

Crime, victims, the perception of safety *Years 2008-2009*

Map of crime: most robberies, snatch-thefts, threats, vehicle thefts in the South, most non-contact thefts of personal property, primary residence burglaries, pickpocketing and bicycle thefts in the Centre and North of the Country

- In the 12 months prior to the survey, 5.7 % of individuals aged 14 and over were victims of property-related crimes (snatch-thefts, pickpocketing and theft of other personal items) or violent crimes (threats, assault, robberies). In the same period, 16.2% of households suffered vehicle-related crimes (theft, attempted theft, vandalism, etc.) or dwelling-related crimes.
- First among property-related crimes was theft of personal items (2.2%) followed by pickpocketing (1.6 %) and snatch-thefts (0.5 %). Threats accounted for the highest number of victims of violent crime (0.9 %) followed by assault (0.6 %) and robbery (0.4 %).
- Households primarily suffered vehicles vandalism (7.8 %) followed by bicycle thefts (3.8 %), thefts of car or truck parts (2.9 %), moped thefts (2.8 %), moped parts thefts (2.1 %), theft of items left in vehicles (2.1 %), motorcycle thefts (1.8 %) and car thefts (1.7%). Next in order were acts of vandalism to dwellings (1.4 %), primary residence burglaries (1.1 %) and thefts of items from external areas of the home (0.9 %); figures were lower for secondary residences both as regards burglary (0.3 %) and illegal entry (0.1 %). Further, 2.6 % of family-owned animals had mistreated, injured or killed animals.
- Inhabitants in the South suffered more robberies (0.8 %), snatch-thefts (0.7 %), threats (1.2 %), vehicle thefts (4 % motorcycles/mopeds, 2.5 % cars and trucks), vehicle parts thefts (4.6 % car and truck parts and 2.7 % motorcycle/moped parts).
- 2.7 % of non-contact thefts of personal property occurred in the North-West and 2.1 % of pickpocketing in the Central Regions. Primary residence burglaries were 1.5 % in the Central Regions and 1.3 % in the North. 5.1 % of bicycle thefts occurred in the North-East. Campania and Lazio had the highest rates for all types of crime.
- In the large municipalities there was a higher incidence of snatch-thefts (1.3 %), pickpocketing (3.1 %), vehicle thefts (4.9 % of motorcycles/mopeds, 4.8 % of bicycles and 3.3 % of cars and trucks), vehicle parts thefts (4.3 % of car and truck parts and 3.7 % of motorcycle/moped parts), vandalism to vehicles (12.4 %) and dwellings (1.9 %).

How many crimes are reported? High report rate for vehicle theft, robbery and primary residence burglary, low for attempted theft

- The number of hidden or unreported crimes was significant and varies according to crime type. The report rate was high for crimes in a first group comprising vehicle theft (96.7 % of trucks, 88.6 % of cars, 86.6 % of motorcycles, and 82.6 % of mopeds), robbery (75.6 %) and primary residence burglary (74.2 %) and in a second group consisting of secondary residence burglary (64.2 %), snatch-theft (53.6 %) and pickpocketing (51.2 %).

