

## Juvenile Delinquency in Six New EU Member States

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**Abstract** This article presents the results of the study conducted in six new member states that joined the European Union in 2004 (This article is based on the report “Juvenile delinquency in six new EU member states’, 2008. Participant and co-authors were Jiri Burianek from the Charles University in Prague, Bojan Dekleva from the University of Ljubljana, Andreas Karpadis from the University of Cyprus, Beata Gruszczyńska from the Warsaw University & Institute of Justice of Poland, Vidas Kalpokas from the Law Institute of Lithuania, Anna Markina from the University of Tartu and Majone Steketee and Marit Moll from the Verwey-Jonker Institute) (The study has been financially supported by the European Community-Daphne-2 Programme to Combat Violence against Children, Young People and Women.). Five former eastern European countries; the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Cyprus, a southern European country and former British colony in the eastern Mediterranean. Often little is known about the prevalence of youth delinquency in these countries, let alone in a trans-national comparison. In this study we examined the variability in patterns of self-reported youth delinquency behaviour and the relative ranking of the prevalence of different types of juvenile delinquency. We also tested whether a number of sociological and criminological theories on prevalence and occurrence of youth delinquency are valid in these six countries.

**Keywords** Delinquency · EU Member · Juvenile

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## Data Collection

The data were collected as part of the larger ISRD-2 research using self-reported information from young students in grades seven, eight and nine in secondary school. The questionnaire is based on questions relating to the prevalence of delinquent behaviour and surrounding circumstances. The questionnaire includes questions about the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and a number of questions that relate, in particular, to the control theory of crime by Hirschi (1969) and Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990).<sup>1</sup>

Although comparable methods were used to gather and clean the datasets in the six countries, there are still significant differences between the datasets. The data between countries cannot be taken at face value and compared because some participants used a national sample whereas other countries used a city-based sample. Since each of the countries oversampled a large city, the capital, these are the units within the countries that can be compared. Even though the size and social context of these cities differ, they are similar in the sense that they are metropolitan areas in the countries involved. However, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the six countries as a whole, they are only relevant for the capital cities of the six new EU member states. When comparing the capitals we should also bear in mind that the average age of students in the sample in Nicosia and Prague is somewhat lower than in Warsaw and Tallinn.

## Core Findings Regarding Delinquency Prevalence, Risky Behaviour and Victimization

In this study we have examined the prevalence of 15 types of delinquency, and a number of general patterns have been identified. The core findings with respect to delinquency are that most of the young people indicate that they have never committed a crime in their lifetime (63%), and this figure is even higher (76%) for the previous year. That means that a quarter of young people report having engaged in at least one type of delinquent behaviour in the last year and one-third of them during their lifetime. Given the age distribution of the respondents, this means that one-third started offending at a rather young age.

Because we look at 13- to 15-year-old students based on a selection by grade, last year's prevalence is a better measure than the lifetime prevalence. Consequently, for every respondent in the survey the time period is the same, namely the last 12 months. Since the perpetration of delinquent behaviour usually starts in the 13 to 15 age range, the lifetime prevalence measure distorts the image due to the fact that 15 year olds had two more years to commit a delinquent act than 13 year olds. The most frequently reported offences for the six new European member states are non-serious offences, such as group fighting (9.7%), carrying a weapon (7.9%), hacking (6.2%), vandalism (5.4%) and shoplifting (4.3%). This pattern is the same as the pattern found in the Nordic Capital Cities (Kivivuori 2007)<sup>2</sup> and in the other countries participating in the ISRD (Junger-Tas et al. 2010, Enzmann et al. 2010). However, the rates are relatively low even for the most frequent offences, especially for shoplifting, in comparison with the average of all large cities within the ISRD project (4.3% versus 7.0%). The highest rates are reported for group fighting, with almost one in

<sup>1</sup> Such as the relationship with parents, parental supervision, attachment to school, school achievement, peer group membership and attitudes to pro-social behaviour.

<sup>2</sup> The Scandinavian Research Council for Criminology and the National Research Institute of Legal Policy of Finland made a comparison of the ISRD study's outcomes in the four Nordic Capital Cities. They analysed the results of the questionnaire for Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo and Stockholm.

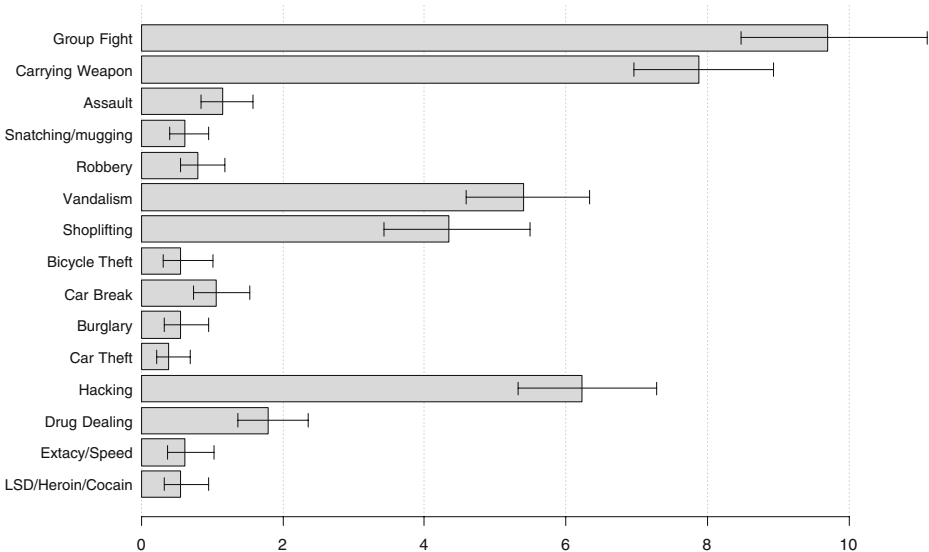
ten students having participated in a group fight during the past 12 months. For the more serious offences, less than 2% of all respondents in the 13–15 age range admitted to having committed a more serious offence such as snatching a purse, assault or robbery (Fig. 1).

