dividing by the number of crimes to give an overall score between 1 and 3). The more serious the crime was seen by the victims the closer to 3 the score approached.

The chart below shows the average score for all crimes for the industrialised countries and Barbados.



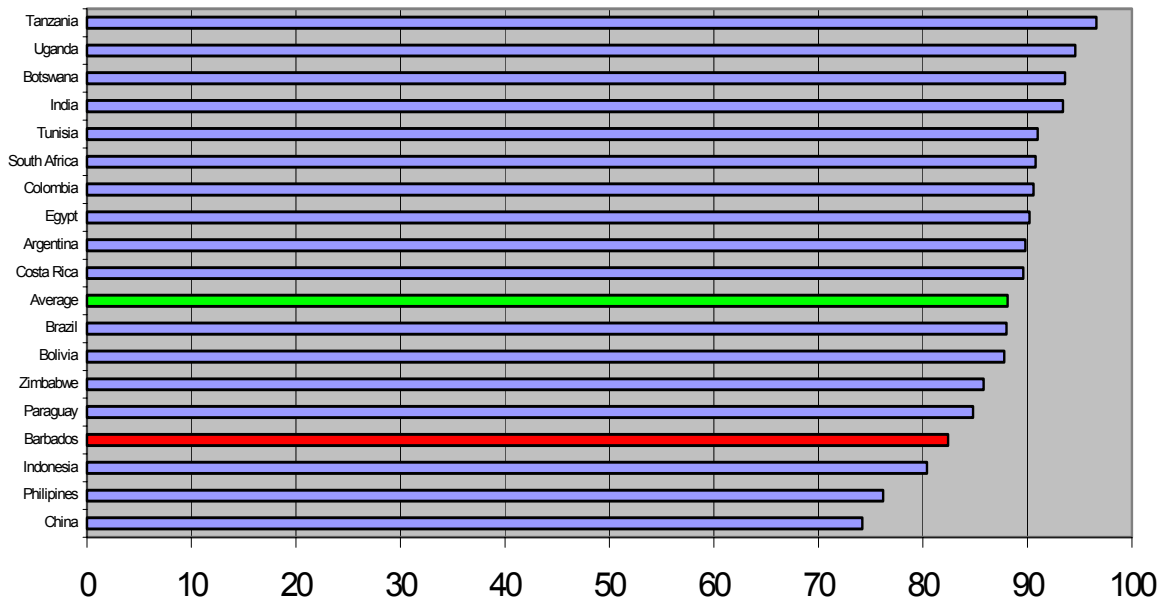
Finland, Denmark and Switzerland score significantly lower than average and Barbados and Northern Ireland score significantly higher. This means victims in Barbados and Northern Ireland judge the crimes committed against them to be more serious than did the other industrialised countries judge the crimes committed against them.

### Crime seriousness in the developing countries

Unfortunately the ICVS analysts did not use the same way to describe crime seriousness for the developing countries so no direct comparisons can be made. But we did analyse the data for Barbados in the same way that it was analysed for the developing countries and so we can compare Barbados with the developing countries.

The method used was to take five crimes (theft of vehicle, sexual assault, robbery, burglary and assault with force) and calculate the proportion which was judged “very serious” or “fairly serious” in each of the countries. These figures have been averaged and they are shown in the chart below.

**Percentage of 5 crimes serious**



All the five chosen crimes were what many would think were serious crimes, so it is not surprising that victims gave them high ratings.

The chart shown that in Tanzania 97% of these five crimes were judged “very serious” or “fairly serious”; at the bottom of the chart is China where 74% of the crimes were judged serious. The average was 88%.

Barbados judged 82% to be serious and hence comes near the bottom of the ratings.

In other words Barbadian victims find crime more serious than almost all industrialised countries but less serious than almost all developing countries (the three countries with lower ratings were all Asian).

### **What does it mean?**

There is some discussion in both ICVS publications as to why different countries judge the same crimes as more or less serious.

- the word 'serious' may not mean the same to different people,
- the level of seriousness might be influenced by local culture (e.g. high sensitivity to particular topics),
- crime conditions (countries with high crime rates see crime as more serious),
- different tolerance for crime.

However it seems entirely possible to us that in fact people are using the word serious in the same way and that, indeed, apparently similar crime is more serious in one country than another.

For example, in Barbados bicycle theft is judged more serious than in Scandinavia. And so it is. Here someone whose bicycle is stolen may well have lost their means of transport to work while in Denmark they will have lost a leisure item (and it would have been insured). One more example. In Barbados many cars are not insured against theft so theft of car without recovery is very serious. Much more serious than in England where virtually all cars are insured against theft.

Finally we looked at the correlation between standard of living and the perceived level of seriousness. We used the United Nations Human Development Index as the measure. Again we could not look at all 35 countries together as they do not all use the same measure of seriousness. Therefore we had to look at the relationship between the Human Development Index and seriousness in the industrialised and developing countries separately.

Within both these groups there is a negative correlation between the Human Development Index and perceived seriousness. In other words even within these relatively homogenous groups the higher the Human Development Index the less likely victims were to judge the crime serious. Thus in very poor Tanzania crime is seen as much more serious than in rich Denmark.

## Section 2

### REPORTING CRIME TO THE POLICE

The realization that numbers of crimes recorded by the police gave only a partial view of crime – particularly because many crimes are not reported by the victims to the police – was one of the main reasons that victim surveys were undertaken. It was the search for what was known as the ‘dark figure’ that motivated the early studies in the 1970s. We now know that it is not just the reporting rates by the public which affect the crime figures but it is also the recording practices by the police of those crimes reported to them. However this report will not deal with this second issue; it will concentrate on the reporting practices of the public – and it will put Barbados in the international context.