- A third group of crimes includes theft of items from vehicles (45 %), attempted theft in primary residences (40.2 %), theft of personal items (29.3 %), attempted theft of cars and trucks (30.7 % and 24.3 % respectively), illegal entry (28.6 %), and threats (27.6 %).
- A final group of crimes with a report rate of less than 20 % comprises assault (19 %), attempted motorcycle theft (18.9 %), bicycle theft (18.5 %), attempted robbery (15.1 %), theft of items from external areas of the home (12.8 %), attempted theft of motorcycles (10.4 %), theft of car parts (9.2 %) and of motorcycle/moped parts (8.4 %), attempted snatch-theft (7.6 %), attempted theft of personal items (6.8 %) and bicycles (5.6 %), and attempted pickpocketing (4.2 %).
- Important reasons in reporting a crime are: i) economic loss (when the stolen goods were worth over 500 euros 90 % of robberies, 84.5 % of burglaries, 83.1 of pickpocketing and 65.8 % of snatch-thefts were reported); ii) injuries (in the case of injury 53.6 % of assaults are reported); iii) the type of goods stolen.
- As regards credit cards and cheques, 100 % of robberies, 91.1 % of snatch-thefts, 87.3 % of cases of pickpocketing and 86.4 % of thefts of personal items were reported. Personal document thefts are reported in over 80 % of cases.
- Reasons for not making a report vary according to the type of crime. Relative unimportance, for example, was cited in over 73 % of vehicle parts thefts and 50.4 % of personal item thefts, but only in 25 % of snatch-thefts and 17.8 % of robberies. Futility of reporting an incident to the police - largely due to their inability to take action in the absence of clear evidence and information on perpetrators - was the reason most cited by victims of burglary (30.1 %), theft of personal items (26.6 %), robbery (22.5 %), pickpocketing (21 %) and snatch-theft (19.8 %).

When and where crimes occur: evening, night and the early hours for robberies and assault, day-time for snatch-theft and pickpocketing, evening and night for car theft

- 60 % of assault cases and 48.5 % of robberies were committed after 6 pm in the evening and in the early hours post-midnight. Most thefts of cars and trucks (63.6 %) and their parts (62 %) also occurred in the evening and at night. A very high proportion of cases of pickpocketing (75.7 %), non-contact theft (64 %), snatch-thefts (64.5 %) and bicycle thefts (50.7 %) instead took place during the day.
- Most snatch-thefts occurred in streets and squares (68.4 %) whereas pickpocketing was most frequent on buses (33.3 %) and in markets and crowded places in general (20.8 %). Most personal item thefts were committed in schools and work places (43.6 %) and entertainment venues (28.8 %). The streets again figured highly in the number of robberies (52.3 %), however these were also common in car parks and garages (25.2 %). Most cases of threat (39.9 %) and a significant proportion of assaults (11.5 %) took place within the home.
- Most crimes suffered by victims surveyed occurred in their municipality of residence (67.3 % of robberies, 64.5 % of snatch-thefts, 62.1 % of assaults, 58.6 % of pickpocketing and 57 % of personal item thefts). Some 20 % of such crimes took place in the provincial capitals of the victim's region of residence.

Dynamics of criminal acts: in most burglaries thieves do not break in but exploit distraction on the part of owners

- The dynamics of criminal acts depend on the nature of the crime: snatch-thefts occurred extremely rapidly (41.6 %), personal robberies involved verbal or physical violence (14.2 % and 22.3 % respectively), pickpockets exploited distraction on the part of victims (26.1 %) or the presence of crowds (25.3 %).
- Distraction is also a main factor in burglaries. In most cases thieves did not enter the premises by breaking in but by using deceit (10.6 %), exploiting distraction on the part of owners (42.6 %) or the particular ease with which entrance doors could be opened (5.1 %). 66 % of burglaries occurred when the occupants were out of the home.
- The probability of success increases when robbers have accomplices: 65.7 % of successful personal robberies were committed by two or more accomplices as against 18.3 % when the robber acted alone; 48.1 % of successful snatch-thefts were committed when accomplices were involved as against 31.7 % of single-thief cases.
- In general, few stolen items are ever retrieved: specifically, just under 10 % of citizens managed to recover part or all property stolen in cases of robbery and 10.7 % partially recovered items stolen in cases of pickpocketing. The probability of recovery is higher for vehicle theft (59.8 of cars and trucks and 42.4 of motorcycles and mopeds).