### Differences in Delinquency Prevalence Between the Six Capital Cities

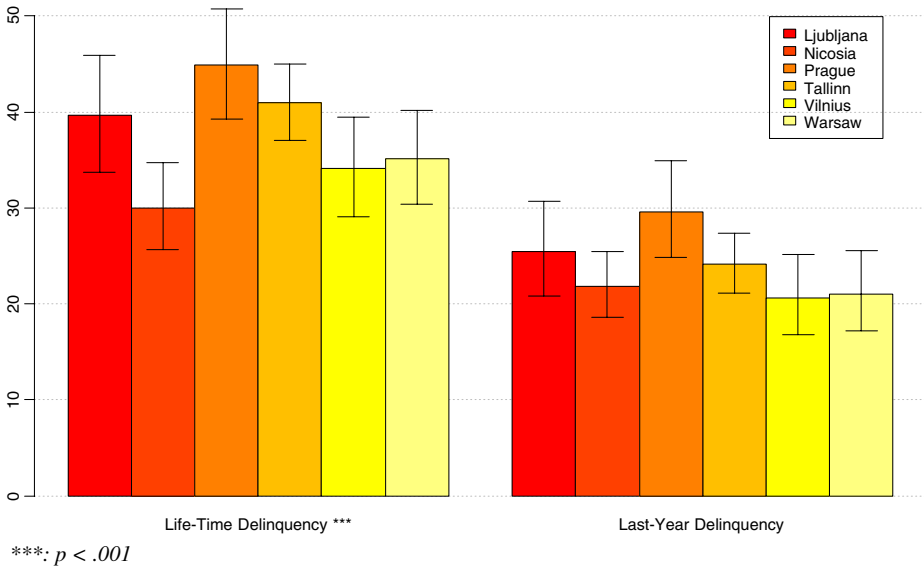
When we look at the prevalence rates for the six cities, we see that there is no significant difference in the number of respondents indicating they had committed a crime in the previous year. It ranges from 20.7% in Vilnius to 29.6 % in Prague. However, there is more variability in the prevalence of delinquent behaviour when we look at lifetime prevalence: the rates are higher in Prague (44.9%) and Tallinn than in Nicosia (30.0%). Although no difference was found between the cities in the number of students aged 13, 14 and 15 who had-or had not committed an offence in the previous year, there is a difference in the type of offence committed for eight of the offences listed, while no differences were found for assault, robbery, burglary, hacking, drug dealing and hard drug use (Fig. 2).

The main findings in terms of delinquency prevalence in the six capitals are the following:

- Overall delinquency rates are highest in Prague. Although there is no particular offence for which Prague has the highest score, Prague very often comes second.
- Prague and Nicosia both have high scores with regards the more ‘frequent violent’ offences, such as group fights, carrying a weapon and vandalism. Group fighting is the most frequently reported offence in Nicosia, while carrying a weapon has the lowest rate. Students in Ljubljana score lowest on group fighting, while Tallinn scores highest for carrying a weapon. One in ten students in grades 7, 8 and 9 has carried a weapon such as a club, chain, or knife (not a pocket-knife) during the last 12 months, a finding that also applies to Prague.