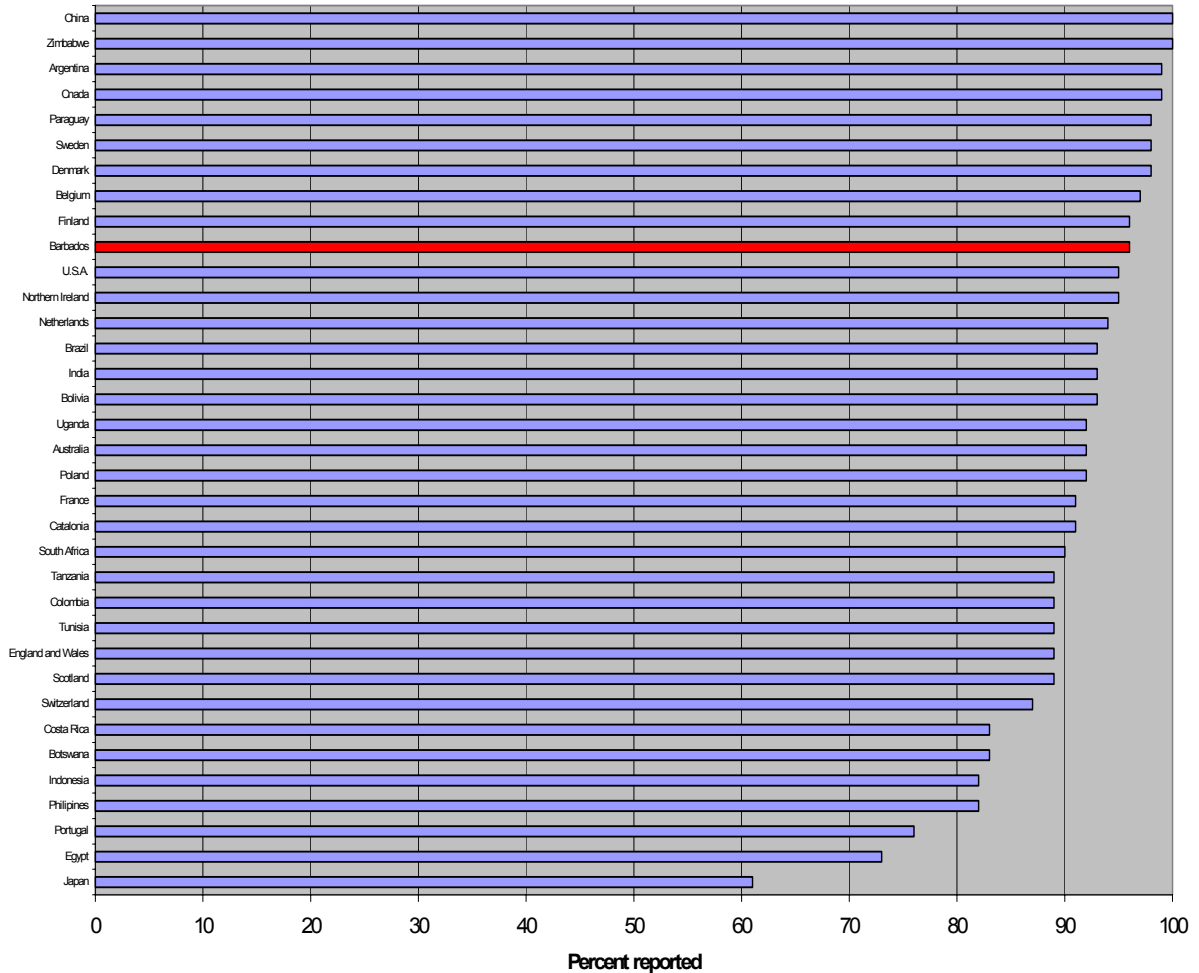
Because the question of reporting crime is so central the victims of all crimes were asked – “Did you or anyone else report the incident to the Police?”

Reporting rates for crimes vary enormously depending on the nature of the crime. In Barbados, for example, they vary between 96% for car thefts and 35% for thefts of personal property (sexual assault also has a low reporting rate – 46%). All the ICVS surveys have shown similar results.

In Western Europe 92% of car thefts are reported to the police, in North America it is a similar figure, in Latin America it is even higher and in Asia and Africa it is between 85–90% (on average).

The chart below shows the reporting rates for thefts of vehicles.

**Proportions of car thefts reported to the police**



As can be seen in Zimbabwe and China 100% of car thefts were reported to the police and in Canada and Argentina it was 99%, Barbados' figure of 96% is the 10<sup>th</sup> highest out of the 35 countries. At the other end of the scale is Egypt at 73% and Japan at 61%.

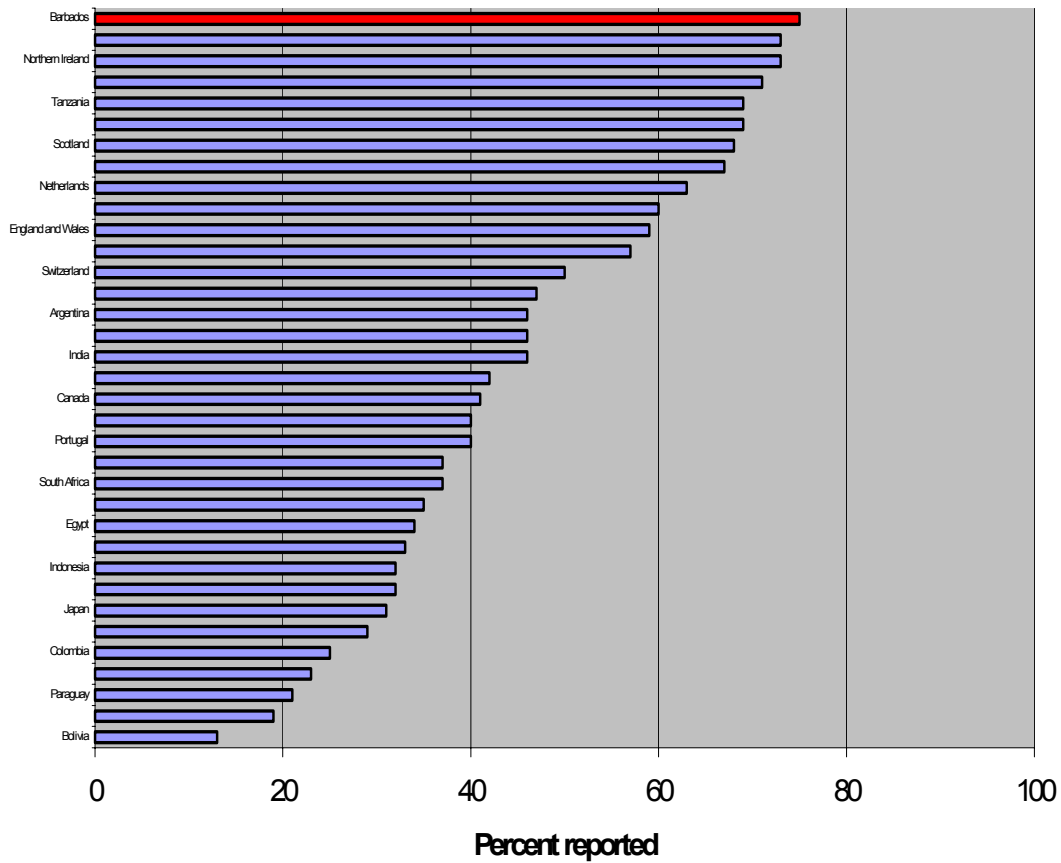
Burglary is also an offence with a high reporting rate in the industrialised countries with over 90% being reported in Belgium and Scotland. But here the range is much greater than for car theft. In some Asian and Latin American countries the rate is between 25 and 35%. In Barbados it is 78% – the 11<sup>th</sup> highest.

