

CrimeShare

The unequal impact of crime

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This research uses data from several years of the British Crime Survey of England and Wales, originally undertaken by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB). These data sets were kindly supplied by the UK Data Archive and are Crown Copyright. Although the main focus of statistical analysis has been necessarily limited to England and Wales, we hope that all of the issues raised and most of the policy prescriptions will be of interest to the whole of the United Kingdom and perhaps beyond.

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Introduction

While there is a long tradition of philosophical inquiry into punishment and its justification – ‘retributive justice’ – philosophers and social scientists have paid much less attention to the way crime bears on questions of social justice. It is not obvious why this is so. Perhaps it is traceable to the tendency of philosophers to think rather crudely about social justice as a matter of the distribution of negative freedom and material goods, and overlook the complex set of conditions and capabilities (including personal security) that make for well-being. (For complexity-sensitive accounts see Sen (1999), Nussbaum (2000), Wolff and de-Shalit (2005)).

But whatever the explanation, the consequences have been profound. Too often in the past, progressives have failed to speak up for those who have been subject to crime, or to explore its role in perpetuating disadvantage. And too often social democratic states and their public services have failed victims of crime.

Recently, criminologists, policymakers and criminal justice agencies have begun to make good this neglect. They have become more attentive to the effects crime has on those who experience it or fear they might experience it. Feminist campaigners helped make violence against women – and the inadequacy of official responses to it – a political and, to some extent, a social justice issue. Champions of other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups – young people, poor people, disabled people, black people, for instance – similarly began to underscore the extent to which they were unfairly subject to crime, and to criticise criminal justice agencies for not doing more to protect them, or help them recover from it.

These movements in turn informed the so called ‘community justice’ movement, which offered a more generalised critique of state-dominated criminal justice systems, arguing that the police, courts and correctional bureaucracies dehumanised victims and offenders, fuelled retributive modes of thought, and did little to stop re-offending. Finally, a growing body of research testified to the impact of crime on victims – and to a more limited extent, its effect in sustaining poverty and other forms of disadvantage. As a recent survey of ‘victimology’ observed, ‘Victim surveys ... and qualitative studies of the impact of crime and of victim needs have permanently altered the criminological agenda’ (Zedner 2002: 419).

These developments have in turn influenced the way western governments and criminal justice systems think about and respond to crime. Nowhere is this truer than in the UK. The establishment of statutory criminal injuries compensation arrangements, the introduction of the victim’s charter, recruitment of a Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses, and the recent *Rebuilding lives: supporting victims of crime* green paper (Home Office 2005) all testify to growing government concern to supporting and recompensing victims – as does the dramatic rise in public funding for Victim Support, from a mere £5,000 in 1979-80 to over £30 million in 2005/06 (Home Office 2005, Zedner 2002: 433).

The 1997 elections arguably represented a milestone in this process. Determined to break with old perceptions that the Left cared more about offenders than victims, and recognising that crime tends to fall on those least equipped to negotiate it, Tony Blair’s government has gone out of its way to show itself ‘tough on crime; tough on the causes of crime’ (e.g. Blair 2002). New Labour has overseen a raft of measures intended to tackle crime and concern about crime in worst-off areas, protect particularly vulnerable groups, improve the way the criminal justice system responds to victims, and promote programmes to support and compensate them.

To take just a few examples, the Government has produced a restorative justice strategy, intended in part to give offenders a chance to make amends to those they have harmed (www.crimereduction.gov.uk/workingoffenders42.htm); further increased funding for Victim Support from £12 million to £30 million between 1997 and 2005/06 (Home Office 2005); sought to make the experience of giving evidence easier; and rolled out strategies to reduce violence against women and vulnerable groups (www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence51.htm). Most recently it has established a Victims Fund (2004), and a Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses (2004) and issued the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (2005/06). And the last decade has seen a very significant fall in crime: a drop of 35 per cent since 1997, according to the British Crime Survey (Nicholas *et al* 2005).

Table 1: Some landmark dates in the development of victim support

1964	Establishment of statutory criminal injuries compensation arrangements
1972	First UK women's refuge set up
1975	Victim Support set up
1976	First UK rape crisis centre set up
1981	Creation of the British Crime Survey
1982	Roger Graef's TV documentary on the treatment of women reporting rape
1985	UN declaration of the basic principles of justice for victims of crime and abuse of power
1986	ChildLine set up
1987	First national government funding for Victim Support
1990	Victim's Charter
1991	Criminal Justice Act
1996	Victim's Charter revised
1998	Crime and Disorder Act – reparation for victims of young offenders
1999	Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act – vulnerable witness provisions
2004	Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act
2004	Victims Fund – to develop services for victims of sexual offending
2004	Establishment of the Victims' Advisory Panel – giving victims a greater voice in policymaking
2005	<i>Rebuilding lives: supporting victims</i> green paper – victim support to prioritise practical and emotional help, as well as financial compensation
2006	Code of Practice for Victims of Crime – creation of statutory obligations on the Criminal Justice System to provide minimum standard of service to victims
2006	Recruitment of a Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses

Source: adapted from Williams (1999)

It is arguable, however, that despite what is by historic standards an impressive record, we have still not gone far enough in viewing crime through a social justice lens. Government leaders and criminal justice professionals urge the importance of tackling crime in worst off areas, or crime that affects particularly vulnerable groups. But this has not yet translated into systematic investigation of the impact of crime and fear of crime, or into strategies to minimise crime's role in perpetuating injustice. It is notable that Labour ministers, and social democrats more generally, find it much more natural to employ the language of social justice when talking about the aims of, say education, health or welfare policy, than they do when talking about crime.

This short report makes no claim to represent a rigorous philosophical treatment of crime as a social justice issue or an exhaustive investigation of patterns of victimisation and their effects. But it does begin to explore how crime's effects might be conceptualised from the point of view of social justice, review some of what is known already about the impact of crime on different groups, offer some new quantitative findings as to its impacts, and suggest further avenues of research. By way of conclusion, we point to some steps the Government could take to improve understanding of the distribution of crime-related harm, and diminish the role that crime plays in creating and perpetuating the most offensive forms of social injustice. We are only too aware of the limits to our efforts, but hope they will, at least, help spur further thinking and research.

Our thinking on crime and social justice is much indebted to Jonathan Wolff, Professor of Philosophy at University College London, who gave a very helpful presentation to an ippr seminar early on in our

research (Wolff has since developed this in a lecture (Wolff 2005)). Before turning to a closer examination of the impacts of crime on different social groups, we draw on Wolff's presentation in laying out the various ways in which crime can harm people.

How crime harms people

Following Wolff, we suggest that crime affects people in two distinct ways. First, it can affect them as victims, and second as potential victims – that is, as people at risk of becoming victims. The main point to make about the first way is that the impact crime has on its victims tends to far exceed the loss of material resources (or in the case of crime against the person, physical pain and disability). So you cannot simply compensate for a burglary say, or theft of a car, by providing monetary compensation for the objects lost and the lost opportunity costs in making good their loss. An injury sustained as a result of assault will generally be experienced as something much 'worse' than an injury from an accident. Wolff does not explore why this should be so, other than to suggest that perhaps victimisation represents an insult to 'status' or 'identity'. But it is clear that any fully worked-out analysis of crime and social justice will need a more elaborate account of the nature of the harm that results from being a victim.

The harm of crime, however, cannot, as Wolff argues, be reduced to the harm of being subject to crime. The perceived risk of crime (what we tend to call 'concern about crime' and 'fear of crime') also has costly consequences. It encourages people to take expensive security measures (like using cars and taxis instead of public transport or walking, or purchasing home security devices and expensive home insurance), or discourages them from socialising, taking part in activities or enjoying public spaces. It can even prevent people from moving to jobs or areas to which they might otherwise move, and negatively affect other major life decisions. This in turn has knock-on effects for families, local communities and the wider economy – fear of crime, for instance, has been shown to undermine local social networks and trust ('social capital') (see chapter 3).

To look briefly forward to our argument, chapter 1 shows that the harm done by crime – both the harm that results from being a victim of a crime and the harm that results from perceiving oneself at risk of crime – is very unevenly distributed, and that both kinds of harm tend to be concentrated on worst off groups. We also show, in chapter 2, that the harmful effects of crime are severely amplified by poverty and other forms of disadvantage – that is to say, poor people are not only much more likely to be subject to many sorts of crime and be more concerned about crime, but are also more poorly equipped to deal with these things. In chapter 3 we highlight the way that concern about crime undermines social capital in individuals and among communities. Finally, in the concluding chapter we point to some key steps government and the Criminal Justice System (CJS) could take to ensure that they do better for those most harmed by crime.

We must make four final points of clarification. First, we are not claiming that considerations of social justice offer the only grounds for wanting to help those worst affected by crime. In an influential report published ten years ago, ippr's Commission on Social Justice argued that social justice, rather than holding back economic development, could contribute to it (Commission on Social Justice 1994). Crime policy is a case in point. As our research indicates, crime places a heavy burden on our public services and the economy more generally. Those subject to crime are more likely to be ill or unemployed. They are often more likely to turn to crime themselves. High levels of concern about crime can push an area beyond a tipping point and launch it into a downwards spiral of decline. There is, in other words, an overwhelming 'business' case or a 'national interest' case, as well as a social justice case, for doing more to help those most vulnerable to crime.

Second, we need to be alert to a certain danger in viewing crime as a social justice issue – the danger that it will encourage the tendency to conceive of those subject to crime, or concerned about it, as passive and fearful victims reliant on the support of concerned professionals. This conception is both unhelpful and patronising. It is unhelpful because, as we have already hinted, victims are often themselves 'offenders' – being engaged in criminal activity is strongly associated with having been or being a victim of it (Rumgay 2004). Often, as in the case of gang conflicts, fights, or disputes between neighbours, 'victim' and 'offender' are hardly even applicable categories. It is patronising because most victims or those most likely to become victims do not think of themselves as 'victims' or potential victims: they get on with their lives, making reasonable assessments of the risks facing them, and taking prudent measures to lessen them.

Furthermore, as we will argue, there is a limited amount public services alone can do to reduce crime or help those adversely affected by it. An active civil society and good family and friendship networks play a

role at least as important as the public services in lessening the harmful effects of crime. It is vital that talk about the role of 'criminal justice agencies' in helping victims does not obscure these points.

Third, it is important to say that becoming more attentive to victims and the way that crime contributes to injustice does not mean that we should become less attentive to offenders. Most of those that end up in the hands of probation and prison services have been failed by their parents and families and/or by public services – many are mentally ill or are addicted to drugs or alcohol. It would be unrealistic to pretend that there could never be tensions between the interests of victims/potential victims and the interests of offenders.

To take an example, it has been argued that our growing sensitivity to the impact that crime has on victims and concern to ensure that victims' views are taken into account in sentencing offenders has driven up the harshness of disposals (Ashworth 2000: 186, Williams 2005: 12). But it is not generally a question of less for victims means more for offenders or the other way around – their interests are not usually incompatible (contrary to much political rhetoric about 'rebalancing justice') (Williams 2005: 88-92).

Insofar as offenders are often themselves victims, better supporting victims can help offenders. But even where victims are victims and offenders offenders, their wants and interests do not generally conflict. Victims are not notably more punitive than the public at large, with many victims wanting to 'help the good part of the offender' (Umbreit, quoted in Williams 2005: 114). Indeed, there is good reason to believe that were the CJS to become better at reducing crime and responding to victims, this would dampen demands for ever harsher punishments. Research suggests that much of the increasingly punitive climate of the last few decades has been fuelled by dissatisfaction with the way the CJS and public agencies more broadly have dealt with crime (Hough, Jacobson and Millie 2003, *Rethinking Crime and Punishment* 2004).

Fourth and finally, while our focus is on the fairness or otherwise of the way crime is distributed across social groups and the justice of the CJS's response to crime across social groups, we have not looked at the justice or otherwise in the way the CJS goes about investigating crime, securing conviction, and punishing offenders. We have restricted ourselves to looking at patterns of victimisation and risk, and how criminal justice agencies react to these, in seeking to reduce crime or support and compensate victims; we have not looked at patterns of detection, conviction and sanction.

It could be argued that we should have done. After all, one way, arguably the most important, of ensuring that we treat victims fairly, is by according fair and proportionate effort to identifying and punishing the people that harm them. It is no coincidence that the system responsible for overseeing and administering endeavours in this area is called the criminal *justice* system.

But we think our narrower focus is justified. The larger task would have been *too* large, and anyway, philosophers have long worked with a distinction between questions of distributive or social justice, and questions of retributive or 'correctional' justice. But we also recognise that the distinction is a vague and not always helpful one. Failing to apprehend and punish someone for a crime, for instance, might not only be a failure of retributive justice; if agencies fail because they do not see the victim as being as deserving of their attention, say, as other social groups, this is clearly a matter of social justice. The way the Stephen Lawrence murder was handled, for example, as described in the Macpherson report, represented a failure to achieve correctional justice, but it was a failure to achieve social justice too (Macpherson 1999). The police failed to treat Stephen's death with the seriousness that they would have treated the death of a white boy, especially a middle-class white boy.

Looking back at the history of the Criminal Justice System in this country, it has plainly tended to display great bias in the way it has approached the business of detection, conviction and sanction – not all victims have been treated equally in the sense that not all criminals have been pursued with the same zeal or treated with the same severity once convicted. Crimes against middle-class people, for instance, have tended to be pursued more actively than crimes against the working class, while 'white collar' criminals have often been treated more leniently than 'blue collar' ones. No doubt these biases still exist. They are the subject, however, for another report.

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1. Inequality, victimisation and crime

This chapter presents an overview of the literature on the distribution of victimisation¹ and concern about crime across society. It is a first step towards understanding how the impact of crime is spread across Britain. It begins by looking at inequalities in terms of income and area, before considering ethnicity, age and gender, before finally – and perhaps most importantly – examining repeat victimisation.

We are used to thinking about inequality in most policy areas. In terms of income and wealth it is well known that Britain is one of the most unequal countries in the developed world. The richest one per cent of the population has 23 per cent of the wealth and the poorest half has just six per cent (Inland Revenue 2004). Year after year, opinion surveys show that four out of five people think that the gap between the rich and poor is too wide (Taylor-Gooby 2005), showing that people do care about inequality.

So why do they care? Perhaps most importantly, high levels of inequality can just seem unfair. But there are other reasons too. Inequality reduces everyone's standard of living as the talents of those born into poverty are systematically wasted. And a vast body of research shows that people living in unequal societies have worse health, lower levels of trust, are less likely to be involved in community life, more likely to be victims of violence and experience more discrimination (Wilkinson 2005).