**Fig. 1** Last year offence prevalence for all six cities in percentage (n=3501)

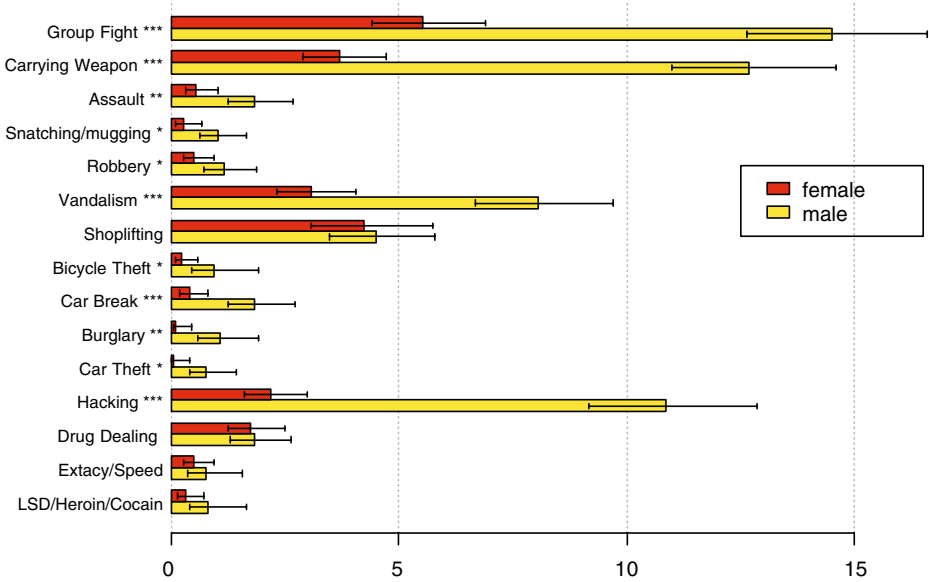


**Fig. 2** Lifetime and last year prevalence of delinquent behaviour in the six cities in percentages. \*\*\*:  $p < .001$

- Of the more frequent and less serious property offences, shoplifting is reported least often by students in Tallinn and Vilnius. Interestingly, vandalism and shoplifting levels are highest in Ljubljana, followed by Prague.
- When we look at the rare violent and property offences addressed in the survey, the rates are so low (they vary from 0.0% to 2.1%) that it is impossible to find any differences in these rates between the six cities. We therefore looked at a more aggregated level. For the more serious and rare property offences such as assault, purse snatching or robbery, the highest rates were found in Ljubljana and Nicosia, an unexpected finding as these two cities have the youngest students in the dataset. However, even in Ljubljana and Nicosia the number of respondents reporting these offences is very low. The rate of serious property crime committed by young people in Vilnius is also very low. In fact, some offences are not committed at all.

The findings lead to the conclusion that the delinquency patterns in the six capital cities are quite similar, although there are some differences. Interestingly, delinquency patterns by gender are similar for the six capitals surveyed. One in four girls and one in two boys reported having committed an offence during the previous year. No gender differences were found in any of the cities for shoplifting and the use of drugs or drug-dealing, where girls feature as much as boys. The most frequent offences—group fighting and carrying a weapon—are three times as high among boys than girls. The greatest gender difference involves computer hacking. This can be explained by boys' interest in computers and other technical fields, which presents them with more opportunities to commit this kind of offence. Girls are undoubtedly less represented among serious offences against the person (Fig. 3).

Other researchers have reported a strong positive relationship between age and delinquency; in other words, involvement in delinquent behaviour generally increases considerably during adolescence and declines rapidly thereafter (Junger-Tas et al. 2003). There is a difference in age for the dataset as a whole, but it does not apply to all six capitals. Only in Ljubljana and Nicosia is there a difference in delinquency development as a function of age. In other words, delinquency prevalence in the other capitals does not



**Fig. 3** Differences in gender for last year prevalence in the six cities in percentages. Note: \*:  $p < .05$ , \*\*:  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*:  $p < .001$

increase as a function of age increasing from 13 to 15. A possible explanation for this finding may well be that the selection criterion was the students’ grade and not their age. The data were then analysed on the basis of a respondent’s grade and a difference was found in the case of shoplifting: the higher the grade, the higher the delinquency rates. This was an unexpected finding because it might be expected that the age of onset for shoplifting would be the lowest, as compared to the age of onset of other offences.

### Alcohol, Drugs and Risky Behaviour

There is considerable public concern in most of the six participating countries about alcohol consumption and drug use among young adolescents. The results of this research show that this cause for concern is justified. Alcohol consumption by students in grades seven, eight and nine is quite high. Three in four students in the six capitals aged 13–15 years have used alcohol in their lifetime (75.9%) and one in three had drunk alcohol during the previous month (34.5%). Most of these young people drink beer or wine, rather than spirits. Lifetime prevalence of alcohol consumption is lowest in Nicosia and highest in Tallinn (85.2%), Prague (85.1%) and Vilnius (82.2%). Although the prevalence rate for the last month is much lower, the ranking order is the same.

If we compare these results with those of all the countries participating in the ISRD-study, we find that the average lifetime prevalence of alcohol consumption shows that 60% of all students have drunk alcohol at some point in their lifetime and last month consumption is (27.7%). These results show that the drinking behaviour of adolescents in the New European member states is quite high, with the exception of Cyprus.

‘Binge drinking’ (i.e. drinking five glasses or more the last time they drunk alcohol) is twice as high in Tallinn and Warsaw than in Nicosia and Ljubljana. Heavy alcohol

consumption can be expected to impact adversely on students' academic performance, to contribute to and increase any tendencies towards aggression and violence in and out of school and, finally, to persist into adulthood.