The reasons for the high reporting rates for burglary and car theft are not difficult to see. Both crimes are seen as serious by their victims – but more importantly – these are the crimes most likely to be covered by insurance (burglary more so in the industrialised countries than the developing). Insurance companies normally insist that the police are informed of the crime before they will pay out a claim – a powerful incentive!

Robbery is a crime with a moderate and highly variable reporting rate as can be seen from the chart below.



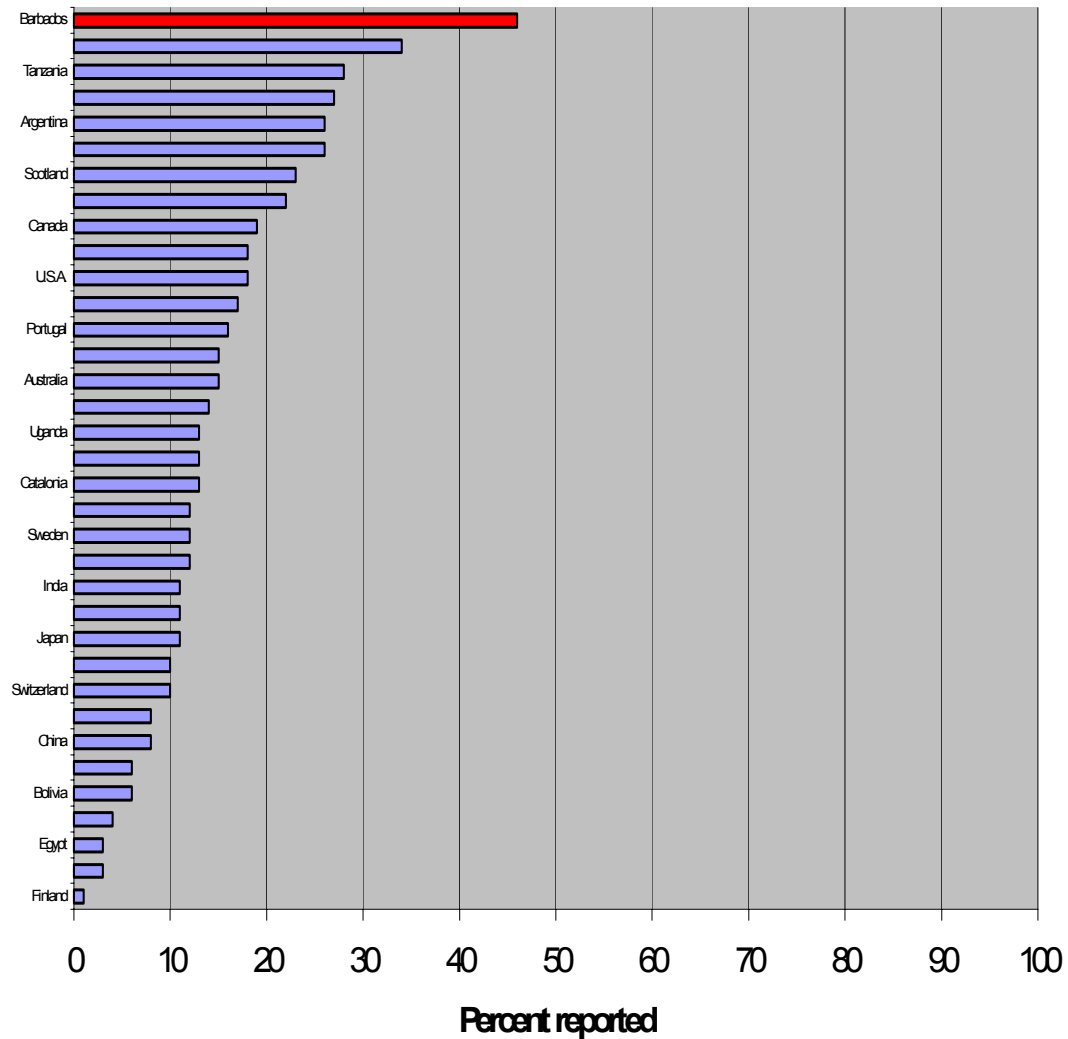
## Robbery, proportion reported to the police



The country with the highest reporting rate is Barbados (75%). Northern Ireland and Denmark both have rates of 73%. At the other extreme are Costa Rica, Paraguay, Brazil and Bolivia where the rate varies between 13% and 23%.

Sexual offences generally have the lowest reporting rate. The chart shows this.

### Proportion of sex offences reported to the police



The reporting rates vary between 46% in Barbados to 1% in Finland. Half the countries have a reporting rate between 10 to 20%. Sexual offences always have a low reporting rate – but it does appear to go up when victims think that the police will treat them more sensitively. The introduction of the use of women police officers and special areas in the police station to report sex offences has increased the reporting rate in England and Wales.

Generally speaking Barbados has a relatively high reporting rate. The only crime for which Barbados does not have a high or very high reporting rate is theft from a car, where it is about halfway down the chart.

