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HONG KONG UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CRIME VICTIM SURVEY

Final Report of the 2006 Hong Kong UNICVS

This report presents the findings of the 2006 Hong Kong United Nations International Crime Victim survey. This was the first time the UNICVS was conducted in Hong Kong SAR China. For this reason, no trends in crime over time are available but where appropriate, the results are compared with those of other main cities in the developed and the developing world.

The report shows crime victimisation rates for ten types of common crimes: car theft, theft from car, household burglary and attempted burglary, robbery, personal theft, assault, and sexual victimisation. In addition, the report examines non-conventional crimes such as corruption and bribery, and consumer fraud. A unique feature of the Hong Kong UNICVS is a set of questions on cyber victimisation. The report also presents information on other topics related to criminal justice such as reporting to the police and the police response to victimisation, fear of crime, crime prevention measures, and opinions about police and sentencing. Hong Kong's residents attitudes to restorative justice and victims' participation in the justice process are also examined.

In 2006, the Hong Kong government conducted its regular Crime Victim Survey. This provides a unique opportunity to compare the results of the CVS and the UNICVS, and assess the ways in which different methodologies impact on the results of crime victimisation surveys.



The University of Hong Kong



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April 2010

HONG KONG

THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL

CRIME VICTIM SURVEY

Final Report of the 2006 Hong Kong UNICVS

The University of Hong Kong and The Australian National University

HONG KONG

THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL

CRIME VICTIM SURVEY

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Foreword

The publication of the final report of the Hong Kong United Nations International Crime Victim Survey (UNICVS) makes a welcome contribution to our limited knowledge about crime victimisation in Chinese communities. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and introduced for the first time questions about cybercrime victimisation and attitudes toward restorative justice.

Undertaking any population survey demands considerable time and effort. The innovative features of the Hong Kong UNICVS, its translation into Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) and the opportunity to compare the results with a victim survey conducted at the same time by the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department all required additional attention. The final report offers a wealth of information on the experiences and attitudes of Hong Kong people on crime.

The perseverance of the research team led by Professor Broadhurst and the continued support of their respective research centres has ensured that this valuable report will reach a larger audience among researchers and the wider community.

Sandeep Chawla

Director
Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Vienna, April 2010

PREFACE

The final report of the United Nations International Crime Victim Survey (UNICVS) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China¹ contributes to research about crime victimisation in Chinese communities. Preliminary results of the survey were released on 7 October 2006 and attracted substantial press attention. These press reports noted the relatively low level of crime victimisation in Hong Kong (except for high levels of consumer fraud), and the good standing of the Hong Kong Police among the survey respondents.²

The Hong Kong UNICVS research team has also been occupied with two other surveys that are now being finalised for publication. These are the United Nations International Violence Against Women Survey (conducted in several other countries including Hong Kong in 2006 and Singapore in 2009: see Holly Johnson, Natalia Ollus and Sami Nevali, 2008, *Violence Against Women: an International Perspective*, Springer, New York) and the United Nations Crime Against Business Survey that was completed in May 2007 and conducted in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Xi'an (Broadhurst et al. 2010).

The full report of the fifth sweep of the UNICVS (including Hong Kong SAR China) was published in late 2007 by the Netherlands Ministry of Justice and this source provides the international comparisons noted in this report (see Jan van Dijk, John van Kesteren, Paul Smit 2007, *Criminal Victimization in International Perspective: Key findings from the 2004-2005 ICVS and EU ICS77* (Onderzoek en beleid, No. 257), The Hague: Ministry of Justice, WODC). Although the international report summarised the key findings from the Hong Kong UNICVS, the present report is especially important in that it:

- provides data on cybercrime victimisation for the first time in the UNICVS survey;
- provides data on attitudes to restorative justice for the first time in the UNICVS survey;
- provides a rare opportunity for a direct comparison of the findings that arise from using different survey methods: the UNICVS was conducted by telephone interview while the larger Hong Kong Government crime victim survey was conducted face to face and both took place over the same time period;
- adds further details to the measurement of crime victimisation and attitudes to criminal justice in Hong Kong not otherwise provided, such as the incidence of crime victimisation experienced by Hong Kong residents when travelling abroad; and
- contains a detailed description of the Hong Kong survey results and contextualises the international comparisons provided by the UNICVS across 33 cities and countries involved in the fifth sweep of the international survey.

Many people helped make this survey possible; in particular we thank Anna Alvazzi del Frate and John van Kesteren. The efforts of the interviewers and the cooperation of the respondents are gratefully acknowledged. We also record our appreciation of the corporate sponsors who supported this study.

Roderic Broadhurst

¹ Throughout this report, for brevity, Hong Kong or HK will be used when referring to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), People's Republic of China.

² See Crawford, B. 'It's true', *South China Morning Post*, October 7, 2006, p. 1; Wong, N. 'HK among world's safest cities: UN survey', *China Daily* (Hong Kong), 7 October 2006, p. 2; Crawford, B. 'Only Cambodia beats HK for consumer fraud', *South China Morning Post*, 7 October 2006; and Anon, 'One out of five is victimized by consumer fraud', *Ming Pao*, 7 October 2006, p. A5. A list of Chinese and English news reports about the survey is reported in Appendix I.

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The authors are extremely grateful for the assistance provided by John van Kesteren of the University of Tilburg, Netherlands, Dr Anna Alvazzi del Frate of UNODC Vienna, The University of Hong Kong Social Sciences Research Centre interviewers, and the many respondents who gave their valuable time to answer the survey. We are also grateful to Harry Hobbs for his editorial assistance in preparing summary tables and checking drafts of the report. We also thank Professor Sheu, Chuen-Jim National Taipei University for providing a copy of the 2005 Taiwan Crime Victimization Survey and Chang, Yao-Chung for translation of the relevant sections of the survey. In addition, we thank the Australian Research Council, Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security at The Australian National University for providing the essential support needed to bring this project to completion.

The financial assistance of the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong and the generous donations of the corporate sponsors of the 2nd Asia Cybercrime Summit Hong Kong 2003, organized by the Centre for Criminology of the University of Hong Kong, are gratefully acknowledged. We especially thank Mr Jeffrey G. Bullwinkel, chairman of the Summit organising committee and all the sponsors (Microsoft, Mastercard, eBay, Motion Picture Association, International Federation of Phonographic Industries and Internet Crimes Group) who allowed the surplus of that event to be used to support this study.

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Map of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, People's Republic of China
(Source: <http://www.reliefweb.int>)



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1989, five sweeps of the United Nations International Crime Victim Survey (UNICVS) have been conducted, with a growing number of countries and cities taking part. The fifth sweep in 2004–05 involved 30 countries and 33 capital and main cities in the developed and developing world. The UNICVS is the most comprehensive instrument to study the extent of crime, and perceptions and attitudes toward the criminal justice system in a comparative perspective. It uses standardised questionnaires and similar data collection methods, which make it possible to reliably compare data across countries and over time.

The United Nations International Crime Victimization Survey (UNICVS) in Hong Kong

Although national victimisation surveys have been conducted regularly in Hong Kong since 1979, Hong Kong took part in the UNICVS, as both a country and a capital city, for the first time in 2006. From February to June 2006, 2,283 Hong Kong households were interviewed by telephone about their victimisation experiences using the UNICVS instrument. Demographic, attitudinal and socio-economic data were also collected. The UNICVS questionnaire asked respondents if, during the past five years (2001–05) and during the last year (2005), their household had been victim of car theft, theft from car, car vandalism, motorcycle theft, bicycle theft, burglary, and attempted burglary; and if they themselves had been the victim of robbery, theft of personal property, sexual offences, and assault or threats. From their answers, five-year and one-year prevalence estimates are computed. The UNICVS also enquired about four non-conventional crimes: consumer fraud, corruption, computer-related victimisation, and respondents exposure to drug-related problems.

An important feature of the UNICVS is that it asks victims whether they reported their victimisation to the police, so the ‘dark figure’ of crime (the amount of crime that is not known to the police and not recorded in official statistics) can be estimated. Questions about fear of crime, perception of police performance, attitudes about the punishment of offenders, and opinions about restorative justice were also included in the Hong Kong UNICVS instrument.

In the same year that the UNICVS was conducted in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (HK C&SD) conducted the Crime Victimization Survey (CVS), for crimes that occurred during 2005. This provides an opportunity to compare the results of the two surveys, which used different methods (the CVS conducted face-to-face interviews), samples (the CVS interviewed 20,100 households), and defined crimes in different ways.

Findings of the Hong Kong UNICVS

We first report the *five-year* and *one-year* prevalence estimates of victimisation (i.e. those individuals who were victimised at least once) for ten common crimes and three non-conventional crimes, and we examine how HK’s victimisation rates compare to the UNICVS international average for main cities. Then, we analyse patterns of victimisation and whether some groups of respondents were more likely to be victimised than others, before turning to the reporting behaviour of victims to the police. The next section presents results measuring attitudes to crime (fear of crime), perception of the police, and attitudes to punishment. The final section compares the results of the UNICVS with those of the HKCVS.

Rates of victimisation for common crime and non-conventional crime

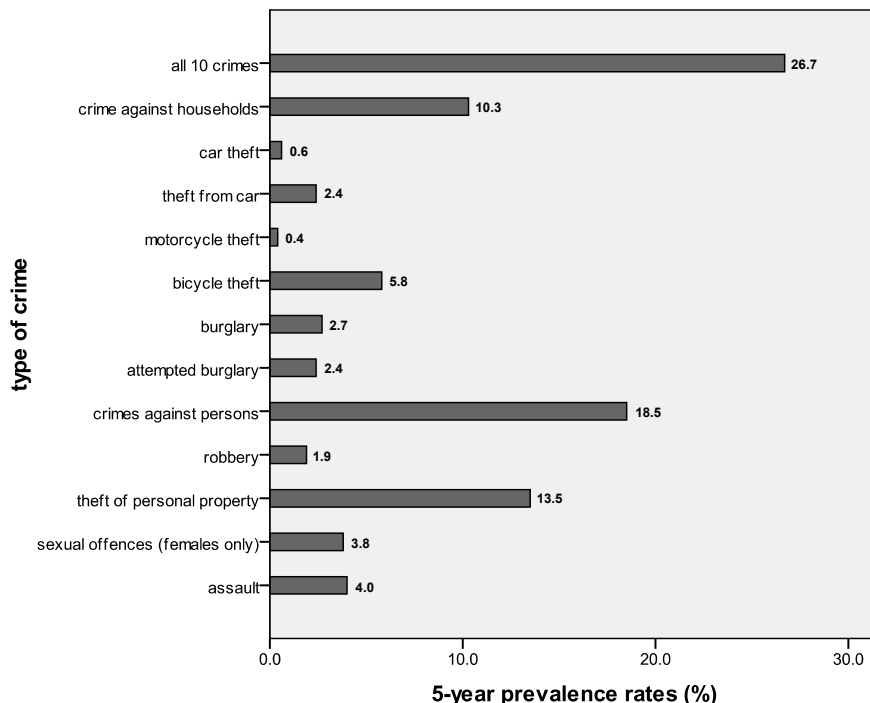
Overall, 26.5 percent of Hong Kong respondents reported they had been victim of one or more common crimes in the five years preceding the survey, and eight percent in the past year. Figure 1 presents five-year victimisation estimates for each type of crime, and Figure 2, one-year estimates for Hong Kong and the international average for 33 main cities. For both five-year and one-year estimates, the combined rate

of crimes against persons (18.5% in 2001–05 and 5.7% in 2005) was around twice the rate of crimes against households (10.3% in 2001–05 and 2.6% in 2005). Because the rate of car ownership is lower in Hong Kong than in other developed nations, car theft is relatively rare in recent years, with less than one percent of the sample reporting the theft of a car in the last five years, and none in 2005.³ Bicycle theft was the most common crime against households. Theft from car, burglary, and attempted burglary had similar rates ranging 2.4 to 2.7 percent in 2001–05.

The most common crime against persons was theft: 13.5 percent of respondents reported that a personal item was stolen from them in 2001–05 and nearly four percent in 2005. Less than two percent of respondents mentioned being robbed in the last five years. Nearly four percent of female respondents were sexually victimised in 2001–05. This was similar to the proportion of the whole sample that reported an incident of assault and threats.

For non-conventional crimes, the UNICVS referred only to incidents that happened in 2005. More than one in five respondents (22%) indicated that they had been a victim of consumer fraud. In over half the cases, the fraud happened in a shop (52.6%), but we do not know if it occurred in Hong Kong or at another location (such as Mainland China). For three percent of fraud victims, the fraud was related to the use of a credit card. In contrast to fraud, no incident of government official corruption was reported in the UNICVS. For the first time in the UNICVS respondents in Hong Kong were asked about computer related crime. Although 95 percent of computer users had protection software installed, two-thirds were victim of at least one incident of computer-related crime, mostly attacks through malicious software such as viruses, malware or spyware. Exposure to drug-related problems in the neighbourhood is a new item in the UNICVS, which does not record the level of drug consumption, but rather the visibility of such problems. Just over seven percent of respondents said they had witnessed drug-related problems ‘often’ or ‘from time to time’.

Figure 1. Five-year victimisation estimates (10 crimes) Hong Kong, 2001–05



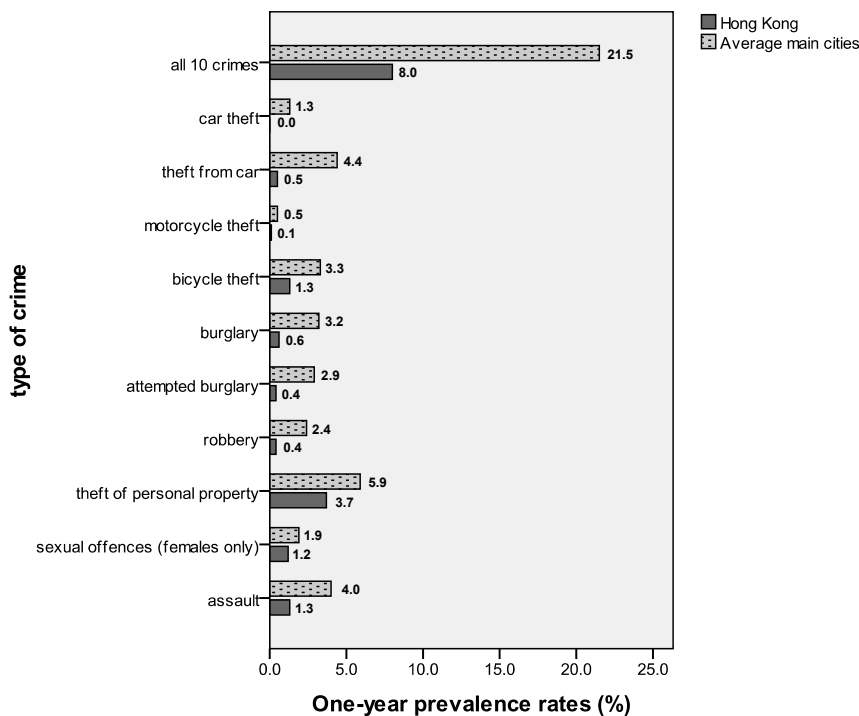
³ The decrease in car theft in Hong Kong is in part due to the Mainland’s policy of making it difficult to register (left-side drive) HK vehicles. This practice reduced the temptation to steal cars in HK and then sell them in the Mainland where right-side drive is the norm.

Hong Kong and other cities

Since the UNICVS was conducted in Hong Kong for the first time in 2006, we cannot compare victimisation trends over time. However, it is possible to compare Hong Kong with 33 capital and main cities surveyed by the UNICVS at around the same time. For most types of crime, Hong Kong recorded lower rates of victimisation than all other cities. In 2005, the combined victimisation rate for the ten common crimes was about three times lower than the international average (7.8% compared to 21.5%). For both crime against households and crime against persons, Hong Kong ranked below the international average. The rate of female sexual victimisation in Hong Kong (1.2%) approached the international average (1.9%).

In contrast to common crime, levels of consumer fraud were high in HK (22%), at nearly twice the international average for 25 cities in developed countries (12.4%). Hong Kong ranked third highest after Budapest, Tallinn and Athens. However, Hong Kong's rate of credit card-related fraud (3.2% of all fraud incidents) was lower than the international average (10% of all incidents). Like Hong Kong, Belfast recorded no occurrence of corruption, and very low levels were recorded in Dublin and Helsinki (0.1%). Nearly three times as many respondents internationally (22 main cities in the developed world) compared to those in HK said they had been exposed to drug-related problems in the last year (19%). Questions on cyber victimisation were unique to Hong Kong in 2005.

Figure 2. One-year victimisation estimates (10 crimes) for Hong Kong (2005) and the average for 33 main cities



Patterns of victimisation

For most crimes, the UNICVS asks victims to describe the most recent incident in the five-year period in terms of location, number and prior knowledge about offenders, injury, seriousness, and so on. Demographic characteristics including location also provide information on patterns of victimisation. For crimes against households, we found that the rate of victimisation for all crimes combined was significantly higher for the New Territories (16.8%) than for Kowloon (10.5%) or Hong Kong Island (9.8%), and this was mostly due to higher rates of both bicycle ownership and bicycle theft in the New Territories. There was no difference in rates of burglary or attempted burglary between the three regions. The majority of Hong Kong households had one or more types of anti-burglary protection (ranging from an alarm to a neighbourhood watch scheme), but neither the type nor number of anti-theft mechanisms had an impact on the likelihood of burglary. However, the UNICVS does not ask when the protection

system was established, and it could be that some households purchased an anti-burglary system after being burgled.

The UNICVS included two separate questions on attempted burglary and successful burglary. Households that reported an attempted burglary in the five years 2001–05 were significantly more likely to also fall victim to a successful burglary than other households. Although we have limited information on the time sequence of the two incidents, it seems that households that were victims of break-in *attempts* were more likely to be targeted by burglars. Residents who reported visible drug-related problems in their neighbourhood were also more likely than other residents to experience a burglary or related offences. These findings have implications for crime prevention: residents should be warned to immediately repair and secure doors or windows that have been damaged during an attempted burglary; and those who are aware of drug-related problems in their neighbourhood may want to take extra security precautions.

Relatively large proportions of robberies (39.5%) and personal thefts (23.8%) against HK residents happened outside HK. It is most likely these incidents took place in Mainland China, where many HK residents shop and do business. While HK victimisation rates are already low compared to other main cities, the rates of victimisation for theft and robbery within the limits of HK are in fact even lower (1.1% for robbery and 10% for theft). There is, however, a different pattern of personal theft victimisation for male and female residents. Females are significantly more likely to become victims of theft in Hong Kong (particularly bag snatching and pick-pocketing) than males, who are more likely to become victims outside of Hong Kong. It would be beneficial to issue warnings to HK residents (particularly males) to be vigilant when travelling to Mainland China (and overseas generally) to avoid becoming a victim of these crimes.

As elsewhere in the world, respondents aged 16–24 years were more likely than older residents to be victims of personal theft and assault and threats. Female victims of assault and threats were significantly more likely than male victims to know the offender. The UNICVS findings in HK are consistent with findings in other countries and confirm that women are more likely than men to be assaulted in a domestic context. Younger female residents (16–24 years) had the highest risk for sexual assault (rape and indecent assault). A few male residents reported sexual victimisation (typically some kind of offensive behaviour), but victims of sexual assault were predominantly female.

Over half the incidents of consumer fraud occurred in a retail setting. For six out of ten female victims, the fraud happened in a shop, but in all other contexts, male respondents were more likely to be defrauded than female respondents.