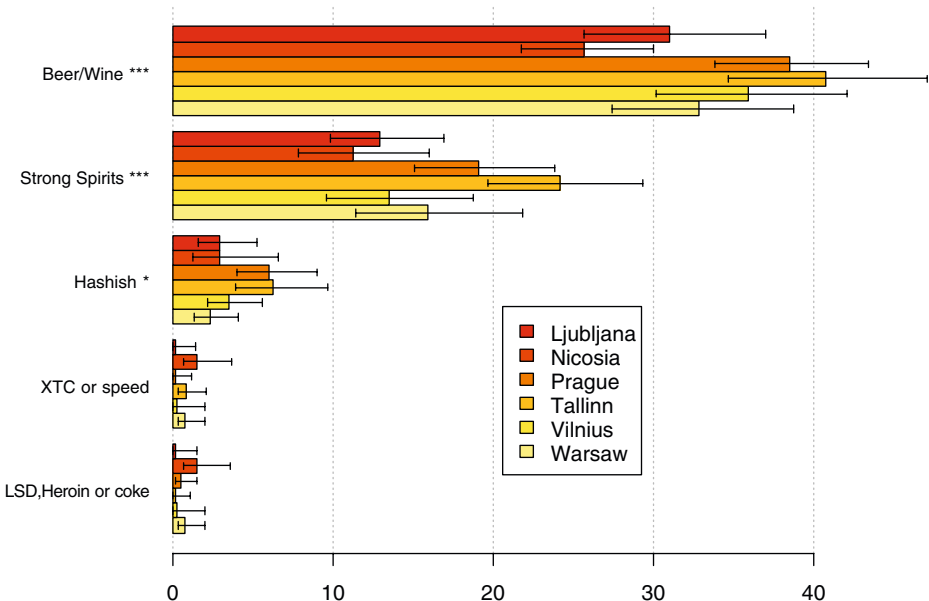
The prevalence of hashish and hard drug use is very low among the respondents. Only one in 25 had used hashish during the previous month, and one in eight had ever done so. The use of hashish was found to be most prevalent in Tallinn and Prague. It should be noted, however, that the use of hard drugs is so low that there are no differences in use between the six capitals.

For all participating cities there is a difference in age as far as the consumption of alcohol and use of hashish is concerned. As students get older, there is an increase in the number reporting they consumed alcohol or used hashish during the previous four weeks. Nearly one in every two students consumes alcohol at the age of 15, while at the age of 13 this is one in four.

Analysing the prevalence for the whole dataset, there is no gender difference in substance use for lifetime and previous month use. The only exception is the use of hashish: more boys have tried hashish in their lifetime than girls. Some gender differences for previous month use were only found among students in Nicosia, where drinking beer and wine as well as smoking hashish are more prevalent among boys than girls (Fig. 4).

### Juvenile Victimisation

Juvenile victimisation is a very serious problem that affects the proper functioning of students in their everyday life. Trauma stemming from victimisation may adversely affect one's personal development. On the other hand, it may also give rise to a desire to retaliate, or even to embark on the perpetration of criminal offences. Research has also shown how victimisation can be a predictor of conduct disorders and how victims may turn into



**Fig. 4** Last month Prevalence of substance use in the six cities in percentages. Note: \* :  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*:  $p < .001$

aggressors (Kumpulainen & Rasanen 2000). The interaction between being a victim and delinquency has been examined.

In the ISRD-2 study the “victimisation” is defined as being a victim of robbery, assault or theft. In addition to these three criminal offences, students were also asked about being a victim of bullying, meaning being the target or the perpetrator of unpleasant or aggressive behaviour by one’s peers.

It seems that one in every three students had at least once been the victim of robbery, assault, theft or a bullying incident. Young people in grades 7–9 in the six capitals were most often the victims of theft (22%), but they were rarely the victims of violent crime, such as assault (about 5%) and robbery (6%). As one might have expected, bullying has a different pattern, almost one in six students was bullied (17%). It should be remembered, however, that the victims of bullying are often victimised more than once. The percentage of multiple victims is higher than those of different types of offences. Almost two-thirds of all bullying victims are multiple victims of blackmail or maltreatment by their peers.

The results of study in six European capital cities show that students very rarely report bullying incidents to the police—less than one in 20 victims (5%). It was found that the offences most often reported by students were robbery (19%) theft (17%) and, on a slightly lesser scale, assault—one in seven victims (Fig. 5).

There are some differences between the capital cities, as is shown in Fig 6. In Nicosia, for example, there are rarely any victims of robbery, while the students in Vilnius and in Tallinn were most frequently robbed (almost one in ten). However, the six capitals do not differ as far as assault victimisation is concerned. Theft is definitely higher in Ljubljana (with a 35% victimisation rate) than in other capitals cities. Students in Ljubljana were also bullied the most often (28%), followed by peers in Tallinn, where almost one-fourth were being maltreated by their peers. The lowest rates—about 10% were found in Prague and Nicosia.

There are also differences in rates concerning reports filed with the police (Fig. 7). They apply to both, types of crime, and the countries. Robbery was most frequently reported in Nicosia, about one of two incidents, while the lowest reporting rates were observed in Prague and Tallinn (one of seven). Almost one in three assaults was reported to the police in Nicosia, while only about every eighth in Vilnius and Warsaw. Theft