It is striking that these concerns have little to do with money in itself – what people really care about is health, social status, opportunity and risk (ibid). We have developed a whole gamut of tools and measures to assess the size of the gap between the best and worst off: 50/10 ratios, 90/10 ratios and Gini coefficients for income and wealth are all widely used in government reports and academic papers. Yet surprisingly, given the very concentrated distribution of crime in all societies, no comparable measure exists for crime – we cannot analyse how inequality in crime has changed or how it differs between countries. And we rarely use the language of inequality when talking about victimisation or concern about crime², in stark contrast to health or opportunities more broadly.

And yet there are good reasons to be concerned about how *fair* the distribution of crime in Britain is. High concentrations of risk and concern³ can exacerbate crime's impact: coping mechanisms can become overburdened, leading to people facing social exclusion, lower social mobility and worse prospects, and communities facing declining social capital, low employment and stifled regeneration. We need to see crime policy in the broader context of all social policy: inequality in crime matters because it stifles people's chances in life.

The context: crime continues to fall dramatically

Of course, we should not forget that tackling historically high crime rates has been a considerable success for this government (and the last two years of the previous government). The latest figures show a 44 per cent drop in the total number of British Crime Survey recorded offences between 1995 and 2004/05, and the risk of being a victim now stands at just 24 per cent – down from 40 per cent in 1995 – the lowest level since the Survey began in 1981 (Nicholas *et al* 2005). And where there has been a continued focus, such as on tackling domestic violence, rates have fallen faster. Domestic violence is now almost 60 per cent lower than it was in 1995. This has been a major achievement, and one that deserves more widespread recognition in

1. Unless otherwise stated, reported statistics are based on ippr's analysis of several years of the British Crime Survey. The Survey has a sample of about 40,000 people aged 16 or over living in private households in England and Wales, with a 'booster sample' of ethnic minority respondents. Data covers numbers of crimes by type of offence and victim, fear of crime and crime prevention measures, and, on an ad hoc basis, contact and attitudes to the police, drug use, and household fires (ONS 2003).

2. Here we use the term 'concern' about crime to report people's stated 'worry' about being a victim of crime. Whether this stated 'worry' really reflects people's attitude towards crime (or 'fear' of crime) is open to debate – see Hale (1996) for a good overview. Many criminologists argue that when people talk about their 'fear' of crime they are really talking about a whole host of social anxieties, rather than crime in itself. Jackson (2004), for example, argues that everyday worries about crime are strongly associated with subjective interpretations of local social order and moral consensus. However, it is still useful to compare different groups' stated worry about crime as an approximate indicator of genuine concern. See the Fear of Crime 'toolkit' for more details at www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/fc00.htm

3. Concern about crime may have some positive effects, such as helping to make people more vigilant and take greater precautions against victimisation, thereby reducing the incidence of crime. This has led some commentators to question whether there could be an 'optimum' level of concern about crime.

the media and public awareness than it currently receives. But it raises the issue of whether we can now afford to ask deeper questions about the links between crime, inequality and social justice.

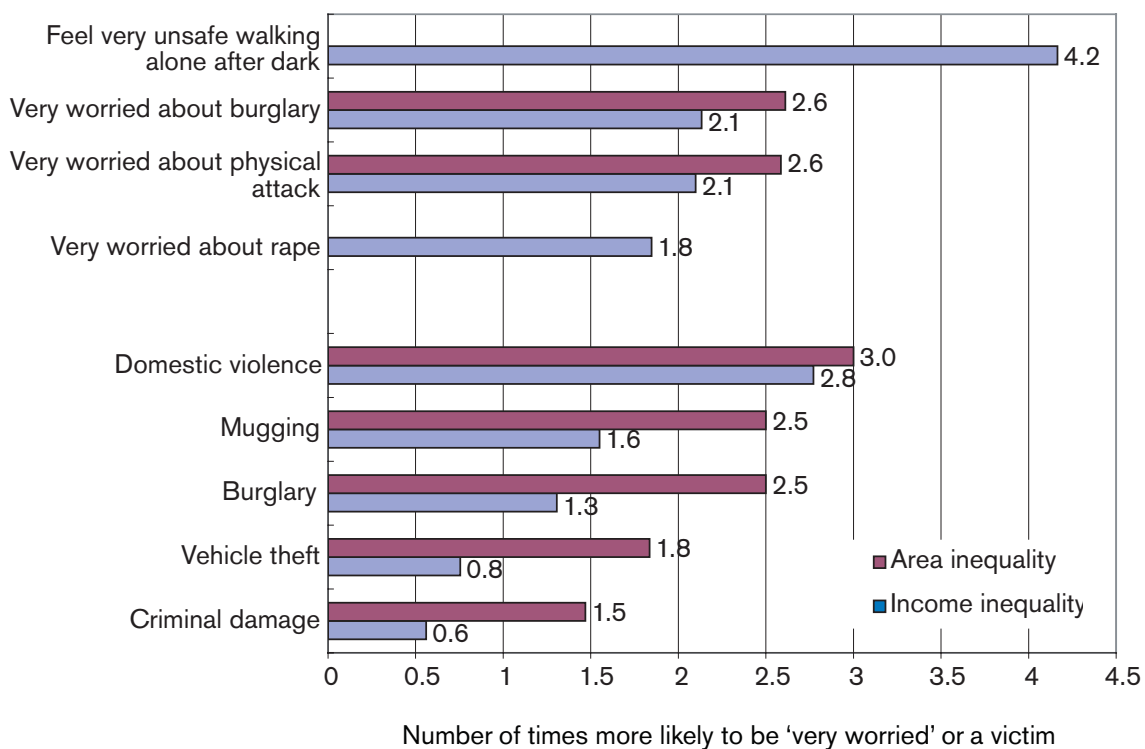
How unequal are we?

A simple answer to this question would be: 'very'. One famous study in the 1990s found that four per cent of victims experience 44 per cent of all crime (Farrell and Pease 1993) – it is likely that this is still approximately the case today.

One simple way to measure inequality in crime is to compare the risks that different groups face. Although it is important to recognise that patterns of crime are extremely complex and that many low income areas have low crime rates, Chart 1.1 below shows that, on average, people living in households with an income of less than £10,000 a year are 1.6 times as likely to be mugged, 1.3 times as likely to be burgled and 4.2 times as likely to be feel 'very unsafe' walking alone after dark as those living in households with an income of more than £30,000 a year.

Looking at inequality in terms of area – bearing in mind similar caveats – shows similarly pronounced differences: people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods are, on average, 2.5 times as likely to be mugged, 2.5 times as likely to be burgled and 2.6 times as likely to be 'very worried' about being physically attacked as those people living in the least deprived neighbourhoods.

Chart 1.1: Inequality in concern and risk of victimisation, by income and area



Source: Authors' calculations, based on British Crime Survey, various years

Note: Income inequality compares households with incomes of less than £10,000 per year to households with incomes of more than £30,000 per year. Area inequality compares households in 'hard pressed' or 'striving' areas to households in 'wealthy achiever' or 'thriving' areas (ACORN definitions). Income data from 2004/05, area data from 2003/04. Concern about crime data by area is from 2002/03.

This is a crude measure, but it does start to show how concentrated some forms of victimisation and concern are in Britain today⁴.

4. Recent work by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has gone some way towards disaggregating income and area effects (NRU 2005).

Falling inequality?

While we cannot currently compare inequality in crime between countries, it seems that levels of such inequality have changed over time in England and Wales. Research shows that inequality increased during the 1980s (Trickett *et al* 1995). But there is growing evidence that it has decreased since 1997: in 2003/04, the poorest households were 1.02 times as likely to be victims of violent crime⁵, compared to 1.29 times in 1997, and they were 2.3 times as likely to be afraid of physical attack in 2002/03, compared to 2.6 times in 1999 (Mirrlees-Black *et al* 1999, Simmons and Dodd 2003)⁶. These are no small achievements – any progressive government should be proud of the fact that the poorest households are no more likely to be victims of violent crime than the richest. But there is still a long way to go.

Chart 1.1 only considers inequality in terms of income and area. Although how much you earn and where you live remain two of the most important factors, we know that crime is concentrated along many other dimensions – people who are ill, unemployed, disabled or excluded are all more likely to be victims (Nicholas *et al* 2005).

Affluence buys protection

Looking in more detail at the relationship between income, victimisation and concern shown in chart 1.1 reveals three important trends.

First, richer households are more likely to be victims of some crimes, particularly vehicle crime and criminal damage.

Second, poorer households are more likely to be victims of serious intrusive crimes, such as burglary, mugging and domestic violence. For some crimes, such as domestic violence, there is a complex and often two-way relationship between victimisation and poverty – for example fleeing an abusive partner can lead to poverty, and stress induced by poverty can catalyse further problems (Walby and Allen 2004).

Third, poorer households are much more likely to report being ‘very worried’ about specific types of crime and feeling ‘very unsafe’ walking alone after dark: importantly, the difference in concern is much greater than the difference in victimisation.

It might be surprising that richer households face lower risks of crime and report much lower concern about crime when they have more property to lose and are more obvious targets for theft or robbery. Part of the reason for their lower rates of victimisation may be that they can afford to live in safer areas, invest in home security devices and take private transport late at night. And because they are able to take steps to avoid being victims, this may make them less concerned.

Poorer households, who have less choice about where they live, who cannot afford to pay for expensive alarm systems or take taxis home in the evening are less able to control the risks they face – they often have no option but to expose themselves to greater danger. For people without any earnings at all, this can mean they are much more likely to be victimised: 11.7 per cent of unemployed people were victims of violent crime in 2004/05, compared to five per cent of economically inactive⁷ people and 4.1 per cent of those in employment (Nicholas *et al* 2005).

Being unable to take control of risk can exacerbate stress levels, and this may partly explain why poorer households report being concerned about crime over and above their higher risk of victimisation. There is good evidence that even simple security measures, such as installing window locks and alarms, can have a significant impact on people’s concern about crime – often more so than the perception of an additional police presence on the streets (NRU 2006).

A second explanation for this greater concern about crime than victimisation among poorer households may be that experiencing crime has more of an impact on people with low incomes. As we argue in chapter 2, poverty can ‘amplify’ the effect of victimisation. For example, car or bicycle theft may make it impossible for people to travel to work, particularly if they live in rural areas; having to replace windows or change locks after a burglary can start a cycle of debt for those without assets; or it may be harder to afford time off work to recover from injuries, which can mean they take longer to heal.

5. Violent crime consists of common assault, wounding, robbery, and snatch theft.

6. Figures for later surveys are not directly comparable.

7. Those who are not considered to be unemployed but are not in employment. For example, people receiving incapacity benefit.

Area inequality

Where you live also matters hugely for how likely you are to be a victim of crime, although it is not a reliable determinant. In some of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in England and Wales, there were just 2.9 property crimes per 1,000 people; in others there were 78.8 – nearly 30 times as many (Home Office 2004a).

Although crime rates vary significantly between regions, the most pronounced differences can be seen between very local areas – even between adjacent streets. At the broadest level, people living in city centres (particularly London) are more likely to be victims than those living in rural areas. Within cities, those living in social housing or deprived neighbourhoods often face the highest risk – often more than double that of owner-occupiers (Nicholas *et al* 2005), although there are significant variations between areas, and deprivation is by no means a sure indicator of high crime rates. Sedgefield, for example, is relatively deprived but has a low crime rate, due in part to its demographic make-up: as an ex-mining area it has a low proportion of young men. But in general terms, more locally still, the worst off face the highest risks even within deprived areas: in the least affluent 60 per cent of neighbourhoods the poorest households are most likely to be victimised, while in affluent areas the relationship is the other way round (Hope 2003b).

Patterns of concern about crime appear to be similar to those for victimisation. The worst off are much more likely to report being concerned, over and above the additional risk they face in reality: 12 per cent of those in the most prosperous areas said they were ‘very worried’ last year about being attacked, compared to 32 per cent of those living in the most disadvantaged areas. As we argue in chapter 3, this geographical concentration of crime can have serious spill-over effects on employment and social capital, affecting areas’ prospects in the long term: neighbourhoods tend to remain either low or high in crime over long periods, especially if they are characterised by violence (Hansen and Machin 2003).

Ethnicity and hate crime

Many of the most deprived areas have large minority ethnic populations. Perhaps surprisingly, although people from black and minority ethnic groups were more likely to be victims of crime in 2002/03, this is just because they are younger on average: after controlling for age, differences in rates of victimisation disappear (Salisbury and Upson 2004).

An important exception to this finding is that people of mixed ethnicity – the fastest growing ethnic group in Britain – were more likely to be victims of assault, robbery, vehicle theft, burglary and vandalism even after accounting for differences in age and area. Unfortunately this trend is not well understood and we cannot draw firm policy conclusions without further detailed investigation.

Although overall levels of victimisation are similar, there are important differences in the kinds of crime ethnic and other minorities can experience compared with non-minority groups. The former are occasionally victims of ‘hate crime’⁸ – offences motivated by racism or prejudice. Being a victim of this kind of crime can be particularly difficult because it is such a personal attack: someone has singled you out because of who you are and what they think you represent. Hate crime can make victims feel even more isolated and socially excluded than a random assault, lead to wider repercussions within the victim’s family and the wider community, and can often lead to victims becoming depressed (Phillips and Bowling 2003).

Although hate crime⁹ is relatively rare, there were more than 200,000 racially motivated crimes in England and Wales in 2002/03 (Salisbury and Upson and 2004). Some ethnic groups were more likely to be victims than others: according to the categories used by Salisbury and Upson less than one per cent of crime against white British people was racist, compared to two per cent of crime against black British people, three per cent against Asian British people and four per cent against people of mixed ethnicity. These figures may have increased significantly in the last year as cultural tensions have increased for some groups, particularly Muslim communities.