Many victims do not report the crime to the police

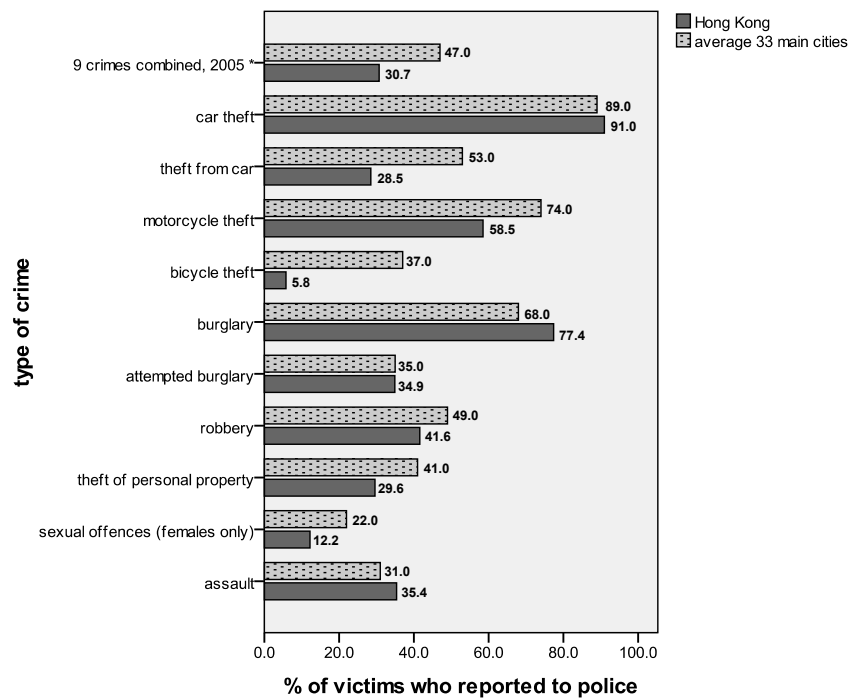
Figure 3 presents rates of reporting to the police in Hong Kong and the average for 33 main cities in the developed and developing world. The average reporting rate for ten crimes combined was 36 percent, partly due to very low reporting rates for bicycle theft; however, rates varied depending on the type of crime and its seriousness. The majority of car thefts (91%) were reported to the police, as well as over three-quarters of burglaries (77.4%), and over half of the motorcycle thefts (58.5%). It is worth noting in the case of car and other theft that insurance services require a report to the police as a condition of processing a claim and that this is likely to account for the relatively higher levels of reporting for such offences. For all other crimes, most victims did not report the incident to the police and the percentages were lower, ranging from a low 5.8 percent for bicycle theft to 41.6 percent for robbery. The average rate of reporting for ten crimes combined is lower in Hong Kong than the international average. For less serious property crimes, the pattern of reporting in HK is closer to that of developing countries than developed countries, but similar for burglaries and violent crimes (apart from sexual offences).

As we will see later, low reporting rates are not due to a lack of trust in the police, since the majority of HK residents express high levels of satisfaction with their police force. The reasons that victims gave for not reporting to the police varied depending on the type of offence but, overall, when the crime was not serious enough, respondents or their family, resolved it themselves. Respondents also did not report if they believed the police could do nothing about the crime. However, one-third of burglary victims did not report because they feared reprisals. For all crime types, victims tended to report incidents perceived

as more serious; for example, when a weapon was used, the victim was injured, or something was actually stolen.

For five crimes (theft from car, burglary, robbery, assault and threats, and sexual victimisation) victims who reported to the police were asked to rate the police response to their complaint. Overall, the majority of victims (66.6%) were satisfied with the response from the police. One-third of victims of sexual offences and one-quarter of victims of assault and threats received support from victim support agencies. However, many more, particularly victims of burglary, indicated that they would have liked some support.

Figure 3. Reporting to the police: Hong Kong and average for main cities



Fear of Crime

Two measures of fear of crime are included in the UNICVS: the perceived likelihood of being burgled and the fear of street crime. Twenty-eight percent of respondents believed that their household was 'likely' or 'very likely' to be burgled in the next 12 months; this is only slightly lower than the international average of 35 percent. However, a much lower proportion of HK respondents felt 'a bit' or 'very unsafe' walking in the street after dark (5.6%) compared to the international average of 32 percent. On the two measures, female respondents expressed more fear than male respondents, as did victims of crime. The measures of fear of crime correlated highly with the presence of visible drug-related problems in the neighbourhood.

Public Perceptions of the Police and Attitudes to Punishment

Satisfaction with the police

All respondents were asked to give a judgement of police performance at controlling crime and their helpfulness. The vast majority of respondents considered that the police in their area were doing a 'very good' job (14.5%) or a 'fairly good' job (81.1%) at controlling crime. Of all the cities surveyed in the UNICVS, HK residents were the most positive about police performance. Asked whether the police are helpful and do everything to be of service, the majority of respondents (93.6%) also 'fully agreed' or 'tended to agree' with the statement. Even the groups of respondents who tended to be more critical of police performance, such as victims or crime or younger respondents, rated that performance higher than respondents in other main cities, suggesting that overall HK residents are highly satisfied with their police force.

Attitudes to sentencing

The UNICVS questionnaire asked all respondents about what kind of punishment should apply to a 21-year old male who is found guilty of burglary for the second time (for stealing a colour television). Options included a fine, a community service order, a suspended sentence, and a prison sentence. Nearly 60 percent of HK respondents thought that a recidivist burglar should serve time in prison. This is much higher than the international average (38%), but comparable to the average in developed countries (58%). However, common law countries, such as Hong Kong, tend to be more punitive than civil law countries (e.g. 53% of Northern Ireland and 51% of England and Wales respondents opted for a prison sentence).

Opinions on restorative justice

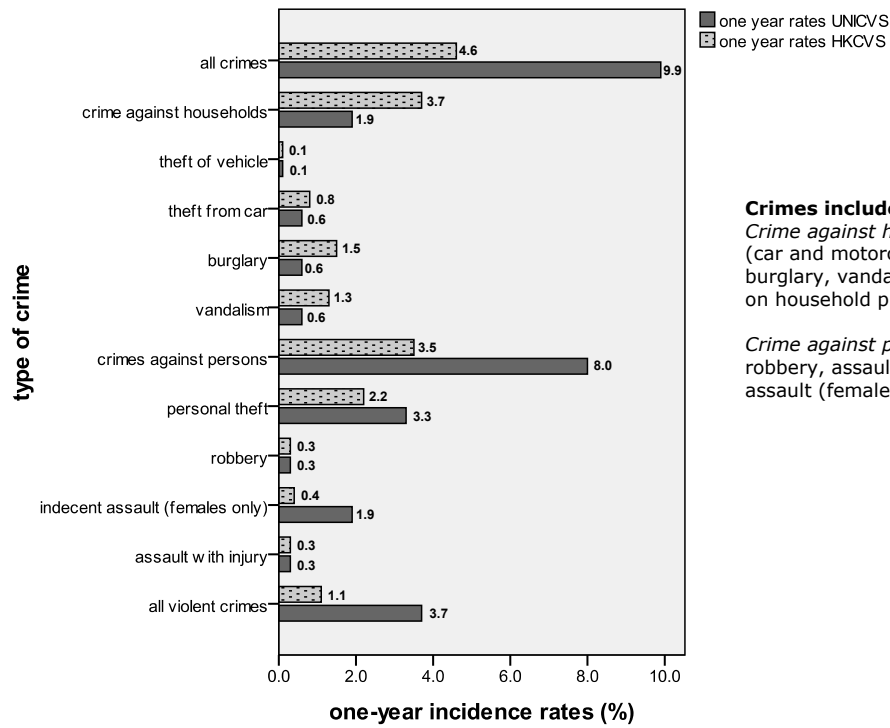
Three questions on restorative justice and victim participation in the justice process were unique to the HK UNICVS. Over half HK respondents indicated that they would be willing to participate in out-of-court processes to resolve the dispute with the offender, whether by themselves or with the involvement of professionals and non-professionals. However, only 35 percent believed such out-of-court processes would be a useful alternative to the traditional court process.

Comparison with the Hong Kong Crime Victimization Survey

Comparing the results of the UNICVS and the HKCVS highlights the ways in which methodology, sample size and wording impact the findings of victimisation surveys. The rates of victimisation in the two surveys differ for some crimes, but are similar for others. Overall, the HKCVS finds higher rates of crime against households, and lower rates of crime against persons than the UNICVS (Figure 4). This could be attributed to the large difference in sample size (and possibly sample representativeness), and the ways in which crimes were defined and counted. It is likely that the CVS is less accurate than the UNICVS in recording sexual victimisation and violence against women. In the CVS, all members of the household are interviewed face-to-face, making it difficult for respondents to report crimes committed by other family members or which they have kept secret from other household members. The UNICVS is inherently more anonymous because interviews are conducted over the telephone, thereby increasing the distance from both interviewer and other household members and making it easier to report these events.

Rates of reporting to the police also differ for some crimes in the two surveys. The UNICVS finds higher reporting rates for burglary, robbery and threats; however, reporting rates are comparable for car theft, personal theft and serious assault. Both surveys record high levels of satisfaction with the police response. Attitudes to sentencing were difficult to compare because: (1) the CVS only asked the opinion of victims, whereas the UNICVS asked all respondents; (2) the victims' judgement of the appropriate sentence referred to different crimes against persons, whereas UNICVS respondents were provided with a standard scenario of a burglary; and (3) the CVS provided ten sentences representative of sentencing options in Hong Kong) than the UNICVS, which presented only four options. This may explain why UNICVS respondents appeared to be more punitive (i.e. a larger proportion opted for imprisonment) than HKCVS respondents.

Figure 4. One-year incidence rates, Hong Kong, 2005: UNICVS and HKCVS



Crimes included

Crime against households: theft of vehicle (car and motorcycle), theft from car, burglary, vandalism (on car for the UNICVS; on household property for the CVS).

Crime against persons: personal theft, robbery, assault with injury, indecent assault (females only).

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. The United Nations International Crime Victim Survey in Hong Kong

In 2006 and for the first time, The University of Hong Kong Centre for Criminology and Social Sciences Research Centre, with support from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and INTERVICT (University of Tilburg) conducted the United Nations International Crime Survey (UNICVS) in Hong Kong. The development of the UNICVS started in 1987. In 1989, 16 countries participated in the first sweep of the survey, which was conducted again in 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2005, with an increasing number of countries participating. Since its inception, 78 developed and developing countries from all continents and/or their main cities have taken part in one or several sweeps of the UNICVS.⁴ The UNICVS is unique in that it provides a standardised instrument for monitoring crime rates and public perceptions about crime and justice across countries with different justice systems and varying ways of recording crime. The information provided by official sources such as the police and the courts is limited, because it only accounts for the crimes that have been detected and recorded by the police. The 'dark figure of crime' consists of the large proportion of crime that goes unreported. The 'dark figure' varies from country to country and partly reflects confidence in the police and differences in the severity and frequency of some offences. Victimization surveys are one way to estimate this 'dark figure' and obtain a more truthful, although not perfect, representation of actual crime rates.

The latest sweep of the UNICVS, conducted some time during 2004-2006, depending on the country, covered 38 countries, including eight where the survey was conducted only in one or two main cities. Around three-quarters of the participating countries were located in Europe and/or in the developed world.⁵ Hong Kong and Phnom Penh (Cambodia) were the only two Asian cities that participated in the fifth sweep; Hong Kong for the first time, and Phnom Penh for the second time⁶. At the same time as

⁴ Crime victim surveys conducted among Chinese populations are rare. The UNICVS was conducted face-to-face in Beijing in 1992 (see Zhu et al. 1995) and again in 1996; however, data for the second survey in Beijing in 1996 (participating in the third sweep of the UNICVS) was never published. In 2004, a multi-stage cluster sample of 2,474 Tianjin residents completed a self-administered questionnaire (over 95% response rate) that covered the following crimes: robbery, assault, personal theft, bicycle theft, swindling, and burglary (for example see Zhu, Messner and Zhang 2008 from among several publications from this survey). Also in 2005 the Taiwan National Police Agency undertook the Taiwan Areas Criminal Victimization survey (see Sheu, Chen, Mong, Tsai, Huang, Huang, et al. 2005; and see also Kuo, Cuvelier and Chang 2009). The 2005 Taiwan Areas Criminal Victimization Survey applied a stratified random sampling method to select households (respondents over the age of 12) and 18,046 residents (from 35,944) were interviewed by telephone between February and April 2005. The response rate was 50.6 percent. The respondents were asked to report for 2004 any victimisation involving personal crime (larceny, robbery and assault), and crimes against the household (burglary, motorcycle and vehicle thefts, and fraud). Information was also collected on the respondents' demographic characteristics, perceptions of community disorganisation, offense time and place, and lifestyle activities. A unique feature of the Taiwan CVS was that, in addition to the randomised survey, it also interviewed 2,025 (from 2,060) victims of crime who had reported a burglary, robbery motorcycle/car theft or fraud to the police in 2004. An earlier study of a smaller sample of Taiwanese respondents is reported by Mon (2003). In May 2007, the United Nations Crime Against Business Survey conducted in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Xi'an was completed, and results are currently being finalised (see Broadhurst et al. 2010).

⁵ Participating countries in Europe were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey; in Africa, Mozambique and the Republic of South Africa; in South America, Argentina, Brazil (two cities) and Peru; in Asia, Cambodia and Hong Kong SAR; as well as Australia and the United States.

⁶ The second UNICVS in Phnom Penh was not available in time to be included in the report of the 5th UNICVS; however details of the first and second UNICVS in Cambodia may be found in Broadhurst and Bouhours (2009).

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the UNICVS was conducted in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Government ran its own national Crime Victimization Survey (CVS). However, the UNICVS differs in important ways from the Hong Kong Government CVS, on the questions asked and on the methodology.

The standard UNICVS instrument provides a measure of 10 common crimes, ranging from minor offences (such as petty theft) to more serious crimes (such as robbery and sexual offences). The relatively small sample size makes it difficult to estimate less prevalent but more serious crimes such as rape or aggravated assault. Although one item asks about incidents of bribery/corruption of officials, the UNICVS is not designed to examine victimisation by complex crimes with multiple victims such as grand corruption or organised crime. In addition to bribery, the UNICVS includes some questions on respondents' experiences of less conventional crimes, such as consumer fraud and computer-related crime. The UNICVS focuses on individual victimisation and excludes victimless crimes (e.g. narcotic use), crimes against the state (e.g. immigration offences, tax evasion), against businesses and commercial establishments (e.g. fraud by businesses), as well as crimes resulting in the victim's death (e.g. murder and manslaughter). For common crimes, respondents who have been victimised were asked follow-up questions about what happened, whether they notified the police, and whether they were satisfied with the police response. All respondents were asked a few other crime-related questions, such as their opinions of police performance, attitudes to sentencing, and fear of crime.

1.2. Hong Kong in 2005

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HK SAR) of the People's Republic of China comprises a peninsula and over 200 islands located in the South China Sea at the mouth of the Pearl River delta (see Map after Acknowledgements section).⁷ Hong Kong's three main regions—Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula, and the New Territories and Islands—cover an area of 1,104 square kilometres, of which only five percent is arable land. Hong Kong, a British colony since 1842, was handed back to China on 1 July 1997. However, it was agreed that HK would continue to follow the English common law and maintain its autonomy, in all domains except foreign affairs and defence, for at least 50 years following the transfer: this is often known as the 'one country two systems' solution. HK SAR has a two-tier system of government, headed by the Chief Executive: the central Legislative Council comprises 60 members elected every four years, and 18 District Councils manage the local affairs. The two official languages are Cantonese and English; English is spoken by 35 percent of the population as a second language.

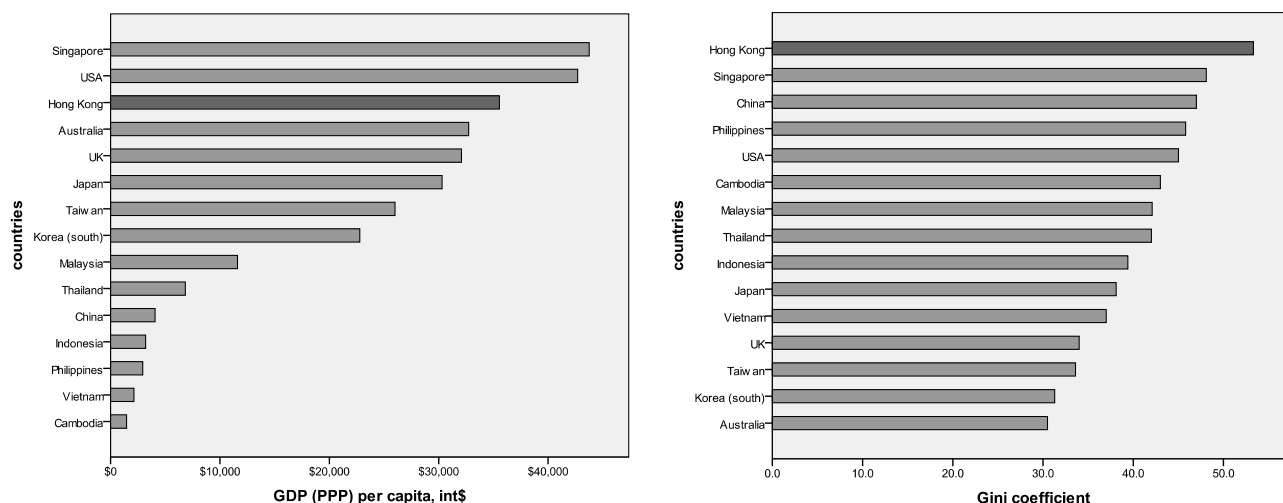
In 2005, the population was estimated at 6,813,200, over half of whom resided in the New Territories (52%), with a further 30 percent on Kowloon Peninsula, and 18 percent on Hong Kong Island. The most densely populated region was Kowloon Peninsula with 43,080 persons per square kilometre, followed by Hong Kong Island (15,850) and the New Territories (3,700). A gender imbalance in the population (52% females compared to 48% males) is partly attributed to the presence of a large number of female foreign domestic helpers. Following the trend in most industrialised countries, the rate of population growth has been declining (0.4% for 2001–06 compared to 0.9% for 1995–2001). With this fall in the fertility rate, the proportion of youths under 15 years has decreased, while the proportion of the population aged 65 and over is growing. The median age of the population has been rising from 34 years in 1996 to 36 years in 2001 and 39 years at the most recent census in 2006. People of Chinese descent constitute 95 percent of the population; while Filipino (1.6%) and Indonesians (1.3%) form the largest ethnic groups in HK.

Hong Kong is one of the world's leading financial centres. It continues to have a capitalist economy based on free trade, low taxation and minimum government intervention. In 2006, HK was the twelfth largest trading entity in the world, with the sixth largest stock exchange for foreign exchange trading. About half of HK's total trade value is with Mainland China. Four key industries contribute to HK's economic success and employ nearly half the workforce: trading (wholesale, retail and import/export) is the largest (29% of GDP), followed by financial services (13% of GDP), various professional services (11% of GDP), and finally tourism (3% of GDP). In 2005, the HK gross domestic product at purchasing

⁷ This section draws mainly from the findings and figures of the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2007a & b).

power parity (PPP) per capita (GDP [PPP] per capita) was one of the highest among Asian as well as Western countries (Figure 1.1). Overall, 61 percent of the population was in the labour force. At 5.6 percent, the rate of unemployment was slightly higher than in neighbouring countries (Singapore, 3.1%; Taiwan, 4.1%; Japan, 4.4%), and closer to rates in the United States and Australia (5.08% and 5.06% respectively). Although HK's GDP has more than doubled since 1988, HK also has the greatest level of income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient.⁸ HK's Gini coefficient (53.3) is relatively close to Singapore's (48.1), but much higher than Korea (31.3), Taiwan (33.6) and Japan (38.1).

Figure 1.1. GDP and Gini coefficient for Hong Kong and selected countries, 2005



Note The current international dollar is a hypothetical unit of currency with the same purchasing power as the US dollar within the United States. It is a useful measure to compare various countries' standard of living (*Source*: International Monetary Fund 2009)

Note The Gini Index was calculated for various years ranging 2002–07 (for HK, the year is 2007) (*Source*: Central Intelligence Agency 2009)

According to the latest census (2006), the nett median monthly household income is HK\$17,250 (or US\$2,211). The census also revealed improvements in education attainment, with 75 percent of the population aged 15 and over in 2006 having attended secondary or higher education. The proportion of people 15 and over having completed a degree course was up from 10.4 percent in 1996 to 15.4 percent in 2006. This was particularly true for women, with 93 percent of women aged 15–44 years having attended secondary or higher education (up from 84% in 1996).

1.3. Crime and the Criminal Justice System

Hong Kong is currently one of the safest cities in the world, and it is perceived as one of the least corrupt countries in Asia. In 2000, HK's overall recorded crime rate was 1,185.7 per 100,000 population, which was lower than Singapore (1,202.6), Japan (1,924.0), South Korea (3,262.6) and England and Wales (9,766.7), but higher than the Philippines (106.0), China (288.7), Malaysia (717.5) and Thailand (931.0) (Broadhurst et al. 2008). However, these figures provide an indication of the number of crimes that came to the attention of the police; they do not include crimes that went unreported to the police ('the dark figure'). HK's low rate of recorded crime is supported by results from victimisation surveys, which indicate a victimisation rate lower than that of Western nations, but similar to other Asian countries such as Japan. After a rise and fall in recorded crime during the 1970s, and a new rise in the late 1980s, crime rates for both violent and property crime declined throughout the 1990s. This drop matched a decline in

⁸ The Gini coefficient is a measure of equality that varies from 0 to 100. Zero represents perfect equality (everyone has the same income), and 100 represents perfect inequality (one person has all the income). Numbers closest to zero indicate countries with smaller income disparities.