Offenders: most snatch-thefts, robberies and cases of assault committed by males aged under 40, one third by foreigners

- Those who committed snatch-thefts, robberies and assault often acted alone (respectively in 47 %, 39.7 % and 55.7 % of cases), were mostly male (respectively in 80.7 %, 85.6 % and 86.8 % of cases) and under 40 years of age in about 80 % of cases. Victims stated that some 30 % of personal robberies and snatch-thefts were committed by youths under the age of 20.
- In 27.1 % of cases of assault and 53.5 % of threatening behaviour the culprit was a person known by the victim. Specifically, 21.9 % of threats were made by a person whom the victim knew by sight, 8.9 % by a neighbour, 5.1 % by a boyfriend or girlfriend, 3.7 % by a friend, 3.3 % by a partner, 2.1 % by a relative, 1.9 % by a co-worker and 1.8 % by an employer. In 44.1 % of threat cases the culprit was a stranger.
- Victims of snatch-thefts, personal robberies and assault claimed that the perpetrators were foreign in approximately 30 % of cases (respectively 31.9 %, 28.7 % and 30.9 %). Certainty, however, that perpetrators were foreign is demonstrated only in 9.1 % of cases of assault, 2.8 % of robberies and 1.6 % of snatch-thefts.

Victims: women most subject to snatch-theft and pickpocketing, men to robbery and assault; young people aged 14-24 years most subject to crimes, less so the elderly

- The risk of sustaining a crime varies according to population stratum: women, for example, were more likely than men to suffer a snatch-theft (0.7 % compared with 0.4 % percent) or to be pickpocketed (2 % compared with 1.3 %); conversely, men were more likely than women to undergo robbery (0.5 % compared with 0.2 %) or assault (0.7 % compared with 0.5 %).
- The risk was highest for young people aged 14-24 followed by those aged 25-34. Relative to these age groups, personal item thefts were 6.5 % and 3.7 % (compared with a national average of 2.2 %), pick-pocketing 2.9 % and 2 % (national average 1.6 %), threats 1.7 % and 1.8 % (national average

0.9 %), assault 1.4 % and 1.2 % (national average 0.6 %), snatch-thefts 1 % and 0.7 % (national average 0.5 %), personal robbery 0.8 % and 0.6 % (national average 0.4 %).

- Victims sometimes suffer the same type of crime more than once. Multi-victimisation is more frequent in the case of threats (42.3 % of victims had suffered two or more occurrences), vehicle vandalism (34.6 % two or more occurrences) and house vandalism (35.6 % two or more occurrences). Repeat-crime percentages were also high as regards the theft of bicycle parts (30.7%), moped parts (28.6 %), car parts (26 %), motorcycle parts (23.8 %), theft or mistreatment of animals (27.4 %), thefts of items from external areas of the primary residence (24.5 %) and assault (19.5 %).

Sense of insecurity: fear is high especially in the South and among girls aged 14-24 years; half the population states their behaviour is conditioned by crime

- A high percentage of citizens stated they were afraid of crime. 28.9 % felt a high sense of insecurity when going out alone in the dark (19.9 % felt unsafe and 9 % extremely unsafe) and 11.6 % never leave the house when after dark, neither alone nor in company. Insecurity was most prevalent among women (37 %, comprising 24.3% who felt unsafe and 12.7 % who felt extremely unsafe) and especially among young females aged 14-24 years (47 %, comprising 34.1 % who felt unsafe and 12.9 % who felt extremely unsafe).
- Citizens in the South of the Country felt the most insecure (33.2 %, comprising 22 % who felt unsafe and 11.2 % who felt extremely unsafe), particularly in Campania (41.6 %, comprising 25.7 % who felt unsafe and 15.9 % who felt extremely unsafe). 47.2 % of women inhabitants of this region felt insecure (28 % unsafe and 19.2 % extremely unsafe) as did 60.3 % of young females aged 14-24 years (38.2 % unsafe and 22.1 % extremely unsafe.)
- Crime also affects citizens' behaviour: 48.5 % stated they felt insecure (15.8 % very unsafe and 32.7 % rather unsafe) and 25.2 % said they were too afraid to go out alone after dark.