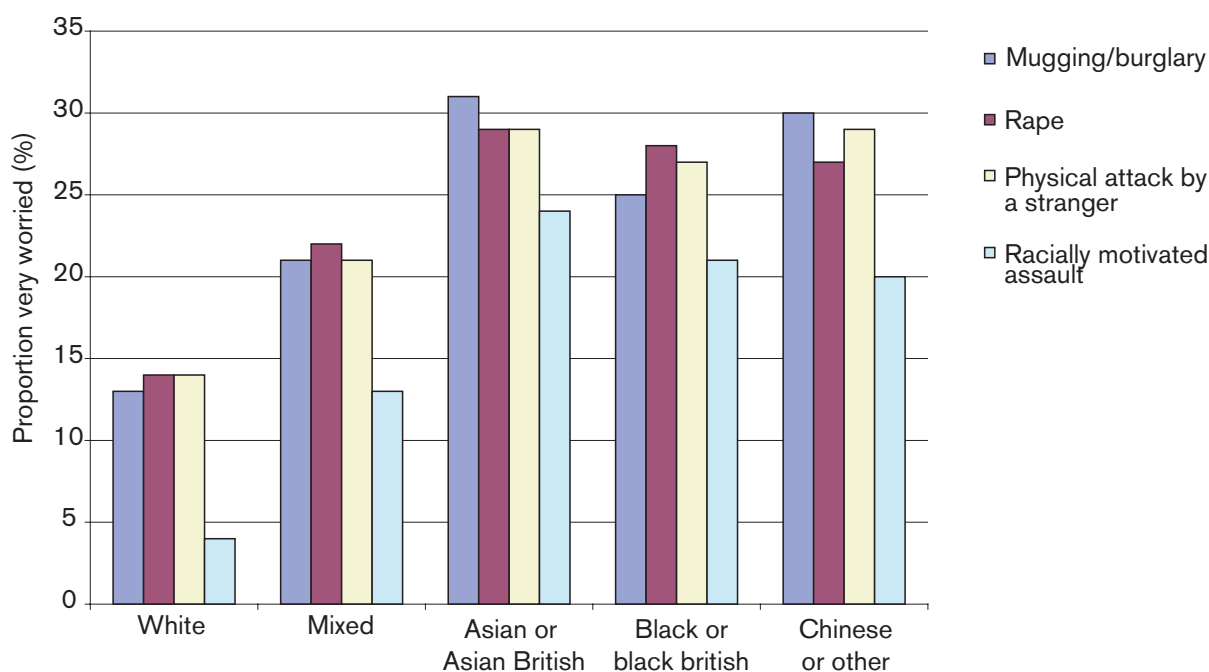
8. Hate crime is defined by the Home Office as ‘A crime committed because of the hatred by the offender of some characteristic of the victim – usually their race, religion, physical or learning disability, gender or sexual orientation. It is a new category of crime identified only recently in relation to the unfortunate reality of the experience of many people living in Britain today.’ (www.crimeinfo.org.uk)

9. Excluding domestic violence, which has often been characterised by feminist thinkers as a form of hate crime.

Hate crime is not just confined to ethnic minorities: research shows that as many as two-thirds of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals have been victims of homophobic crime (NAG 1999) and up to one-fifth of those living in London had experienced physical assault (Stormbreak 2004). Many incidents go unreported due to a lack of confidence in the police, fear of being charged with a 'gay' offence, of being 'outed' or of retribution, or an acceptance of violence and abuse as normal. For younger victims of homophobic crime, these factors can be enough to deter the vast majority of reporting, even though they face extremely high rates of hate crime. In one survey, 48 per cent of lesbians, bisexuals and gay men under 18 said they had experienced violence, 61 per cent reported being harassed and 90 per cent said they had experienced verbal abuse because of their sexuality (Stonewall 2005).

The prevalence and high visibility of hate crime may partly explain why different minority ethnic groups have very different concerns about crime. (Although survey figures are unavailable for other minority groups, similar trends would probably be seen.) As chart 1.2 shows, white people were less concerned about crime overall and about racially motivated assault in particular; Chinese, Asian and Asian British people had higher levels of concern, and were more concerned about mugging or burglary; and black and black British people were more concerned about all crimes, particularly rape and physical attack.

Chart 1.2: Proportion 'very worried' about violence by ethnic group



Source: Salisbury and Upson (2004)

Again, these differences are partly due to differing age structures: the black British group has a much older profile than the Asian British group, for example. Even so, it is still clear that minority ethnic groups report much higher levels of concern about crime than white British people.

Age and gender

Age and gender are extremely important determinants of risk of victimisation. Perhaps surprisingly, young people are among the most likely to be victimised. The recent introduction of the *Offending Crime and Justice Survey* has made important inroads into our knowledge in this area for children above the age of 10 (Wood 2005); data for younger age groups remains relatively scarce. The survey reveals that victimisation is a common experience for many children – 35 per cent of children aged 10-15 were victims of crime in 2003, with 19 per cent experiencing five or more incidents (ibid) – and that children from disadvantaged groups are more likely to be victims. This finding is supported by other research: as many as 59 per cent of children from 'On Track'¹⁰ areas were victims of crime in 2004, with more than 25 per cent of boys and 10 per cent of

10. 'On Track' is a long-term government initiative aimed at children at risk of getting involved in crime (see www.crime-reduction.gov.uk/crpinit.htm)

girls having been physically attacked in the last year (Armstrong *et al* 2005). Important risk factors seem to be poverty, difficult relationships with parents and having committed anti-social behaviour in the last year (Wood 2005).

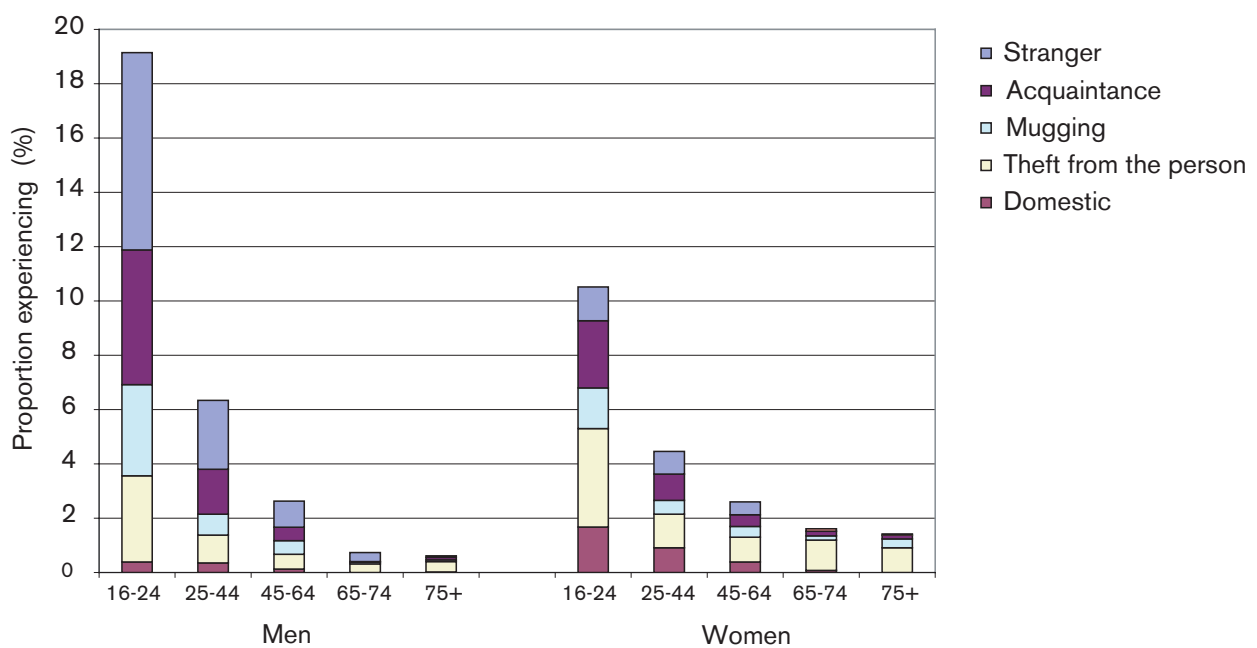
An additional risk that many children face is bullying by peers. Thirteen per cent of secondary school pupils from On Track areas report having been bullied in the last week. Black children, 'looked after' children or children who had been excluded from school were all significantly more likely to be bullied by their peers (Armstrong *et al* 2005).

Among adults, young men have the highest risk of being a victim (or perpetrator) of violent crime. As chart 1.3 shows, men aged 16-24 were nearly twice as likely as any other group to be victimised: nearly one in ten was attacked by a stranger and one in 20 was attacked by someone they knew. Although some of these victims may not have been entirely blameless – they may well have unreasonably provoked the offender – these are huge numbers. In England and Wales together, these figures suggest that nearly 450,000 young men were attacked by a stranger in 2004/05 (GAD 2005). Lifestyle undoubtedly plays a part here: people who visit a pub at least three times a week are more than twice as likely to be victims of violent crime as those who never go (Nicholas *et al* 2005).

Chart 1.3 also shows that people's risk of being a victim of violent crime falls sharply with age. Similar patterns can also be seen for other types of crime: just 1.5 per cent of people over retirement age were burgled last year, compared to 3.6 per cent of those aged 25-44 and 7.1 per cent of those aged 16-24 (*ibid*). And other research shows that young people – particularly those aged 10-15 – are far more likely to be victims of repeat victimisation than other groups (Wood 2005).

Another important trend shown in chart 1.3 is that men and women face very different risks. While women are less likely to be victims until they reach age 65, they are much more likely to be victims of domestic violence at any age; and if they are victims, the offender is also more likely to be someone that they know personally. Knowing the offender can make a significant difference to how much impact a victim's experience has: it can be harder to avoid the offender, harder to report the crime without fear of reprisal, and harder to recover if the perpetrator is around as a constant reminder – especially where the offence is a violent one (see chapter 3). Victims of 'acquaintance violence', as it is known, are also much more likely to be attacked by the same person again that year (Nicholas *et al* 2005).

Chart 1.3: Risk of victimisation for violent crime, by age and gender



Source: British Crime Survey 2003/4

Note: The British Crime Survey does not provide victimisation rates for children and is not directly comparable with the Offending Crime and Justice Survey

This helps to explain why women are more likely to report being 'very worried' about crime than men. The kinds of crimes they experience tend to be more intrusive and more personal, particularly when these are

sexual assault and domestic violence. More than one in five women aged between 16 and 59 have been a victim of domestic violence at least once in their lifetimes and 17 per cent have been sexually victimised in some way (Walby and Allen 2004). Crucially, these crimes have higher rates of repeat victimisation than any other type of crime, especially when carried out on women.

Repeat victimisation

Just 56 per cent of victims of domestic violence suffered only one incident in 2003/04; some went through far more. Women who were victims of domestic violence in 2001 experienced an average of 20 incidents each year – suggesting that some women experience extremely frequent attacks (Nicholas *et al* 2005, Walby and Allen 2004).

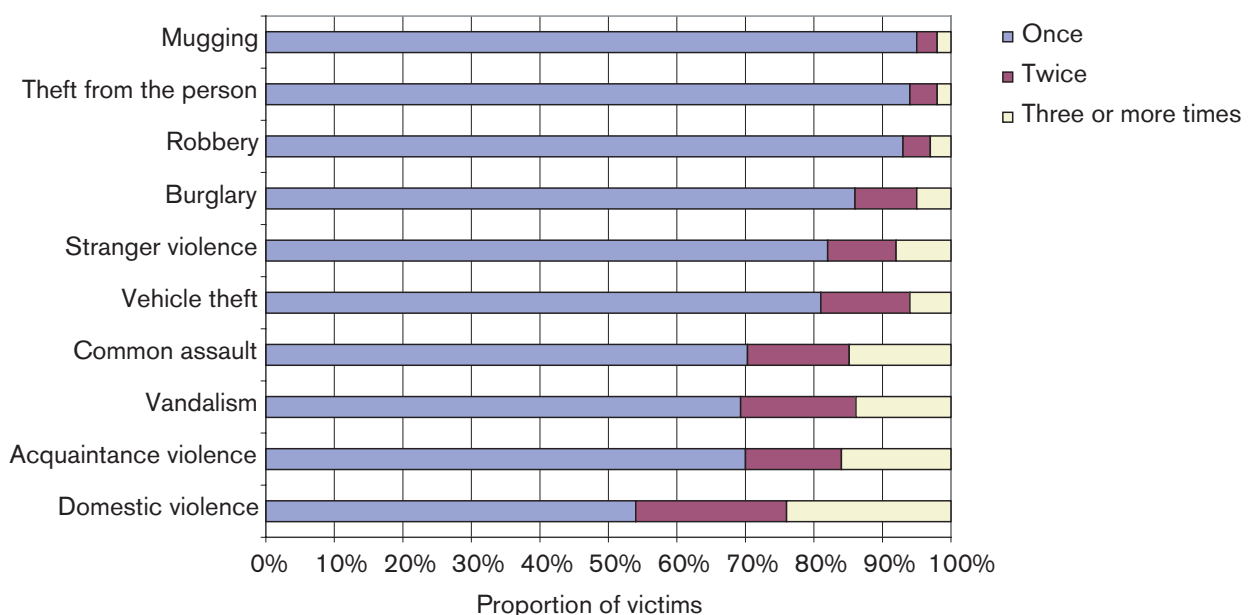
Although rates of repeat victimisation for other kinds of crime are lower, as chart 1.4 shows, they are still high: 30 per cent of victims of assault and 14 per cent of victims of burglary experienced more than one similar incident in 2004/05.

Repeat victimisation is particularly worrying because a series of incidents can have a much larger impact than would be predicted by just adding together the effects of several isolated experiences (see chapter 2). Repeat victims are more likely to feel that they have lost control and are unable to protect themselves, and this can lead to serious consequences. Research carried out in Scotland shows that victims of repeated crimes suffer increasing emotional and physical impact and that in severe cases this can lead to considerable social exclusion (Shaw and Pease 2000).

These effects are particularly pronounced for those who have experienced repeated domestic violence (Refuge 2004): for 52 per cent of women who have been seriously sexually assaulted in their lives, their experience led to depression or other emotional problems, and for one in 20 it led to attempted suicide (Walby and Allen 2004). Another way of putting this is that 64,000 women living in England and Wales today have tried to kill themselves following a serious sexual assault (GAD 2005).

Looking at trends over time shows that rates of repeat victimisation have fallen significantly over the last ten years: from 19 per cent of burglary victims in 1995 to 14 per cent in 2004/05, and from 37 per cent of victims of violent crime to 26 per cent in the same period. But these falls are ‘not as large or as consistent as the overall reduction in crime’, which suggests that ‘only a small proportion’ of the fall in crime since 1995 has been due to falls in repeat victimisation (Nicholas *et al* 2005: 21). Although the police have largely recognised the importance of reducing repeat victimisation, it seems that they may have been less successful in reducing this than other types of crime.

Chart 1.4: Repeat victimisation: number of times victims experienced various crimes



Source: Nicholas *et al* (2005)

Note: Chart shows proportion of victims of each crime type who experienced one, two, or more than two incidents

Why care about inequality in crime?

This chapter has shown that risks of victimisation and concern about crime are very unevenly distributed in Britain. But should this matter or should we just care about reducing the total number of crimes? The next chapter surveys the evidence.

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2. Crime's impact on victims

For many of the 10 million people in England and Wales who were victims of crime last year, their experience was merely inconvenient (Nicholas *et al* 2005). For others, it changed their lives dramatically. This chapter, containing original analysis undertaken by ippr, reveals the true scale of the 'spill-over' effects of crime and its often devastating impact on people's employment, wealth, housing, mental health and well-being.