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the population group with the highest risk of offending—those aged 15–29 years. Broadhurst et al. (2008) discuss the reasons for HK's low crime rate and suggest that, among other factors, it may be the result of family-oriented cultural traditions, proactive crime prevention, an increasingly professionalised police service, an ageing population, strict firearms law, ethnic homogeneity, high levels of formal and informal surveillance, and effective control of cross-border crime.

The last ten years has seen a push to make the criminal justice system more inclusive of victims through the implementation of restorative justice processes (Chan 2008; Lee 2009; Wong 2002). In October 2003, family conferences were introduced for young people who had committed minor offences such as shoplifting, but this process does not include victims. Under the Police Superintendents' Discretion Scheme, young offenders can be cautioned rather than prosecuted if the offence is their first, it is minor, they unequivocally admit to it, and they and their parents agree to the caution. If the police believe that the youth is in need of supervision and treatment, a family conference involving the youth, his or her parents, and various professionals is called to decide on the appropriate actions to deal with the youth. Thus, unlike in Western countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, family conferences in Hong Kong are solely offender-centred. Informal post-caution victim-offender mediation meetings, run by social workers, have been used since 1999 to help young offenders reflect on their crime and restore the relationship with victims, but these appear to be a minor element of the juvenile justice system and the Hong Kong Government is still reluctant to formally alter criminal justice processes (Wong 2008).

In 1996 the Hong Kong Government introduced the *Victims of Crime Charter*, which sets out both the duties and rights of victims. However, the *Charter* has no legal status and courts have no obligation to accept impact statements from victims. The latest crime victimisation survey (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department 2006a) revealed that over 90 percent of persons aged 12 and above had never heard of the *Charter*, and only one percent had some knowledge of its content. Those who had heard of the *Charter* did so mainly through the media, not the government or justice professionals. In 2006, the Hong Kong Government considered whether to introduce some form of victim participation in juvenile justice proceedings, but rejected the idea on the grounds that victims would see the conference as a too lenient option, with little deterrent effect; victims could feel re-victimised or under pressure to give the offender a second chance; the benefits of victim-offender meetings were not demonstrated; and the types of offences typically committed by juveniles did not lend themselves to conferencing (Legislative Council Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services 2007). It was also assumed that victims would not want to 'go through the unpleasant experience' of meeting the offender. The UNICVS can shed light on this debate as three questions on victim participation in the criminal justice process and potential alternatives to the court system were introduced in the HK UNICVS. The first two ask respondents whether they would consider meeting with an offender to resolve the consequences of a crime out of court. The third is more general and asks respondents if they believe that out-of-court processes could be implemented as alternatives to the traditional court system.

1.4. Structure of the Report

This report has nine chapters that focus on the Hong Kong component of the UNICVS. Chapter 2 describes the methodology of the survey and the instrument used in Hong Kong. Prevalence and incidence rates for victimisation by 10 common crimes are presented in Chapter 3, and compared with the international averages in other main cities. This is followed by the correlates of victimisation by common crime in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 examines victimisation by non-conventional crime. In Chapter 6, we turn to the responses to crime victimisation: reporting to and satisfaction with the police, and access to victim support. Chapter 7 analyses public attitudes to crime, particularly fear of burglary and personal crime, and Chapter 8 focuses on respondents' assessments of the effectiveness of law enforcement in Hong Kong, opinions on the sentencing of a recidivist burglar, and attitudes toward victim participation in the criminal justice system. Finally, in Chapter 9 we compare the results of the UNICVS and HK Crime Victimisation Survey (HKCVS) and analyse the impact of different methodologies and definitions on victimisation rates.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology and Sampling

2.1. Timeframe and Instrument

The Hong Kong UNICVS was conducted from February to June 2006 and refers to victimisation that happened in the five years preceding the survey (i.e. 2001–05), and in the past year (2005). This method minimises ‘forward telescoping’, that is, the tendency for respondents, when they are asked exclusively about victimisation in the last 12 months, to mention older incidents. First, screening questions ask respondents about their experience of crime in the last five years. Those who mention an incident are asked when it happened—in the first few months of the current year (2006), during the past year (2005) or earlier. If respondents answer that it happened in 2005, the interviewer then asks how many times it occurred during 2005. These questions are designed to elicit information on the prevalence as well as the volume or frequency (incidence) of crime.

The instrument used in HK was adapted from the 2004–2005 standard UNICVS instrument,⁹ with additional questions unique to HK that focused on computer-related crime, drug-related problems in the area, and attitudes to restorative justice. The survey included 158 pre-coded questions. The questionnaire was bilingual, with the Chinese versions translated from the original English version. The main section was designed to record the prevalence, incident characteristics and victims’ reporting behaviour for 10 ‘conventional’ or standard crimes, including four vehicle-related crimes, burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, theft, sexual victimisation, and assault and threats. A short section focused on four less conventional crimes: consumer fraud, corruption, cyber victimisation as well as respondents’ experience of drug-related crime in their neighbourhood. The final section enquired about respondents’ attitude to crime and their opinion on policing, sentencing and restorative justice. The survey concluded with questions on households and respondents’ demographics (e.g. district of residence, marital status, level of education), and a few lifestyle questions (e.g. how often do you go out) that were designed to examine differences in lifestyle and their impact on the risk of victimisation. Appendix II outlines the content of the survey instrument. The standard questionnaire of the 2004–05 UNICVS CATI version is presented in van Dijk et al. (2007: Appendix 8) and online at <http://rechten.uvt.nl/UNICVS/pdf/files/questionnaire2004_05.pdf>.

The types of crime covered in the UNICVS generally accord with legal definitions of common crime, but are described using colloquial language. Respondents were first asked about household crimes—those affecting the household at large—with respondents reporting all incidents known to them. Six crimes against households were included: car theft, theft from or out of a car, motorcycle theft, bicycle theft, burglary, and attempted burglary. These were followed by questions about personal crimes—those affecting only the respondent. Types of personal crimes included: robbery, theft of personal property (pick-pocketing, bag snatching, and other theft), sexual offences (including rape, indecent assault, and offensive behaviour), and threats and assault (including assault with force). The HK survey was the first UNICVS survey to ask about cyber victimisation (computer-related crime), using items from the US National Crime Survey. A first series of questions assessed personal access to and use of a computer, and a second set of questions focused on specific forms of cyber attacks and whether the respondent incurred monetary losses.

⁹ Although car vandalism was excluded from the 2004–05 UNICVS questionnaire, it was retained in the HK version.

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Most questions were close-ended and allowed a single answer. Standard answers were presented for open-ended questions, such as those asking about reason(s) for not reporting victimisation, and multiple answers were usually allowed. Responses additional to the interviewer's prompts were recorded on a separate sheet. Interviewers often reminded the respondents to exclude incidents mentioned previously. A pilot study comprising 265 successfully completed interviews was conducted in January 2006 to test the length, logic, likely response rate, Chinese wording and format of the questionnaire. Data from the pilot survey were not counted as part of the final survey, but were used to modify the Chinese translations and improve the instructions given to interviewers.

2.2. Mode of the Survey and Sample Selection

The UN protocol includes two interview methods for the UNICVS: Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and face-to-face interviews. CATI has been used in industrialised countries from the first sweep of the UNICVS in 1989, and is the standard interview method in countries with high telephone penetration rates (over 70% of the population). In Hong Kong, where fixed-line telephone line penetration of households was about 93% in 2005 (Bacon-Shone and Lau 2006), CATI using fixed-lines was an appropriate mode for conducting the UNICVS. A team of around 60 interviewers experienced in using CATI were recruited in HK and provided with three days training in applying the UNICVS survey protocol. When using CATI, interviewers read the instructions and the questions displayed in English and Chinese, together with any pre-coded answers, from a computer screen. Answers were directly entered into the computer system and used by the system to select the next question. This process effectively reduced the possibility of potential routing error by the interviewers.

All fixed-line telephone numbers were generated from the Hong Kong 2005 English residential telephone directory¹⁰ by dropping the last digit, removing duplicates, adding all 10 possible final digits, randomising the order, and selecting numbers as needed. This method provided an equal probability sample that covered unlisted and new numbers, but excluded businesses large enough to use blocks of at least 10 numbers.¹¹ Although survey samples drawn from telephone directories (ie, including only landline telephone numbers) may result in an under-representation in European countries of young people, who are those most likely to be reached by mobile phones only (Gelb 2008), it is unlikely that this was a problem in the HK UNICVS. First, because fixed-line penetration for households is higher than in European countries and the sample was based on households rather than persons, young people with mobile phones will usually be reachable via the household landline phone. The exception will be young people who have recently formed new households and who tend to dominate the households without fixed-lines in Hong Kong (Lau 2006). Second, as seen later, young people were over-represented in the HK sample, confirming that reaching young people, the age group most likely to use mobile phones instead of fixed-lines, was not a problem in Hong Kong.

We followed the standard UNICVS sampling criteria and drew a sample of households by a random dialling of telephone numbers. Non-relevant contacts such as businesses were ignored. Eligible respondents were aged 16 and above and could be Cantonese, Mandarin or English speakers. Domestic helpers were included in the survey.¹² In each household, a single respondent was selected using the 'next birthday' rule: the selected respondent was the household member aged 16 and over, whose birthday came first after the survey date. This rule helped to reduce the over-representation of elderly persons and homemakers in the sample. The selected household member was not replaced if he or she refused to participate. This process continued until the desired number of completed interviews was reached. The aim was to reach a sample size of approximately 2,200 persons.

¹⁰ The Chinese version of the residential telephone directory was not used because the total number of telephone contacts is less than in the English version.

¹¹ This selection process leads to a lower response rate than directory-only sampling, which does not cover unlisted and new numbers.

¹² A large number of households have domestic helpers from the Philippines, Indonesia or Thailand.

Overall, 4,663 persons were invited to participate. The response rate was 49%, and the final sample included 2,283 completed questionnaires.¹³ This response rate is consistent with the average response rate of 46 percent in the fifth sweep of the UNICVS, for countries that also used the random digit dialling contact method. The gender of both the respondent and interviewer were matched, which is particularly important for any sensitive questions regarding sexual victimisation and family violence.

2.3. Reliability and Validity of the Telephone Survey

Reliability consists of the degree to which the instrument used will produce consistent measures when repeated.¹⁴ Test-retest and alternate-form checks were not applicable to the UNICVS, because all respondents were contacted once by a single interviewer. Intra- and inter-observer reliability was ensured by close monitoring of each interviewer's performance and standardised training before both the pilot and the final implementation. Internal consistency reliability—how well responses to several related survey items vary together (Litwin 1995)—was calculated for two questions (v161 and v162, probing respondents' attitude to restorative justice) and was found to be satisfactory.

Validity relates to how well the instrument measures what it sets out to measure (Litwin 1995). After five sweeps and 140 surveys, and repeated implementation in a number of countries, the UN English protocol has few validity problems. The content validity of the Chinese questionnaire was reviewed by local and overseas criminologists, including research staff from the UNODC. Face validity was controlled by inviting individuals with no formal training to assess how fluent the Chinese questionnaire was in practice.

All telephone interviewers were trained using a standardised approach prior to the commencement of the survey. All interviewers were fluent in Cantonese, standard Mandarin (Putonghua) and English. Quality checks were carried out at each stage of the survey to ensure satisfactory standards of performance. A validation assessment was conducted on the day following the survey, through a telephone call-back to randomly selected respondents. The Social Sciences Research Centre supervisors or project staff subsequently checked around 15 percent of the questionnaires completed by each interviewer.

2.4. Victimisation Rates and Significance Tests

Statistical weighting was applied to compensate for the over- and under-sampling of particular groups and to make the results more representative of the HK population aged 16 and above. Weights were calculated as the ratio of the population distribution by age group, sex and region compared to that of the sample (Appendix III).

The standard UN measure of victimisation is described in detail in Alvazzi and van Kesteren (2004, for Europe) and in van Dijk et al. (2007, for the latest UNICVS-5). The prevalence rate is the percentage of respondents who were victimised one or more times during the year preceding the survey for a specific crime. Prevalence rates do not reflect the volume of crime, but the proportion of the population who have been victimised *at least once*. The incidence rate measures the total number of incidents and represents the number of times that people are victimised during a year (usually expressed as N per 100,000 population). Following the standard UNICVS methodology, victimisation rates are expressed as percentages computed including 'user defined missing values', such as 'don't know' and 'refusal'. Descriptive statistics are presented for most of the results. The strength of differences was tested using the Chi-square procedure, and the associated *p* (statistical significance) values and confidence intervals are reported as appropriate.

¹³ 1,993 individuals refused to participate or withdrew during the interview, and 387 questionnaires were only partially completed.

¹⁴ For example, reliability can be assessed by repeating the test with the same participants and using the same instrument over time (test-retest reliability). Another method (alternate-form reliability) consists of applying to the same participants an alternative form of the instrument, which is worded differently but in essence measures the same concepts (Litwin 1995).

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As in all surveys, the results of the HK UNICVS are estimates and their accuracy depends on the size of the sample and the observed percentages. Because results are based on a sample of the population rather than the whole population, it is probable that differences between sample and population results will occur (sampling error). However, if the sample is large enough and representative of the population, these differences are not expected to be substantial. For our sample, we calculated the maximum sampling error to be ± 2.1 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence; that is, for each given survey question we can be 95 percent confident that the difference between the proportion of the sample and that of the population answering positively would vary by no more than plus or minus 2.1 percent.

2.5. Limitations of the Survey

Some population groups were not included in the sample selection. First, some people cannot be contacted by telephone, for example, those living in institutions such as prisons, hospitals, hostels or homes for the elderly. Past research has suggested that people in institutions may be at a higher risk of crime victimisation than those in the community. Second, households with no fixed telephone line were also excluded, such as those using only mobile phones, and those living on boats,¹⁵ in temporary housing or in remote areas. Finally, because the survey was usually carried out between 4.00 pm and 10.30 pm on weekdays, those who worked regularly at night or did shift work were also more likely to be excluded.

Crime surveys are prone to a number of response errors. First, participants may not recall trivial incidents that occurred during the survey period. They may only recall incidents that were serious but occurred outside of the survey period. For each type of victimisation, respondents are asked to recall details of the last incident. Respondents who have been victimised multiple times may recall the most serious incident rather than the most recent. Certain groups, such as the better educated and more affluent, are more likely than other groups to report incidents of minor violence (Lynch 2006). Some respondents may fail to realise that an incident is relevant or may be unwilling to report certain incidents—particularly those involving people they know; others may have been participating in unlawful activities during the course of their own victimisation. Therefore, the UNICVS measures only crimes that respondents are prepared to reveal to interviewers.

Despite the assistance of CATI, interviewers may commit errors during data collection, such as misinterpreting answers or mistakenly entering the wrong code. Together these factors may affect the reliability of the data obtained. However, every effort was made during the administration, data coding and analysis stages to minimise these problems. A small number of cases were excluded due to data inconsistencies or only partial completion of the questionnaire. We now turn to the results of the HK UNICVS, starting with victimisation by common crime in the next chapter.

¹⁵ Although, according to the telephone company in HK, some boat owners have a fixed line at the pier and connect the line to their boat when moored.

CHAPTER 3

Victimisation by any Common Crime

3.1. Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of 2,283 respondents. Table 3.1 presents selected characteristics of the 2006 HK UNICVS sample. As seen in Section 2.4, the sample was not entirely representative of the HK population; the far right column of Table 3.1 presents the weighted proportions. Female respondents were slightly overrepresented (56% of the sample) as were participants under 35 years of age. The sample's mean age was just under 38 years (42 years, when using weighted data). More than half the respondents resided in the New Territories and nearly 30 percent in Kowloon. Over half the respondents were married or living as a couple. Half the sample was in paid employment and 15 percent were students. The monthly nett income of nearly two-thirds of participants fell within ± 25 percent of the population median income.

Table 3.1. Characteristics of the 2006 HK UNICVS sample

Characteristic		Unweighted %	Weighted %
Gender (N=2,283)	Male	45	47
	Female	56	53
Age in years (N=2,177)	16-24	27	21
	25-34	16	12
	35-44	23	24
	45-54	19	19
	55+	15	24
	Mean age (years)	37.7	41.8
Region (N=2,135)	Hong Kong Island	17	19
	Kowloon	29	30
	New Territories	54	51
Marital status (N=2,249)	Married, de facto	57	64
	Single	39	31
	Divorced or widowed	4	5
Highest level of education (N=2,261)	Primary	11	15
	Secondary	53	51
	Advanced and tertiary	36	34
Occupation (N=2,239)	Not in paid employment	31	36
	Student	19	15
	In paid employment	50	49
Nett household monthly income (HK \$) (N=2,239)	0-9,999	17	20
	10,000-24,999	44	42
	25,000-39,999	20	19
	40,000+	19	19

The rest of this chapter presents the rates of victimisation for common crime in 2005 and over the five-year period 2001–05. Rates of victimisation are expressed as measures of prevalence and incidence, using weighted data.

3.2. Prevalence of Common Crime Victimization

Table 3.2 presents the overall one-year and five-year victimisation prevalence rates for any of 10 common crimes. This is a simple measure for the overall risk of victimisation by common crime; that is, the percentage of people who reported having been the victim of at least one crime during the survey period. Since the UNICVS was conducted for the first time in Hong Kong in 2006, we cannot compare trends over time; however, we can compare HK rates with victimisation rates in other main and capital cities. Caution must be exercised when analysing these results, as numbers are small.

Just under 27 percent of participants reported that they had been a victim of one or more common crimes in the five-year period 2001–05, and nearly eight percent in 2005 (the year preceding the survey). Rates for crime against the person were more than double the rates of crime against households. However, because of the methodology used, it is likely that the victimisation rates for crime against households are underestimated. A single respondent per household was asked about both personal and household crime. While personal crimes involve only that respondent, household crimes typically involve several victims, depending on the number of people living in the household. In addition, the respondent may not be aware of all incidents of household victimisation.

Not surprisingly, because vehicle ownership rates are low, rates of vehicle-related crime are also low, when based on the whole sample. In the period 2001–05, 22 percent of household reported owning a car, with only three percent owning a motorbike. Bicycle ownership was higher: 30 percent of households reported owning bicycles; of these, 40 percent owned more than one. Rates of vehicle ownership are much lower in HK than in other industrialised countries due to the relatively small size of the city, and its comprehensive public transport system. As a result, HK has the world's highest rate of public transport usage (90% of daily travel is done through public transport). Car vandalism was the most common car-related type of victimisation (3.1%).

Table 3.3 presents rates of vehicle-related crime as a proportion of owners. No car theft was reported for 2005, and just over two percent of car owners said something was stolen from the car. The highest rate was for bicycle theft (5.5% of bicycle owners).

Table 3.2. Overall victimisation: one-year (2005) and five-year (2001-05) prevalence rates for ten crimes in Hong Kong and international average for main cities

Type of crime victimisation	Hong Kong (N=2,283)		Average main cities, one year ^a %
	five years 2001-05 %	one year 2005 %	
Any of 10 common crimes^b	26.7	8.0	21.5
Any crime against households	10.3	2.6	-
Crimes against households: vehicle-related	11.1	1.8	-
Theft of car/van/truck	0.6	0.0	1.3
Theft from car (object in car or car part)	2.4	0.5	4.4
Vandalism on car	3.1	-	-
Theft of motorcycle/moped/scooter	0.4	0.1	0.5
Theft of bicycle	5.8	1.3	3.3
Crimes against households: burglary and related	4.4	0.9	-
Burglary	2.7	0.6	3.2
Attempted burglary	2.4	0.4	2.9
Crimes against the person	18.5	5.9	-
Robbery	1.9	0.4	2.4
Theft of personal property	13.5	3.7	5.9
Sexual victimisation (females only, N=1,222)	3.8	1.2	1.9
Assault and threats	4.0	1.3	4.0

Notes^a Source: van Dijk et al. (2007: Appendix 9, Table 2). Surveys were conducted in 33 capital cities from developed and developing countries in 2004-05. ^b Ten crimes include crimes against household (theft of car, motorcycle, bicycle, theft from car, burglary, and attempted burglary) and personal crimes (robbery, sexual offences, assault and threats, and theft of personal property).