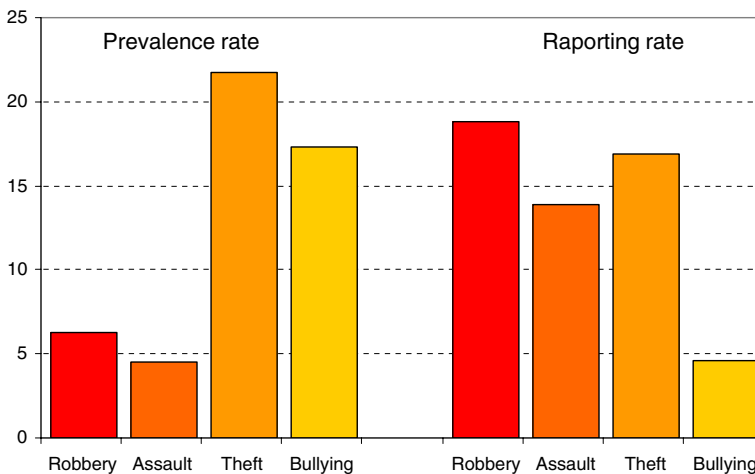
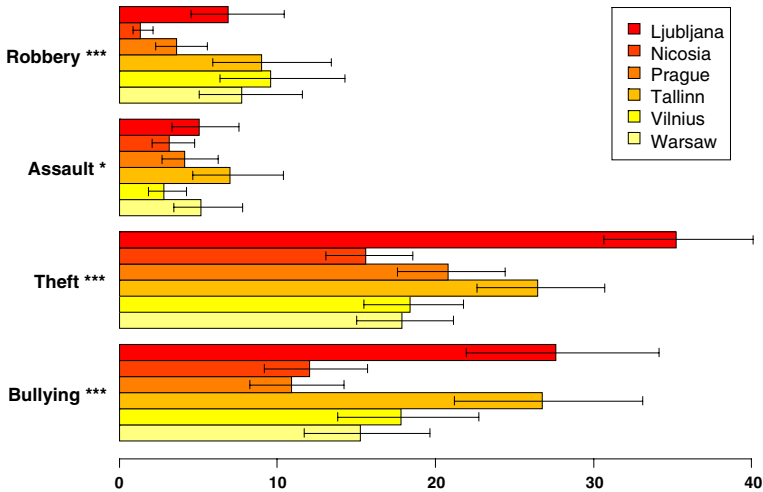


Fig. 5 Average prevalence rates and percentage of victims reporting to the police



**Fig. 6** Victimization rates in the capitals of the six new EU member states. Note: \*.  $P < .05$ ; \*\*\*.  $P < .001$

reporting rate fluctuates almost as much as in the case of violent crime. Most often students reported theft incidents in Warsaw (about one in three), followed by peers Tallinn (one in four). In Prague and in Vilnius the police were informed very rarely, only in about 10% of thefts.<sup>3</sup> Bullying was reported mostly in Nicosia and Prague (where the least likely occurred), and the lowest reporting rate was observed in Ljubljana (where prevalence rate was the highest).

The demographic profile of victims depends on victimisation type and is similar in capital cities. Being a victim of robbery and assault increases with the age (grade), while theft and bullying is more common among younger than the older students. Boys are the victims of robbery and assault more often than girl, while theft victimisation prevalence is almost the same for both genders (Fig. 8). Bullying, as is theft, is independent on gender with slight majority of girls. Cross-countries comparison shows that the difference in robbery victimisation is not high, with clearly lower prevalence rate for girls in Nicosia and Prague and the highest rate in Vilnius. Victims of assault are demographically similar to the victims of robbery and diversity among countries are rather low. In the six European capitals the highest female prevalence rates for theft and bullying were in Ljubljana and Tallinn while the lowest in Nicosia. In Prague, however, girls are the victims of bullying twice as often than boys.

The results of the survey show a positive correlation between delinquent behaviour and being victimised. Peers, who were involved in delinquency, had two times higher risk of being victims of a robbery and assault than others. They were also more frequent than others the victims of bullying and theft. Similarly, further signs of life style as using alcohol, truancy, going out in the evening, having delinquent friends, increase the victimisation risk, particularly risk of robbery and assault. Low self control, together with a positive attitude towards violence, increases the risk of being a victim of robbery and/or theft and is not correlated to bullying. Differences between

<sup>3</sup> Low reporting rate to the police were observed in post socialist countries in the International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS), (Gruszczyńska 2002), what can be explained, beside others, the weak confidence towards police.



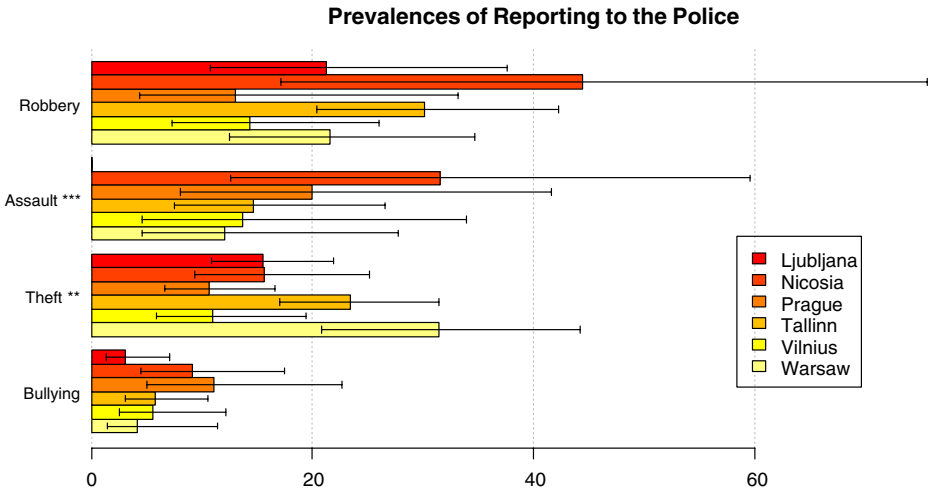


Fig. 7 Reporting rates in the capitals of the six new EU member states

countries are not high, although the correlations in Nicosia and Warsaw are weaker than in other capitals.