### **Variations in reporting rates**

The reasons for the variation in reporting rates are not clear.

There are two types of variations to take account of

- reporting rates of different crimes
- different reporting rates of the same crime in different countries.

### Reporting rates of different crimes

We have shown above that there are large differences between the reporting rates for different crimes. There does not appear to be any obvious explanation for the differences. The reason for the very high rate of reporting of car theft and burglary in the industrialised countries is, as we have said, related to insurance claims. The very low rate for sex offences is to do with the common difficulty for women in admitting to anyone that they have been molested; after that it becomes more difficult to see the reasons.

It may well be thought that the perceived seriousness of different offences would be the reason for the differences. However, while perceived seriousness appears to have a significant effect to some countries in others it has virtually none.

In the industrialised countries overall there is a small but positive correlation (0.31) between crime seriousness score and proportion of crimes reported; in Latin American and Asian countries the positive correlation is very small; only in African countries and Barbados is there a high positive correlation between perceived seriousness and reporting rates. In African countries it is 0.81 and in Barbados 0.72.

Thus in Barbados, at least, perceived seriousness appears to explain most of the difference in reporting rates of different crimes, although even in Barbados the correlation is reduced by the effect of the level of reporting sexual offences. Sexual offences have a high seriousness score but a low reporting rate.

#### Different reporting rates of the same crime in different countries

As we have seen above there are considerable differences in the extent to which victims in different countries report the same crime – for example theft from cars has a reporting rate of 77% in Tanzania but only 14% in Bolivia and assault has a 64% reporting rate in Barbados compared with 8% in Brazil. The seriousness which people in different countries perceive the same crime to be seems to have some impact on reporting rates – but not very great. Within developing countries there is a correlation of 0.4 between seriousness and the reporting of burglary – but there is none in industrialised countries although there are correlations of 0.3 in developing countries and 0.5 in industrialised countries between seriousness and reporting rates for robbery.

There are, however, two other measures which produce some interesting results.

The first is the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI). This index measures a number of factors in a country – such as wealth, healthcare, education etc. The countries with high scores are the richest, best-organized countries and those with low scores are the poorest least organized countries.

There is no relationship between HDI and levels of reporting car theft – i.e. car thefts reporting has nothing to do with standard of living but for burglary and personal theft there are fairly high correlations (0.5 and 0.67) – in other words, the richer the country the more likely people are to report these crimes.

However the factor that we have looked at which seems to have the best relationship is the perceived level of corruption.

On page. 32 above we showed the perceptions of corruption in different countries. There is a strong negative correlation between saying that officials had asked for a bribe and the propensity to report crime. In other words **the more likely people were to say they thought officials were corrupt the less likely victims were to report crime to the police.**

For assault the correlation is  $-0.5$ , for personal theft and robbery it is  $-0.6$  and for burglary it is  $-0.7$ . Interestingly there is no correlation between corruption and reporting car theft. Car theft seems to be reported whatever the conditions in a country are.

This makes sense. If people believe that many officials are corrupt then they will probably think it is a waste of time to report crime. Barbados has a high reporting rate and a very <sup>53</sup>low perceived corruption rate.

Barbadians, presumably think they are not wasting their time reporting crime to the police. Reporting crime seems to be significantly effected by the perceived utility of reporting it.

### Victim satisfaction with the police response

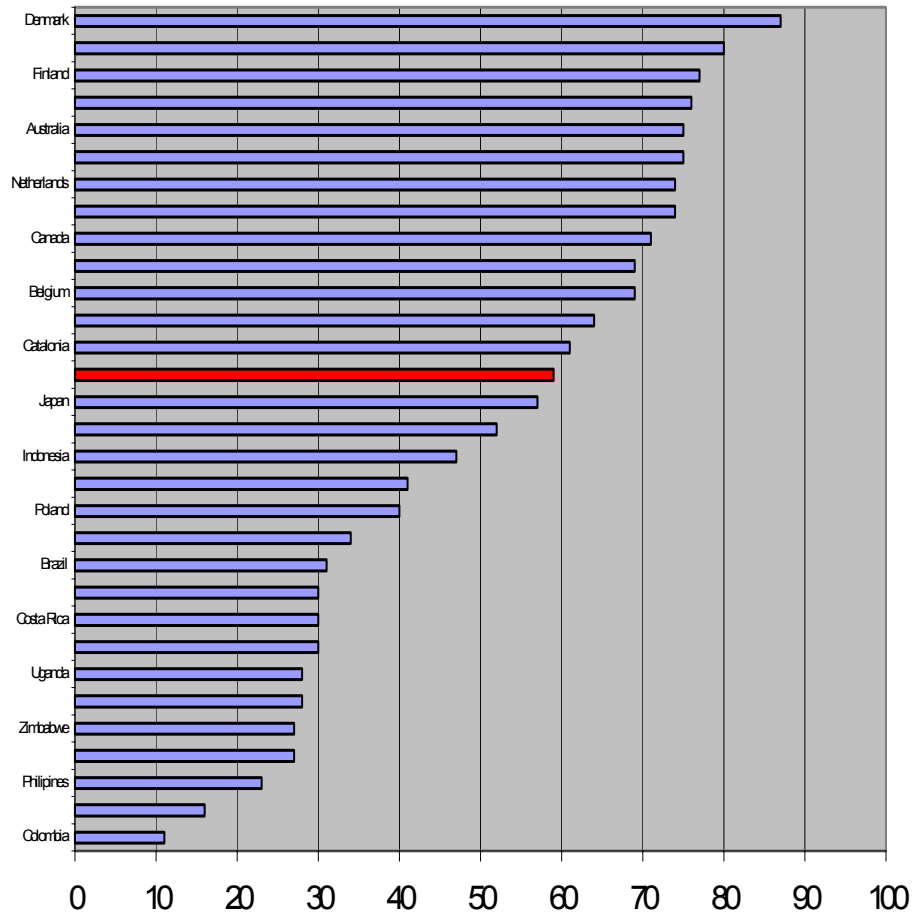
Victims who had reported a crime to the police were asked how satisfied they were with the police response.