Table 3.3. One-year (2005) prevalence rates for vehicle-related crime in Hong Kong and international average for main cities, vehicle-owners only

Type of vehicle-related victimisation ^a (N owners)	Ownership		Victimisation, owners only, 2005	
	Hong Kong (N=2,283) %	Average, main cities ^b %	Hong Kong %	Average, main cities ^b %
Theft of car/van/truck (N=491)	21.5	63.2	0.0	2.2
Theft from car (N=491)			2.1	8.1
Theft of motorcycle (N=67)	3.0	12.5	3.4	2.9
Theft of bicycle (N=736)	30.2	55.3	5.5	5.8

Notes^a Vandalism is not included because the question referred to 2001-05. ^b Source: van Dijk et al. (2007: Appendix 9, Table 10). Surveys were conducted in 33 capital cities from developed and developing countries in 2004-05.

In the five years preceding the survey, the rate of crimes against the person (18.5%) was higher than that of crime against households (11.1%). The most common offence against individuals involved theft of personal property (e.g. pick-pocketing and bag snatching, 13.5%). Rates of violent crimes (robbery, 1.9%; sexual assault, 3.8%; and assault, 4.0%) were lower than the rate of theft. To allow for comparison with cities where males were not asked about sexual victimisation, we report only the rate of female victimisation. Details of sexual victimisation of men are presented in Chapter 9.

3.3. Incidence of Common Crime Victimization

Section 3.2 examined crime prevalence, that is, the proportion of respondents who reported being victimised at least once in the survey period. This section focuses on the volume of crime in 2005. For each type of crime, participants who reported having been victimised were asked how many times this happened in 2005. Table 3.4 summarises the incidence of crime in HK in 2005.

Table 3.4. Incidence of victimisation for 10 common crimes in Hong Kong, 2005

Type of crime victimisation	Reported incidents N	Incidence rate (N=2,283) %	Respondents victimised two or more times ^a %
Any of 10 common crimes^b	269	11.8	21.5
Any crime against households	78	3.4	-
Crimes against households: vehicle-related	52	2.3	-
Theft of car/van/truck	0	0.0	n/a
Theft from car (object in car or car part)	13	0.6	30
Theft of motorcycle/moped/scooter	2	0.1	0
Theft of bicycle	37	1.6	17
Crimes against households: burglary and related	26	1.1	-
Burglary	14	0.6	8
Attempted burglary	12	0.5	33
Crimes against the person	191	8.4	-
Robbery	9	0.4	0
Theft of personal property	98	4.9	14
Sexual victimisation (females only, N=1,222)	31	2.5	71
Assault or threats of assault	59	2.6	31

Notes ^a Of those who reported being victimised in 2005. ^b Ten crimes include crimes against household (theft of car, motorcycle, bicycle, theft from car, burglary, and attempted burglary) and personal crimes (robbery, sexual offences, assault and threats, and theft of personal property).

As expected, incidence rates are higher than prevalence rates because repeated victimisation incidents that occurred in 2005 are included. However, similar patterns are present: the rate of personal crime is more than twice the rate of household crime. For all crimes, about one-fifth of respondents (21.5%) were victimised more than once with the same/any crime. Victims of personal crimes were more likely to be victimised more than once and more likely than households (22.7% vs. 16% respectively). One-third of households who reported an attempted burglary were victimised more than once, but only eight percent of those households that were victims of a successful burglary were victimised more than once. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of the female respondents who reported some sexual victimisation said they had been victimised several times. Although it is based on a small number of cases, this is a particularly high level of repeat victimisation, which suggests a proportion of sexual victimisation occurred within intimate relationships.

3.4. International Comparisons

The second and third columns of Table 3.2 compare victimisation in HK and in 33 main cities worldwide. Although the UNICVS considers HK as both a country and a city, it is appropriate to compare HK with other main cities because: (1) HK's size is comparable to cities rather than countries, and (2) it is heavily urbanised. Van Dijk et al. (2007: 46) point out that the level of victimisation by common crime is one-quarter to one-third higher in urbanised centres than in rural areas. We see that, in 2005, HK had the lowest victimisation rate for the 10 common crimes combined (about three times lower than the average, 8% compared to an average of 21.5%) as well as for each crime examined.

Except for bicycle theft, rates of crime against households were particularly low—ranging between five and eight times smaller than the average rates. For personal crime, robbery was relatively rare (0.4%), only one sixth the international average. Rates of sexual victimisation against females were close to the international average (1.2% compared to 1.9%).¹⁶ These figures confirm HK's low rate of crime recorded by the police, for both violent and property crime.

Apart from Phnom Penh (Cambodia, 2002), the UNICVS has not been conducted in major Asian cities in recent years, and we cannot compare HK's rates with neighbouring cities. Phnom Penh recorded the highest victimisation rate for the 10 common crimes combined (41.3%), but London ranked third highest (32%). HK (7.8%) and Lisbon (9.7%) were the only two cities with an overall victimisation rate lower than 10 percent. Looking at crime against households, we see again that the rates of victimisation in HK are among the lowest. HK records the lowest rate of car-related crime among both the general population and the population of car owners. The low rate of car ownership in HK partly explains the low rate of car-related victimisation, however, there seems to be no direct link between rates of car ownership and car-related crime. For example, two Western cities, Sydney and Rome, have similar high levels of car ownership (91.7 and 90.9% respectively), yet less than one percent (0.8%) of Sydney car owners reported some victimisation (car theft or theft from car) compared to 3.7 percent of car owners in Rome. The recent crackdown on car theft in Mainland China contributes to the low rate of car theft in HK.¹⁷ For example, it is now difficult to register HK vehicles in the Mainland because they are 'left-hand' rather than the usual 'right-hand' drive, and this policy has reduced the practice of stealing cars in HK to sell them in the Mainland.

Rates of motorbike theft internationally are generally low (1% and under). Phnom Penh stands out both in terms of bike ownership (87.9%) and theft of motorbikes (6.6% of the population). By contrast, motorbike ownership is quite low in HK (3%); however, the rate of motorbike theft, as a proportion of owners, is slightly higher in HK (3.4%) than the international average (2.9%). Three other cities have comparable rates of ownership (Johannesburg, 2.5%; Istanbul, 2.9%; and Warsaw, 3.1%), but all three have rates of theft approaching zero. A similar observation can be made for bicycle theft: while HK has a lower than average rate of bicycle ownership, the rate of bicycle theft (based on ownership, 5.5%) is similar to the average international rate (5.8%).

For burglary and attempted burglary, HK ranks lowest of all cities, although Lisbon and Helsinki also have rates under one percent for burglary. Phnom Penh recorded the highest rate of house burglary (15.8%) and the third highest rate of attempted burglary (7.6%) behind Maputo (9.5%) and Lima (13%).

For all crimes against the person, HK ranked lower than the 33-cities average. Its rate of robbery (0.4%) was the lowest among the 33 cities, followed by Athens, Reykjavik, Rome and Stockholm (0.7%). New York (2.3%) and London (2.6%) were close to the mean of 2.4 percent. South American cities were among the highest-ranking for robbery: Buenos Aires (10%), Lima (7%), Sao Paulo (5.4%) and Rio de Janeiro (5.1%). For personal theft, HK (3.7%) ranked eight lowest, but still below the international average (5.9%). Sydney's rate (3.7%) was similar to that of HK. Three cities recorded rates under three percent: Lisbon (2.4%), Rio de Janeiro (2.5%) and Sao Paulo (2.9%). London recorded a comparatively high likelihood of personal theft (10.2%), ranking third after Phnom Penh (12.8%) and Lima (12.3%).

Although not the lowest, which is Istanbul (0.6%), HK had a low prevalence of assault and threats (1.3%) equal to Lisbon and comparable to Rome (1.3%), Rio de Janeiro (1.54%) and Budapest (1.6%). Johannesburg recorded the highest rate (11.2%), while the rate in London (8.6%) is over twice the average (4%). Finally, rates of female sexual victimisation in HK (1.2%) were only slightly below the international average (1.9%). In some countries, including HK, the question about sexual victimisation

¹⁶ Sexual victimisation against male victims (N=1,034) was 0.4%.

¹⁷ According to the Hong Kong CVS (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department 2006a), rates of car theft peaked at 3.5–3.9% from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, but have since decreased to 1.7%; that is, to the pre-1980 level.

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was also asked of male respondents. Rates of male sexual victimisation were universally low: the average was 0.6 percent, and HK's rate was 0.4 percent. Comparing sexual victimisation between countries is difficult because what victims consider is inappropriate sexual behaviour varies depending on the culture and the level of gender equality. A relatively high rate of sexual victimisation in developed cities such as Helsinki (4.3%) and Copenhagen (3.8%) may reflect a woman's willingness to report even minor indecencies rather than a high rate of sexual attacks. Eight cities recorded rates of female sexual victimisation under one percent—all located in Europe.

The International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) was conducted by telephone in Hong Kong in 2006, using the CATI service of the Social Sciences Research Centre of The University of Hong Kong.¹⁸ This gives us an opportunity to compare the UNICVS results with those of the IVAWS (Johnson et al. 2008).¹⁹ The IVAWS found that in Hong Kong four percent of female respondents had been victims of any type of violence by men in the past year: two percent involved physical violence and three percent of sexual violence. One-year rates of victimisation in the UNICVS were slightly lower, particularly for sexual violence. Overall, 2.4 percent of female respondents indicated that they had been victims of any kind of violence: 1.5 percent of physical violence, and 0.9 percent of sexual violence. It is not surprising that the IVAWS, which was especially designed to measure violence against women, particularly in the wording of questions, elicits higher response rates than the UNICVS. However, both surveys suggest that the prevalence of violence against women in Hong Kong is among the lowest of the countries surveyed. According to the IVAWS, Hong Kong's rate of victimisation by any kind of violence (4%) was the second lowest after Switzerland (2%) and comparable to that of Denmark (5%); the rate of physical violence was also second lowest after Switzerland (1%). The rate of sexual violence (3%) was higher than for Switzerland (1%) and Denmark, Poland and the Philippines (2%). On all three measures, Mozambique rated the highest of the countries surveyed, with over one in five women (22%) reporting instances of violence against them.

¹⁸ The translation of the IVAWS into Cantonese, and the training and supervision of the interviewees, was undertaken by the authors.

¹⁹ The IVAWS focused on violence against women perpetrated by men, while the UNICVS examined violence by perpetrators of either sex. However, research has shown that, globally, an overwhelming proportion of violence against women is gender-based, i.e. it is perpetrated by men against women and girls. Although the UNICVS did not collect information on the gender of perpetrators of physical or sexual violence against women, we expect they included a majority of males, and that, despite the slightly different focus, we can confidently compare the results of the IVAWS and the UNICVS. Sample sizes were also comparable: the IVAWS surveyed 1,294 respondents aged 18 to 69 years, and the UNICVS included 1,222 female respondents aged 16 and over.

CHAPTER 4

Characteristics of Victimisation Incidents

In addition to reporting the number of incidents of victimisation, respondents were asked to describe elements of the most recent incident in the last five years. Depending on the type of crime, the survey included questions such as where the crime occurred, whether a weapon was used, how much was stolen, and whether the victim knew the perpetrator(s). We first look at crime against households in terms of location, repeat victimisation and financial costs. Then we describe the characteristics of incidents of personal crimes and analyse whether some groups of respondents were more likely to be victimised.

4.1. Crime against Households

4.1.1. Victimisation in three Hong Kong regions

Overall, the rate of household victimisation was 10.3 percent for 2001–05, and 2.6 percent for the year 2005. The five-year rate of crime against households was significantly higher in the New Territories (16.8%) than in the other two regions (Hong Kong Island, 9.8%; and Kowloon, 10.5%). Rates of burglary and attempted burglary were comparable (ranging between 2.4%–3.0% and 2.0%–2.5% respectively), but a higher rate of vehicle-related victimisation was reported in the New Territories (14.3%, compared to 6% for Hong Kong Island and 5.7% for Kowloon). Table 4.1 presents the rates of theft from car and bicycle theft based on car/bicycle ownership and including only incidents that occurred within the respondent's own district (car and motorcycle thefts are excluded because the numbers are too small).

Table 4.1. Rates of selected crimes against household by HK regions, 2001–05

Crime against households	Hong Kong Island %	Kowloon %	New Territories %
Theft from car (N=460) ^a	0.0	4.7	7.6*
Theft of bicycle (N=639) ^a	4.9	2.4	19.3***
Burglary (N=2,283)	3.3	2.9	2.4
Attempted burglary (N=2,283)	2.5	2.6	2.0

Notes *** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$. ^a Percents based on car or bicycle ownership. Includes only thefts that occurred in respondents' home district.

While the rates of car and motorcycle ownership were similar in the three regions, significantly more households owned a bicycle in the New Territories (39.6%) than in Hong Kong Island (20.6%) or Kowloon (19.4%), which provides more opportunities for theft. Also, not all vehicle-related victimisation took place at or near the respondent's place of residence. Controlling for vehicle ownership and location of the incident, we see from Table 4.1 that households in the New Territories are at significantly higher risk of victimisation through theft from car and bicycle theft than households in other districts. The rate of bicycle theft is about five times higher in the New Territories (19.3%) than in Hong Kong Island (4.9%) and eight times that of Kowloon (2.4%). For theft from car, there is also a large difference in rates between Hong Kong Island, where no thefts were reported, and the New Territories (7.6%), with a smaller difference for Kowloon (4.7%).

4.1.2. Vehicle-related crime victimisation

With HK's low rate of vehicle ownership, rates of vehicle-related victimisation were also relatively low—11.1 percent over five years and 1.8 percent for 2005. The majority of vehicle-related victimisation

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occurred at or near the respondent's home, ranging from 57.1 percent for car theft to 91.5 percent for bicycle theft. The next most common location for vehicle-related victimisation was at work (from 3.8% for bicycle theft to 14.9% for car theft). Around half the cars and trucks that were stolen were recovered. All victims of car theft said the theft was 'very' or 'fairly' serious. Note that the numbers of vehicle-related victimisation are very small and must be interpreted with caution.

4.1.3. Burglary and attempted burglary

The combined rate of burglary and attempted burglary in the last five years was 4.4 percent. Although the rate of burglary and attempted burglary in 2001–05 was slightly lower in the New Territories (3.5%) than Hong Kong Island (5%) or Kowloon (5.1%), this difference was not statistically significant. A majority of households (82.7%) had at least one type of anti-burglary protection.²⁰ Yet, no significant difference was found between the presence or the number of security mechanisms and the likelihood of housebreaking. However, respondents were not asked when they installed their security system. It could be that members of households that have been burgled in the past have set up a security system as a result of the burglary. The rate of housebreaking was comparable for all housing types except for village housing. There, the rate of burglary and attempted burglary (14.9%) was between two and three times higher than in other types of housing (ranging from 2.1% for subsidised public housing to 7.3% for hostel/temporary housing/wooden houses). Village housing typically consists of a single household by building, is not located in estates, and is generally more remote, which makes it easier to break into compared to the majority of high-rise housing in HK.

The majority of households that were broken into in 2005 were victimised only once. However, when looking at the five-year period 2001–05, households that had been the victim of an attempted burglary were significantly more likely to become victims of a successful burglary than non-victimised households. As Table 4.2 shows, 27.8 percent of households where an attempted burglary occurred were also victim of a successful burglary, compared to only 2.1 percent of households where no burglary was attempted. The survey does not permit us to establish the time order of the incidents, but these results suggest that burglars repeatedly targeted certain households until they were successful.

Table 4.2. Attempted and successful burglaries, 2001–05

N=2,283		Attempted burglary		Total
		Yes	No	
Burglary	Yes	27.8 ***	2.1	2.7
	No	72.2	97.9	97.3
		100%	100%	100%

Note *** $p < .001$.

In over three-quarters (76.6%) of successful burglaries, something was actually stolen. The value of the stolen goods ranged from HK\$110 to \$150,000 and averaged HK\$16,745 (\$US2,149),²¹ with a median value of HK\$4,750 (i.e. for half the households burgled, the value of the goods stolen was equal or lower than HK\$4,750). The majority of respondents, whose house was burgled, described the burglary as 'very' or 'fairly' serious (80%), regardless of the value of stolen property.

4.2. Crime against Persons

The four crimes against the person in the HK UNICVS are: theft of personal property (e.g. pick-pocketing), robbery, assault and threats, and sexual victimisation, which includes rape, attempted rape,

²⁰ This consisted of one or a combination of: burglar alarm (13%), special locks, doors, and/or windows (43.9%), a formal or informal neighbour watch system (67.1%) or other mechanisms such as closed circuit television, high fences, a dog, and/or a caretaker/security guard (18.3%). We explore protective mechanisms further in Chapter 7 in relation to fear of crime.

²¹ The Hong Kong dollar is tied to the United States dollar at the approximate rate of \$USD1 = \$HK7.78.

indecent assault, and offensive behaviour, and was asked of both male and female respondents). Different questions were asked for each type of crime against the person. The combined rate of victimisation for the four crimes was 18.5 percent for 2001–05, and 5.9 percent for 2005. Similar to the rates of crime against households, rates of crime against persons were lower than those recorded in other cities around the world. This is particularly so for theft and robbery, especially when we exclude the incidents that took place outside of Hong Kong. Table 4.3 summarises selected incident characteristics for each of the four crimes.

Table 4.3. Selected characteristics of crimes against persons, Hong Kong, 2001–05

	Theft of personal property N=308 %	Robbery N=44 %	Assault and threats N=91 %	Sexual assault ^a N=34 %	Offensive behaviour ^a N=14 %
Location of the incident					
At/near home or in own district	27.4	35.7	57.1	60.0	67.0
Another HK district or at work	48.8	24.8	38.1	35.4	33.0
Mainland China/overseas	23.8	39.5	4.8	4.3	-
N offenders					
One only	-	38.5	59.0	97.0	100.0
Two	-	28.7	20.0	0.0	-
Three or more	-	32.9	21.0	3.0	-
Victim knew at least one offender by name or by sight ^b	-	-	35.0	6.0	13.2
Weapon present, yes ^c	-	23	14.1	7.1	7.0
Of incidents involving a weapon, % when weapon was actually used against the victim	-	66.7	66.7	100.0	0.0
Respondent regards incident as very or fairly serious	61.9	71.4	66.7	62.1	43.0
Respondent regards incident as a crime	-	-	87	97.0	78.6

Notes ^a Includes female and male respondents. Sexual assault includes rape and indecent assault; and offensive behaviour includes non-contact offences such as indecent exposure. ^b Excludes cases where victims did not see the offender. ^c No guns were present in any of the three crimes, only knives and other objects used as weapons.

4.2.1. Theft of personal property

Respondents were asked about any theft of personal items that did not involve force. Such items included theft of a purse, wallet, clothing, jewellery or sports equipment that had been stolen over the last five years, in locations such as at work or school, in a pub, on public transport, in the street or at the beach. The likelihood of victimisation by theft was the highest of the four crimes, with 13.5 percent of respondents reporting at least one theft in the five years 2001–05 and 3.7 percent in 2005. Around one-quarter of theft victims (23.8%) were victimised in Mainland China or overseas (Table 4.3). Thus, if we exclude those incidents that occurred outside of HK, the likelihood of victimisation by theft of personal property for 2001–05 within HK borders decreases to 10 percent. Nearly half of the thefts (48.8%) occurred outside the respondent’s own district or at work and were least likely to happen at the respondent’s residence (3.9%).

As Table 4.4 shows, a comparable proportion of female and male respondents (14.7% and 12.2% respectively) were victims of theft. However, for female victims the theft was significantly less likely to occur outside HK (14.5%) than for male victims (36.5%). Indeed, when the thefts that occurred outside of HK are excluded, we find that females were significantly more likely to have personal items stolen

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(12.2%) within HK borders than males (7.6%). Typically, victims were carrying or holding the stolen items, which suggests that within HK females may be at risk of bag snatching.

Table 4.4. Rates of crime against persons by selected characteristics of respondents, 2001–05

	Theft of personal property %	Robbery %	Assault %	Sexual assault ^a %
Sex of respondent				
Male	12.2	2.4	4.1	0.8
Female	14.7	1.6	3.9	3.8***
Age group (years)				
16–24	16.8	2.3	4.3	5.4
25–54	14.1	2.1	5.2	2.8
55+	9.2**	0.9	1.3	1.1
Education level				
None and primary	7.9	0.9	3.3	1.0
Secondary	13.3	2.2	3.7	3.9
Tertiary	17.5	2.0	5.1	5.8
Income level (HK \$)				
<10,000	9.8	1.2	3.0	4.5
10,000–24,999	12.7	2.7	3.2	3.0
25,000–39,999	15.5	3.0	6.0	3.6
40,000+	17.7	0.9	5.2	5.8

Notes *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$. ^a Includes only rape and indecent assault. Except for sex of respondents, results are presented for female respondents only (N=1,222).