School indicators were significant in all capitals where we observed assault, theft or bullying. School disorganisation did not increase the risk of being a robbery victim in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Neighbourhood surroundings were important in most countries, the highest interaction occurring in Warsaw, Tallinn, while playing a lesser role in Prague, Vilnius and Nicosia.

A close correlation was found between victimisation and having experienced the death or serious illness of a family member. One can assume that such traumatic events are internalised, resulting in low self-esteem and withdrawal which, in turn, may increase the likelihood of being victimised at school, in particular being bullied. Family disruption such as separation or divorce of parents, inter-parental conflicts or substance abuse among parents were found to be associated with both crime victimisation and bullying. Finally, adolescents with weak family bonds were found to be victimised more often than their peers with stronger family ties.

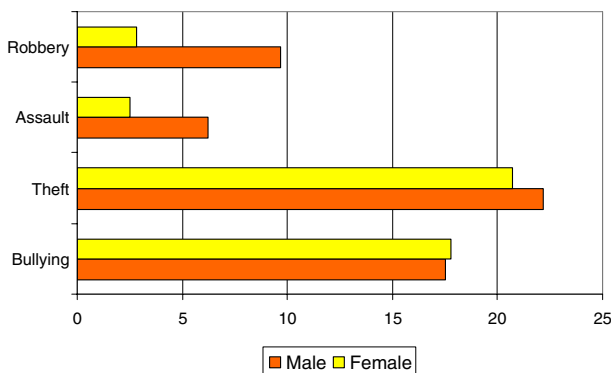


Fig. 8 Victimization rates by gender

## Family Composition and Attachment to Parents and Family Control<sup>4</sup>

Most research concludes that family composition and family break-up in particular have long-term negative effects on the socialisation and behaviour of children and is an important risk factor for getting involved in delinquent behaviour. Juveniles from divorced households are significantly more prone to antisocial behaviour, especially boys (Junger-Tas 1993). The group of countries analysed in this publication includes countries with numerous different family types: Mediterranean as well as Northern and Central European. Cyprus and (partly) Slovenia are traditional Mediterranean countries with strong family ties and adolescents frequently living at home with their own mother and father. The highest proportion of one-parent families is in Tallinn and Prague (see Table 1). The role of religious (Catholic) values may also explain why the structure of the family in Lithuania is more similar to Poland than to any other Baltic State (Estonia) with whom Lithuania shares a similar Soviet past

Generally, adolescents' relationship with their mother is better than with their father. This pattern is similar in all countries. Regarding differences between countries, the lowest proportion of students who get along well with their father is in Tallinn, followed by Warsaw, Vilnius and Prague. Adolescents' evaluation of their relationship with their father is better in Ljubljana and Nicosia. We can speculate that this is related to the role of the father in child raising which is still strong in Southern Europe, and to the fact that in the same two countries adolescents spend more time with their parents than in the other four.

Table 2 reviews the association between parental variables and versatility<sup>5</sup> and problem behaviour. For most family bonding variables, there is a significant association with delinquency, risk behaviour and victimisation. Good relationships with parents is a characteristic for non-offenders, though the strength of these associations is rather low.

The data show that of the variables that measure parental supervision, stipulating the time of coming home is least associated with delinquency and risk behaviour. The results for the other variables, parents know my friends and time limit, confirm that supervision plays a role in preventing problem behaviour among adolescents. One conclusion that can be derived from Table 2 is that, although family bonding has an effect on delinquency, supervision has a higher preventive effect. Additionally, we can observe that family bonding has a stronger association with problem behaviour than with delinquency.

The survey found no link between neighbourhood bonding and delinquent or risky behaviour, with the exception of Warsaw where a stronger bond to one's neighbourhood is associated with higher involvement in risky behaviour. A possible explanation for this rather contradictory result is that neighbourhood bonding is related to spending leisure time with one's friends. When juveniles hang out in the street they feel more connected to the neighbourhood and, of course, being in public places with one's friends provides plenty of opportunities to commit delinquent acts and consequently leads to a greater risk of coming into contact with the police. Our data confirm the thesis that in neighbourhoods with a higher degree of social disorganisation, the

<sup>4</sup> This paragraph is based on a chapter within the report 'Juvenile delinquency in six new EU member states', Family, school and neighbourhood, Steketee et al. (Eds.), 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Versatility is a measure for the number of different offences committed by an offender. It has been argued that such variety score is useful because they show the extent of involvement in different type of crimes (Junger-Tas et al. 2003).