We discovered that in 2002/03, as many as 850,000 victims of crime experienced lost earnings. Up to a further 180,000 moved home and 32,000 changed jobs *as a direct result of being victimised*¹¹.

Further, our analysis shows that the impact of crime is *amplified by repetition and disadvantage*: victims of crime are more likely to suffer serious spill-over effects if they are poor, in bad health, living in social housing, unemployed or inactive, living alone or without savings, or have been victimised before.

These findings should underpin a progressive response to crime. As we argue in the concluding chapter, they should be at the heart of a strategy that aims to minimise crime's impact on people's life chances.

This original analysis is presented in the second part of this chapter. The first part places our findings in context by examining what we already know about the impact of crime on victims.

Immediate effects of crime

Being a victim of crime is often expensive. Last year, £846-worth of property was taken in the average burglary and £109-worth in the average robbery¹² (Dubourg and Hamed 2005).

Although physical injuries are less common than loss of property, more than 48,000 victims of crime suffered broken bones last year and nearly 400,000 had severe bruising, often resulting from unprovoked violence (Nicholas *et al* 2005).

I heard three cracks as something hit me in the face. I thought it was a stone and jumped off the swings with my face in my hands and blood pouring out of my mouth and my nose.

Male victim of air rifle shooting, 2004 (Victim Support 2004)

The immediate physical and financial effects of crime, however, are just the first chapter in a much longer tale; in one recent survey fewer than one per cent of victims said that their physical injuries were the most upsetting aspect of their experience (Hodgson 2005). Victimisation spills over into other areas of people's lives in all sorts of ways. One way to measure this is by calculating the total cost of crime to society: adding up the value of all property stolen or damaged, the NHS cost of treating victims' injuries, the amount spent on insurance, security and alarms, the economic output lost as people take time off work to recover, government spending on the Criminal Justice System (including witness and victim support services) and the estimated 'cost' of the emotional and physical impact of victimisation.¹³ Research by the Home Office (Chart 2.1) shows that this amounts to £36.2 billion each year. To put this into perspective, the total NHS resource and capital budget in 2004/05 was £66.9 billion (HM Treasury 2005a).

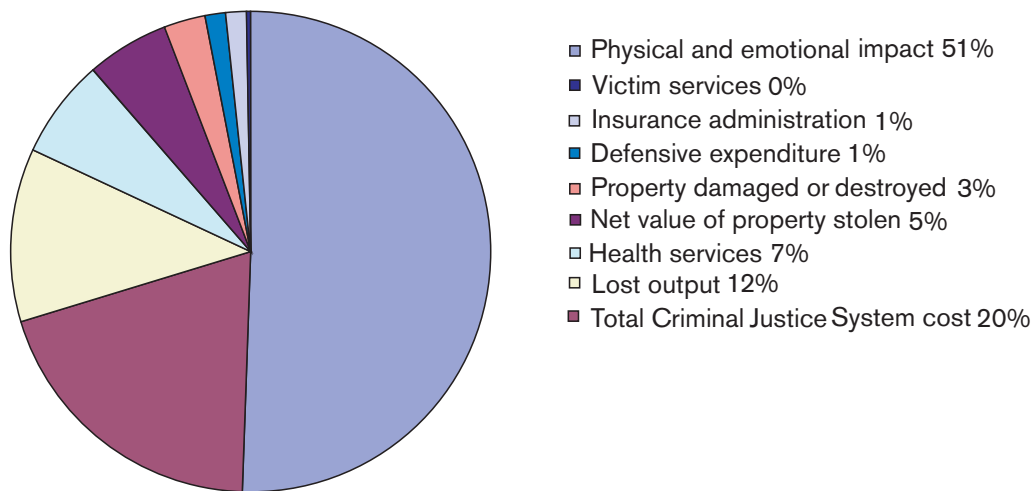
Unfortunately, evaluation methodology is not yet sophisticated enough to enable us to determine convincingly how these costs are distributed across the population. But ippr's initial analysis indicates that

11. Based on original analysis of the British Crime Survey 2002/3. The Survey has a sample of about 40,000 people aged 16 or over living in private households in England and Wales, with a 'booster sample' of minority ethnic respondents. Data cover numbers of crimes by type of offence and victim, fear of crime and crime prevention measures, and on an ad hoc basis contact and attitudes to the police, drug use, and household fires (ONS 2003). The total population in England and Wales aged 16 or over covered by this survey was 42.4 million people, which equates to 11.4 million victims of crime in 2002/03 (GAD 2005).

12. Robberies involve stealing with the use of force immediately before doing so, in order to do so (Nicholas *et al* 2005).

13. Estimates of the emotional and physical impact of crime are derived from health economics, using figures from Dolan *et al* (2003).

Chart 2.1: Division of the £36.2 billion cost of crime in England and Wales: cost in £ millions and proportion of total cost, 2003/04



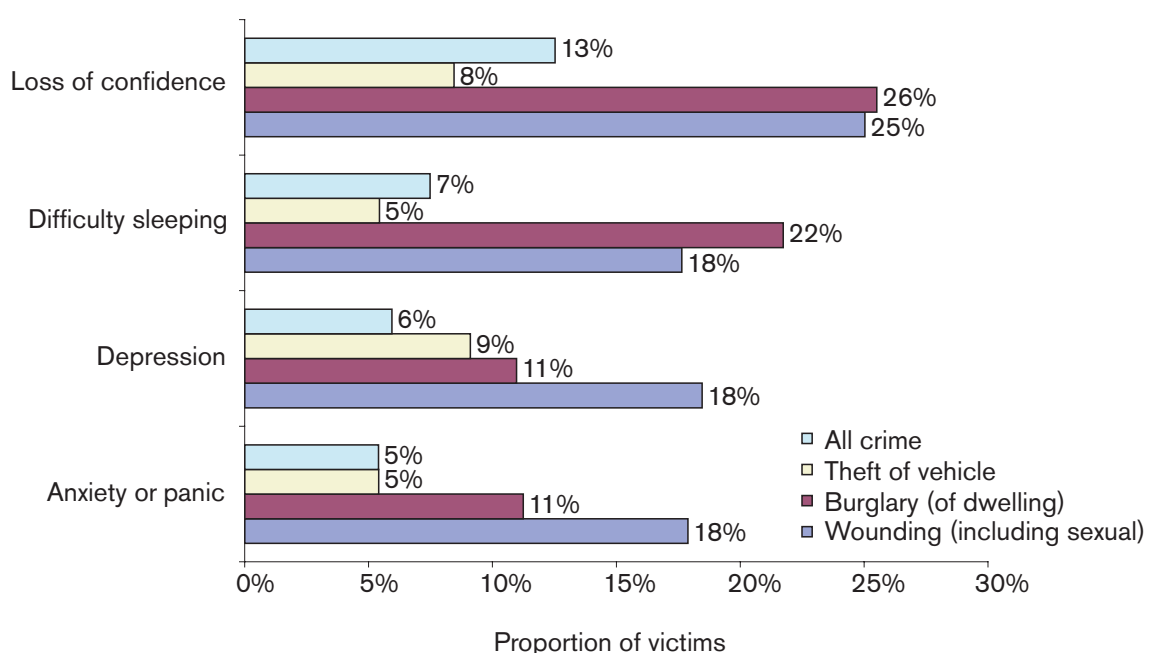
Source: Dubourg and Hamed (2005)

poorer households bear a disproportionate share of the cost of crime (including physical and emotional impact) because they face both higher crime rates and a distinctive profile of offences. We need more in-depth research to substantiate these preliminary findings and provide detailed estimates or comparisons.

Nonetheless, the aggregate numbers alone tell an interesting story – one which should have profound implications for the way we think about priorities in crime prevention. Home Office research shows that the total *volume* of crime fell by 20 per cent between 2000 and 2003/04, but the total *cost* of crime fell at nearly a third of that rate – by just seven per cent (Dubourg and Hamed 2005). This suggests that a substantial proportion of the fall in crime over the past decade may be due to reductions in less serious offences that do not have as large an impact on people’s lives. So which crimes have the most impact?

Some crimes can be particularly traumatising to the victim because something is *deliberately* done to *them*. ippr’s analysis shows that certain crimes appear to have consistently stronger emotional effects than others.

Chart 2.2: Reported emotional impact of experiencing crime, by crime type



Source: British Crime Survey 2002/03, ippr analysis

Note: The distinctive impact of burglary and wounding compared to ‘all crime’ is statistically significant at 95% confidence

As chart 2.2 shows, victims of burglary and wounding – crimes that involve the offender directly attacking the victim or invading their privacy – report particularly high levels of emotional distress, whereas victims of car crime are less personally affected.

Chart 2.2 also shows how people’s emotional reactions vary by type of offence. As might be expected, victims of burglary are particularly likely to have difficulty sleeping, whereas those who have been wounded in a violent attack are more likely to suffer depression, anxiety and panic attacks. Although survey evidence for sexual offences is not as detailed – as these crimes are much less common – it is clear that these can have even more serious implications. Nearly half of rape victims experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Dolan *et al* 2003).

I find it hard to talk about it even now. It makes me feel sick.

Female victim of sexual assault, 2002 (Victim Support 2002)

Twenty-one percent of victims of domestic violence took time off work as a result of the worst incident in 2001, 52 per cent experienced depression or emotional problems (Walby and Allen 2004), and one study found that nearly 20 per cent had contemplated suicide (Barnish 2004).

We know that crime has a profound impact on children’s lives too. But unfortunately, current data limitations mean that we cannot use quantitative analysis – the approach adopted in this research – to illuminate further our understanding of how victimisation affects children.¹⁴

A crucial issue here relates to the full impact of domestic violence on children’s life chances (for a recent overview see Mills 2004). Women who are abused during pregnancy are twice as likely to experience a miscarriage and more likely to experience stillbirth, premature birth, and foetal injury (including broken bones). Over the long term, exposure to violence or trauma before the age of five can alter the developing brain, which may partly explain why pre-school children who are exposed to domestic violence are at significantly higher risk of developing emotional, behavioural, speech and language problems (Refuge 2005).

A recent review of the literature, spanning 30 years, clearly shows that maltreated children perform less well at school, even controlling for socio-economic background (Veltman and Browne 2001). And other research has shown that the earlier children are harmed, the more likely they are to exhibit behavioural problems in early adolescence (Keiley *et al* 2001). In the longer term, children who have witnessed domestic violence suffer similar impacts as those who have been physically abused. They are also more likely to show aggressive and antisocial behaviour, suffer from low self esteem and tend to do less well at school (Barnish 2004).

Part of the reason that crimes like domestic violence are so damaging may be that the victims know the perpetrators intimately. Being attacked by someone you know well is more likely to be seriously traumatic for many reasons: there is the threat of repetition, the fear of reprisals if the victim reports the crime to the police, and the more personal nature of the crime.

But perhaps the most important factor behind the impact of domestic violence impact is the extremely high rate of repeat victimisation. For serious crimes, repeat victimisation can be devastating. But there is growing evidence that it can also make relatively minor crimes difficult to bear.

You feel so nervous that you watch all the time – even when you’re hanging out your washing.

Female victim of repeat victimisation, 2000 (Shaw and Pease 2000)

Far from becoming inured to crime by constant exposure, repeat victims tend to become more vulnerable. A growing body of research shows that previous victimisation can amplify and prolong the impact of subsequent experiences of crime (Shaw and Pease 2000): in one study repeat victims were six times more likely to report depression or being upset (MacLeod *et al* 1996). Research from Scotland shows that this can

14. This is because the main source of our analysis, the British Crime Survey, only covers adults.

in turn prompt them to turn away from friends and family and cause mental illness and drug and alcohol addiction (Shaw and Pease 2000). This long-term, amplifying effect of repeat victimisation should make it a priority for crime prevention and support.

Long-term effects of crime

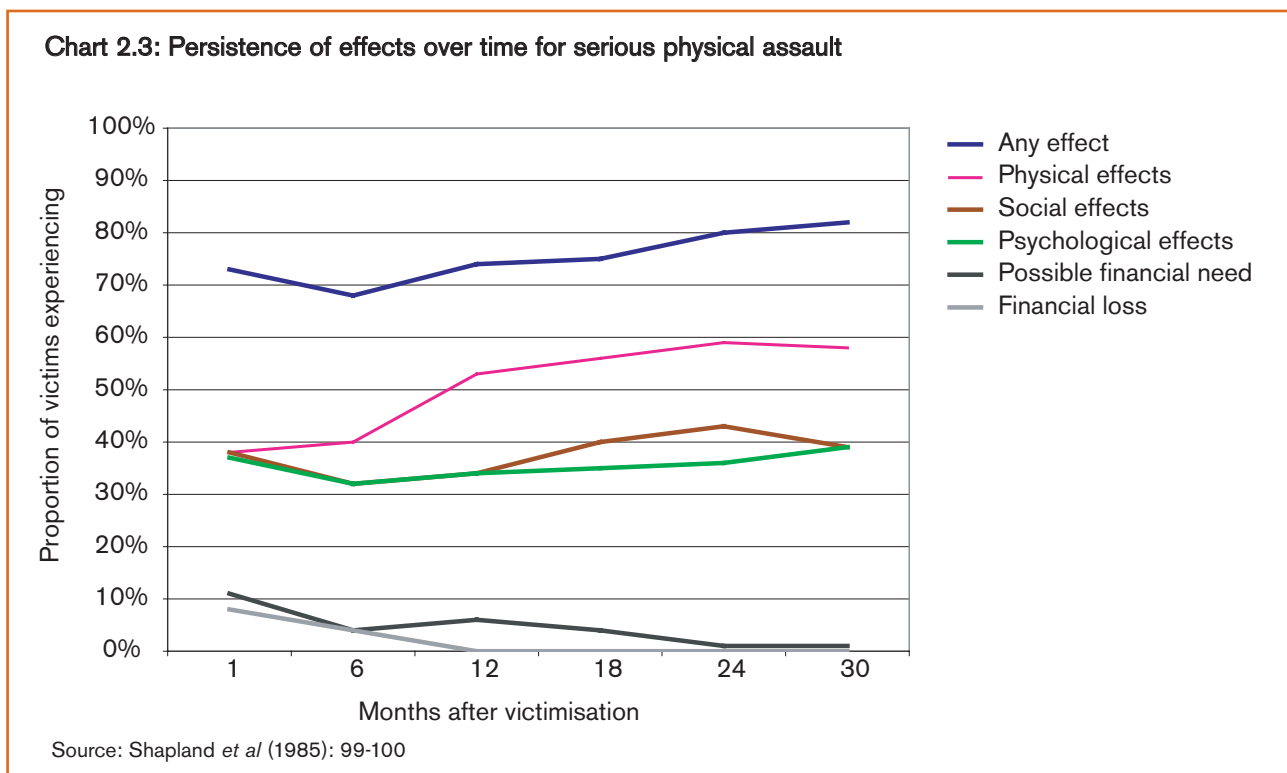
We often think of crime as something that people ‘get over’ quickly. Around a third of victims say that they were ‘just a little’ affected by their experience. But for hundreds of thousands of people each year, the effects of crime can last for weeks and months, and for some even longer. Seventeen per cent of victims of crime in 2002/03 reported being ‘very much’ affected by their experience and a further 24 per cent said they were affected ‘quite a lot’ (ippr analysis of BCS 2002/03).