Generally speaking victims in Barbados were less satisfied than victims in industrialised countries but more satisfied than victims in developing countries, with police response.

On the two property crimes asked about (burglary and theft from cars) 59% of Barbadians were satisfied (compared with an average of 64% for industrialised countries) and on contact crimes (robbery, assault and sex offences) 53% of Barbadians were satisfied compared with an industrialised country average of 61%. [The satisfaction with the police on sex offences in Barbados was extremely low, with only 16% of women being satisfied].

For three crimes (burglary, robbery and assault) direct comparisons with most of the other ICVS countries can be made. The chart below shows how satisfied victims were with the police when the offence was burglary.

### Percentage satisfied with police response to burglary

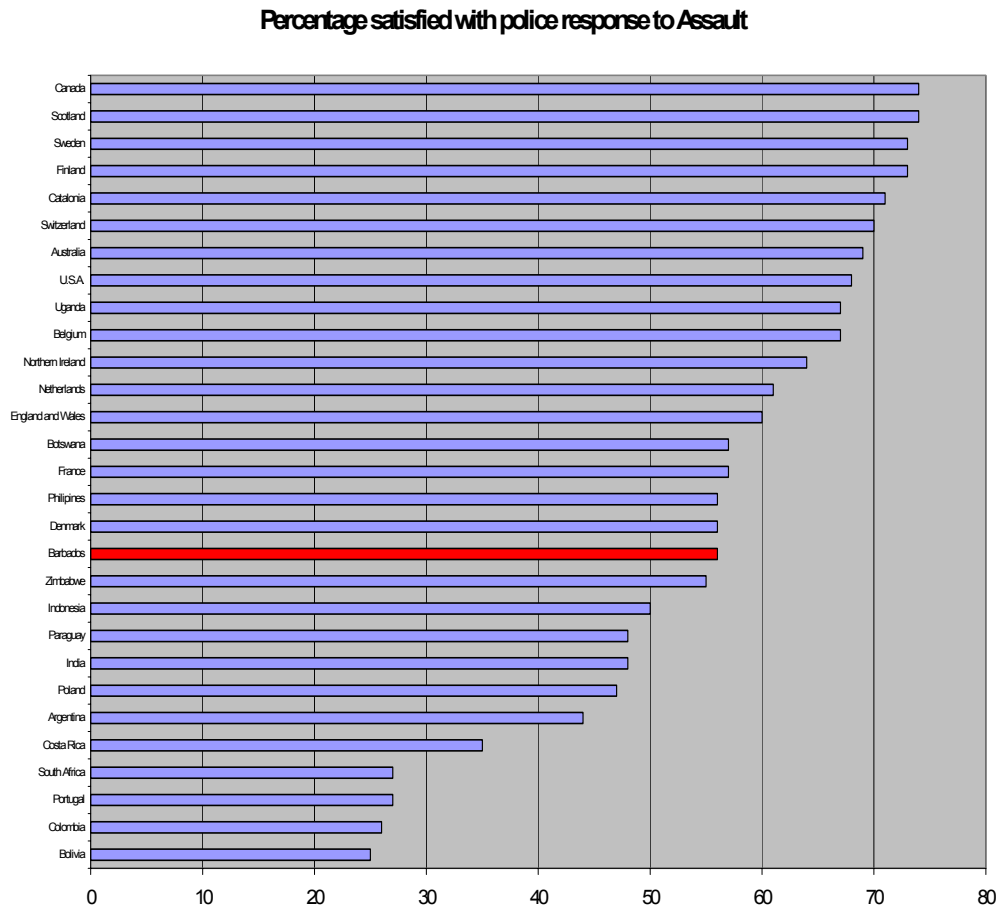


As can be seen Barbadian victims were more satisfied than victims in any of the developing countries but less satisfied than in all but two industrialised countries. The range is very wide – from an 87% satisfaction in Denmark and 80% in Scotland to an 11% satisfaction in Colombia and 16% in Bolivia. Barbados is just above half way at 58%.

Satisfaction with the police when the offence was assault did not divide so neatly on development levels. Here Barbados with 56% of victims

satisfied was in the lower half of the chart, above only Portugal from the industrialised countries and with a lower satisfaction rate than Uganda and Botswana.

This is shown in the chart below.



The correlation between satisfaction with the police if a victim of burglary and the Human Development Index was a high 0.73 but it was only 0.39 for assault.



## Reasons for dissatisfaction with the police

Those respondents who said they were not satisfied with the police response were asked why?

Overall the main reason for dissatisfaction in all parts of the world was that the police “did not do enough”. Table 1 below, shows the reasons (percentage of respondents) for dissatisfaction for 4 offences. (The columns do not add up to 100 because victims could give multiple answers).

**TABLE 1**

	Theft from car		Sex Offences		Burglary				Robbery			
	Ind.	Bar.	Ind.	Bar.	Ind.	Latin Ameri.	Africa	Bar.	Ind.	Latin Ameri.	Africa	Bar.
Did not do enough	41	50	49	85	49	56	52	49	50	56	40	59
Were not interested	36	26	34	85	44	41	22	22	35	54	22	25
Did not find offender	27	23	22	12	22	35	38	18	21	44	40	19
Did not recover goods	26	28			22	32	44	22	13	26	38	19
Gave no information	14	30	20	25	17	26	20	36	8	30	18	45
Were impolite	13	20	17	51	15	21	6	13	16	18	12	5
Were slow to arrive	9	18	11	0	16	5	19	32	7	10	17	43
Other	18	28	23	0	19	4	6	15	20	1	7	14

For theft from a vehicle it can be seen that 50% of dissatisfied Barbadian victims thought the police did not do enough compared with 41% of victims in industrialised countries. The biggest differences between Barbados and industrialised countries were related to receiving information (30% in Barbados said it was not satisfactory compared with 14% in industrialised countries) and on slowness in arriving (18% Barbados, 9% industrialised).

The dissatisfied sex offence victims in Barbados had much more negative views than the dissatisfied sex offence victims in the industrialised world (although care is needed in the interpretation because numbers are quite small). In Barbados 85% said the police did not do enough (compared with 50%) 85% said the police were not interested (compared with 34%) and 51% said the police were impolite (compared with 17%).