Sense of insecurity: high worry of crimes, particularly sexual violence

- Overall, greater concern emerged as to the likelihood of being a victim of sexual violence (very concerned 24.1 %, quite concerned 18.6 %), of burglary (very worried 22.8 %, quite worried 36.5 %), of assault or robbery (very worried 20 %, quite worried 27.6 %). Lesser general concern was felt regarding snatch-theft and pickpocketing (very worried 17.5 %, quite worried 30.7 %) and car theft (very worried 14.1 %, quite worried 29.6 %).
- Women were again the most worried, particularly with regard to sexual violence (very worried 31.8 %, quite worried 20.3 %) or assault (very worried 25.4 %, quite worried 30 %). Concern about these crimes was higher among women in the regions of Puglia (very worried 38.8 %, quite worried 19.3 %), Campania (very worried 38.3 %, quite worried 20.4 %) and Lazio (very worried 36.6 %, quite worried 20.9 %).

Local area of residence: over 60 % of citizens stated that the crime rate had remained unchanged, 20 % that it had risen

- 77.9 % of the population described the risk of crime in their living area as low or insignificant. Citizens were also asked how they perceived the level of crime compared with the previous year: 63.8 % responded that it had remained unchanged, 19.6 % that it had increased and 9.1 % that it had fallen. Social and environmental decay is not very high: the frequency at which citizens encountered situations of social degradation in their area where they live was 9 % for vandalism of public

property, 9.5 % for vagrants and the homeless, 5.6 % for drug users, 4.8 % for drug dealers and, lastly, 3.4 % for prostitutes soliciting custom. Most citizens had a positive view of police control in their area, however almost 40 % expressed a negative opinion: 61.6 % stated that police control in their area of residence was very or quite successful, while 38.4 % thought it was very or quite unsuccessful. Satisfaction among residents is higher in the North-East (67.8 %) and lower in the South (55 %), Lazio (52.5 %) and the large metropolitan areas (51.7 %).

- Those dissatisfied with the police's work were asked what the police should do to better the situation: 62.5 % thought they should patrol the streets more frequently and perform more spot checks, 59.5 % would like an increase in police numbers and actual deployment whereas 25 % wanted the police to conduct investigations and intervene more rapidly and effectively against criminals.

Home-protection strategies of citizens: Special doors locks rank top followed by neighbour vigilance and fitting window locks; more than one third of citizens avoids certain places or streets after dark

- The main home-protection methods adopted by families are special doors locks (46.7 %), asking neighbours to keep check (39.4 %) and fitting window locks (28.4 %). These are followed by leaving lights on when going out (23.8 %), fitting door and window grilles (23.2 %), installing automatic light switches (21.9 %), alarm systems (19.1 %), taking out insurance against theft (18.7 %) and installing a safe (15.3 %). Families living in the South rate above the national averages only as regards leaving on lights when going out (27.1 % compared with 23.8 %).
- In many cases, families in the Islands register values below the national average: asking neighbours to keep check (33.9 %), insurance against theft (7.5 %), burglar-proof doors (34.4 %), window locks (20.3 %), door or window grilles (16 %), home alarm systems (12.7 %) and automatic light switches (13.6 %).
- Some citizens adopt personal defence methods: 35.3 % avoid certain places or streets after dark, 42.8 % lock their car doors from the inside when driving, 8.7 % take something with them to defend themselves in case of danger.

Trends over the last 10 years: drop in primary residence burglaries, car theft, theft of items from vehicles and theft of animals; no variation in the percentage of those who feel unsafe; decrease in those who feel very safe and increase in those who never leave the house