Regardless of sex, those under 35 years were significantly more likely than older respondents to be victims of theft overall and within the limits of HK: of respondents aged 16–34 years, 16.9 percent reported a theft compared to 12 percent of those aged 35 and over ($p < .01$). People aged 55 and over were least likely to be victimised. The majority of theft victims (86.7%) were carrying or holding the item(s) that were stolen. Respondents were not asked about the value of stolen items, but 61.9 percent said the theft was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ serious. However, these thefts may have been perceived as less serious than burglaries, since a higher proportion of burglary victims (80%) said it was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ serious.

4.2.2. Robbery

The item on robbery referred to successful as well as attempted robberies and emphasised the use of force or threats: *over the past five years, has anyone stolen or attempted to steal something from you by using force or threatening you?* The overall rate of victimisation by robbery was low, with 1.9 percent of respondents reporting a robbery in the last five years and 0.4 percent in 2005. Of the four crimes against persons, robbery had the largest proportion of incidents occurring outside HK (39.5%). If we exclude those incidents that happened in Mainland China or overseas, the five-year rate of victimisation falls to 1.1 percent.

For 35.7 percent of robbery victims, the latest incident happened in the district where they live. The rate of robbery for female victims (1.6%) was lower but not statistically significantly different from male victims (2.4%). However, if we consider only incidents that occurred within HK limits, significantly fewer female respondents were victimised (0.7%) than male respondents (1.7, $p < .05$). Overall, slightly more younger respondents (16–24 years) reported being robbed than other age groups (2.3% compared to an average of 1.7% for those aged 25 and over); but when looking only at robberies that occurred within HK, this relationship becomes statistically significant: 2.3 percent of youth under 25 were robbed in HK

compared to 0.9 percent of older age groups ($p < .05$). Again, respondents over 55 were least likely to be victimised by robbery; just 0.9 were between 2001 and 2005.²²

About six in ten victims (61.6%) reported that more than one offender was involved ranging from two to 7 (mean, 2.3 perpetrators). This result is consistent with the latest and past sweeps of the UNICVS in other cities. Of those victims of robbery, male victims were significantly more likely to be attacked by multiple offenders (81.8%) than female victims (32.4% reported more than one perpetrator, $p < .001$).

In nearly one-quarter of attacks (23%) victims reported the presence of a weapon during the robbery, which is lower than the figure of 39% reported internationally for main cities. The victim's gender made no difference to the presence of a weapon. No incident involved a gun, two-thirds involved a knife, and the rest another weapon or an object, such as a stick, used as a weapon. In only 36 percent of incidents, the perpetrator actually stole something from the victim. Whether a weapon was used or not made no difference to the outcome of the attack. Overall, 71.4 percent of victims said the robbery was 'very' or 'fairly' serious.

4.2.3. Assault and threats

The question asked was: *have you over the past five years been personally attacked or threatened by someone in a way that really frightened you, either at home or elsewhere, such as in a pub, in the street, at school, on public transport, on the beach, or at your workplace?* (sexual victimisation was excluded). Overall, four percent of respondents said that they had been attacked or threatened between 2001 and 2005. Fewer than five percent of assaultive incidents occurred outside HK limits. The rate of assault was similar for male (4.1%) and female (3.9%) respondents.

For one-third of victims (34.6%) the most recent assault happened at their home, and for one-quarter (25.9%) at their workplace. Females were most likely to be assaulted at their home (44.7%) then at work (22.7%), with an inverse result for males (28.9% were assaulted at work and 21.1%, at home). Comparing the risk of assault at home vs. any other locations combined, we find that females were significantly more at risk to be assaulted at home than males (43.8% and 18.2% respectively, $p < .01$).

The number of assault perpetrators ranged from one to 20. A majority of victims (59.3%) were attacked by only one person, and another 20.3 percent were attacked by two persons. Female victims were more likely than male victims to encounter a single perpetrator (66.7% for females compared to 51.2% for males). Respondents were asked if they knew the offender by name, by sight or not at all. Most male assault victims did not know their offender (71.8%), a larger proportion than female victims (58.7%). In addition, 28.3 percent of female victims compared to only 7.7 percent of male victims knew the offender by name ($p < .05$). These findings suggest that violence against women is of a different nature than violence against men. They confirm that women are more likely to be assaulted in a domestic context, by partners, boyfriends, family members or relatives, and this is consistent with the findings of the UNICVS in other countries (van Dijk et al. 2007).

In contrast to the results for theft and robbery, the younger age group (16–24) was equally at risk of assault and threats as those aged 25 and over. For the four age groups, 16–24, 25–34, 35–44, and 45–54, rates of assault were comparable, ranging from 4.3–5.2 percent. People 55 and over, however, were significantly less at risk of being assaulted than other age groups (1.3% as compared to 4.9 percent for those under 55, $p < .01$). Fourteen percent of assaultive incidents involved a weapon (compared to an average of 22.6 percent for main cities internationally). Of those, 37.7 percent involved a knife and in the other cases, another weapon or an object used as a weapon. None involved a gun. Weapons were more likely to be present during incidents involving the younger age group (53.8%); for older victims, the likelihood that a weapon was used diminished, and no victim aged 55 and over mentioned a weapon.

Victims of assault were asked whether force was actually used against them during the incidents. One-quarter (25.4%) of respondents reported actual use of force, and this was similar for male and female

²² The difference with other age groups was not statistically significant, although it approached significance at $p = .07$.

victims. Female victims, however, were significantly more likely to be injured during the assault (26.7% compared to 10% of male victims, $p < .05$). Overall, 66.7 percent of victims regarded the assault as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ serious, and 87 percent considered it to be a crime. Female victims were more likely to say that the assault was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ serious (73.9% compared to 58.1% for male victims); yet, and despite having a greater risk of injury, they were also less likely than males to regard it as a crime (73.9% compared to 93% of male victims) (neither result reached statistical significance).

4.2.4. Sexual victimisation

Questions about sexual victimisation were asked to both male and female respondents, and covered all types of sexual offence, ranging in seriousness from offensive behaviour to rape. The question was worded in broad terms: *people sometimes grab, touch or assault others for sexual reasons in a really offensive way. This can happen at home, or elsewhere, for instance in a pub, the street, at school, in public transport, in cinemas, on the beach, or at one's workplace. Over the past five years has anyone done this to you?* Overall, 2.4 percent of respondents reported some sexual victimisation in 2001–05: 3.8 percent of female respondents and 0.8 percent of male respondents. Not surprisingly, female respondents had a significantly greater risk of sexual victimisation. For this reason, it is worth examining first the type of sexual victimisation for each group. Victims were asked to describe the latest incident as a rape, attempted rape, or indecent assault (i.e. contact sexual offence) or as offensive behaviour (i.e. a non-contact offence). The majority of men described the incident as offensive behaviour (80%).²³ By contrast, the majority of women (76.7%) reported a contact sexual offence: seven percent a rape or attempted rape, and 69.7 percent an indecent assault. Younger females (16–24 years) had the highest risk for sexual victimisation. Next, we focus on the sub-sample of female respondents who were victims of a contact sexual offence.

Most incidents of contact sexual offence occurred in HK (95%) and all but one involved a single perpetrator. Only seven percent of female victims knew the perpetrator by name; the others did not know the offender. Only two assaults (6.5%) involved a weapon. Nearly two-thirds (62.2%) of female victims regarded the contact sexual victimisation as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ serious (all rape or attempted rape victims considered the incident as ‘very’ serious). All but one victim considered the assault to be a crime.

If we consider all sexual victimisation and all victims, we find that males tended to regard the sexual incident as less serious than females, and victims of offensive behaviour considered the incident as less serious than victims of assault.²⁴ This result is consistent with the fact that males were more likely to be victims of offensive behaviour than females. Yet, all but one male victims considered the incident of sexual victimisation to be a crime.

²³ Only N=5 males reported any sexual victimisation, with one of them reporting a rape.

²⁴ Of male victims, 58.1% said the incident was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ serious compared to 73.9% of female victims. Of victims of offensive behaviour, 38.2% said the incident was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ serious compared to 57.1% of victims of sexual assault.

CHAPTER 5

Victimisation by Non-Conventional Crime

This chapter examines victimisation by four non-conventional crimes: consumer fraud, corruption, computer-related victimisation, and experiences with drug-related problems in the neighbourhood. Questions on computer-related crime are unique to the HK survey.

5.1. Consumer Fraud

Respondents were asked whether in 2005, *someone—when selling something to you or delivering a service—cheated you in terms of quantity or quality of the goods or services*. While the question did not exclude serious fraud, it is likely that the majority of the incidents mentioned amounted to cheating.

In HK, more than one in five respondents (22%) said that they had experienced at least one incident of consumer fraud in 2005. Less than one percent (0.7%) overall had experienced some credit card-related fraud. Of those respondents who had experienced some type of consumer fraud, 3.2 percent reported that it was related to the use of a credit card (Table 5.1). Victims of consumer fraud were also asked about the circumstances in which the fraud had occurred. For over half the victims (52.6%) the fraud occurred in a shop or retail outlet. About three percent of all incidents of consumer fraud were related to shopping online.

While HK recorded amongst the lowest rates of victimisation for conventional crime compared to other main cities, consumer fraud was the only type of crime, which was comparatively common. The level of consumer fraud victimisation was nearly double the average reported in main cities in developed countries (12.4%). In 2005, HK ranked third highest for consumer fraud after Budapest (25.8%), Tallinn (24.5%) and Athens (24.1%). Cities with the lowest rate of consumer fraud were Helsinki (5%) and Edinburgh (5.8%). The UNICVS, however, does not ask where the consumer fraud took place. HK citizens have a particular consumption pattern marked by a high level of HK-China cross-border activities (Wang 2004). Over half the incidents occurred in a shop, and it could be that a large proportion of these events actually happened outside of HK.

Compared to other main cities, credit card fraud was less likely to occur in HK, as was fraud when shopping online. On average, in the main cities of developed countries, 10 percent of victims indicated the fraud was credit card-related. By contrast, in HK, only 3.2 percent of fraud victims said the fraud was related to using a credit card. A perhaps surprising result was the absence of credit card fraud when shopping online. Since most transactions on the Internet are completed using a credit card, we would have expected a higher level of credit card-related fraud when compared to that of other main cities (on average 28% of reported consumer fraud).

More female than male respondents were victims of consumer fraud (24.4% and 20.2% respectively, $p < .05$), but this relationship did not hold in all settings. In all contexts other than a shop, males were more likely to be defrauded than females; however, for six out of ten female fraud victims (59.7%) the incident occurred in a shop compared to 42.8 percent of male victims. This difference could arise because women are more likely to do the shopping for the family (e.g. at the market), or that they are seen as easier targets than men by shopkeepers. In contrast, older respondents aged 55 and over were significantly less likely to be victimised than those under 55 (17.4% compared to 24% for the younger age groups, $p < .05$), in all fraud contexts.

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Table 5.1. Rates of consumer fraud and context of fraud in Hong Kong, 2005, and internationally

	Consumer fraud (N=2,283) %	Average UNICVS main cities ^a %	Of fraud incidents (N=501)	
			Context of fraud %	Credit card related %
Any consumer fraud incident	22.0	12.4	-	3.2
Consumer fraud by context				
A shop of some sort	11.6	-	52.6	26.7
A hotel, restaurant or pub	2.0	-	9.2	26.7
Online shopping	0.7	1.1	3.2	0.0
Getting construction, building or repair work, or work done by a garage	0.6	-	2.8	0.0
Something else	7.1	-	32.2	46.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>22.0</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Credit card-related fraud	0.7	1.5	-	-

Note ^a The averages computed are for 24 developed cities in Europe plus New York (van Dijk et al. 2007: 87-88). Detailed results by context of fraud are not provided except for online shopping.

5.2. Corruption

Respondents were asked whether, during 2005, *any government official, such as a custom officer, a police officer, a judge, or inspector asked or expected a bribe for his or her services*. Apart from six respondents who refused to answer or said they did not know, no one reported an incident of bribery. The low rate of victimisation due to corruption is consistent with HK's relatively high score (8.3) on the Corruption Perception Index.²⁵ Other cities with very low rates of corruption include Belfast (0%), Dublin (0.1%) and Helsinki (0.1%), although main cities in Western Europe all tended to have rates less than one percent. Athens recorded the highest rate of 13.8%, with an average of 1.9 percent for main cities in developed countries (van Dijk et al. 2007: 90). Cities in developing countries generally recorded higher rates of street corruption (e.g. Maputo, 30.5%; Phnom Penh, 29%).

5.3. Computer-Related Crime

Questions related to cybercrime are unique to the HK UNICVS. First, respondents were asked whether, in the last 12 months (2005), they had access to a computer/laptop and the Internet for their personal use. Those who did have access to computers were then asked about their experience of computer-related victimisation. The relevant crimes included online fraud, cyber attacks through hacking or malicious software, unwanted lewd communication and other activities that respondents perceived as cyber victimisation. In the next sections, we focus on the sub-sample of computer users, not the whole survey sample.

5.3.1. Computer usage in Hong Kong

Two-thirds of respondents (65.7%) indicated they had used a computer, laptop or WebTV for personal purposes or to operate a home business in 2005. The proportion of the sample that had access to the Internet was comparable to the estimates for HK as a whole: that is, about 67% of the population in 2006, among the highest in Asia.²⁶ Table 5.2 describes characteristics of computer use in Hong Kong

²⁵ The Corruption Perception Index is a composite index of experts' perceptions of general levels of corruption compiled by Transparency International (<http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2005/cpi_2005#cpi>, accessed 5 March).

²⁶ Source: <<http://www.Internetworldstats.com>> (accessed 5 March); Internet penetration was about 70% as at 31 December 2007 and had grown in HK by 118% since 2000. Internet access was about 65-70% of households in Japan, HK, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. These may be regarded as e-nations—those capable of fully exploiting the benefits of e-commerce also

(unweighted and weighted data). Male respondents were significantly more likely to use a computer than female respondents (71.2% compared to 61.1%) and computer users, on average, were younger than non-computer users (32.7 years compared to 48.6 years). This is not surprising since persons performing home duties and respondents who were retired were the least likely of all occupational categories to have access to a computer (34.5% and 20.7% respectively). By contrast, a majority of students (93.6%), professionals (93%) and managers (89.7%) had used a computer for personal purposes in 2005.

Most computer users had access at home (95%); about half also had access to a computer for personal purposes at work (46.3%). Others accessed computers in places such as libraries or Internet cafés (37%), and 19.3 percent used computers to run a home business. The vast majority of computer users were connected to the Internet (98.3%) and only five percent did not have software such as a firewall or anti-virus program.²⁷

Table 5.2. Computer use in Hong Kong (2005)

	Unweighted %	Weighted %
Access to computer, laptop, WebTV in 2005 (N=2,283)	65.7	59.7
Of computer users	N=1,499	N=1,362
Location of computer ^a		
At home	95.3	94.9
At work	46.3	47.2
Other places (library, school, café)	37.0	33.9
Home business	19.4	19.9
Internet access (yes)	98.3	98.1
Uses protection software (e.g. firewall, anti-virus program) ^b	95.2	95.2

Notes ^a Multiple responses allowed. ^b An additional 4.3% of respondents did not know whether the computer they used had any protective software.

5.3.2. Computer-related victimisation

Table 5.3 presents the prevalence of cybercrime reported in the HK UNICVS. Two-thirds of computer users (66.4%) were the victim of at least one type of cybercrime in 2005. Over half of those victimised (56.1%) experienced only one incident, but 36.7 percent were victimised twice. The most common type of victimisation was an attack on the computer using malicious software (73.5%). The majority of these attacks occurred through downloading a virus (85.3%). A similar proportion of cyber attack victims said they had been victimised through malware (16.8%) or spyware (16.2%), and 10 percent reported an incident of hacking. The likelihood of cyber victimisation was comparable whether the computer was accessed at home (67.5%), at work (72%), in other locations (76%) or while operating a home business (69%).

Around 14 percent of respondents victimised by cybercrime experienced financial losses, ranging between HK\$30 to HK\$12,000 (mean, HK\$1,420; median, HK\$500). Financial losses were most likely to occur through fraud while shopping online (42.5%), but incidents of software copyright violations in connection

enjoy high levels of broadband access comparable to that of most Western countries. See also <http://www.ofta.gov.hk/en/datastat/eng_cus_isp.pdf> (accessed 15 March 2010) which reports that 1,536,968 households or 67.1% had broadband access in HK as at mid-2006. See *Thematic Household Survey Report No. 27—Information Technology Usage and Penetration*, Hong Kong Census and Statistics, November, 2006; available at <http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/products_and_services/products/publications/statistical_report/social_data/index_cd_B1130227_dt_latest.jsp> (accessed 15 March 2010).

²⁷ Another five percent did not know whether they had such software.

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with a home business incurred the largest mean amount of loss (HK\$990). The reporting of cyber victimisation to the police and other agencies is presented in Chapter 6.

Table 5.3. Prevalence of cyber victimisation and financial loss, Hong Kong, 2005

	Cyber victimisation, computer users (N=1,362) %	Of cyber victimisation incidents (N=897) ^a	
		Financial loss %	mean loss HK\$
All types of cyber victimisation	66.4	13.9	1,420
Attack on computer ^b	48.8	17.3	235
Unrequested lewd or obscene communication while online or through email	40.6	10.2	122
Threats of harm or physical attack made online or through email	2.3	10.9	94
Fraud while shopping online	2.0	42.5	650
Software copyright violation in connection with a home business	0.4	24.8	990
Something else that respondent considered a computer-related crime	7.6	6.5	192

Notes ^a Excludes eight respondents who did not know or refused to answer. ^b Includes virus attack, spyware or malware attack, hacking, and other types of attack.

5.4. Exposure to Drug-Related Problems in the Neighbourhood

The item about drug-related problems was included in the UNICVS for the first time in 2004. Respondents were asked: *during 2005 how often were you personally in contact with drug-related problems in the area where you live (e.g. seeing people dealing drugs or using drugs in public places, or finding syringes left behind by drug users)?* This question does not record the level of drug consumption or drug-related problems, but rather the visibility of such problems, and, potentially, the level of law enforcement; that is, in areas where the police are proactive in repressing drug-related activities, it is likely that these activities will remain hidden from public view.

Drug-related problems were relatively rarely reported in the HK UNICVS: 7.4 percent of respondents said they had witnessed drug-related problems ‘often’ or ‘from time to time’ in the last 12 months. The average for all 22 developed countries was 19 percent (van Dijk et al. 2007: 96-7), nearly three times HK’s rate. Countries with a comparable experience to HK were Finland and Sweden.

Drug-related problems were reported significantly more frequently by Kowloon residents than by those in Hong Kong Island or the New Territories: in Kowloon, 10.8 percent of respondents said they had been in contact with drug-related problems ‘often’ or ‘from time to time’ compared to 6.6 percent in the New Territories and 4.3 percent in Hong Kong Island (chi square=17.39, df=2, $p<.001$). However, while the rate of contact with drug-related problems reported in Kowloon is higher than other HK regions, it is still only half the international average. There was also a statistically significant relationship between visible drug-problems in the neighbourhood and the level of burglary and attempted burglary (chi square=8.26, df=1, $p<.05$), which suggests that drug users may be responsible for a portion of property crimes in the area.

CHAPTER 6

Responses to Crime Victimization and Victim Satisfaction

First, this chapter examines the level of official reporting to the police (and other agencies) of common and non-conventional crime victimisation, and how reporting behaviour varies across offence types and victim characteristics. It also considers the reasons that victims gave for not reporting to the police. Then, it discusses, for selected types of crime, how victims who did report to the police felt about the police response; were they satisfied with the police response, and if not, why? Finally, it considers the issue of victim support by other agencies.

6.1. Reporting Crime Victimization to the Police

For all types of crime, victims were asked about the last incident, *did you or anyone else report the incident to the police?* In addition, for consumer fraud and computer-related victimisation, victims were asked whether they reported the incident to agencies other than the police. The frequency with which victims (or others) report to the police is linked to the type of offence considered. First, we examine the reporting of 10 common crimes and compare reporting rates in HK with those in other countries. For three types of crime—burglary, sexual offences, and assault and threats—we analyse the reason(s) why some victims chose not to report the incident. Then we turn to the reporting of less conventional crimes.