For burglary and robbery it is possible to compare Barbados with the developing countries as well as the industrialised.

On burglary there were not big differences between the countries, although in Latin America victims were more likely to say the police were not interested. However Barbados came out significantly worse than other countries on the police not giving information and being slow to arrive. (32% of Barbadian dissatisfied victims said the police were too slow compared with 16% in the industrialised countries, 5% in Latin America and 19% in Africa).

On robbery the pattern was similar. Barbadians were much more likely than anywhere else to complain about receiving insufficient information and that the police were too slow to arrive.

The lack of information given by the police and slowness of response in Barbados is very marked when compared with other countries. And the treatment of sex offenders raises serious concerns.

### Section 3

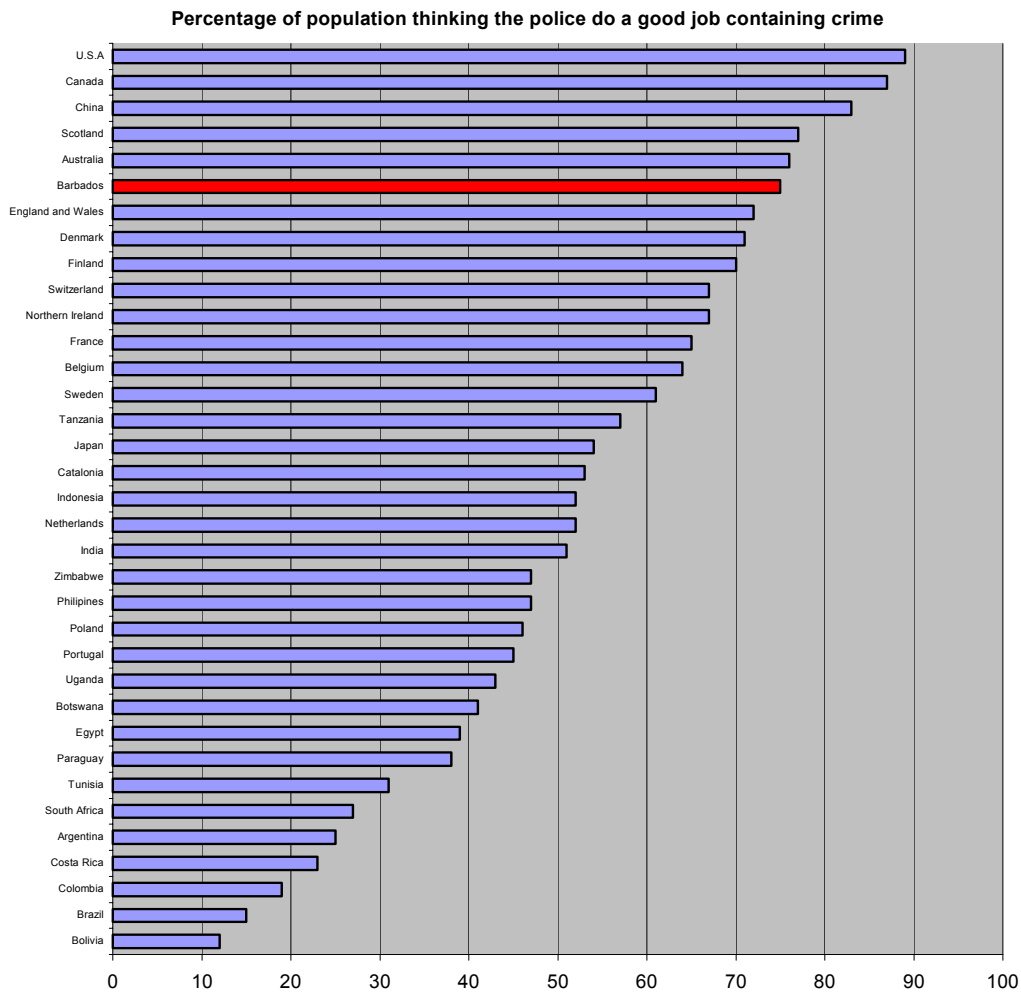
#### POPULAR ATTITUDES AND FEARS

In the last section we looked at the views of those who had been victims of crime, in this section we deal with the attitudes to crime and criminal justice and the fears about crime of the whole sample.

#### **General attitudes to the police**

All respondents were asked two questions about the overall performance of the police. The first asked whether people thought the police did a good job at controlling crime in their area and the second whether they thought they police were helpful. The first question was asked of all the ICVS countries the second only to the industrialised countries.

The chart below shows how good the police were judged on controlling crime.



As can be seen the police get a very good score in Barbados. 75% of the adult population believes the police are doing a good job. Police in the U.S.A., Canada and China get the highest approval (89%, 87% and 83%). At the other extreme are the police in Latin America. In Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and Argentina approval was 12%, 15%, 19%, 23% and 25% respectively.

The police in Barbados also got a very good rating on helpfulness.

- 75% of the population say they are helpful,
- the range in industrialised countries is from 88% in U.S.A. to 44% in Northern Ireland.

### **Safety on the streets**

The survey asked respondents a question which is often asked in surveys to measure vulnerability to crime. The question was “How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark?”

The chart below shows the proportion of people who felt somewhat or very unsafe.

## Proportion feeling unsafe in their area after dark



- 25% of Barbadians feel unsafe.
- The extremes are Brazil with 70% feeling unsafe and India with only 13%.
- Barbados is about half way up the table with similar rates to England and Wales, Tunisia, Japan, China, Scotland and France.
- Africa and Latin American countries shared the top eight positions.

- Overall there is only a weak relationship between risk of contact crime and fear in ones home area. Barbados has a somewhat higher fear than might be expected from the chance of being a victim of contact crime. The answer probably lies in the way crime is portrayed in the media.

### **Safety at home**

The survey also asks people how safe they feel at home alone after dark. This question was not asked in the surveys of developing countries.

- Rates of fear are much lower than for fear on the street.
- 10% of Barbadians feel unsafe compared with the average of 6% for industrialised countries.