Unfortunately, systematic longitudinal work on the effects of victimisation is extremely rare in Britain. There is simply no good longitudinal data that can be used to analyse how long the impact of victimisation and fear lasts.¹⁵ Despite this lack of hard data, the evidence from international and small-scale studies suggests that the impact of crime can last for a surprisingly long time (Newburn 1993).

- Two months after experiencing crime, victims report lower levels of well-being than non-victims and, to some extent, higher levels of vulnerability (Denkers and Winkel 1998).
- Four months after experiencing some forms of victimisation, two out of five victims still talk about the offence to someone near them and nearly all of those who started to take extra precautions still take them (Davis and Friedman 1985). This suggests that the behavioural impacts of crime may be relatively long lasting.

In the still longer term, the effects of moderately serious physical assault can last for years (Shapland *et al* 1985). Chart 2.3 below shows that 40 per cent of victims were still suffering social and psychological effects 30 months after the offence.

Why are the effects of victimisation so enduring? One reason may be that some victims suffer ‘secondary victimisation’ through protracted interaction with the Criminal Justice System (CJS): the legal process can exacerbate the effects of crime by constantly reminding victims of what they have been through, particularly if they are treated without proper consideration by officials (Dignan 2005). An important element of this is financial, as people incur expenses travelling to court and responding to police enquiries.

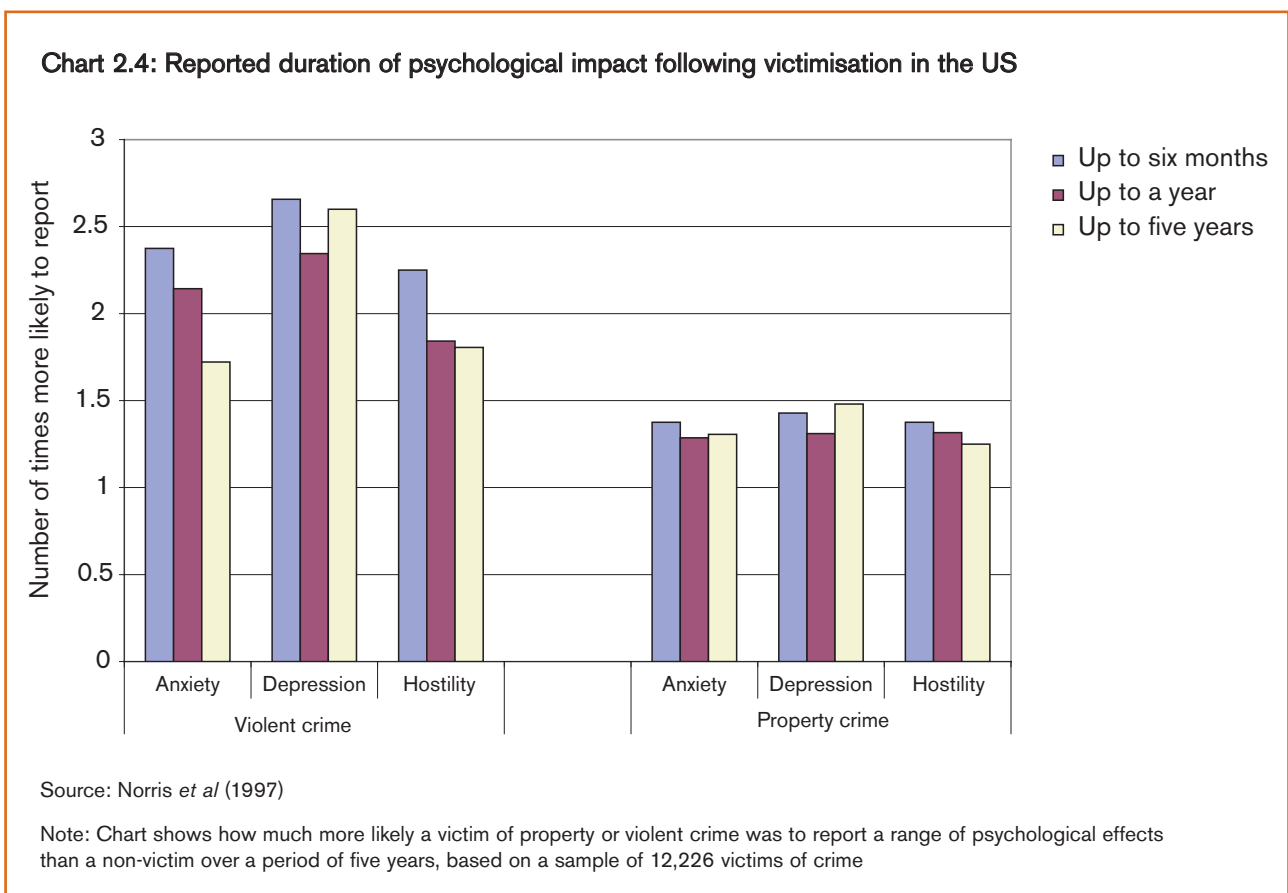


15. An easy way of closing this gap in our knowledge would be to include detailed questions about crime in two years of the British Household Panel Survey or an ongoing cohort study.

To its credit, the Government recognises the importance of secondary victimisation and has instigated several reforms to improve the experience of victims in the CJS. For example, the Witness Care Units, now extended to 165 units across the country, play an important role in improving the experience of the small proportion of victims of crime who do end up in court (Home Office 2005).

Reducing secondary victimisation is important. But the vast majority of victims of crime will never come into prolonged (if any) contact with the CJS, which presents an enormous challenge in terms of targeting and delivering support. As we argue in the concluding chapter, we need to find better ways of reaching out to the most vulnerable victims who do not engage with the CJS.

Many of the victims whose cases never get to court experience long-term effects. Perhaps the best recent study was carried out in the US in the 1990s, following a group of 12,226 victims of property and violent crime over a period of several years. Chart 2.4 shows that even *five years* after the offence, some victims were still more likely to report a range of increased psychological problems than non-victims, with those who had been attacked remaining far more likely to show symptoms of anxiety and hostility. For example, victims of violent crime were 2.6 times as likely as non-victims to suffer from depression and 1.8 times as likely to exhibit hostile behaviour five years after the original offence. These results remain significant after controlling for demographic background and previous psychological differences (Norris *et al* 1997).



Why do some victims appear to experience such an enduring impact of crime? One important factor is that they are victimised more than once. After controlling for repeat victimisation, it seems that the psychological impact of crime disappears after a year for property crime and 18 months for violent crime (*ibid*). This underlines just how important repeat victimisation is in increasing the impact of crime on people's lives.

These figures are worrying in themselves. But looking at abstract percentages can often hide the individual stories behind each number. Listening to victims talk about their experiences brings home just how profoundly people can be affected over the long term.

It was a long time before I could bear to be touched by anyone ... even my grandchild. There were days when I just felt like giving up.

Female victim of sexual assault, 2002 (Victim Support 2002)

This description highlights how victimisation can ‘spill over’ into many aspects of people’s lives. The rest of this chapter presents ippr’s original analysis using data¹⁶ from the 2002/03 British Crime Survey, which shows how extensive these effects can be.

Crime can ‘spill over’ into other areas of life

Last year, victims of violent crime took a total of 83 million days off work in England and Wales to recover from physical and psychological injuries, at a cost of more than £4.2 billion to the economy and £2.4 billion to the NHS. Similar impacts would be seen in Scotland and Northern Ireland. For many who were not entitled to sick pay, this may have led to serious financial hardship. At the same time, households spent £522 million to protect themselves and £518 million was spent on insurance administration (Dubourg and Hamed 2005). But even these figures hardly begin to represent the cost of crime to victims. Victimisation can change people’s attitudes, and adversely affect employment, wealth, housing, mental health and well-being: in one recent survey, 71 per cent of victims reported making lifestyle changes as a result of their experience and 23 per cent said they had started drinking, smoking or using drugs more often (Hodgson 2005).

Being a victim of crime makes people more worried about their safety. Perhaps unsurprisingly, people who have been burgled tend to worry about burglary and victims of violent crime tend to worry about violent crime (Simmons and Dodd 2003). But they worry about other kinds of crime too and this can have a profound impact on their behaviour and ability to make the most of their lives.

I used to really enjoy my morning walk to the paper shop; but I don’t do it any more. I’m just too worried.

Victim of assault, 2002 (Victim Support 2002)

As chart 2.5 shows, nearly 20 per cent of people who were wounded in a violent crime avoid some places following their assault. For those who live near the scene of the crime, or near similar environments, this could be a serious inconvenience.

‘Avoiding certain places’ may sound relatively trivial. But for many it means they are less able to use public transport, or take on paid or volunteering work if this involves coming home after dark.

We might expect recent victims of wounding to avoid dangerous places. And it is well known that many people lose earnings through taking time off work. It is perhaps more surprising that crime often results in much more serious behavioural change. As chart 2.5 shows, nearly one in 20 victims of burglary reported moving home as a direct result of their experience and one in 50 victims of wounding changed jobs.

While these proportions may sound small, they represent a huge cost to society. Across England and Wales, the figures in chart 2.5 equate to as many as 490,00 people starting to avoid certain places, 850,000 losing earnings, 180,000 moving home, and 32,000 changing job each year.¹⁷ These are not insignificant numbers – and they may represent a significant underestimation of the real impact of crime.

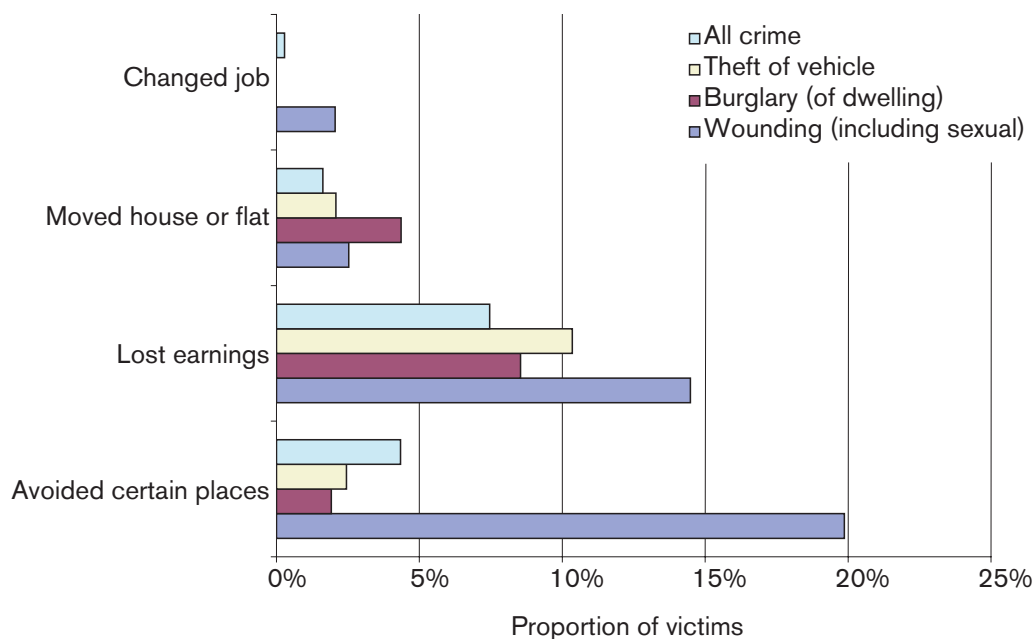
A recent small-scale survey suggested that a large proportion of victims experience serious impacts on their work and personal relationships: 24 per cent said their relationship with their friends and family had been affected, 16 per cent reported increased strain on their relationship with a partner, 10 per cent reported sexual problems, nine per cent said it ended their relationship and a huge 31 per cent said it had affected their working life (Hodgson 2005).

Chart 2.5 also shows that different crimes tend to have different effects. Vehicle theft is particularly likely to result in lost earnings (perhaps because victims subsequently have difficulty getting to work), whereas burglary is more likely to result in victims moving home. For the most serious kinds of crime – such as rape and domestic violence – the spill-over effects can be devastating.

16. Unfortunately this does not allow us to capture the impact of crime on children’s lives due to data limitations. All reported effects are for adults aged 16 plus.

17. The risk of being a victim of crime in 2002/03 was 27 per cent (Simmons and Dodd 2003). The total population in England and Wales aged 16 or over covered by the British Crime Survey was 42.4 million people (GAD 2005). This equates to 11.4 million victims of crime.

Chart 2.5: Reported direct impact of experiencing crime, by crime type



Source: British Crime Survey 2002/03, ippr analysis

Note: The distinctive impact of burglary on moving home and avoiding certain places, of wounding on lost earnings and avoiding certain places, and of theft of vehicle on avoiding certain places, compared to 'all crime', is significant at 95% confidence.

Danielle went into a state of deep shock after recovering from the physical wounds and was unable to return to her job as a carer for the elderly. Her five children were suffering too. Even long after the attack when Danielle had seen her attacker jailed for eight years, she was still unable to leave the house alone or bear anyone to come too close.

Female victim of stabbing, rape and assault, 1996 (Victim Support 2004)

Studies that have looked at the impact of these crimes tend to be small scale and qualitative and it is hard to draw firm conclusions on how widespread their effects are. But it is likely that these crimes often have a serious impact. Nearly one in four victims of rape in a study conducted in 1981 moved home and just under half of victims in a 1976 study had changed jobs within six weeks of the attack (Williams and Holmes 1981, Burgess and Holmstrom 1976). Many rape victims withdraw from social contact and for some the experience can lead to drug or alcohol abuse (Newburn 1993).

Sexual or violent crimes tend to have the most impact when children are the victims, often leading to permanent psychological effects and severely reduced life chances (Morgan and Zedner 1992). This can sometimes lead to a cycle of abuse where victims go on to perpetrate the abuse against succeeding generations of victims (Dignan 2005).