**Table 1** Family composition by capital city

	Ljubljana	Nicosia	Prague	Tallinn	Vilnius	Warsaw
	%	%	%	%	%	%
One parent family	13.2	6.8	14.1	24.3	13.9	13.6
Core family complete	78.5	87.6	66.8	57.2	74.2	77.7
Core family reformed	8.3	4.9	17.9	15.8	10.7	6.4
Other		.7	1.2	2.7	1.3	2.3

involvement of adolescents in delinquent and risky behaviour is higher. This association is uniform for all countries.

Crime in schools is a serious problem confronting school authorities in many countries. Examples of criminal offences in schools include vandalism, theft, bullying, violence, and drug use and trafficking. Delinquency in schools interferes with the learning process. School failure is a well-established correlate of delinquency and adult criminality (Farrington 2007). The survey findings confirm the hypothesis that school-related factors are significantly correlated with delinquency, truancy and victimisation. Stronger school bonding is associated with a lower prevalence of delinquency and truancy and, in a lesser degree, to lower victimisation levels. A higher crime rate in schools is positively associated with higher delinquency and victimisation, while its association with truancy is rather weak.

One final factor considered by the survey is ‘serious life events’. The literature has established that adolescents who have experienced more than two serious life events are vulnerable and at a higher risk of developing problem behaviour. The survey found a weak association between traumatic life events (such as the death or serious illness of

**Table 2** Association between parental variables, truancy and victimisation (Spearman rho)

		Last year versatility	Last year prevalence truancy
Getting along with father	Correlation Coefficient	-.125(**)	-.142(**)
	N	3070	3147
Getting along with mother	Correlation Coefficient	-.115(**)	-.150(**)
	N	3330	3408
Leisure together with parents	Correlation Coefficient	-.086(**)	-.114(**)
	N	3384	3468
Dinner together with parents	Correlation Coefficient	-.082(**)	-.101(**)
	N	3381	3464
Parents know friends	Correlation Coefficient	-.211(**)	-.247(**)
	N	3338	3416
Parents stipulate time	Correlation Coefficient	-.029	-.069(**)
	N	2922	2989
Observing time limit	Correlation Coefficient	-.192(**)	-.238(**)
	N	2325	2376

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

one's parents, close relatives, or friends) and various types of delinquent behaviour, but a stronger association with victimisation by one's peers.

### Leisure and Group Membership<sup>6</sup>

Juvenile delinquency and other risky behaviour can be found not only at school but also in a young persons' leisure time. It was, therefore, challenging to look at the way juveniles spend their leisure time, especially since in western countries most delinquency is a group phenomenon. The survey examined a number of characteristics of leisure time. There are differences in the way young people in the six capitals spend their time. In Tallinn they go out more frequently and spend their time with a large group of both male and female friends. Students in Prague rarely go out in the evening. In line with the more family-oriented lifestyle of students in Nicosia, it comes as no surprise to find that they generally spend their free time alone or with their family—a finding that most probably reflects: (a) the emphasis on attending private coaching centres after school to ensure admission to a good university, which leaves them with less time to do their homework than their counterparts in the other five countries; and (b) the fact that public transport is almost non-existent in Cyprus and school students rely on their parents for transport.

The survey also looked at the risky behaviour of a juvenile's friends and whether one's group of friends is considered to be a gang in accordance with the 'Eurogang definition'<sup>7</sup>. The Eurogang definition is that a gang is 'any durable street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of their group identity' (Decker & Weerman 2005). Taking the six cities as a whole, five percent of students belong to a group of friends that could be considered a gang. Out of the six cities taken into consideration, it was found that the group characteristics existing in Ljubljana coincide more so with the definition of "gang" than in the five cities, while Vilnius and Warsaw have the lowest gang-membership rates. Students in Nicosia and Vilnius have ties with fewer friends who demonstrate risky or delinquent behaviour, while students in Ljubljana and Prague have a higher number of friendships presenting risky or delinquent behaviour.

With regards to how secondary school students in grades 7–9 spend their leisure time, the survey yielded some remarkable outcomes. Students in Warsaw are more reading (school) oriented in contrast to their counterparts in Tallinn who go out more often and are, therefore, more socialising-oriented, but also more computer-oriented. Students in Ljubljana are more deviant-oriented since a higher number of them have admitted to drinking a lot of beer, vandalizing property for fun, or frightening and annoying people just for fun. However, it is to be noted that students in Ljubljana are also more sport-oriented. Students in Prague and Vilnius do not stand out in any way as far as their leisure activities are concerned.

Generally speaking, risky or delinquent behaviour is, to some extent, related to an active social lifestyle, mediated by large mixed-gender peer groups which include deviant or delinquent friends. The interplay and interaction of these characteristics (as

<sup>6</sup> This paragraph is based on a chapter in the book, 'Juvenile delinquency in six new EU member states' Leisure and peers, Steketee et al. (Eds.) 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Instruments developed by the Eurogang Research Program. There are six items within the questionnaire that measures the membership of a gang.