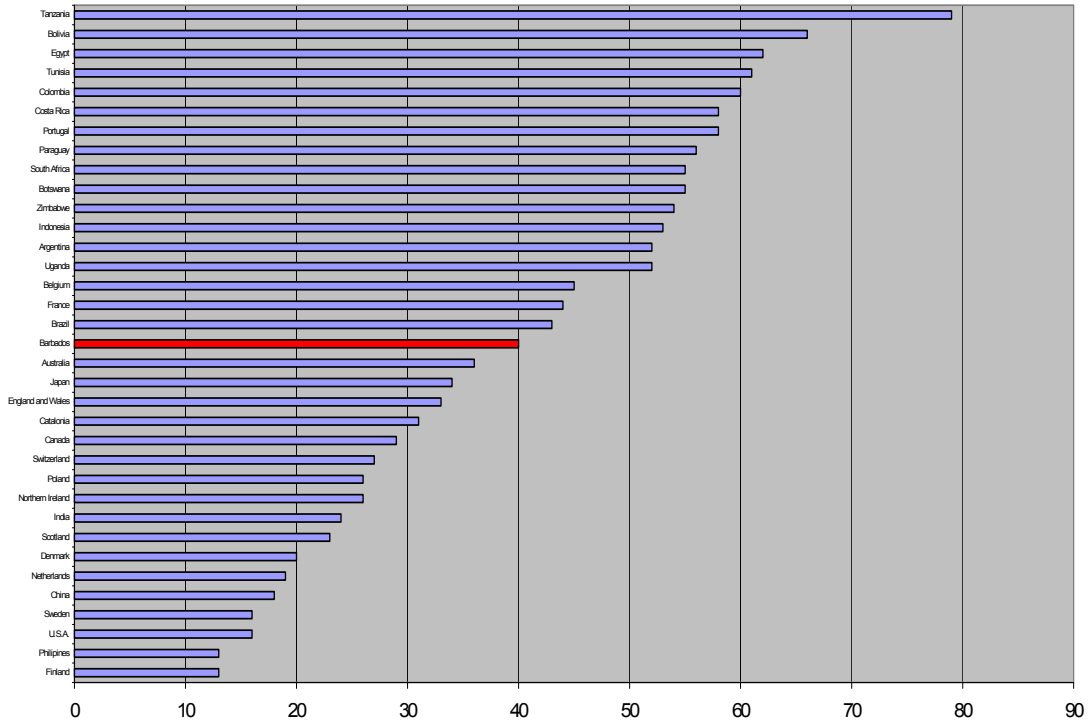
This is consistent with Barbados having a higher than average burglary rate.

### **The likelihood of burglary**

A third question asked to test fear of crime was how likely people thought they were to be a victim of burglary in the next twelve months.

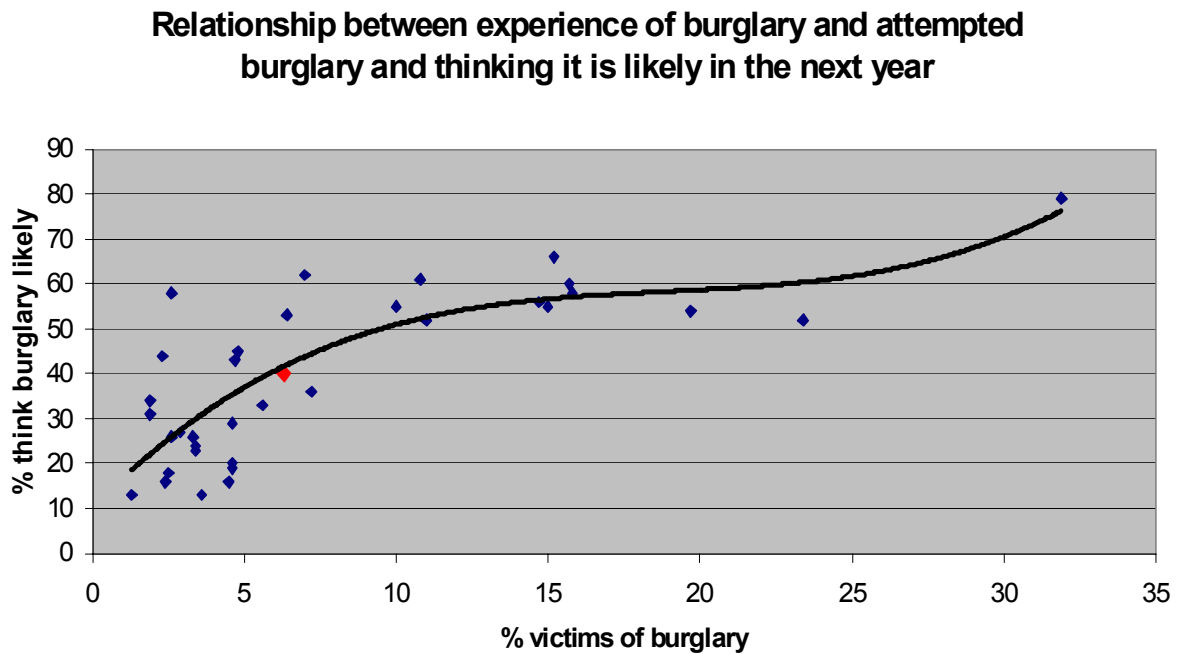


### Proportion of people thinking they are likely to be a victim of burglary in the next year



- 40% of Barbadians thought it likely or very likely they would be the victim of burglary in the next year.
  - In the previous year 6.3% of Barbadians had been the victim of burglary or attempted burglary.
- 79% of Tanzanians thought they were likely to be a victim of burglary (31.9% had been in the previous year).
- Only 13% of Finns or Philipinos thought they were likely to be burglary victims.
- On average 40% of people think they are likely to be burgled – the same figure as for Barbados.

We also checked to see whether there was a relationship between the proportion of people in a country who thought burglary was likely and the proportion of households which had been victims of burglary or attempted burglary. There is a relationship, as can be seen from the chart below.



The correlation between the two variables was 0.74.