A further spill-over effect is that victimisation may lead to offending. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this report to look at this relationship in detail, but it is undoubtedly a large hidden cost of crime. It is becoming increasingly clear that the line between victims and offenders is blurred, with offenders being more particularly likely to be victims of crime themselves (Rumgay 2004): 56 per cent of 10-15 year olds who had committed a criminal offence in 2003 had been victims of crime that year, compared to 35 per cent of all 10-15 year olds (Wood 2005). Exploring these links in more depth would show how minimising the impact of victimisation may well have the added advantage of preventing further crime; over time the Offending Crime and Justice Survey will reveal these trends in more detail.

These spill-over effects are often not recognised by policy (Rumgay 2004), although there appears to be an emerging shift in focus towards the impact of crime – a shift that this report welcomes and to which it aims to contribute. The move towards restorative justice has benefited a small proportion of victims. But this is

only a fraction of those who are directly affected by crime. Just a third of crime is reported to and recorded by the police and just under eight per cent of crimes result in a detection (Nicholas *et al* 2005).

Victim support services are geared towards the wider impact of crime and volunteers are often able to give practical as well as emotional support, and there has been evidence of government agencies starting to work better together in response to the impact of victimisation. But too often agencies have found it difficult to work together in responding to the extent and importance of the ‘spill-over’ effects of crime on people’s lives.

The impact of crime can be ‘amplified’ by disadvantage

Those who are poor, live in deprived areas or are otherwise disadvantaged are much more likely to be victims of crime and report being ‘very worried’ about crime (see chapter 1). This should be a serious concern. But just looking at the incidence of crime misses a crucial point – the impact can be dramatically worse for those who are already disadvantaged.

One simple measure of disadvantage is low income. Chart 2.6 shows those living in the poorest households were nearly three times as likely to report a range of emotional effects following victimisation, including depression, anxiety, panic and difficulty sleeping. They were also more likely to move home and to change their behaviour by avoiding certain places. For those in employment, people with lower incomes were more likely to lose earnings, possibly because they were more likely to be paid by the hour. This analysis suggests that the impact of crime is almost certainly amplified by disadvantage.¹⁸

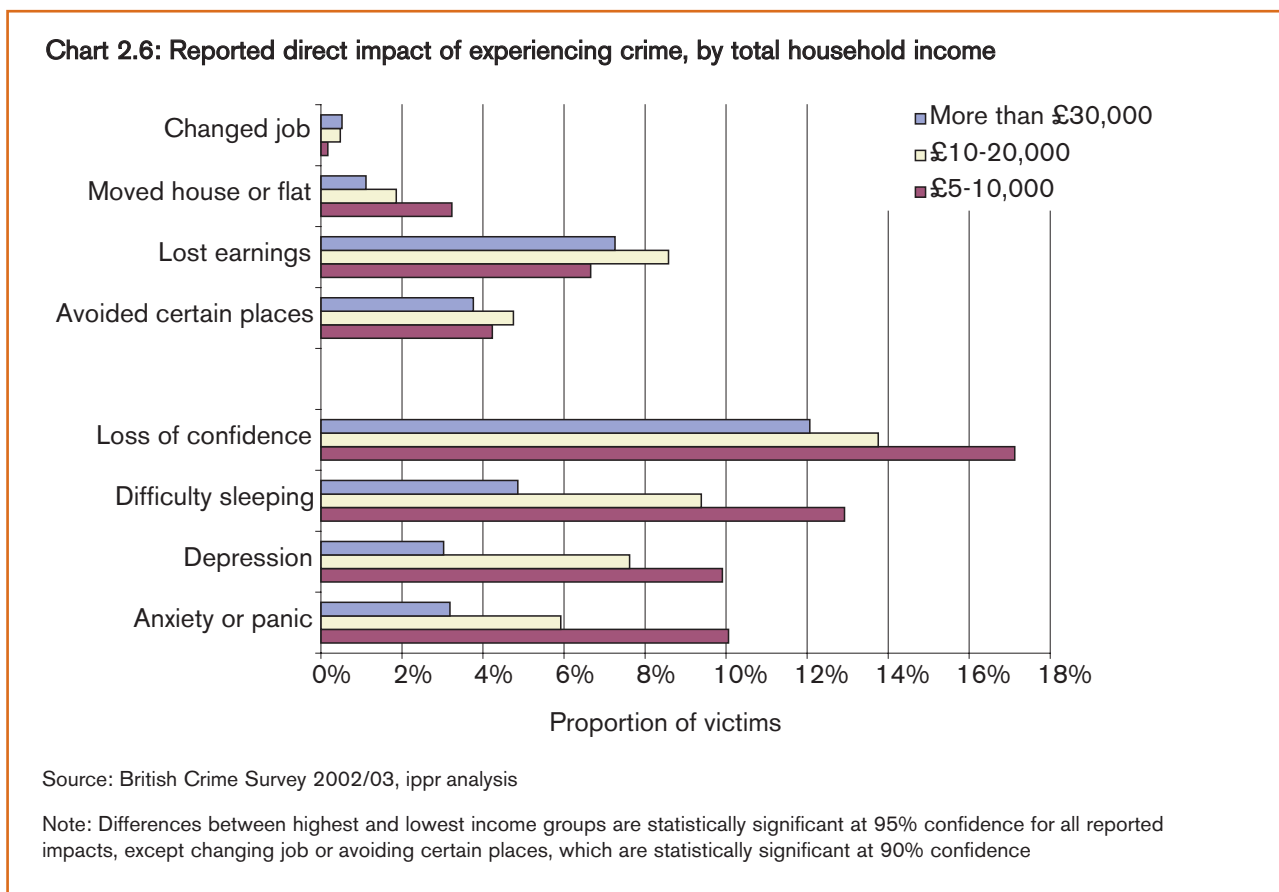


Chart 2.6 only looks at income. But further analysis by ippr of the British Crime Survey 2002/03 shows that similar patterns can be seen across a wide selection of measures of disadvantage. Of course, there are strong correlations between many of the measures highlighted below – but the point remains that on a range of indicators, the impact of crime is more severe for the disadvantaged.¹⁹

18. This appears to be a relationship that has held over time: in 1998, 44 per cent of those earning under £10,000 reported being ‘very much’ affected by their experience, compared to 24 per cent of other victims (Maguire and Kynch 2000). Further research should investigate how differing rates of mental health and crime types across income groups affect the results.

Better longitudinal data would allow this relationship to be tracked more easily over time.

19. All differences reported are statistically significant at 95% confidence unless specified otherwise.

Finance

Perhaps the most obvious way in which the impact of crime is amplified by disadvantage is in terms of home contents insurance. The better off you are, the more likely you are to be able to afford insurance, and the less impact burglary has. In 2002/03, 11 per cent of households with an income of between £5,000 and £10,000 a year made an insurance claim following a burglary, compared to 37 per cent of households with an income of more than £30,000 a year.

Being a victim of theft or burglary may also be much worse for those on low incomes or with no assets, as they are less able to replace goods. For items that are effectively essentials, this can contribute to problems managing finances and lead to greater debt problems. Low income households are more than five times as likely to experience debt problems, such as hire purchase repayments (Pantazis 2005), which may further amplify the impact of crime. Cheap credit is often much less available to those on low incomes or those who do not have bank accounts (Regan and Paxton 2003).

Assets are important here. Sometimes victims need to spend money on repairs immediately to keep themselves safe, for example, replacing broken windows after a burglary. Although some financial assistance is available from the police, assets can help 'smooth' income against unpredictable financial outlays and even small amounts can provide an important protection (Bynner and Paxton 2001). Thirty-two per cent of those who say they would find it 'impossible' to find £100 at short notice report being 'very much' affected by experiencing crime, compared to just 14 per cent of those who would find it 'no problem'.

Looking in more depth at the effect of assets shows that they are particularly important in coping with some kinds of crime – 49 per cent of those who say they would find it 'impossible' to find £100 at short notice report being 'very much' affected by experiencing burglary. This suggests that providing practical support, such as repairing windows or locks, for poorer victims of some types of crime may be particularly important

Health

Poor health is also associated with greater impact of victimisation. Fourteen per cent of victims of crime who said their health was 'very good' reported being 'very much' affected, compared to 27 per cent of those who said they were in 'bad' health and 41 per cent of those who said they were in 'very bad' health. Those in bad health were also particularly likely to report difficulty sleeping and high rates of depression.

Tenure and housing

Where you live and who your neighbours are make a huge difference to your risk of being a victim of crime. It can also affect the extent to which being a victim impacts on your life. Thirty-seven per cent of victims of burglary living in social housing reported being 'very much' affected, compared to 21 per cent of owners. They were also nearly twice as likely to report difficulty sleeping (36 per cent compared to 18 per cent) and much more likely to report depression (32 compared to 22 per cent) as a result of their experience.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who own their own homes are unlikely to move home following burglary – around two per cent did so in 2002/03. However, people in the private rented sector were much more likely to change their accommodation – 12 per cent of burglary victims in this group did so, compared to seven per cent of social housing tenants. This may reflect the difficulty many social housing tenants have in moving to a different location following victimisation, rather than a lack of desire to move.

Living alone

People living on their own²⁰ face higher risk from burglary and other types of property crime (Dignan 2005). They are also more likely to report being 'very much' affected by this kind of crime than people in multi-person households (25 per cent compared to 32 per cent of victims). Work by ippr has shown that there is a significant divide between those who choose to live alone – and can afford to – and those who are effectively forced into solo living by adverse circumstances (Lewis 2005, Bennett and Dixon 2005, Dixon

20. Differences between multiple and single person households are only significant at 90% confidence due to small sample size.

and Margo 2006). And it seems that for this latter group, being a victim of crime may be a particularly traumatic experience with significant spill-over effects: 35 per cent of victims of burglary who lived alone reported experiencing depression afterwards and 31 per cent had difficulty sleeping, compared to 22 and 24 per cent of those in larger households. People living alone were also nearly twice as likely to move home following a burglary – just under 10 per cent did so in 2002/03.

Employment

Employment status also makes a considerable difference to the extent of crime's impact²¹. Fifteen per cent of victims of crime living in households where the main earner was employed reported being 'very much' affected by their experience, compared with 19 per cent of those where the main earner was inactive. The effects were particularly noticeable in terms of reported difficulty sleeping: seven per cent of employed victims of crime reported difficulty sleeping as a result of victimisation, compared to 12 per cent of those who were inactive.

Sex and age²²

There is relatively little difference between gender and age groups in reporting being 'very much' affected by crime overall, although there are some differences in the type of emotional responses different groups experience. Women are more likely to report depression and difficulty sleeping, and younger people are more likely to report depression than older people.

However, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions here as these differences may be partly due to the different crime profiles these groups have. Looking in detail at offence types suggests some differences – for example, women are nearly twice as likely to report being 'very much' affected by burglary and violent crime, particularly between the ages of 30 and 59.

Victims' practical responses to crime differ by age more than by sex. The most pronounced differences were for young women moving house following burglary (11 per cent compared to five per cent of all victims), young people changing the places they go to (17 per cent of young men and the same proportion of young women reported avoiding certain places after victimisation, compared to just two per cent of men and one per cent of women aged over 60), and for young men losing earnings following burglary (18 per cent compared to 11 per cent of all victims of burglary).

Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter show that crime has a profound impact on millions of people in Britain each year. The residual effects of victimisation and concern about crime can last for weeks, months or even years, spill over into many areas of life, and are often dramatically amplified by both disadvantage and repetition.

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21. Statistically significant figures for unemployed respondents are unavailable due to small sample size.

22. Due to small sample sizes differences are only statistically significant to 90% confidence.

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3. Pulling up the drawbridge: crime, concern about crime and social capital

In the last two chapters we have reviewed how the incidence of crime, concern about crime and the impact of crime vary across social groups. Many types of crime are committed more often than not against the worst off. And most crimes tend to have the greater impact on those who are disadvantaged. Even concern about crime is unequally shared – those from disadvantaged areas or in lower income households are affected to a greater extent.

In this chapter we focus on the long-term effects of crime and sustained concern about crime, and the role that these long-term effects play in perpetuating social disadvantage. We focus in particular on the effects on social relations and community bonds or, more technically, ‘social capital’ – broadly, people’s trust and networks and their capacity to co-operate with one another for mutual advantage. Chapter 2 has already pointed to the way in which victimisation and fear of victimisation can affect people’s social habits and relationships, prompting them to go out less, move home, change jobs and become more distrustful. But these effects have such serious repercussions on people’s quality of life and life chances that we return to them here.

We distinguish in particular between two ways in which concern about crime works to undermine trust and sociability. First it does so directly, by making those who are concerned about crime less trusting and sociable. Second, it does so indirectly, by undermining trust and co-operation across communities, resulting in what social scientists call ‘area effects’ or ‘neighbourhood effects’. These two processes (technically the individual level and meso level process (Halpern 2005)) can work independently of one another. That is to say, people can be disadvantaged by concern about crime, either because they themselves become concerned, and so less trusting and sociable, or because they find themselves in situations where people around them are concerned about crime and so are less trusting and sociable. In practice, of course, these processes tend to go hand in hand, and people who are themselves untrusting and unsociable tend to find themselves surrounded by people who are untrusting and unsociable. Indeed, the two tend to reinforce each other.

Trust, networks and co-operation

In recent years, social scientists working in different traditions and coming from different perspectives have emphasised the importance of social networks and norms of trust and co-operation in promoting individual and community well-being (Coleman 1990, Sampson 1999, Fukuyama 1999, Putnam 2000). Researchers argue about exactly how to define ‘social capital’ (or whether ‘social capital’ is the right word to define what they are talking about), how to measure it, and what is happening to it (see Halpern 2005 for overview).

Nonetheless, there is an impressive body of research linking low levels of social connectedness and trust and weak norms of reciprocity and co-operation to a range of valuable things. People who are less trusting and less well connected, for instance, are much more likely to be unemployed, ill, and depressed and fearful, than those with thick address books and trusting attitudes. It has been shown, for example, that people find jobs at every level of the labour market through informal channels (Halpern 2005: 44-47), while an impressive body of international studies indicates that ‘people who are socially disconnected are between two and five times more likely to die from all causes, compared with matched individuals who have close ties with family, friends and community’ (Putnam 2000: 327).

Similarly, communities with low levels of inter-personal trust, social connectedness or associational activity, tend to be poorer and more dangerous, less lawful places than those with strong community bonds. Research by Robert Sampson found, for instance, that controlling for other factors, areas with poor ‘collective efficacy’ – where people are unwilling to take stand against minor breaches of order and informally enforce norms of good behaviour – have higher crime rates than areas with better collective efficacy (Sampson 1999)²³.

