

English summary of Brå report 2016:1



Swedish Crime Survey 2015

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**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) –
centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures**

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå)
works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society
by producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime
and crime prevention work.

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Summary

This report presents the overall results of the 2015 Swedish Crime Survey (Swedish abbreviation: NTU). Approximately 12,400 persons responded to the questions; this was a 63 per cent response rate to the survey. Most participated through telephone interviews, but a smaller percentage participated through posted questionnaires or Internet questionnaires. The results of the report are summarised below, divided into the following areas of enquiry: *exposure to crime, insecurity, trust in the criminal justice system, and victims' contacts with the justice system.*

Exposure to crime

Exposure to crime was investigated for the calendar year preceding the date on which the question was asked. This means that the exposure reported in the 2015 NTU reflects exposure during 2014. The exposure to offences against individual persons is reported as the percentage of exposed persons while exposure to property offences against households is reported as the percentage of exposed households.

Offences against individual persons

Of those who answered the questions in the 2015 NTU, 11.3 per cent state that, in 2014, they were exposed to one or more types of offences referred to in the report as offences against individual persons: assault, threats, sexual offences, mugging, fraud, or harassment. This is a reduction as compared with the preceding year (in 2013 the percentage was 12.7%) and a return to roughly the same level as was measured the year prior to that.

The most common types of offences are threats and harassment, while exposure to sexual offences, mugging, and serious assaults are less common.

Of the offences against individual persons reported in the 2015 NTU, approximately one-fourth (26%) were reported to the police. The highest reporting rate is for serious assault (64%) and the lowest is for sexual offences (8%). The reporting rate increased from 24 per cent in 2005 to 33 per cent in 2010, and was at approximately the same level until this year's survey, when the percentage of offences against individual persons which were stated as having been reported to the police declined and returned to the same level as when the survey was commenced.

Most persons who have been exposed to offences against individual persons state that they were exposed once during 2014, while 12 per cent of such persons (corresponding to 1.4% of the total population ages 16–79) state that they were exposed four times or more. This group was exposed to approximately one-half (53%) of all incidents of offences against individual persons.

Assault

The percentage of the population stating that they were exposed to assault declined from 2.3 per cent in 2013, to 2.1 per cent in 2014. One can perceive a weak downward trend in assault offences over time and the percentage of victims has declined by 0.6 percentage points since the survey was commenced in 2005. However, it should be pointed out that the primary reduction has been among young men.

Exposure to assault is more common for men than women, and most common in the 20–24 age bracket.

The most common crime scene is a public place and it is most common for the perpetrator to be unknown to the victim.

Threats

In 2014, 4.1 per cent were exposed to threats, which is a reduction as compared with the preceding year (4.5%). With the exception of the first two years (2005 and 2006), the percentage exposed to threats has been stable during the entire measurement period.

Exposure to threats is more common for women than men, and most common in the 20–24 age bracket.

The most common crime scene is a public place and it is most common for the perpetrator to be unknown to the victim.

Sexual offences

In 2014, 1.0 per cent of persons stated that they had been exposed to a sexual offence. This is a reduction as compared with 2013, when 1.3 per cent stated that they had been exposed. Sexual offences remained at a relatively stable level for the period 2005–2011, but the results for the most recent two years show a higher level. However, the decline in the most recent measurement makes it difficult to interpret the trend.

Exposure to sexual offences is significantly more common for women than men, and most common in the 16–19 and 20–24 age brackets.

The most common crime scene is a public place and it is most common that the perpetrator is unknown to the victim.

Mugging

Exposure to mugging has been relatively unchanged over the past few years. In the 2015 NTU, 0.7 per cent of respondents state that they were mugged in 2014.

Exposure to mugging is more common for men than women, and is most common in the 16–19 and 20–24 age brackets.

Fraud

The percentage of persons exposed to fraud has gradually increased from 2.5 per cent in 2006 to 3.1 per cent in 2014.

Exposure to fraud in 2014 is essentially equally common for men and women. The greatest percentage of exposed persons are in the 45–54 age bracket.

Harassment

The percentage of persons exposed to harassment in 2014 was 4.0 per cent. This is a reduction as compared with 2013, when 5.0 per cent stated that they had been exposed. Between 2005 and 2010, the percentage of exposed persons gradually declined from 5.2 per cent to 3.5 per cent. Thereafter, the percentage increased between 2011 and 2013 to the same level as when the survey was commenced (5.0%).

Exposure to harassment is more common for women than men, and most common in the youngest age brackets in the survey (especially common in the 16–19 and 20–24 age brackets).