6.1.1. Rates of reporting for common crimes

The average rate of reporting for the 10 crimes combined was 36 percent (Table 6.1). However, this average is distorted by a very low reporting rate for bicycle theft,²⁸ and rates vary by type of crime and seriousness. Most car thefts (91%) were reported, as well as over three-quarters of burglaries (77.4%) and over half of the motorcycle thefts (58.5%). For all other crimes, the majority of victims did not report the incident to the police. For these crimes, rates of reporting ranged from a low 5.8 percent for bicycle theft to 41.6 percent for robbery. Levels of reporting were comparable for household and personal crimes. Among personal crimes, the reporting of sexual victimisation was the lowest (12.2%).

For many types of crime, levels of reporting to the HK police are lower than international averages, at least in the developed world. As Table 6.1 indicates, in 2005 27.6 percent of five property crimes combined were reported to the HK police compared with 45 percent in other cities. We find a similar pattern for a combination of nine property and personal crimes. Hong Kong's levels of reporting car theft, burglary and attempted burglary (2001–05) were comparable to the average for 33 main cities, but about 15 percent lower for theft from car and motorcycle theft. Reporting of bicycle theft was particularly low (5.8% in HK compared to 37% internationally). It is worth noting that for car theft and other offences, such as burglary, insurance services typically require a report to the police as a condition of processing a claim, and this is likely to account for the relatively higher levels of reporting such offences. For personal crimes, reporting was similar to the international average for robbery and assault, but lower for theft of personal property and sexual victimisation. Considering only the average reporting rate for 10 crimes, the pattern of reporting to the HK police is closer to that of developing than developed countries. For example, Hong Kong's average rate of reporting to the police for nine crimes combined

²⁸ Hong Kong's average reporting rate for nine crimes, excluding bicycle theft, is 40.4%.

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(2005) is comparable to the rates for Rio de Janeiro (32%) and Buenos Aires (30%). Reporting rates in most developed cities range between 50 percent and 65 percent, but other developed cities with lower rates of reporting include Reykjavik (36%), Athens (40%) and New York (43%) (van Dijk et al. 2007: 267–68).

Table 6.1. Reporting to the police for common crimes, and satisfaction with the police response for selected crimes, Hong Kong and international averages, 2001–05 and 2005

	Report to the police^a %		Satisfied with the police response^b %	
	Hong Kong	Average UNICVS main cities ^c	Hong Kong	Average UNICVS main cities ^c
10 crimes combined (N=609)	36.0	-	-	-
Crime against household (N=312)^d	29.5	-	-	-
Car theft (N=11)	91.0	89	-	-
Theft from car (N=53)	28.5	53	61.1	52
Motorcycle theft (N=8)	58.5	74	-	-
Bicycle theft (N=129)	5.8	37	-	-
Burglary (N=59)	77.4	68	68.6	52
Attempted burglary(N=53)	34.9	35	-	-
Crime against person (N=422)^d	32.7	-	-	-
Robbery (N=43)	41.6	49	60.2	49
Theft of personal property (N=303)	29.6	41	-	-
Sexual victimisation (N=49)	12.2	22	77.4	55
Assault (N=90)	35.4	31	66.7	52
9 crimes combined,^e 2005 (N=179)	30.7	47	-	-
5 property crimes combined,^f 2005 (N=134)	27.6	45	-	-
5 crimes combined,^g (N=95)	-	-	66.6	53

Notes ^a Except when indicated, % are for the five years 2001–05. ^b % are of those victims who reported to the police, excluding 'don't know' and 'refusal'. Percentages for satisfaction apply to the last instance of each crime in the five-year period. ^c Includes 33 main cities from the developed and developing world (van Dijk et al. 2007: Table 12, pp. 267–68 and Table 14, pp. 272–73). ^d N reported may not equal the sum of each individual crime, because some respondents have been victimised with multiple types of offence; of those, some may have reported one type of crime, but not another. ^e The nine combined crimes are theft of car, theft from car, theft of motorbike, theft of bicycle, burglary, robbery, theft of personal property, sexual offences, and assault and threats. ^f The five property crimes are theft from car, theft of bicycle, burglary, attempted burglary, and theft of personal property. ^g The five combined crimes are theft from car, robbery, theft of personal property, sexual offences, and assault and threats.

6.1.2. Reasons for not reporting

For one crime against households—burglary—and two personal crimes—sexual offences and assault and threats—victims who did not report were asked, *why didn't you report it?* A list of reasons was provided with multiple answers allowed (see Table 6.2), but victims could also express their own reasons. Around one-third of victims of burglary and assault and threats thought the seriousness of the incident did not warrant reporting. However, a similar proportion of burglary victims indicated that they did not report because they feared reprisals by the perpetrator(s). Such a high level for 'fear of reprisals' from the offender(s) as a disincentive to reporting to the police warrants further research. It may arise from the problems of shared accommodation and the close living arrangements common to public and temporary housing in Hong Kong. Over half the victims of sexual offences mentioned other reasons for not reporting, including 'could not tell' and embarrassment. Few victims believed that the police would not respond to their complaint, and few mentioned fear or dislike of the police as reasons for not reporting the offence.

Looking only at burglary, we find that, internationally, the main reason for not alerting the police was that the incident was not serious enough (34%), similar to HK (32.1%). However, a much lower proportion of victims internationally (4%) than in HK (35.1%) indicated that fear of reprisals stopped them from reporting. While one in five victims internationally thought the police would do nothing, no HK victims mentioned this as a reason for not reporting burglary. When analysing these results, we must keep in mind that the number of burglaries not reported to the police is small (N=13).

Table 6.2. Reasons for not reporting selected crimes to the police (percentages for the last incident), Hong Kong 2001–05

Reasons for not reporting ^a	Burglary (N=13) %	Sexual offences (N=43) %	Assault/threats (N=60) %
Not serious enough/no loss/kid's stuff	32.1	21.2	30
I/my family solved it	10.4	17.3	21.7
No insurance	7.5	n/a	n/a
The police could do nothing/lack of proof/inappropriate for police	13.0	25.6	17.5
The police won't do anything	0	4.0	6.1
Fear of reprisals	35.1	9.9	7.4
Fear/dislike of the police	5.5	5.4	7.7
Other reasons	14.6	52.8	31.2

Note ^a Multiple answers were allowed; percentages add up to more than 100%. N are of valid answers (i.e. excluding 'don't know' and 'refusal') and % are of victims who chose not to report.

6.1.3. Patterns of reporting by characteristics of offence and victim

For all types of crime, and as could be expected, victims were more likely to report serious rather than minor incidents. Table 6.3 shows rates of reporting according to the seriousness of the incident and the victim's perception.

Table 6.3. Percentages of victims who reported to the police by seriousness of offence, Hong Kong 2001–05 (last incident)

	Car theft (N=11)	Theft from car (N=53)	Motorbike theft (N=8)	Bicycle theft (N=129)	Burglary (N=59)	Att'p'd burglary (N=53)	Robbery (N=43)	Theft (N=303)	Sexual offences (N=49)	Assault and threats (N=90)
Victim said incident was										
Very/fairly serious	91.0	43.0*	60.0	9.3	80.9	45.7**	45.2	27.9	17.9	41.7
Not very serious	-	16.7	50.7	4.0	63.6	6.3	25.0	20.4	4.8	23.3
Weapon present?										
Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	80.0**	-	-	66.7
No	-	-	-	-	-	-	31.3	-	-	32.4
Something stolen?										
Yes	-	-	-	-	91.3**	-	73.3**	-	-	-
No	-	-	-	-	30.8	-	25.0	-	-	-

** p<.01, * p<.05

Although not all relationships are statistically significant because of the small number of cases in some categories, a clear pattern emerges: when victims perceived the incident as ‘very’ or ‘fairly serious’, they were more likely to report it to the police. In addition, the presence of a weapon during the incident and the fact that something was stolen are associated with a higher likelihood of reporting. Other elements not shown in the Table 6.3 are injuries to the victim (76.9% of victims who were injured during an assault reported to the police compared to 28.8% of non-injured victims, $p < .01$), and seriousness of the attack (45.5% of assaults with actual force were reported, but only 32.8% of threats). However, the seriousness of the sexual victimisation (assault vs. offensive behaviour) did not impact on the likelihood of reporting.

For the four personal crimes (robbery, theft of personal property, sexual victimisation, and assault and threats), neither the gender nor age of the victim had a significant impact on the likelihood of reporting to the police. However, the group of victims aged 55 and over were more likely to report a theft of personal property than the younger age groups (41.3% and 22.1% respectively), and this relation approached significance. Socio-economic status (education and income levels) did not impact on reporting the victimisation. Professional status had some impact, with non-skilled and agricultural workers least likely to report their victimisation.

6.1.4. Non-conventional crime

This section examines the reporting of consumer fraud and computer-related victimisation. Overall, 11 percent of victims of consumer fraud reported the incident to the police or to another agency (Table 6.4). The majority of victims who reported the fraud contacted a public or private agency other than the police. Seven percent reported to both types of agency.

Thirteen percent of computer-related incidents were reported. Of those, all but one case reported to a combination of private agencies, and a minority reported to the police as well. About one-third of victims contacted their Internet Service Provider, system administrator and/or someone else. Female victims were significantly more likely to report cyber victimisation than male victims (17.2% of female victims reported compared to 10.3% of male victims, $p < .01$). This gender difference may possibly be a result of the high levels of offensive material noted by respondents who reported being a cybercrime victim.

Table 6.4. Percentages of victims who reported non-conventional crime, Hong Kong 2005

	Consumer fraud	Cybercrime
All victims	N=501	N=905
Reported to at least one agency	11.0	13.6
Of those victims who reported, to which agency^a	N=55	N=117
To the police	16.4	3.2
To another public or private agency	91.0	99.1
To Internet Service Provider	n/a	34.4
To web administrator	n/a	17.3
To system administrator	n/a	33.1
To someone else	n/a	30.6

Note ^a Multiple answers were allowed; percentages add up to more than 100%. N are of valid answers only (i.e. excluding ‘don’t know’ and ‘refusal’).

6.2. Satisfaction with the Police Response

For five types of crime, victims who contacted the police were asked, *on the whole, were you satisfied with the way the police dealt with the matter?* (yes/no). As Table 6.1 (righthand side column) indicates, the majority of victims who reported the crime to the police said that they were satisfied with the police response. Levels of satisfaction ranged from 61.1 percent of victims of theft to 68.8 percent for victims of burglary, with a particularly high satisfaction level for victims of sexual offences (77.4%). The proportion of Hong Kong respondents who were satisfied with the police response (66.6%) was larger than the international average (53%), but some cities recorded higher levels than HK; for example, Zurich (76%), Stockholm (75%), Copenhagen (73%) and Vienna (71%). Satisfaction with the police was generally lower in the developing world than in the developed world.

Victims who answered that they were dissatisfied with the way the police dealt with the matter were asked for their reasons. A choice of eight reasons was offered (including ‘other reasons’), but victims could also relate their own reasons. Multiple answers were allowed. Many victims cited ‘other reasons’ for their dissatisfaction (Table 6.5). The main reasons across all the five crimes was that the police did not do enough, and for theft of car and burglary the main reasons were that the police did not recover the stolen items or apprehend the offender. One in four burglary victims and over one in three assault victims felt that the police were not interested in their complaint. One-quarter of victims of assault and threats reported that the police did not treat them correctly or were impolite. This figure is in line with the international average, and van Dijk et al. (2007) suggests that this might be because the police in some cases of assault attribute a degree of responsibility to the victim.

Table 6.5. Reasons for dissatisfaction with the police response, Hong Kong 2001–05 and international averages (percentages for the last incident)

Reasons for dissatisfaction ^a	Theft from car (N=5)	Burglary (N=12)	Robbery (N=7)	Assault/ threats (N=10)	5 crimes HK (N=32)	5 crimes average UNICVS ^b
Didn't do enough	26.4	42.5	27.6	39.7	37.5	66.0
Were not interested	26.4	13.2	0	38.2	21.9	54.0
Didn't find or apprehend the offender	26.4	35.9	9.5	0	18.8	54.0
Didn't recover my property	61.1	36.1	0	n/a	21.9	48.0
Didn't keep me properly informed	0	0	0	0	0	42.0
Didn't treat me correctly/were impolite	0	5.6	0	24.5	9.4	22.0
Were slow to arrive	0	6.6	0	0	3.1	25.0
Other reasons	83.2	31.2	90.5	53.0	56.3	18.0

Notes ^a Multiple answers were allowed, percentages add up to more than 100%. N are of victims who were not satisfied (excluding ‘don't know’ and ‘refusal’). Sexual victimisation is not shown in Table 6.5 because only one victim said she was dissatisfied with the police and it was for ‘other reasons’. ^b Averages are for 30 countries in the developed and developing world (van Dijk et al. 2007: Table 23, p.118).

Although the percentages of victims who mentioned a specific reason for dissatisfaction are generally lower in the HK sample than internationally, the general pattern of dissatisfaction was similar. An important difference was that no HK victim complained that the police did not provide enough information on the case, while on average 42 percent of victims internationally cited this reason. Because of the low rate of reporting for sexual offences, we cannot comment on victims’ reasons for dissatisfaction (only one victim said she was dissatisfied but did not cite a specific reason).

6.3. Victim Support

For four crimes (burglary, robbery, sexual victimisation, and assault and threats), victims who reported to the police were asked if they had received support from a victim support agency: *in some countries, agencies have been set up to help victims of crime by giving information, or practical or emotional support. Did you or anyone else in your household have any contact with such a specialised agency after the incident?* Those who did not contact a victim support agency were then asked: *Do you feel the services of a specialised agency to help victims of crime would have been useful for you or anyone else in your household after the incident?* Table 6.6 presents the responses to these questions. One-third of sexual offence victims (all female) and one-quarter of victims of assault and threats (mostly female victims) received support from a victim agency. However, few victims of burglary contacted a victim support agency. Although it is possible this low proportion was underestimated (since the person who answered the survey may have been unaware of other members of the household contacting a victim agency), it was lower than the international average, which was already very low at four percent of victims of burglary. While the proportion of victims of sexual offences who received help in HK is comparable to the international rate, more victims of robbery and assault/threats received support in HK (17.7% for robbery and 25.8% for assault/threats in HK compared to just 8% for each crime internationally). For the four crimes combined, a slightly larger proportion of HK victims (13%) received help compared to the international average (9%).

Table 6.6. Victim support for the last incident, Hong Kong and international averages, 2001–05

Type of crime ^b	Received help from victim support agency %		Would have liked help from victim support agency %		Take up rate ^a %	
	Hong Kong	UNICVS average ^c	Hong Kong	UNICVS average ^c	Hong Kong	UNICVS average ^c
Burglary (N=46)	1.9	4.0	53.8	40.0	5.9	10.0
Robbery (N=18)	17.7	8.0	38.4	44.0	37.5	20.0
Sexual victimisation (all victims) (N=15)	33.4	30.0	57.9	68.0	50.0	38.0
Assault/threats (N=32)	25.8	8.0	73.3	42.0	33.3	19.0
Four crimes combined (N=105)	13.0	9.0	42.0	43.0	25.0	21.0

Notes ^a This is the proportion of victims whose expressed needs are met. It is calculated as the proportion of victims who received help divided by the number who did receive help plus those who would have wanted it (times 100). ^b N are of victims who reported to the police (excluding 'don't know' and 'refusal'). ^c Averages are for 30 countries in the developed world (van Dijk et al. 2007:119–25).

Apart for robbery victims, over half of the victims who did not contact a victim support agency thought it could have been useful. This was particularly true for victims of assault; 73.3 percent felt the services of a victim support agency would have been useful for them after the incident (Table 6.6). This figure is higher than the international average of 42 percent and suggests there is a need for more assistance for victims of assault in HK. Over half of the burglary victims who reported to the police also expressed a need for victim assistance. For the four crimes combined, 42 percent of victims felt in need of assistance after their victimisation, which is in line with the international average of 43 percent.

There was no difference by sex of victims for robbery, but female victims were more likely to contact a victim support agency after they had been assaulted or threatened than male victims (38.9% did so compared to only 7.7% of males, $p < .05$).²⁹ Overall, figures for HK were comparable to the average for

²⁹ This analysis is not conducted for sexual victimisation because there are too few male victims.

28 other main cities.³⁰ A slightly higher proportion of HK victims received support from a specialised agency.

The take up rate (Table 6.6, righthand side columns) consists of the proportion of victims of crime in need of some assistance who actually received help. In HK, victim support agencies overall reached a quarter of victims in need of specialised help. This figure was highest for victims of sexual offences, with half of those in need receiving some help. Except for burglary, HK has higher take up rates for victim support than the international average. Victims of burglary were less likely to receive help in most countries. However, the percentage of victims of burglary who would have appreciated help is not much lower than for personal crimes, and is actually higher than for robbery (53.8% of burglary victims compared to 38.4% of robbery victims). Victims of sexual assault, in HK and internationally, were the most likely to receive help, as specialised rape crisis centres are available in most of the developed world.

³⁰ Questions on victim support were not asked in five cities in 2004–05 (Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Tallinn, Warsaw and Zurich).

CHAPTER 7

Fear of Crime

The UNICVS contains two measures of fear of crime: one addresses crime against households (burglary); the other focuses on crime against persons (street crime). This chapter first examines HK respondents' perception of their likelihood of being burgled, and then their attitude to street crime. For each question, we analyse several factors that correlate with fear of crime, and compare HK results with international averages. Van Dijk et al. (2007) noted that inhabitants of main cities tend to report higher fear of crime for both crimes against households and against persons than national populations. Therefore, in this section, we compare fear of crime in HK with the perceptions in other main cities.

7.1. Likelihood of Burglary

One question asked respondents to estimate their risk of being burgled: *What would you say are the chances that over the next twelve months someone will try to break into your home? Do you think this is very likely, likely or not likely?* Nearly three-quarters (71.8%) felt it was unlikely that their home would be burgled in the coming year (Table 7.1). Only one percent of respondents thought a burglary very likely and 27.2 percent perceived it was likely. HK residents seem to be less fearful of burglary than populations in main cities from the developed world, where on average 35 percent were concerned by the likelihood of burglary. Concern was particularly high in Istanbul (75%) and Athens (73%). Warsaw recorded a comparable rate to HK (27%). Fear of burglary was lowest in Copenhagen (14%) and New York (16%). The HK figure is also much lower than the average in main cities in the developing world, where over half the respondents (53%) thought they were likely or very likely to become a victim of burglary. Van Dijk et al. (2007) noted that the perception of the likelihood of burglary at national levels is strongly related to the national rates of burglary measured by the UNICVS. This is true in HK where both rates of burglary and concern about burglary are lower than average.

Some groups of respondents were more concerned about becoming victims of burglary than others. As Table 7.1 shows, female respondents and people whose household had been victimised in the last five years were more concerned than male respondents or non-victims. Age also had some impact on the level of concerns about burglary. The proportion of respondents who thought it was likely or very likely that their house would be burgled ranged from 23 percent for those 55 and over to 34.3 percent for those aged 25 to 34 years. If we compare responses from the oldest age group (55 and over) with the group aged under 55, we see that people aged 55 and over showed significantly less concern about their household being victimised.

By HK regions, residents of Hong Kong Island expressed the lowest level of concern about burglary, and the difference with the two other regions was statistically significant (HK, 22.2%; New Territories, 28.5%; and Kowloon, 29.5%; New Territories and Kowloon combined, 28.9%). This difference in perception does not reflect different rates of burglary, as the three HK regions had comparable levels of victimisation. Respondents who had reported drug-related problems in their neighbourhood were more likely to also report concerns about being burgled: nearly half (46.9%) of the people who reported drug-related problems in their area felt it was likely that their house would be broken into, compared to 28.6 percent of those who did not report drug-related problems. This perception is not erroneous, as we found previously that the rate of burglary was higher in neighbourhoods with visible drug-related problems than those without such problems (see p. 24). Of the three HK regions, Kowloon respondents witnessed the highest level of drug-related problems and they were more concerned with burglary than Hong Kong Island residents, but expressed a similar level of concern to residents in the New Territories.