23. Robert Sampson distinguishes between his own version of social capital – what he calls ‘collective efficacy’ – and the standard version. He argues that insofar as social capital is taken to be exemplified in tight knit, traditional communities, where people socialise and work together, it is neither retrievable nor necessary. What we need of by way of community is something thinner and less demanding: collective efficacy. Broadly, this is the ability to socialise the young and maintain norms of respect for the law, and for one another (Sampson 1999). The factors that make for collective efficacy – dense friendship networks, community supervision of teenagers and high levels of civic participation – make ‘collective efficacy’ a very close cousin of ‘social capital’. But the concept is a more action-orientated one, focusing in particular on how communities mobilise for the achievement of public goods (Sampson and Groves 1989).

As has often been pointed out, social capital can, by bonding the privileged together, work to perpetuate advantage and exclude certain groups – it is not always a force for good. Nevertheless, social capital is generally good for those who possess it, especially for those who are otherwise poor or disadvantaged. It is now widely recognised that the comparatively low levels of social capital characteristic of many disadvantaged and excluded people are generally a very important factor in their disadvantage (Putnam 2000).

But if high crime can be traced, along with many other bad things, to the absence of social capital, can the causality work the other way around? That is, does fear of crime play a role in undermining social capital and so further disadvantage?

Robert Putnam himself, who has done most to highlight the importance of social capital, has surprisingly little to say about relations between concern about crime and community bonds. Though the decline in social capital that he claims the US has witnessed since the 1960s coincides almost exactly with the rise in US crime rates, he does not seem to view the rise in crime and concern about crime as a factor in that decline. It does not feature in his list of ‘culprits’ (Sampson 1999: 263-4). Furthermore, not everyone is convinced that crime is detrimental to social life. A tradition of thought going back to Durkheim argues that crime actually serves to unite people together and forge associational bonds (Skogan 1990: 67).

Nevertheless, the bulk of the evidence would appear to challenge this position. It seems clear that ‘high crime rates can cause otherwise law-abiding members of a community to become distrustful of others, and therefore less likely to cooperate with them on many different levels’ (Fukuyama: 122), or that ‘crime and its legacy of fear and distrust have ... important reciprocal effects on community structure and ultimately social capital’ (Sampson 1999: 264).

Many surveys have shown that people who have been victims of crime, or believe themselves at high risk of crime, go out less, have fewer friends, avoid public places, and speak to their neighbours less than people who feel secure. Home Office research has shown, in one particularly startling finding, that 43 per cent of people aged over 60 never went out after dark in their local area (Chivite-Matthews and Maggs 2002).

Crime can intrude into the most intimate of relations, the closest of family ‘networks’. One recent English victim survey found that nearly ten per cent reported that victimisation had affected their sexual relations, and nearly ten per cent reported that it had led to them splitting up from a partner. A quarter reported that it had affected their relations with friends and family (Hodgson 2005).

ippr research, drawing on the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), shows a strong negative correlation between concern about crime and trust in people – even after controlling for factors known to affect trust and concern about crime, such as age, educational attainment, and marital status.²⁴ Men, for instance, who were ‘very worried’ about crime were around 18 per cent less likely to trust people in their neighbourhood than those who were ‘not at all worried’, while men who were ‘worried a little’ were eight per cent less likely to do so than men who were not at all worried. For women the comparable figures are 14 per cent for those who were very worried about crime and seven per cent for those who were a little worried.

Due to the limitations of the regression model used²⁵ and the control variables available in the BHPS data, we cannot fully establish which way the causality runs between worry about crime and trust, that is, whether fear of crime makes trust in the neighbourhood lower, or whether lower levels of trust in the neighbourhood heighten the fear of crime. It seems likely, however, that the causality works two ways, with concern about crime fuelling distrust and distrust promoting fear about crime.

As we saw in chapter 1, it is people from poor and otherwise disadvantaged groups who are most concerned about crime, and this no doubt contributes to their tendency also to trust people least. Analysis of the 2000 BHPS suggests that people are most likely to trust others if they are educated to at least degree level, are happy living where they are, and are involved in local groups. People are particularly unlikely to trust others if they do not have a degree, rent from the council, are of working age, live in a relatively diverse area and report that crime and vandalism are a problem in their area (Duffy 2004).

24. The questions in the BHPS on trust were not, unfortunately, asked in waves 7 (1997) and 12 (2002). We have combined the data on worry about crime and the other control variables from wave 7 with the data on trust from wave 8 (1998), and the data on worry about crime and controls from wave 12 with the data on trust from wave 13 (2003). This is the best compromise in that it allows us to look at the relationship between worry about crime at a certain point in time and trust 12 months later. Because the regressions are in a panel format rather than a cross-section, they allow us to control for differences in the ‘unobservable’ attributes of individuals in the sample, which might mean that a person is, for example, inherently less likely to place trust in the neighbourhood and more likely to be afraid of crime.

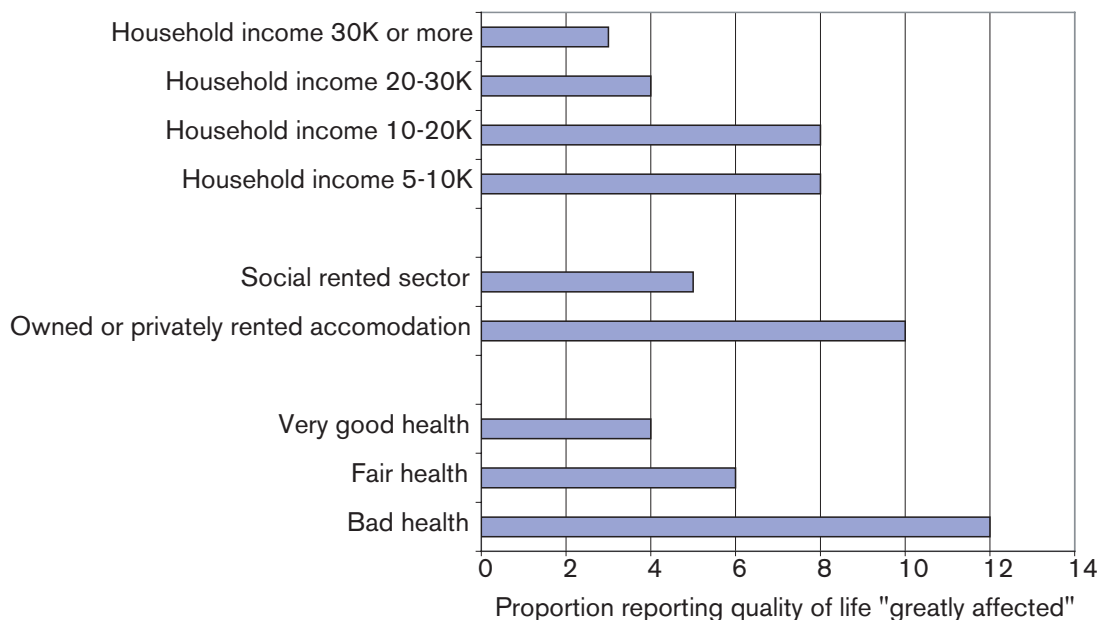
25. A ‘random effects probit’ model.

Concern about crime and unemployment

If the BHPS shows a clear link between concern about crime and distrust, further ippr analysis, from the same data, shows a similar correlation between concern about crime and unemployment – controlling, once again, for other obvious possible determinants. We found, for instance, that men who were ‘very worried’ about crime were around seven per cent less likely to be in work than those who were ‘not at all worried’. Again, we cannot establish the direction of the causality. But it seems probable that concern about crime can cause unemployment.

We have been arguing that high concern about crime works to undermine trust and networks among the already disadvantaged and so further undermines their quality of life and life chances. New ippr findings based on the British Crime Survey bear this out. These clearly show that people from worse-off groups are much more likely than people from better-off groups to report that their life quality is made worse by crime. People with an income of less than £10,000 a year are more than twice as likely as those with an income of more than £30,000 to report that their quality of life is greatly affected by crime. The ratio holds when we compare people living in social housing compared with home owners or those in bad health compared to those in very good health.

Chart 3.1: The impact of crime on quality of life, by household income (£), tenure and health, 2002/03



Source: British Crime Survey 2002/2003, ippr analysis

Note: Differences statistically significant at 95% confidence

Neighbourhood effects

The picture we have sketched is already an intricate one – but reality appears to be more intricate still. For we know that concern about crime is not only higher among some groups than others, but these groups are often concentrated in particular geographic areas or are thrown together in other ways. This in turn can work to exacerbate the process we have outlined above. People most at risk of crime and so most concerned about it not only trust people less and take a less active part in community life, they also tend to find themselves among people who are in the same predicament and so behave in the same way. This makes it hard for them to build relations or rely on other people, even where they want or need to do so.

There is now a good body of evidence, furthermore, to suggest that where social capital falls below a certain level in a neighbourhood, the neighbourhood can reach ‘a tipping point’ and fall into a spiral of decline, so dramatically worsening the situation of the poor groups who live in it (Wilson 1987, Skogan 1990, Sampson 1999, Power and Wilson 2000). To the extent that crime or concern about crime undermines social capital, it contributes to this process. ‘Neighbourhoods themselves can’, as Adam Crawford has put it, ‘be seen as victims of crime’ (Crawford 1997).

The process at work here is extremely complicated, and there is little agreement on its detail – or how to arrest it. Indeed, the forces at work are so intertwined that researchers might never be able to unravel them. Much of the research on this issue is drawn from the US, which has, even by UK standards, very high rates of crime, and dramatic levels of geographically concentrated social exclusion²⁶.

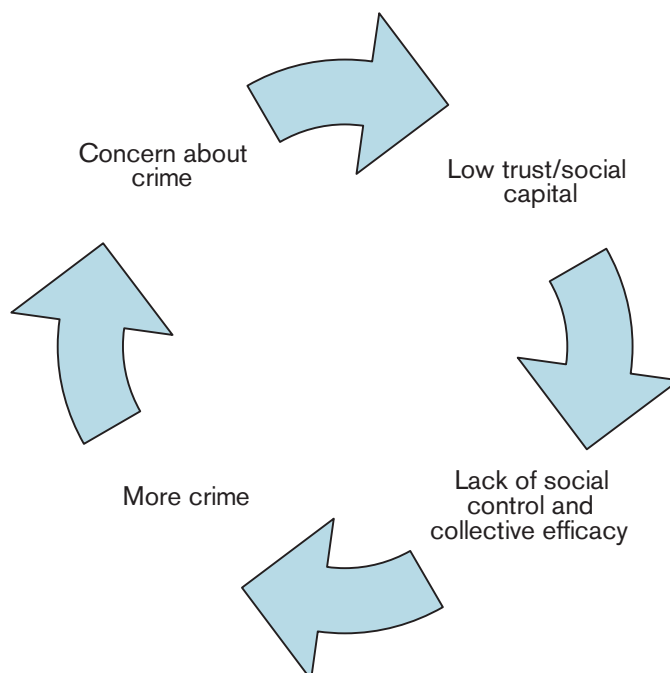
Nevertheless, a couple of points seem clear. First, concern about crime is not the only factor at work in pushing neighbourhoods downwards. Unemployment, poor services amenities and housing, and low-level disorder, among other things, all play an important role. Second, crime does contribute to what the eminent criminologist Welsely Skogan has termed the downwards spiral – by causing more resourceful people and employers to move out, by attracting less ‘desirable elements’ into a neighbourhood and by encouraging those left behind to retreat inwards (Skogan 1990).

Or as Robert Sampson (1999: 264) has put it, social problems that stem from crime and disorder include:

- physical and psychological withdrawal from community life
- weakening of the informal social controls that inhibit crime
- declining organisational life and mobilisation capacity of the neighbourhood
- deteriorating business conditions
- importation and domestic production of delinquency and deviance
- further dramatic changes in the composition of the population.

The now widespread belief that reducing crime and concern about crime is indispensable to regeneration appears well founded.

Figure 3.2: Crime, concern about crime and community breakdown



This chapter has argued that concern about crime can have a major negative effect on people in at least two ways. First, it can undermine their own social capital, discouraging them from developing or maintaining social networks, and rendering them mistrustful of other people and institutions. Second, it can undermine social capital in the communities where they live or on which they depend. Insofar as levels of concern

26. There has been renewed attention to this issue in the UK recently, however. Research has shown how economic incentives can impact on spatial variations in crime rates. Hansen and Machin (op cit 2001) demonstrated that crime rates fell by more in relative terms in areas where more people benefited from the introduction of the Minimum Wage in 1999 than in other areas. Similarly, Feinstein and Sabates (2004) found that the availability of Education Maintenance Allowances for 16-year-olds reduced theft and burglary by male youths in areas where the allowances were piloted.

about crime are much higher among worst-off groups and in poor neighbourhoods, concern about crime makes a major contribution to the unequal distribution of life chances in our society. The process might not be obvious to the human eye, but it is far reaching for all of that.

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Conclusion: Crime, social justice and public policy

This report has sought to show that while crime and concern about crime lessen everyone's quality of life and impose a heavy burden on the national economy, the impact of crime is far from equally distributed. It is not just that otherwise vulnerable people – children and pensioners, the disabled, poor and unemployed, those from racial and ethnic minorities and those who have been victimised before – are most likely to fall victim to most forms of crime, or to be most fearful of crime. Victimization and fear also tend to have a disproportionately negative effect on these groups.

Main findings

The main findings of this report can be summarised below.

There has been a substantial fall in crime since 1995.

- The latest figures show a 44 per cent drop in all crime between 1995 and 2004/05, and the risk of being a victim now stands at just 24 per cent – down from 40 per cent in 1995 – the lowest level since the British Crime Survey began in 1981.
- Domestic violence has fallen by 59 per cent since 1995.
- Repeat victimisation has fallen at a slower rate than crime as a whole.

Victimization and concern about crime fall more heavily on some groups than others. Most of these groups are disadvantaged in other respects.

- People living in households with an income of less than £10,000 a year are 1.6 times as likely to be mugged, 1.3 times as likely to be burgled and 4.2 times as likely to be 'very unsafe' walking alone after dark as those living in households with an income of more than £30,000 a year.
- People living in the most deprived neighbourhoods are 2.5 times as likely to be mugged, 2.5 times as likely to be burgled and 2.6 times as likely to be 'very worried' about being physically attacked as those people living in the least deprived neighbourhoods.
- Thirty-five per cent of children aged 10-15 were victims of crime in 2003, with 19 per cent experiencing five or more incidents. But children from disadvantaged groups are more likely to be victims: as many as 59 per cent of children from 'On Track' areas were victims of crime in 2004, with more than 25 per cent of boys and 10 per cent of girls from deprived areas having been physically attacked in the last year.

Crime imposes obvious costs on its victims in the short term, but the impact of crime can also be long term.