It is most common for the perpetrator to be unknown to the victim.

Property offences against households

The responses show that during 2014, 9.1 per cent of households were exposed to car theft, theft out of or from a vehicle, bicycle theft, or burglary (referred to as property offences against households). Exposure to these crimes has declined since 2006 (when the percentage was 12.6%). The most common property offence is bicycle theft, while burglary and car theft are the least common.

Of the property offences against households reported in the NTU, approximately one-half (51%) were reported to the police. The highest reporting rate is for burglary (87%) and the lowest is for bicycle theft (40%).

Like burglary, car theft is a type of offence which has a high rate of police reporting. The percentage of reported incidents has been relatively stable since 2006.

An overwhelming majority of those who were exposed to property offences against households state that they were only exposed once in 2013. Only 2 per cent of the exposed households stated that they were exposed four times or more.

Burglary

In 2014, 0.8 per cent of households were exposed to burglary. This is a reduction as compared with 2013, when 1.2 per cent of households were exposed. Since the survey was commenced in 2006, the percentage of households exposed to burglary has been relatively stable at approximately 1 per cent.

Car theft

In 2014, 0.2 per cent of households were exposed to car theft. This is a reduction as compared with 2013, when a 0.4 per cent of households were exposed. Since the survey was commenced in 2006, there has been a gradual decline of 0.7 percentage points in the percentage of exposed households.

Theft out of or from a vehicle

The percentage of households exposed to theft out of or from a vehicle was 2.6 per cent in 2014. This is a reduction as compared with 2013, when 2.8 per cent of households were exposed. During the period 2006–2010, the percentage of households exposed to theft out of or from a vehicle declined dramatically (from 5.0% to 2.8%). Since then, exposure has remained at a stable level.

Bicycle theft

In 2014, 6.1 per cent of households were exposed to bicycle theft. This is a small decline as compared with 2013, when 6.2 per cent of households were exposed. Between 2006 and 2011, the percentage of exposed households remained relatively stable. In 2012, the percentage declined somewhat and, in the most recent surveys, exposure has remained stable at a somewhat lower level.

Anxiety and insecurity

Measuring insecurity and anxiety about crime is complicated. The NTU captures some central aspects. The results vary depending on the type of anxiety or insecurity which is the subject of enquiry; for example, more people are worried about the exposure of closely-related persons to crime than their own exposure.

Insecurity outdoors late at night

The percentage of people who do not feel safe when they are outdoors alone late at night in their own neighbourhood has decreased from 21 per cent in 2006 to 15 per cent in 2015.

It is significantly more common for women to feel insecure than for men. The percentage of persons who feel insecure is particularly high among the youngest and oldest women in the survey.

Anxiety about crime in society

The percentage of persons anxious about crime in society has decreased from 29 per cent in 2006 to 22 per cent in 2015.

It is more common for women to be anxious about crime in society than for men. The percentage of persons who are anxious is lowest among the youngest age brackets and highest among the oldest age brackets.

Anxiety that a closely-related person will be the victim of crime

The percentage of persons who are fairly often or very often anxious that a closely-related person will be the victim of crime has declined from 32 per cent in 2006 to 25 per cent in 2015.

It is more common for women to worry that a closely-related person will be the victim of crime than for men. For both men and women, the percentage of those who are somewhat or very often anxious that a closely-related person will be the victim of crime is greatest in the 45–54 age bracket.

Anxiety about being exposed to crime

In 2015, 19 per cent state that they are worried about burglary. With the exception of the surveys for this year and 2011, the percentage has been very stable.

It is slightly more common for women to worry about burglary than for men. The percentage of persons worried about burglary is greatest in the 45–55 age bracket.

The percentage of persons worried about being a victim of an assault has decreased from 15 per cent in 2006, to 11 per cent in 2015.

It is significantly more common for women to be worried about being the victim of an attack or assault than for men. However, the percentage of women who are worried varies a great deal depending on the age bracket. The highest percentage is among women in the 20–24 age bracket.

The percentage of persons worried about being the victim of theft of, or vandalism to, their vehicle has declined from 22 per cent in 2006 to 13 per cent in 2015.

The percentage of persons worried about theft of, or damage to, their vehicle is essentially the same for women and men and across age brackets, with the exception of the youngest age bracket (16–19 years of age), where the percentage is significantly lower.

Trust in the criminal justice system

The criminal justice system comprises several different public agencies and the NTU asks questions about the criminal justice system in general as well as more specific questions regarding four of its agencies - the police, public prosecutors, the courts, and the prison and probation service.