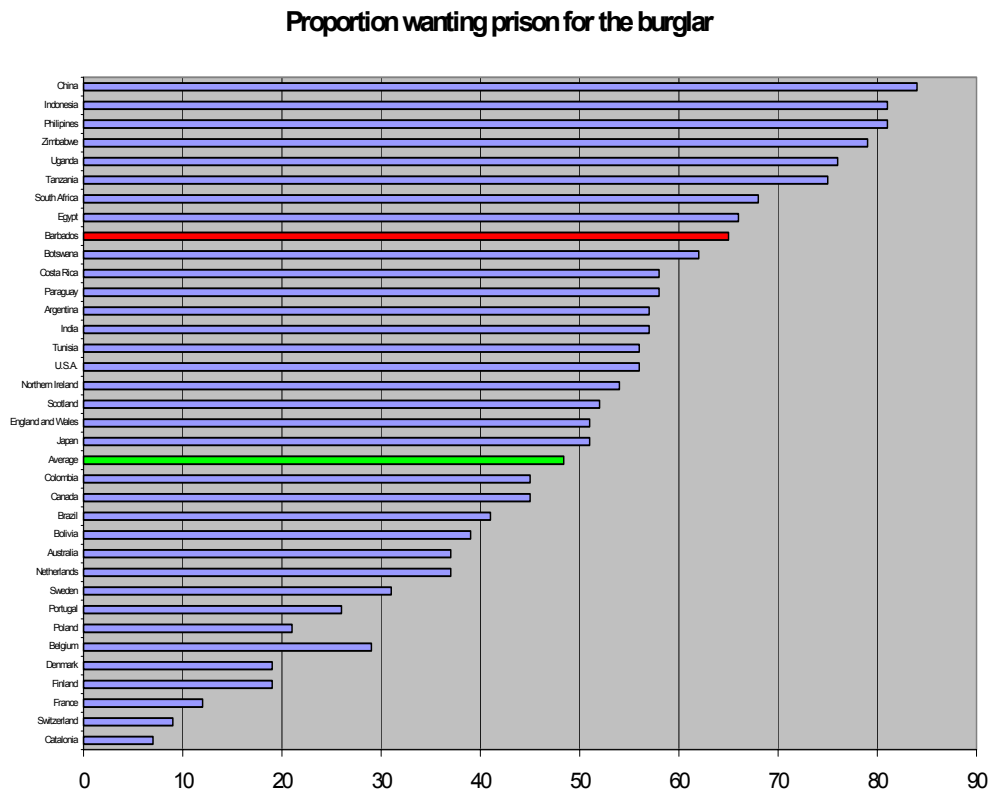
Barbados is represented by the red diamond on the chart. It can be seen that there are countries with approximately the same experience of burglary in the previous year which believe burglary is both more likely and less likely than Barbadians. This chart suggests Barbadians have a very much expected fear of burglary given their experience of it.

## Attitudes to punishment

Finally, we were interested to know what sentence people thought was appropriate for “a man aged 23 who pleaded guilty to the burglary of a house belonging to an elderly man whilst he was out during the day. The offender, who had previous convictions for burglary took a video worth \$500.00 and a television, which he left damaged near the scene of the crime”.

[For interest this was a real crime in England and the offender received 2 years imprisonment. The same question was put to about 300 English judges. They all thought that imprisonment was the correct sentence for this offender!]

The chart below shows the proportion of people in each country who thought that imprisonment was the proper sentence.



The average proportion wanting imprisonment was 48%.

- In China 84% of the respondents suggested imprisonment.
- In Catalonia (Spain) 7% suggested imprisonment.
- In Barbados 65% wanted imprisonment – more than in any industrialised country. Only eight countries suggested a higher use of imprisonment.
- 65% of the people in Catalonia wanted a community service order; in France it was 68%.
- In Barbados 27% suggested a community service order.
- Non-custodial sentences were hardly mentioned in the developing countries except for Brazil where 50% wanted a community service order and 41% prison.
- Prison was the most popular sentence in 8 of the industrialised countries and 16 of the developing countries.
- Community Service Order was the most popular sentence in 9 of the industrialised countries and 1 developing country.

It is not clear why the developing countries should so prefer imprisonment – except that in many of them alternatives are not well developed.

- within the industrialised countries there is no relationship between crime rates and desire for imprisonment although the anglophone countries tend to suggest a higher use of imprisonment. The very poorest developing countries are more likely to suggest imprisonment than the relatively richer ones.

- The overall strongest correlation we can find is between the seriousness score for burglary and desire for imprisonment. It is 0.61. In other words the more serious victims of burglary in a country see the crime the more likely the population as a whole is to want to imprison the hypothetical burglar.

## Conclusion

The first analysis of the Barbados Crime Survey data leaves a positive message – although it suggests areas that need attention.

Thirty-five countries, including Barbados have recently carried out crime surveys based on the questionnaire designed for the International Crime Victim Survey. Barbados has one of the lowest crime rates among the participating countries (the burglary rate, is, however, relatively high and clearly needs attention).

Barbados also has one of the highest reporting rates to the police, one of the lowest corruption rates and is one of the countries with the highest regard for the police.

However, not all is positive. Barbadians feel relatively insecure on the streets compared with other countries, believe they are fairly likely to be a victim of burglary in the near future and crime victims are not very satisfied by the treatment they receive from the police compared with victims in other countries. Victims of sex offences in particular believe the police could do more to help.

Many Barbadians will be surprised by the very positive results for Barbados from this study of crime across the world. Some will say that some aspects of crime, including the increasing use of guns, are significantly worse than they used to be. This may well be true. But it seems to us that knowing that you live in a country where crime is still low, where people are

still shocked when it happens and are not prepared to accept it as normal, is of critical importance for a country whose livelihood is based on tourism (and therefore its image abroad) and is to preferred to living in a country where crime is a commonplace to be shrugged off hopelessly.

## Methodology and Bibliography

The details of the methodology for the survey and a bibliography will be published in the second report on the BarCS – to be released later in 2003.

The two publications used in this report for international comparisons were:

- John van Kesteren, Pat Mayhew and Paul Nieuwbeerta, *Criminal Victimization in Seventeen Industrialised Countries*, The Hague, Ministry of Justice, 2000.
- Anna Alvazzi del Frate, *Victims of Crime in the Developing World*, Rome, United Nations Inter-regional Crime and Justice Research Institute, 1998.