- Two months after experiencing crime, victims report lower levels of well-being than non-victims and, to some extent, higher levels of vulnerability.
- Four months after experiencing some forms of victimisation two out of five victims still talk about the offence to someone near them and nearly all of those who started to take extra precautions still take them.
- 40 per cent of victims of serious physical assault suffer social and psychological effects 30 months after the offence.

Victimization and concern about crime affect many areas of people's lives.

- In 2002/03, as many as 850,000 victims of crime experienced lost earnings, up to a further 180,000 moved home and as many as 32,000 changed jobs *as a direct result of being victimised*.
- For 52 per cent of women who have been seriously sexually assaulted in their lives, their experience led to depression or other emotional problems, and for one in 20 it led to attempted suicide: 64,000 women living in England and Wales today have tried to kill themselves following a serious sexual assault.
- Concern about crime also adversely affects employment. People who were very concerned about crime were around seven per cent less likely to be in work than otherwise similar people who were not concerned about crime.

Crime can have a severe impact on children's life chances.

- Exposure to violence or trauma before the age of five can alter the developing brain.
- Pre-school children who are exposed to domestic violence are at significantly higher risk of developing emotional, behavioural, speech and language problems.
- Maltreated children perform less well at school after controlling for socio-economic background.

The impact of crime depends considerably on the offence type.

- Four per cent of burglary victims moved house in 2002/03, compared to two per cent of all victims of crime.
- Fourteen per cent of victims of wounding lost earnings, compared to nine per cent of victims of burglary.
- Twenty per cent of victims of wounding subsequently avoided certain places, compared to four per cent of all victims of crime.
- The effects of 'hate crime' can be particularly damaging.

The impact of crime is *amplified by disadvantage and by repetition.*

- Those living in the poorest households were nearly three times as likely to report a range of emotional effects following victimisation, including depression, anxiety, panic and difficulty sleeping.
- Thirty two per cent of those who say they would find it 'impossible' to find £100 at short notice report being 'very much' affected by experiencing crime, compared to just 14 per cent of those who would find it 'no problem'.
- Fourteen per cent of victims of crime who said their health was 'very good' reported being 'very much' affected compared to 27 per cent of those who said they were in 'bad' health and 41 per cent of those who said they were in 'very bad' health.

Concern about crime can seriously undermine people's trust and connectedness to one another – 'social capital'.

- Men who were 'very worried' about crime are around 18 per cent less likely to trust people in their neighbourhood than those who were 'not at all worried'.
- High levels of crime and concern about crime are often a major factor in tipping neighbourhoods into a spiral of decline, or frustrating efforts at regeneration.

True, criminologists, policymakers and politicians have become increasingly sensitive to the harm done by crime, to its unequal distribution and its role in perpetuating social injustice (Home Office 2005). The present government in particular has done much to increase funding for the police and victim support and direct resources to groups and areas most disadvantaged by crime. But it is arguable that there is much further to go. We know that crime harms some groups more than others, but we do not recognise how thoroughly it can harm them. Crime prevention and victim support are rarely conceptualised, as they should be, as a pillar of the welfare state. And public policy is still not doing enough to prioritise vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Below we look at ways that public policy could do more to protect and support crime's most vulnerable victims. We focus in particular on quite high-level or Whitehall-level reforms, including ways of reforming government targets, resource allocation and crime measurement. While we do not claim to be experts in the practicalities of either crime reduction or victim support, we believe the recommendations we make here follow from our research findings.

If public policy is going to do more for those worst affected by crime, government and related agencies will need to work first on reducing victimisation and concern about crime among groups hardest hit by it (crime reduction); and second, on better supporting victims (support services). Below we briefly look at ways forward on both of these fronts. But before doing so, we make one more general point.

Although criminal justice agencies can play a role in reducing crime and concern about crime, and in supporting victims, their contribution is always going to be a relatively minor one. At the very least, work by criminal justice agencies needs to be complemented by government-wide policies, and voluntary sector work, aimed at reducing poverty and inequality, giving everyone financial assets that they can draw on in times of need, supporting families and young people, raising educational attainment, improving the quality of our built environments and strengthening social capital and 'collective efficacy'.

If this makes tackling crime-related injustice seem a daunting and costly task, it is worth recalling that these measures will not help protect people only from the effects of crime, but from other ills as well. Social afflictions feed together, with the result that measures that help people reduce one type of disadvantage – mental illness, poverty, addiction, unemployment, being a repeat victim of crime – generally help reduce others as well (Wolff and de Shalit 2005).

Crime reduction

It is clear from our analysis that more needs to be done to prevent people who are poor or otherwise particularly vulnerable to falling victim to crime. Government and the police already acknowledge this, and over the last decade a range of initiatives – both those focusing on deprived areas and ones focusing on reducing particular types of crimes or protecting particular groups – have directed resources to those most in their need. Yet there is further to go. Here we pinpoint three types of measure that could help, one around targets, one around research, and one around resource allocation.

An impact-based target

As we noted in chapter 2, there is good reason to think that while we have seen a dramatic fall in the volume of crime over the last decade, we have not seen as dramatic a fall in the impact of crime. According to one set of Home Office figures, (figures which are admittedly speculative and experimental), the total *volume* of crime fell by 20 per cent between 2000 and 2003/04, but the total cost of crime fell at just over a third of that rate – by just seven per cent (Dubourg and Hamed 2005). This suggests that a substantial proportion of the fall in crime over the past decade may be due to reductions in less serious offences that do not have a large impact on people's lives.

These trends in crime reduction may be due in part to the way the Home Office and ODPM's current Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets are framed: they refer to overall crime rates rather than specific types of crime or the impact of crime.

If central government is going to continue to set targets for crime reduction, it should explore the possibility of moving towards an impact-based measure. A PSA target that was directed at reducing the *impact* of crime would have four advantages:

1. It would prioritise efforts to tackle the crimes that most seriously affect people's lives, such as domestic violence and repeat victimisation, better reflecting the high value people naturally place on their health and well-being.
2. It would focus resources in a socio-economically progressive way, prioritising areas where the impact of crime on people's lives is greatest – which tend to be the most disadvantaged communities.
3. It would prioritise the tailoring of support to people's practical and emotional needs. The government itself has made it clear, in the Home Office's recent *Rebuilding Lives: Supporting Victims* green paper, that it wants to see victim support move in this direction, and an impact-focused PSA could further encourage moves in this direction.
4. It would help demonstrate the value of crime reduction and victim support initiatives to broader policy concerns with equity and well-being. This could be a particularly valuable exercise in the context of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

These four advantages sit comfortably with the direction of current policy. For example, the current Home Office and ODPM targets do have a partly distributive element – the Home Office's and Criminal Justice System's targets are to 'reduce crime by 15 per cent, and further in high crime areas, by 2007-08' (HM Treasury 2004: 19) and ODPM's is to 'narrow the gap in health, education, crime, worklessness, housing and liveability outcomes between the most deprived areas and the rest of England, with measurable improvement by 2010' (ibid: 17). But impact-based targets – focusing on the practical ways in which crime affects people's lives – would further encourage services to tackle especially harmful categories of crime and to support particularly vulnerable groups.

Research priorities

The British Crime Survey provides excellent data on crime rates and patterns. But it would be helpful to know more about victims needs – in terms of the kinds of practical help that people would like – and how these vary according to crime, area and victim type – knowledge that could help victim support services ensure that they were directing the right support to the right people. One possibility would be to commission a BCS module on this subject.

Resource allocation

An impact-based target would have a considerable distributive element. To make this easier to achieve, the Government should review the overall allocation and weighting formulas used for allocating resources to

crime prevention, policing and crime reduction services in order to ensure that spending prioritises groups and areas most harmed by crime. A number of experts have expressed doubts about the police funding formula used by the Home Office to distribute police grants, on the ground that they favour better off areas (Houpis, Littlechild and Gifford 2001).

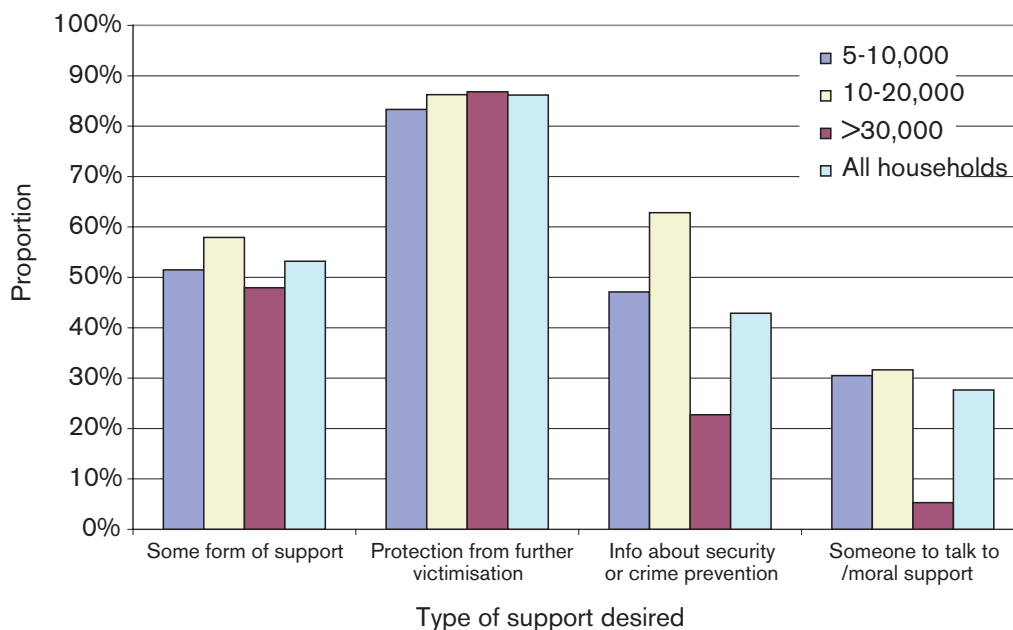
Improving support services

Government needs, finally, to ensure that support for victims and secondary victims is effectively available to those worst affected by crime. The recent proposals for Victim Care Units in the *Rebuilding lives: supporting victims* green paper (Home Office 2005) are welcome steps in this direction, and they build on a series of important reforms that have recently included a new Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, more tailored local services, greater support for victims of sexual violence and abuse through the Victims' Fund, and a greater voice for victims through the Victims' Advisory Panel and the Victims' Commissioner.

As indicated in our introduction, society has only come to recognise its obligations to victims relatively recently – and funding is still, arguably, relatively inadequate. While spending on victims' services has gone up dramatically over the last 25 years, it still remains a very minor proportion of overall criminal justice spending. Just £57 million was spent on victim services in 2003/04 – less than *one per cent* of the Criminal Justice System budget and less than a fifth of one per cent of the total cost of crime to society (Dubourg and Hamed 2005). Much of the focus of recent government reform, moreover, has been directed to supporting victims in dealing with the police and the courts. Victims whose cases never get to court are comparatively neglected (Victim Support 2002).

Although the British Criminal Injuries Compensation system is one of the most generous in the world, we still spend only £30 million funding Victim Support, the principal victim support agency. This has resulted in a significant 'support gap': as chart 4.1 shows, 53 per cent of victims who would have liked some form of support did not receive it, whether because they did not report the crime, were unaware of available support or for other reasons.

Chart 4.1: The 'support gap' – proportion of victims who wanted support but did not receive it, by income (£), 2002/03



Source: British Crime Survey 2002/03, ippr analysis

Given the harm done by crime, and the poor record of the CJS in preventing re-offending (67 per cent of prisoners currently re-offend (Cuppelitch and Evans 2005) there are strong reasons for exploring whether government is striking the right balance between support for victims and attempts to reduce re-offending. Part of the problem is a limited evidence base. We know relatively little about the efficacy of various forms of victim support.

Cost benefit analysis should be undertaken (alongside the research proposed above on the impact of crime) to identify the most effective forms of victim support could well show that gains to victims and to society at large, from well targeted victim support, outweigh the costs. Victim support is, like early years support, a case of 'invest early, save later'.

It would also be helpful to know more about the public's views on the principles that should govern the apportioning of criminal justice budgets between crime reduction and support for victims. This would be not be costly to undertake and could, together with the cost benefit analysis outlined above, give us better ground on which to make funding decisions about victim support.

If victim support services are undeveloped across the board, they tend, arguably, to offer least to those who need them most. There are two respects in particular in which disadvantaged groups appear to be getting a rough deal when it comes to victim support.

First, research suggests that while no more than half of crimes are recorded by the police, victims who are poor or otherwise excluded are less likely than well-off victims to come to the attention of the police or victim support agencies (Salisbury and Upson 2004). They are, therefore, less likely to benefit from their support. To take just one example, older black people are less likely to report a crime than older people from other ethnic groups (ibid).

Second, even when disadvantaged victims are identified as victims, they are less likely to feel their needs have been met by the attention they receive, due to a 'support gap'. Preliminary analysis by ippr shows that people on low incomes are more likely than better-off people to say they want support but are less likely to receive it. Nineteen per cent of victims in households with incomes of less than £5,000, surveyed in 2002/03, wanted support but did not receive it, compared to 13 per cent of households with incomes of more than £30,000. This analysis also suggests that low-income households want a different kind of support service to better-off households. The former are less likely to be concerned about receiving information about protection and much more likely to ask for more intensive (and costly) help, such as moral support or protection from further victimisation.

Addressing the support gap

There are a range of possible options for addressing this support gap. First, as already indicated, we need to know more about the costs and benefits of various forms of support. Second, the Home Office should consider setting targets to reduce the gap, and ensure that the needs of victims from disadvantaged groups are met at the same level as those from well-off groups.

Our final set of recommendations in this area concerns compensation. The evidence presented in chapter 2 clearly supports the Government's recent proposal to shift spending from low level financial payments for relatively minor crimes towards swifter, tailored, practical help (Home Office 2005). This research also shows that victims' financial needs are highest immediately after the crime – but under the current system payments are often delayed by many months, or come in dribs and drabs as they are repaid by offenders (ibid). The government, therefore, should consider both paying compensation up front, rather than in instalments from offenders, and paying interim payments in cases that experience delays or are particularly complex (Victim Support 2005).

Moving forward

We recognise that the recommendations made here do not amount to a magic bullet. The goal of reducing the impact of crime cannot be achieved by the criminal justice system or victim support charities alone. It involves changing the mindset of politicians, public service professionals and the public at large, so that they become more sensitive to crime's effect on individuals and communities and the role it plays in perpetuating inequality. And it requires sensitive and joined-up working from across the public services, voluntary organisations and community groups.

Nevertheless, the Criminal Justice System needs to take the lead. And we believe that the suggestions made here would sharpen the CJS's focus on helping those hardest hit by crime. They should also encourage, less directly, a greater understanding of crime as a social justice issue.

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