Trust in the criminal justice system and the different agencies

The results show that trust in the criminal justice system is relatively high among the public aged 16–79; 64 per cent state that they have a high degree of trust in the criminal justice system as a whole. A similar percentage have a high degree of trust in the police.

The percentage of persons with a high degree of trust in the criminal justice system as a whole has increased from 54 per cent in 2006 to 64 per cent in 2015.

The percentage with a high degree of trust has increased in respect of the police as well, from 55 per cent in 2006 to 65 per cent in 2015.

An increase can also be noted in respect of public prosecutors, where the percentage of persons with a high degree of trust has increased from 42 per cent in 2006 to 51 per cent in 2015.

The percentage of persons with a high degree of trust in the courts has increased from 43 per cent in 2006 to 53 per cent in 2015.

The greatest increase can be seen in the prison and probation service, where the percentage of persons with a high degree of trust has increased from 29 per cent in 2006 to 43 per cent in 2015.

It is somewhat more common for women to have a high degree of trust in the criminal justice system than for men.

The greatest percentage of people with a high degree of trust in the criminal justice system are the youngest persons in the survey (16–19 age bracket), and the lowest percentage of persons with a high degree of trust can be found among the oldest age brackets.

Trust in persons suspected of offences being treated fairly

The percentage of people with a high degree of trust in the criminal justice system treating persons suspected of offences fairly has increased from 45 per cent in 2006 to 53 per cent in 2015. A similar percentage (56%) have a high degree of trust in the police treating persons suspected of offences fairly. Trust in the police in this respect has essentially been stable since the question was introduced in 2008.

Trust in the police treating persons suspected of offences fairly is essentially the same among women and men, while a somewhat higher percentage of men have a high degree of trust in persons suspected of offences being treated fairly by the criminal justice system.

The greatest percentage of persons in the investigation with a high degree of trust in the criminal justice system treating persons suspected of offences fairly is in the 35–44 age bracket, and the lowest percentage with a high degree of trust is among the oldest persons (75–79 age bracket).

Trust that victims are treated well

The percentage of persons with a high degree of trust that the criminal justice system, as a whole, treats victims well has increased from 30 per cent in 2006 to 43 per cent in 2015.

Trust in the police treating victims well has been stable since the question was introduced in 2008 and was 56 per cent in 2015.

It is essentially equally common for women and men to have a high degree of trust that victims are treated well by both the police and the criminal justice system.

The youngest persons surveyed reflected the highest percentage of persons with a high degree of trust that the criminal justice system treats victims well while the lowest degree of trust appeared among the oldest persons surveyed.

Victims' contacts with the criminal justice system

When a person who has been the victim of an offence decides to report the incident to the police, they come into contact with, and gain experience of, one or more of the agencies within the criminal justice system. The experience is customarily limited to the person's contact with the police in connection with the police report, but may also comprise contact with public prosecutors, counsel for injured parties and, in the event the offence comes to trial, courts.

Experience with the police in connection with reporting to the police

Slightly less than one in five persons aged 16–79 (18%) states that he or she was in contact with the police as a result of having been a victim of crime sometime during the last three years. Almost six in ten of these persons (58%) state that overall, they had positive experience of the police, and 13 per cent state that they had negative experience. These percentages have been more or less stable since 2007.

Over time, women state that they had positive experience of the police more often than men, although the differences in this year's survey are relatively small (60% and 57%, respectively).

In those cases where the incident involved threats or violence, the experience with the police was more negative than in other cases.

Results are mixed in respect of more specific aspects of contact with the police. Significantly more persons are satisfied with police availability and attitude than with the information they received about the matter and with the police's ability to be effective in investigating offences.

Experience with trials

Approximately 1.8 per cent of the population state that they been in contact with public prosecutors as a result of having been the victim of crime sometime during the last three years. Slightly more than half of these individuals (51%) state that they experienced this contact positively.

Of the population aged 16–79, 1.3 per cent state that they have participated as an injured party in a trial during the last three years. Almost 2/3 (65%) of these persons state that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way they were treated in court.

Slightly more than half (53%) of those who participated in trial had so-called counsel for the injured party. Of these persons, 69 per cent describe their experience of the counsel for the injured party as positive.

Slightly more than two thirds (67%) of those who were injured parties state that they felt that it was very easy or fairly easy to understand what happened during the trial, and approximately the same percentage (68%) felt that they received sufficient information prior to the trial.



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