- Comparison with the 1997-1998 survey indicates a marked drop in certain crimes, namely primary residence burglaries (from 2.1 % in 1997-1998 to 1.1 % in 2008-2009), car theft (from 3.6 % to 1.7 %), theft of items from vehicles (from 4 % to 2.1 %), mistreatment and theft of animals (from 4.2 % to 2.6 %). The only crime on the increase is bicycle theft (3.1 % in 1997-1998 as against 2.5 % in 2002 and 3.8 % in 2008-2009).
- Whereas mobile phone thefts increased sharply in 2002 compared with 1997-1998 (due in part to the higher number of phones in circulation), the latest survey indicates a drop in such thefts, at least in non-contact thefts, from 22.2 % to 15.6 %, possibly because mobile phones now feature among the items people have always with them.
- Less money was pickpocketed than other items. In 1997-1998, 76.3 % of victims reported they were robbed of money as against 61.5 % in 2002 and 43.3 % in 2008-2009. This sharp fall is in part probably due to the increase in use of plastic money as opposed to cash and greater attentiveness to keeping cash secure when using public transport.

- The use of firearms in robberies has decreased over time and now stands at 24.8 % as against 53.3 % in 2002 and 51.8 % in 1997-1998.
- Whereas perceived insecurity remained basically stable between 1997-1998 and 2008-2009, those who felt very safe have decreased (from 24.3 % in 1997-1998 to 18.8 % in 2008-2009) and those who never leave the house have increased (from 8.4 % in 1997-1998 to 11.6 %), particularly among the over 70s (from 33.9 % in 1997-1998 to 43.6%).

Trends over the last 10 years: rise in concern regarding the risk of snatch-theft, pickpocketing, personal robbery, assault and sexual violence; over 50% of women concerned about the risk of sexual violence

- The conditioning effect of crime on citizens' behavioural patterns increased from 46.3 % in 2002 to 48.5 % in 2008-2009. Less people are worried about the risk of car theft while more are concerned about potential snatch-theft and pickpocketing (48.1 % compared with 44.2 % in 2002), robbery and assault (47.6 % as against 43 %) and, in particular, sexual violence (42.7 % as against 36.3 %). Sexual violence is a concern for over 50% of women.
- Indicators of social and environmental decay based on citizens' answers registered lower values compared with 1997-1998 except as regards the presence of drug dealers. Data remained basically stable since 2002 apart from a progressive drop in those related to prostitutes soliciting custom (13.3 % in 1997-1998, 10.4 % in 2002, and 7.7 % in 2008-2009).
- Differences however emerge across the country. In Northern and Central Italy the percentage of citizens who witness the presence of drug dealers, which fell between 1997-1998 and 2002, rose again in 2008-2009 (passing from 11 % through 7.6 % to 11.6% in the North-West, from 7.8 % through 5.9 % to 7.7 % in the North-East and from 9.6 % through 7.6 % to 10.6 % in Central Italy). A similar oscillating trend emerges again in Central Italy as regards the presence of drug dealers (which dropped from 19.3 % in 1997-1998 to 14.9 % in 2002 only to rise to 16 % in 2008-2009) and in the South as regards acts of vandalism (from 35.3 % through 27.7 % to 30.4 %).

Trends over the last 10 years: improved opinion of police work; increase in mechanical and electronic protection methods (special doors locks, alarm systems etc.)

- Citizens have an improved opinion of police work: 38.4 % stated they were partially or completely dissatisfied with police work compared with 42.2 % in 1997-1998 and 36.2 % in 2002.
- Use of mechanical and electronic protection methods has increased: burglar-proof doors (from 36.6 % in 1997-1998 through 40.8 % in 2002 to 46.7 % in 2008-2009); window locks (from 21.9 % through 26.4 % to 28.4 %); alarm systems (from 13.4 % through 16 % to 19.1 %). Conversely, less citizens possessed guard dogs (from 14.3 % through 11.8 % to 9.9 %) and apartment building concierge and caretaker services have decreased (from 8.9 % through 7.1 % to 5.9 %).

The regions: Campania, Lazio and Puglia rank highest in terms of crime rate and fear of crime

- Conditions in certain regions of the country emerge as being more critical: Campania, Lazio and Puglia ranked highest in terms of crime rate, fear of crime and perceived insecurity and degradation. In the Northern regions, fear of crime was highest among citizens in Veneto despite the fact that the victimisation rates were substantially similar to other regions ones.