**Table 3** Correlations between self control, attitude towards violence and delinquency

	Self control	Risk-taking	Ego-centrism	Temper	Presentism	Versatility last year	Versatility lifetime
Att. t/ violence	R -0.54	-0.34	-0.29	-0.23	-0.22	0.30	0.36
Self control	R 1	0.52	0.54	0.49	0.44	-0.28	-0.32
Risk-taking FS	R 0.5	1	0.01	-0.04	-0.02	-0.24	-0.28
Ego-centrism FS	R 0.5	0.0	1	0.00	0.03	-0.09	-0.11
Temper/Impuls. FS	R 0.5	0.0	0.0	1	0.02	-0.14	-0.15
Presentism FS	R 0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	-0.09	-0.10
versatility last year	R -0.3	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	1	0.85
versatility lifetime	R -0.3	-0.3	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	0.8	1

Correlations with  $p > 0.05$  in italics,  $p$  for  $-0.04 < 0.05$ ,  $p$  for all others  $< 0.001$

opposed to school/reading orientation and spending leisure time alone, with family or small groups of friends) constitutes risky behaviour and is somewhat correlated to delinquency and victimisation. However, it should be borne in mind that the leisure/peer set of variables explains only part of the delinquency variation and it may well be the case that leisure/peer variables represent only intervening variables and not causal ones.

### Predisposing Attitudes and Personal Inclination<sup>8</sup>

Compared with other delinquency theories, the self-control theory is important when explaining and interpreting delinquent behaviour. Firstly, the survey examined students' attitudes towards violence. Although there are similar patterns in all six countries, there are some cities—Nicosia, Warsaw and Ljubljana—with a higher proportion of low-violent and peaceful groups of students. The results show that a positive attitude towards violence is a strong and long-term predictor of delinquent behaviour. It also correlates with friends' delinquency or risky behaviour, but the relationship is probably mutual: students' attitude towards violence attracts them to risky groups.

The survey also used the self-control scale put forward by Grasmick et al. (1993) and found that although the distinctions in particular factors are clear and statistically significant, the general level of self-control varies less apparently. It is possible that the content of particular items has been affected by the translation or by other cultural aspects. Students in Tallinn were found to have the lowest level of self-control, along with risk-seeking and ego-centrism, factors that can be of influence. Students in Ljubljana were found to be emotionally more impulsive but, generally, the best controlled. The rather low level of self-control in Vilnius can be explained by the students' tendency towards risk-seeking and spontaneity. Students in Prague seem to be surprisingly more impulsive in both factors. Students in Nicosia appear well-balanced. The greater emphasis on one's self could reflect the less collectivist tradition compared with the post-communist countries.

Table 3 illustrates the narrow relationship between risk taking and attitudes towards violence (checked against the Attitude Towards Violence scale). If versatility is used as a

<sup>8</sup> This paragraph is based on a chapter within the book 'Juvenile delinquency in six new EU member states', Predisposing attitudes and personal inclinations, Steketee et al. (Eds.) 2008.

general measure of delinquent behaviour, we find a strong correlation mainly with lifetime versatility ( $R=-0.32$ ). The separate factors of self-control (FS) also correlate with delinquency but in a weaker manner. Self-control and attitude towards violence are very similar ( $R=-0.54$ ) and they represent a set of basic attitudes or personal inclinations.

The findings show that self-control correlates with delinquency. However, in combination with attitudes towards violence, self-control can explain delinquent behaviour in a much better way. There is also a strong relationship between low self-control and risky behaviour among people participating in the study. Generally speaking, the basic assumptions made by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) are confirmed.

## Conclusions

The results of the ISRD-2 study on the six capital cities do not prove the popular statement that almost all young adolescents commit one or more crimes. Our results also only partly confirm this statement about 'risky behaviour', i.e. alcohol use and truancy by secondary school students'. Delinquent behaviour characterises only a small proportion of juveniles aged 13-15. Comparing the prevalence rates, we found a remarkable degree of similarity between the New EU Member States, in particular when comparing the relative rank order of the self-reported offenses. Generally, the most frequently reported misbehaviours involved group fights and carrying a weapon. Most of the offences that are committed are non serious delinquent acts. The results also show that violent offences are predominant among juveniles. This fact is not borne out in official criminal statistics, where property crime is the most important element in juvenile crime. An explanation could be that violent juvenile crime tends to go unreported and is part of the 'dark figure' of crime in society. As the survey documents, for example, bullying incidents at school are rarely reported to the police and property offences are reported more often than violent offences. Of particular concern is the combination of high violence rates and the fact that eight percent of the young people admit to carrying a weapon, a finding the authorities are advised not to ignore.

The delinquency patterns identified are quite similar in the six capitals of the new EU member states. Comparing the prevalence rates from these six New Member states with the prevalence rates for all ISRD-countries, we can draw the conclusion that the frequencies of all offences are lower. On the other hand the prevalence rates concerning alcohol consumption are quite high compared to the ISRD-2 study. It would therefore be interesting to compare the new member states with the older members of the EU to see if there are any other patterns when examining delinquency, risky behaviour and victimisation. This will be done in the extensive ISRD-2 survey involving 30 countries. The report of this survey will probably be published in 2010.

The DAPHNE survey has shown a clear association of most individual and contextual factors and their association with delinquency, risk behaviour and also victimisation. Family structure, school, neighbourhood factors, the friends young people hang out with, the way they spend their leisure time, self-control and attitudes, all have an influence on delinquency. However, no single factor has a really strong association with delinquency. The research team feels that no single factor alone can adequately explain juvenile delinquency. Each factor contributes to the process and has a cumulative impact on the behaviour of adolescents.

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