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Table 7.1. Percentage by selected characteristics of Hong Kong respondents who considered a burglary in their house in the coming year likely or very likely

	Burglary: likely and very likely (N=2,129) %	Fear of street crime: felt a bit and very unsafe (N=2,241) %
All respondents^a		
Hong Kong	28.2	5.6
UNICVS average main cities ^b	35.0	32.0
Gender of respondent		
Male	25.6	3.8
Female	30.5**	7.1**
Age of respondent		
16-54	29.5	5.7
55+	23.0**	5.4
Victim of reference crime in last 5 years		
Yes	51.1***	8.3**
No	27.1	5.0
Household income		
<\$10,000	25.4	9.1***
\$10,000+	29.2	3.8
Hong Kong regions		
Hong Kong Island	22.2	2.6
Kowloon and New Territories	28.9*	6.2**
Visible drug-related problems in area		
Yes	46.9***	11.9***
No	28.6	5.0

Notes *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. ^a N are of valid answers only (i.e. excluding 'don't know' and 'refusal').
^b Average from 25 main cities in developed countries (van Dijk et al. 2007: 128 and 131).

The level of household income did not affect the perceived likelihood of burglary. Respondents who had one or several systems of house protection systems (e.g. burglar alarm, special doors or windows) did not show a lower level of concern about burglary than those with no house protection. However, houses with a formal security system were also more likely to have been burgled; therefore suggesting that respondents may be concerned because of their previous victimisation, and that the protective measures are one way to answer their concerns.

7.2. Security Measures

Although this is an indirect measure of fear of crime, the UNICVS asks a set of questions on measures taken against household property crime, in particular burglary. These questions concern nine security measures: burglar alarms, special door locks, special window/door grilles, dogs, closed circuit television, high fences, caretaker/security guards, and formal and informal neighbourhood watch schemes. Overall, 82.5 percent of respondents reported they took security precautions against burglary. The most frequent measures, adopted by nearly half the respondents, were participation in formal or informal systems of neighbourhood watch (see Appendix IV for detailed results). One-third of respondents had special grilles on windows and/or doors, and one-quarter had special locks on their doors. Only 13.5 percent had a burglar alarm. Of respondents who used security measures, most had one (31%) or two (33%) systems of house protection. Compared to the main cities average in developed countries, HK residents have about half the rate of special door locks (25.3% compared to 56% on average in main cities), as well as a lower rate of installation of burglar alarms (13.3% compared to 20%).

7.3. Feelings of Safety on the Streets

One question measured respondents' perceived vulnerability to street crime: *How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark? Do you feel very safe, fairly safe, a bit unsafe, or very unsafe?* Fear of street crime was low, with only 5.6 percent of respondents indicating that they felt 'a bit' or 'very unsafe' in the street after dark (Table 7.1). This was much lower than the international average of 32 percent among all the main cities. While, internationally, the level of concern about burglary and about street crime is comparable (35% for burglary and 32% for street crime), HK residents seem to be much less concerned by street crime than by the possibility of being burgled, and, on the UNICVS, they recorded the lowest level of concern about street crime, followed by the Scandinavian countries. In the most recent and previous sweeps of the UNICVS, there was little relation between the perception of street safety and actual levels of street crime (Van Dijk et al. 2007). In HK, both the rates of street crime and concern about street crime are lower than the international average.

Mirroring concern about burglary, female respondents and people who had been victimised by street crime in the last five years were more concerned than male respondents or non-victims (Table 7.1). This relationship is particularly strong for victims of assault, who were most fearful of street crime. Age, however, had no significant impact on the perception of safety in the street. The proportion of respondents who felt unsafe in the street ranged from 5.1 percent (35–44 years old) to 6.5 percent (16–24 years old). While the youngest age group was most likely to be victimised by street crime, people 55 and over, although they were least likely to be victims of street crime, reported a comparable level of concern.

By HK regions, residents of Hong Kong Island expressed the lowest level of concern about street crime, and the difference compared to the two other regions was statistically significant (Hong Kong Island, 2.6%; New Territories, 5.5%; and Kowloon, 7.4%; New Territories and Kowloon combined, 6.2%). This difference in perception does not reflect differences in street crime victimisation, as respondents from the three HK regions reported comparable levels. However, respondents from Hong Kong Island were the least likely to be in contact with drug-related problems, and those from Kowloon the most likely. Van Dijk et al. (2007) found that, in Europe, exposure to drug-related problems was a major source of the fear of street crime. This seems also to be the case in HK, and is confirmed by the relationship between household income and a fear of street crime.

In contrast to a fear of burglary, the level of household income was correlated with the perception of street safety. Respondents from the lowest household income group (less than HK\$10,000) felt significantly more 'unsafe' in the street than respondents from other income groups. Yet the poorest respondents were those least likely to have been victims of street crimes (15.4% reported an incident of personal crime in the last five years compared to 21.7% and 22.2% for the two income groups HK\$25,000–39,999 and HK\$40,000 and over respectively). However, they also reported the highest level of exposure to drug-related problems (11.1% compared to proportions ranging from 4.9% to 8.9% for the other income groups). It is likely that low-income residents live in areas with more visible drug-related problems, or which are less policed than more affluent areas. Because they are exposed to drug-related problems, they may assume that crime levels are high and, thus, be more fearful. No relationship was found between the frequency with which people go out and their perception of street safety.

CHAPTER 8

Public Opinion on Law Enforcement and Punishment

This chapter examines HK respondents' perception of their police force, and their attitude to the sentencing of offenders. The standard UNICVS instrument asks all respondents to give a judgement of police performance at controlling crime in their area. In addition, the HK instrument retained a question now deleted from the standard questionnaire about the helpfulness and quality of service of the police. Attitude to punishment was measured by asking what type of punishment respondents thought would be appropriate for a recidivist burglar arrested for stealing a colour television. Additional questions, which are not part of the standard UNICVS, about the use of restorative justice processes and victims' participation in the justice process, were included in the HK instrument. We present HK responses to these items and examine if respondents' opinions vary by age, gender, socio-economic status, and experience of victimisation. When appropriate, HK results are compared to international averages.

8.1. General Attitudes to the Police

Victims of various crimes, who had reported their victimisation to the police, were asked how satisfied they were with the way in which the police dealt with that particular crime (Chapter 6). Two questions on overall police performance were included in the survey. The first asked how effective the police were at controlling crime, *how good do you think the police are in controlling crime in your area?*; answers were: 'very good', 'fairly good', 'fairly poor', and 'very poor'. The second question was about police helpfulness, *how far do you agree that the police do everything they can to help people and be of service?*; answers were: 'fully agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree', and 'fully disagree'.

The vast majority of respondents (95.3%) considered that the police in their area were doing a very good (14.2%) or a fairly good job (81.1%) at controlling crime (Table 8.1). Of all the cities surveyed in the UNICVS, HK residents were the most satisfied with the performance of the police, ahead of residents from Helsinki (85%), and Edinburgh and Dublin (81%). The average for 29 main cities in the developed and developing world was 63 percent (very and fairly good job). Residents in developing countries were least likely to be satisfied with their police (van Dijk et al 2007: 274). Not surprisingly, answers to the second question on police helpfulness were highly correlated with the responses on police performance. The majority of HK respondents (93.5%) either fully agreed (12.2%) or tended to agree (81.3%) with the statement that the police do everything they can to help. This question is no longer asked in the UNICVS; therefore, we cannot compare HK results with international results.

On both questions, there was no difference by the gender of the respondents. People under 45 years tended to see the police as less helpful than people 45 and over, although the difference was small. Respondents who had been victimised in the last five years also tended to rate the police as slightly less helpful than non-victims, which could reflect their experience as victims of crime. Respondents exposed to drug-related problems in their area rated both police performance at controlling crime and police helpfulness lower than those not exposed to such problems. These respondents regularly witnessed criminal activity in the street, and it is not surprising that they felt the police were not able to control crime.

Table 8.1. Attitudes to the police by selected characteristics of HK respondents and international average

	Crime control: good and very good % (N=2,242)^a	Are helpful tend to and fully agree % (N=2,229)^a
All respondents		
Hong Kong	95.3	93.5
Average UNICVS main cities ^a	63.0	-
Gender of respondent		
Male	95.3	93.5
Female	95.7	93.8
Age of respondent		
16–44 years	95.1	92.5**
45+ years	96.2	95.7
Victim of personal crime in last 5 years		
Yes	94.0	90.2***
No	95.9	94.4
Victim of household crime in last 5 years		
Yes	91.3	88.9***
No	96.3	94.4
Visible drug-related problems in area		
Yes	84.5	82.5***
No	96.5	94.5
Likely/very likely to be burgled		
Yes	92.1***	90.5**
No	96.5	94.7
Fear of street crime		
Yes	87.4***	83.5***
No	96.1	94.2

Notes *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$. ^a N are of valid answers only (i.e. excluding 'don't know' and 'refusal'). ^b Average from 29 main cities in developed and developing countries (van Dijk et al 2007: 274).

Respondents who believed it was likely that their house would be broken into and those who were fearful of walking in the street at night were more likely to rate police performance and helpfulness lower than respondents who did not have these concerns. However, it is difficult to say whether their lower level of satisfaction with the police made them fearful of crime, or whether their heightened concern about risk of victimisation reduced their level of satisfaction with the police. Nevertheless, in HK, even the groups who were less satisfied with police performance rated that performance higher than respondents in other main cities, suggesting that, overall, HK residents have a high level of satisfaction with their police force.

8.2. Public Opinion on Sentencing

The UNICVS described to respondents the following scenario and asked what sentence they considered was appropriate: *People have different ideas about the sentences, which should be given to offenders. Take for instance the case of a man of 21 years old who is found guilty of burglary/housebreaking for the second time. This time he has taken a colour television. Which of the following sentences do you consider the most appropriate for such a case: a fine, prison, community service, suspended sentence, or any other sentence?* Respondents who indicated that a prison sentence was most appropriate were then asked, *for how long do you think he should go to prison?* Table 8.2 presents the responses to this question for Hong Kong and comparisons with the UNICVS internationally.

Table 8.2. Percentage of the public opting for five sentences for a recidivist burglar, Hong Kong 2005, and international averages from UNICVS 2004–05

Type of sentence	Hong Kong (N=2,210) ^a	UNICVS, international average ^b	UNICVS, average developed countries ^b	UNICVS, average developing countries ^b
Prison	59.9	38.0	37.0	58.0
Community service	28.0	48.0	39.0	22.0
Fine	5.2	-	-	-
Suspended sentence	4.9	-	-	-
Other sentence	2.0	-	-	-

Notes ^a N are of valid answers only (i.e. excluding 'don't know' and 'refusal'). ^b Average from 31 countries and 6 main cities in developed and developing countries (van Dijk et al. 2007: 147-48).

In HK, imprisonment was the preferred sentence for nearly 60 percent of respondents, followed by community service, selected by 28 percent of respondents (Table 8.2). The proportion of the public opting for a prison sentence in HK was much higher than the international average (38%) and the average in developed countries (37%), but is comparable to the average in developing countries (58%). There was, however, a wide divergence between developed countries. Generally, imprisonment was the first choice of sentence for respondents in common law countries such as Northern Ireland (53%) or England and Wales (51%). By contrast, community service was the preferred option in most Western European continental countries. For example, only 12 percent of respondents favoured imprisonment in Switzerland and 13 percent in France and Austria. HK's judicial system is based on the common law and, although HK has the highest pro-imprisonment rate of the common law countries, this rate is relatively in line with other common law countries. HK's rate is comparable to the rate found in Japan, where 55 percent of respondents favoured imprisonment. Van Dijk et al. (2007) found a weak correlation between public support for a prison sentence and national imprisonment rates. Relative to other developed countries, the HK imprisonment rate of 168 per 100,000 population is one of the highest (excluding the US rate of 738 per 100,000). Most European continental countries have rates ranging between 80 and 100 per 100,000. Japan was the exception with a low rate of imprisonment (62 per 100,000) and a high proportion of the public favouring a prison sentence (Sentencing Advisory Council 2008).

Male respondents were significantly more likely than female respondents to select imprisonment over other sentences (64.3% and 56.2% respectively, $p < .001$). Respondents aged 25–54 years were more likely to opt for imprisonment (66.4%, $p < .001$) than younger (16–24 years, 49.3%) or older (55 and over, 52.7%) respondents. The level of education had no impact on the choice of sentence, but household income did. Respondents with a household income lower than HK\$10,000 per month were least likely to favour a prison sentence (53%, $p < .001$). As the household income increased, the proportion of respondents preferring imprisonment also increased, up to 67.3 percent for those earning more than HK\$40,000. Previous victimisation did not affect respondents' sentencing preference. However, respondents who felt it was likely or very likely that their house would be broken into tended to favour imprisonment as the sentence for burglary ($p < .05$). There was no relation between sentence choice and fear of street crime.

For the length of prison sentence, nearly half (45.1%) of those in favour of imprisonment thought a prison term of 2–6 months was appropriate; another 21 percent preferred a 12-month sentence. Overall, two-thirds of respondents who favoured a prison sentence thought that sentence should be one year or under. Compared to international UNICVS results, this length of prison term is relatively short and in line with the choices of the less punitive populations in France and Switzerland (12 months and 9 months respectively). Hong Kong stands out as a place where the public is rather punitive in terms of imposing imprisonment, but less punitive in terms of sentence length. This contrasts with results from van Dijk et

al. (2007) who found a positive correlation between the proportion of people favourable to imprisonment and the length of the prison term.

8.3. Public Opinion on Restorative Justice and Victims' Participation in Justice Process

Although HK has been using a type of family conferencing for young offenders since 2003, this process does not include victims of crime. While advocates of restorative justice (Chan 2008; Lee 2009; and Wong 2002) argue that victim participation is a positive element of the justice process, the Hong Kong Government has been reluctant to introduce such changes. The HK UNICVS asked respondents their opinion on informal justice mechanisms with three questions, where respondents could consider the burglary scenario presented above:

1. *How willing would you be to resolve a dispute together with the offender in an out of court process?*
2. *How willing would you be to mutually solve problems arising from criminal events with the offender in an informal, out of court process involving professionals and non-professionals?*
3. *Do you see negotiations between victims and offenders overseen by community members and outside authority whose presence is to facilitate communication as useful alternatives to the traditional court system?*

On the first question, just over half the respondents (52.3%) indicated they would be very or somewhat willing to resolve a dispute out of court (see Table 8.3). On the second question, a slightly larger proportion (59.5%) said they would be willing to use an informal process involving third parties. On the third question, only just over one-third of respondents (35.2%) believed that negotiations between victims and offenders are useful alternatives to the court system. So while a majority of respondents were willing to participate in informal processes of justice, they were more hesitant to institutionalise these informal practices as alternatives to court.

While the three questions relate to the theme of restorative justice and informal modes of justice, there are differences in how various groups of respondents responded to each of the question. For example, female respondents were more willing than male respondents to resolve a dispute with an offender out of court (55.5% and 48.7% respectively), but there was no difference between the sexes on the other two questions involving more structured processes of informal justice. Consistent with their least punitive response regarding imprisonment, respondents from the younger age group (16–24 years) were the most willing to participate in out of court dispute resolution processes with offenders, and were also significantly more likely to see these processes as alternatives to the court process. Interestingly, people aged 55 and over were not more willing than respondents aged 25–54 years to themselves participate in out of court processes, but, like the younger respondents, they supported the idea that these processes had the potential to offer alternatives to the traditional system.

It is not surprising that respondents who opted for a prison sentence in the burglary scenario were less willing than others to support out of court dispute resolutions processes. Similar response patterns appear in the restorative justice questions and the punishment question. Respondents from the lowest income group were more willing than more affluent people to participate in informal dispute resolution processes, and to support these processes as alternatives to the court system. Respondents with little education, while not more willing to participate themselves in informal processes than more educated groups, showed more support for these processes as useful alternatives. A larger proportion of victims of crime than non-victims indicated their willingness to participate in informal dispute resolution processes, but this did not translate into increased support for institutionalising these processes as alternatives to the court process. Respondents' perception of the performance of the police for controlling crime did not impact their views on restorative justice, but their perception of police helpfulness did. This may be related to the fact that generally a police officer is present during family conferences. Respondents who agreed that the police were helpful tended to be more willing than others to both participate in out of court processes and to see these processes as alternatives to the court system.

Table 8.3. Percentage and selected characteristics of respondents who favour or not restorative justice processes, Hong Kong 2005

	Question 1^a (N=2,159) <i>very/somewhat willing</i> %	Question 2^a (N=2,088) <i>very/somewhat willing</i> %	Question 3^a (N=2,015) <i>yes</i> %
All respondents	52.3	59.5	35.2
Gender of respondent			
Male	48.7	58.0	37.0
Female	55.5***	61.6	33.6
Age of respondent			
16–24 years	74.4***	76.2***	40.8
25–54 years	46.9	55.5	31.9
55+ years			41.4***
Income level			
<HK\$10,000	59.1*	59.4	48.3***
HK\$10,000+	51.1	61.0	33.0
Education level			
None or primary	55.6	55.4	42.9***
Secondary	53.5	61.7	37.5
Tertiary	48.6	59.1	27.3
Preferred sentence			
Imprisonment	40.8***	52.3***	30.1***
Other sentences	69.5	71.2	42.6
Victim of any 9 crimes in the past year			
Yes	69.4**	60.0*	31.3
No	59.0	51.6	35.5
The police are helpful			
Agree	53.3*	61.2**	36.0*
Disagree	43.6	48.9	25.6

Notes *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. ^a Question 1 is about resolving a dispute with the offender in an out of court process; question 2 is about solving problems arising from a crime event with the offenders and in the presence of third parties; and question 3 is about negotiations between victims and offenders as alternatives to the traditional court process. ^b N are of valid answers only (i.e. excluding 'don't know' and 'refusal').

CHAPTER 9

Comparison with Hong Kong Crime

Victimisation Survey

At the same time that The University of Hong Kong Social Sciences Research Centre conducted the HK UNICVS (February–June 2006), the HK C&SD conducted the seventh sweep of its own Crime Victimization Survey (CVS, January–May 2006). The surveys differed on a number of points, including methodology, sample size, and questions asked. It is extremely rare for a government and non-government agency to conduct independent crime victimisation surveys in the same location and within a similar period, but using different methodologies. This gives us a unique opportunity to compare the results of the two surveys and assess the benefits and limitations of each methodology. First, we compare the methodologies of the UNICVS and HKCVS and define the crimes that were included. Then we examine how the rates of victimisation for common crimes vary in both surveys. Finally, we look at reporting and satisfaction with police performance, and public opinion on sentencing.

9.1. The Hong Kong Crime Victimization Survey

The HK C&SD has been conducting Crime Victimization Surveys (CVS) since 1979, under the auspices of the Fight Crime Committee. The 2006 survey (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department 2006a) was the seventh sweep of the survey, previously conducted in 1979, 1982, 1987, 1990, 1995 and 1999. The CVS was run as part of the series of Thematic Household Surveys that the HK C&SD runs regularly.³¹ The aim of the survey is to provide criminal justice administrators and policymakers with information not otherwise available from official statistics, such as the nature and extent of crime for both reported and unreported incidents. Such surveys give an indication of the type and proportion of crimes that are officially reported to the police, the reasons why some crimes are not reported, as well as the role that victims play in crime and crime prevention. This information is useful for analysis, evaluation and planning of criminal justice policies.

9.1.1. Methodology of the Hong Kong CVS and the UNICVS

Both surveys were conducted during the first half of 2006 and referred to victimisation that occurred in 2005. The method by which the two surveys were carried out varied: the UNICVS conducted computer-assisted telephone interviews, while the CVS conducted face-to-face interviews. As Table 9.1 shows, the response rate in the CVS (83%) was higher than that of the UNICVS (49%), which can be explained in part because the CVS used a more direct and expensive contact and interview method than the telephone method of the UNICVS, and was undertaken by the HK C&SD, which increased the response rate.

Face-to-face interviews also have the benefit that people without a fixed telephone can be included in the sample. The CVS sample was selected using the registers of quarters and segments³² maintained by the

³¹ The HK C&SD started a series of Thematic Household Surveys (THS) in 1999. Each round of THS is an independent, territory-wide survey on various topics. It is commissioned to a private research firm, but managed and coordinated by the HK C&SD.

³² Quarters are defined as places of accommodation used by one household (or shared by a limited number of households), which have direct external access and are identified by a unique address (e.g. street name, building name, floor number, and flat number); segments are larger than quarters and consist of non-built-up areas delineated by relatively permanent and identifiable landmarks such as a footpath or river.

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HK C&SD as a sampling frame. The CVS sample was drawn based on geographical location rather than telephone ownership; for example, it included residents living in non-permanent structures (who were unlikely to have a fixed-line telephone). Because of this method of sample selection, it is probable that the CVS sample is more representative of the HK population than the UNICVS sample. On the other hand, the telephone method used by the UNICVS provides more privacy to respondents than the CVS face-to-face interviews with all household members, and is a more sensitive way of surveying crimes such as family and intimate violence, and sexual victimisation.

Table 9.1. Comparison of methodologies and samples used in the UNICVS and the Hong Kong CVS, 2006

	UNICVS	HKCVS
Agency	The University of Hong Kong Centre for Criminology and Social Sciences Research Centre	Hong Kong SAR Government Census and Statistics Department
Survey period	February–June 2006	January–May 2006
Surveyed year	2005, and 2001–05	2005
Sample selection	Random probability sample based on fixed-line telephone numbers listed in the directory	Random sample based on a frame of geographic quarters and segments
Method of interview	Computer-assisted telephone interview	Face-to-face interview
Response rate	49%	83%
Sample size	2,283 households	20,100 households
Choice of respondents	Next birthday rule: one household member 16 and over whose birthday came next after the date of the interview	all members of household aged 12 and over
Age of interviewees	16 and older	12 and older
Gender matching	Yes, respondents and interviewers were same gender	No
Rule of counting	If two or more offences take place in one incident, the more serious one is counted	If two or more offences take place in one incident, the more serious one is counted
Location of victimisation (personal crime)	Hong Kong and overseas/Mainland China	Hong Kong
Weighting	Yes	Yes

Both UNICVS and CVS used households as the basis for sample selection. Within each selected household, the UNICVS surveyed one person whose birthday was the closest after the date of the survey. In addition, the HK UNICVS did not record how many people were part of this household, or their age and sex. The CVS also sampled households, but interviewed *all* the members of each selected household who were 12 and older. This method is likely to provide a more accurate picture of household crime. The CVS sample includes people as young as 12 years. Since young people are most at risk of personal and violent crime, the UNICVS, which interviews respondents 16 and older, may miss an important share of crime committed against children and young teenagers. However, because of the setting of the CVS (face-to-face interviews with all household members present), it is unlikely that children will reveal incidents of violence perpetrated against them by other family members. Finally, the CVS was based on a sample of households about nine times larger than the UNICVS. The CVS included in its sample 20,100 households compared to 2,283 in the UNICVS. Since the CVS attempted to interview all household

members, the sample of respondents is even larger, probably exceeding 50,000 respondents; by contrast, in the UNICVS the sample of households and of respondents is similar since only one household member was interviewed. The small size of the UNICVS samples has been noted as problematic since the first sweep. Killias (1990, cited in Travis et al. 1995: 349) pointed out that, 'in light of Europe's relatively low crime rates, samples of less than 5,000 interviewed persons do not yield sufficient data for reliable analyses'. Since HK's crime rates are even lower than those of Europe, the CVS large sample size can be expected to produce more robust results than the UNICVS. The effect of this smaller sample size is mitigated by the UNICVS approach that estimates both one-year and five-year prevalence rates for the crimes in scope. This means that less common crimes are captured by the five-year recall question and estimating the prevalence of such crime is feasible.

The CVS is a national survey conducted by the Hong Kong Government at regular intervals and thus provides the possibility to study crime trends over time. However, because it does not use a standardised questionnaire and definitions, comparisons with other countries or cities cannot be readily made. The UNICVS, on the other hand, allows analysts to examine crime trends both over time and across countries, because it uses a standard questionnaire and methodology that can be implemented across the world. Another advantage of the UNICVS is its effort at matching the gender of the interviewer and interviewee. This is particularly important for sensitive questions relating to sexual victimisation and family violence. It is likely that sexual violence and violence by intimates is under-reported in the CVS.

9.1.2. Crimes included in the surveys and harmonisation of results

Both surveys categorise crime types as crime against households and crime against persons. However, within each category the types of offence that are included vary and comparing the results of the two surveys is not straightforward. Generally, questions in the CVS are more specific than those in the UNICVS, which is possible because the CVS draws from a much larger sample of respondents.

Items relating to household victimisation are broadly comparable in both samples. The CVS does not include theft of bicycles and combines theft of car and motorcycle under theft of vehicle (see Appendix V for detailed comparison and computation). While the UNICVS enquires only about criminal damage to cars, the CVS records criminal damage to any household property (excluding damage to locks or windows that occurred during a burglary).³³ Therefore, the CVS rate for criminal damage is likely to be higher than the UNICVS. The CVS only focuses on successful burglaries, defined as incidents when someone gained illegal entry into a dwelling, even if nothing was actually stolen. This category is comparable to the burglary category of the UNICVS, which counts attempted burglaries as a separate offence.

There are major differences between the two surveys in the way personal crimes are defined and counted. The CVS focuses on crimes that have been committed in HK, while the UNICVS records crimes committed against HK residents, both within and outside the limits of HK. This is particularly important for personal theft and robbery, since 24 percent and 39 percent of these crimes, respectively, happened in Mainland China or overseas. When comparing rates of personal crimes, we exclude incidents reported in the UNICVS that occurred outside the limits of HK. In both surveys, the group of personal crimes include theft and crimes of violence. The CVS items relating to personal theft cover specifically pick-pocketing, snatching, other personal thefts, and deception. Excluding deception, defined as 'obtaining property dishonestly by any deception', which is more akin to fraud (cheating) than theft, similar offences are included in the UNICVS. The UNICVS also asks victims whether they were holding or carrying the item when it was stolen. This then makes it possible to create a sub-group of personal theft comparable to the combination of pick-pocketing and snatching in the CVS.

The robbery category is similar in both surveys, but the other crimes of violence are less comparable. While the UNICVS enquires about any type of sexual victimisation, the HKCVS focuses only on indecent assault, limited to an assault accompanied by circumstances of indecency; that is, excluding rape and non-contact offences such as indecent exposure.³⁴ It is possible, however, to compare the results of the two

³³ In addition, the UNICVS item refers to the previous five years, and asks about prevalence rather than incidence.

³⁴ Rape was included pre-1998, but the question is no longer asked.

surveys because the UNICVS includes a qualifying question, in which victims describe whether the most serious incident was a rape, an attempted rape, an indecent assault, or other behaviour that they found offensive, and how many times each type of victimisation occurred in 2005.

Under the category ‘wounding and assault’, the CVS focuses only on the most serious assaults that caused injuries, however minor, to the victim. It does not explicitly mention, but does not exclude, domestic assaults. The UNICVS category of ‘assault and threats’ is broader and includes any attack or threat that frightened the respondents, including domestic assault. However, victims of assault are also asked if they were injured as a result of the attack, and this provides a way to compare the rate of serious assault with injury in the UNICVS and the wounding and assault category of the CVS. Finally, an item requires victims to specify whether they were only threatened or whether force was actually used and how many times each type of victimisation occurred in 2005. While it is likely that the term ‘threats’, which was not defined, includes a broader range of behaviours than the categories of blackmail and criminal intimidation³⁵ in the CVS, selecting the cases involving only threatening actions allows a more accurate comparison of the two surveys on this question.

The CVS only surveyed respondents about common crime. Unlike the UNICVS, no question on fraud, cybercrime or corruption was included. We compare the one CVS item relating to deception with the UNICVS item on consumer fraud. However, because it is more specific and more descriptive, it is likely that the UNICVS reports a higher rate of consumer fraud than the CVS.

Finally, different counting methods are reported in the UNICVS and the HKCVS. First, the HKCVS does not report sample demographics, thus, we cannot compare the composition of the two samples. Second, from the responses given by the sample respondents, the CVS estimates the total number of victimisation incidents in the population and calculate rates of victimisation per 1,000 population aged 12 and over for each type of crime (incidence rates). Because the UNICVS draws from a much smaller sample than the CVS, it would be inappropriate to estimate incidence rates for the whole population from the UNICVS sample. A more accurate way to compare victimisation rates between the two surveys is to transform the CVS results into the same unit of measurement as the UNICVS incidence rates (see Table 3.4); that is, rate per 100 population (percent).

9.2. Comparison of Results

9.2.1. Rates of victimisation for common crime

Table 9.2 presents the results of the UNICVS and the HKCVS for the categories of crime described above. Overall, the rates of household crime are higher and personal crime lower in the CVS than in the UNICVS. Rates are small and results must be interpreted with caution. Because CVS respondents were only asked about incidents that occurred during 2005, it is possible that they were more prone to ‘forward telescoping’; that is, they erroneously reported pre-2005 incidents as occurring in 2005. The UNICVS asks first about incidents that happened in the last five years, and then about those that happened in the last year in an effort to minimise forward telescoping (van Dijk et al. 2007). However, if CVS respondents were more prone than UNICVS respondents to telescope, we can assume this would happen relatively uniformly for all crimes. Since victimisation rates do not vary in a systematic way between the CVS and the UNICVS, it is unlikely that telescoping was present to any degree in the CVS.

While rates of vehicle-related crimes are comparable for both surveys, the rate of burglary reported by the CVS is about twice the UNICVS rate. Several or a combination of explanations can account for the difference. The CVS interviews *every member* of each household, but the UNICVS surveys *only one member*. This person may not be aware of all victimisation incidents against the household, particularly if they are relatively minor in nature. Therefore, by asking everyone in the household, the CVS produces a more

³⁵ Blackmail is defined as ‘making an unwarranted demand with menaces with a view to extracting money from a victim’; and criminal intimidation is defined as ‘using violence, threats, etc. to compel the victim to do or abstain from doing what the victim has the legal right to do or abstain from doing’.

accurate picture of household crime. Although the UNICVS definition mentions illegal entry, it adds ‘to steal or try to steal something’. It could be that respondents assumed that the incident did not constitute burglary if nothing was stolen. The UNICVS also excludes theft from garages and sheds, which is not specified in the CVS. In addition the CVS sample is larger and includes residents of non-permanent dwellings, who are unlikely to be included in the UNICVS sample. Temporary dwellings are almost certainly relatively unsecured and more prone to being burgled. Not surprisingly, the rate of vandalism is twice as high in the CVS compared to the UNICVS. Since the UNICVS asks only about damage to cars, it is to be expected that the broader question from the CVS records a higher incidence of vandalism.

Table 9.2. Incidence of crime victimisation, 2005: UNICVS and HKCVS

Type of crime victimisation	UNICVS ^a %	HKCVS ^a %	Comparison
Crime against households			
Theft of vehicle (incl. motorcycle)	0.1	0.1	Similar
Theft from car (object in car or car part)	0.6	0.8	Similar
Burglary	0.6	1.5	CVS over twice UNICVS rate
Vandalism ^b	0.6	1.3	CVS twice UNICVS rate
Crime against persons, committed in HK			
All personal theft ^c	3.3	2.2	UNICVS 1.5 times CVS rate
Snatching and pick-pocketing	2.4	1.3	UNICVS nearly twice CVS rate
Robbery	0.3	0.3	Similar
Assault and threats ^d	2.6	0.6	UNICVS 4 times CVS rate
Assault occasioning injury	0.3	0.3	Similar
Threats or intimidation	2.2	0.4	UNICVS about 5 times CVS rate
Indecent assault (all victims)	1.0	0.2	UNICVS 5 times CVS rate
Indecent assault (female victims)	1.9	0.4	UNICVS 4.5 times CVS rate
Combined rates			
Crime against households ^e	1.9	3.7	CVS about twice UNICVS rate
Crimes against the person ^f	8.0	3.5	UNICVS over twice CVS rate
All violent crime ^g	3.7	1.1	UNICVS more than 3 times CVS rate
All victimisation ^h	9.9	4.6	UNICVS over twice CVS rate

Notes ^a For the UNICVS, incidence rates are calculated as: (N incidents of victimisation in 2005/N respondents) x 100. For the CVS, rates are estimated from the survey as estimated N incidents of victimisation/HK population and expressed per 1,000 population 12 and over. They have been converted into percent in Table 9.2. ^b UNICVS: includes only damage to a car, and the rate for 2005 is estimated as the yearly average number of incidents from those reported for 2001–05. CVS: includes the number of incidents of damage to any household property. ^c CVS: Not including deception. ^d UNICVS: includes common assault and threats with or without injury to the victim; CVS: includes wounding and assault, blackmail, and criminal intimidation with injury to victim. Threats and intimidation include: for the UNICVS all threatening behaviour, and for the CVS blackmail and criminal intimidation. ^e UNICVS: includes theft of car/truck/van and motorcycle, theft from car, burglary, and damage to vehicle. CVS: includes theft of vehicle (car and motorcycle), theft from car, burglary, and damage to household property. ^f UNICVS: includes personal theft, robbery, indecent assault (all victims), assault occasioning injury, and threats. CVS: includes robbery, indecent assault, wounding and assault (with injury), blackmail, criminal intimidation, and personal theft (excluding deception). ^g UNICVS: includes robbery, indecent assault (all victims), assault occasioning injury and threats. CVS: includes robbery, indecent assault, wounding and assault (with injury), blackmail, and criminal intimidation. ^h Includes theft of vehicle (including motorcycle), theft from car, burglary, vandalism, robbery, indecent assault (all victims), assault occasioning injury and threats (UNICVS), wounding and assault (CVS), blackmail and criminal intimidation (CVS), and personal theft (excluding deception for the CVS).

In contrast, the UNICVS rates for personal crime are generally higher than those reported in the CVS, even when including only the incidents that happened within the limits of HK. For the most two serious crimes of robbery and assault occasioning injury, the CVS and the UNICVS rates are similar (albeit small).

It could be that for less serious offences, which are not precisely defined in the UNICVS, respondents have reported incidents that would not fit within the specific definitions of the CVS. This is particularly likely for threats: any type of verbal threat is potentially included in the UNICVS, while the CVS only records the most serious offences of blackmail and criminal intimidation. The rate of indecent assault against female respondents is nearly five times higher in the UNICVS. Because there is no gender matching of interviewer and interviewees in the CVS, and the question on sexual victimisation is imprecise, the CVS is not an appropriate instrument to capture sexual victimisation. Research on sexual victimisation and on violence against women more generally, has shown that survey questions elicit higher numbers of positive responses when they describe the behaviour rather than the legal definition (indecent assault). Female respondents are also less likely to report sexual victimisation when interviewed by a male surveyor. Finally, the CVS interviews the whole household face-to-face and this probably deters women from reporting violence against them by other household members or that they have kept secret from them. The telephone interview method of the UNICVS increases the distance from both interviewer and other household members, and is more conducive to respondents revealing such sensitive victimisation.

9.2.2. Reporting and satisfaction with the police

Both the UNICVS and the CVS asked victims of crime whether they, or someone else, reported the incident to the police. Direct comparisons between the two surveys are difficult because the UNICVS only considers the reporting of the last incident, whereas the CVS records the reporting of all victimisations during the year 2005. Compared to other main cities, the UNICVS found that reporting rates tended to be lower in HK. For most crimes, the CVS revealed even lower reporting rates than the UNICVS. Table 9.3 presents reporting rates for selected crime in the UNICVS and the CVS. The UNICVS rates presented below differ from those reported earlier because we focus only on victimisation during 2005.

The largest difference in reporting rates between the two surveys is for the reporting of burglary: the UNICVS finds that 75 percent of burglaries were reported, whereas the CVS finds a rate three times lower (25%). As we have seen before, it is possible that UNICVS respondents understood something had to be stolen to amount to burglary. As a consequence, the burglary incidents mentioned in the UNICVS may be more serious than those in the CVS, and therefore more likely to be reported to the police. The high proportion of victims in the UNICVS who did not report the burglary due to fear of reprisal also lends supports that more serious events are captured by the UNICVS. For personal theft, the rates of reporting in both surveys are comparable. However, the UNICVS rate of reporting robbery is nearly twice that of the CVS. This difference could be explained by the smaller number of robberies (N=9) mentioned by respondents in the UNICVS, which reduces statistical accuracy. In both surveys, the reporting rate of assault with force (UNICVS) and wounding and assault (CVS) is similar, but, according to the UNICVS, a higher proportion of incidents of threats were reported to the police compared to the CVS. This finding is intriguing because the CVS includes more serious incidents (blackmail and criminal intimidation), which are generally more likely to be reported because of their gravity, but are also offences specifically designed to deter victims from reporting to the police. Overall, the UNICVS rate of reporting household victimisation is about three times that of the CVS, and this is due in part to the much higher level of burglary reported to the police in the UNICVS. The reporting of violent victimisation is similar in both surveys, but the CVS does not present reporting behaviour for indecent assault, as the numbers are too small. The Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2007a: 134) notes that for most crimes, reporting rates have decreased compared to the 1998 survey. Reporting rates in 1998 were closer to those found by the UNICVS in 2005. Apart from differing definitions of crime, the much larger sample in the CVS can account for differences in reporting rates.

Like the UNICVS, the CVS asked victims of crime who reported to the police whether they were satisfied with the police response. Two items examined victims' experiences: their judgement of police manners (e.g. politeness) and their perception of the quality of police service. Focusing only on the second question, which is closer to the UNICVS question, we find that CVS respondents indicated a slightly higher level of satisfaction with the police than UNICVS respondents for all crime types. The proportions of CVS respondents who said they found the service of the police 'very good' or 'good' were: 81.8 percent for theft of car, 74.8 percent for burglary, 68 percent for robbery, and 77.9 percent for wounding and assault. By comparison, the proportions of UNICVS respondents who said they were 'very

satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the police response were: 61.1 percent for theft of car, 68.6 percent for burglary, 60.2 percent for robbery, and 66.7 percent for assault and threats. A possible explanation for the discrepancy between the two surveys is that the UNICVS is a UN survey conducted by an independent agency (The University of Hong Kong), while the CVS is a government-commissioned survey asking about government operations. Therefore, the UNICVS may have the advantage that respondents provide more honest answers. Overall, however, both surveys produced relatively comparable results, and showed a higher level of satisfaction with the police response in HK than the UNICVS international average.

Table 9.3. Percentage of respondents victimised in 2005, who reported the incident to the police: UNICVS and HKCVS

Type of crime victimisation	UNICVS %	HKCVS %	Comparison
Crime against households			
Theft of vehicle (incl. motorcycle) ^a	-	86.4	CVS rate slightly higher than UNICVS for past 5 years (78.9%)
Theft from car (object in car or car part)	20.0	33.1	CVS rate about 1.5 times UNICVS rate
Burglary	75.0	25.0	UNICVS 3 times CVS rate
Crime against persons, committed in HK			
All personal theft	22.9	22.4	Similar
Snatching and pick-pocketing	25.8	20.1	Similar
Robbery	30.0	18.7	UNICVS nearly twice CVS rate
Assault and threats	23.3	21.8	Similar
Assault with force or injury ^b	40.0	38.7	Similar
Threats or intimidation	21.7	6.7	UNICVS 3 times CVS rate
Indecent assault (all victims)	10.0	-	Not reported for CVS
Indecent assault (female victims)	10.0	-	Not reported for CVS
Combined rates			
Crime against households	47.5	16.5	UNICVS rate nearly 3 times CVS rate
Crimes against the person (all victims)	32.7	20.0	UNICVS rate about 1.5 times CVS rate
All violent crime	21.1	17.6	Similar
All victimisation	31.1	19.1	UNICVS rate about 1.5 times CVS rate

Notes ^a N is too small to calculate reporting rate for 2005 for UNICVS. ^b UNICVS: includes all assault with force; CVS: wounding and injury.

9.2.3. Opinion on sentencing

Questions on sentencing differed in the two surveys. The UNICVS asked *all respondents* what they thought should be the sentence for a recidivist burglar. By contrast, the CVS only asked *respondents who had been the victim of a personal crime* their views on the sentence for that particular crime. Ten sentencing options were presented in the CVS, including counselling and therapy for the offender, an apology, and compensation paid to victim, compared to only four (plus 'other sentence') in the UNICVS. For all crime types, imprisonment was the first preference, ranging from 50.6 percent for indecent assault to 31.7 percent for wounding and assault.³⁶ On average, for all crimes, 37.2 percent of victims opted for imprisonment. This figure is lower than the UNICVS rate of 59.9 percent. More importantly, while the majority of respondents in the UNICVS opted for imprisonment, less than half did so in the HKCVS. It is probable that the limited choice of sentences in the UNICVS accounts in part for the larger proportion of respondents choosing a prison sentence. With the larger number of options available in the CVS, it was

³⁶ While victims of wounding and assault were less likely than victims of other crimes to choose imprisonment, they were also more likely to suggest an apology from the offender (13.5%) as a sentencing option.

likely that responses would be more spread out. However, studies on sentencing attitudes indicate that respondents often do not know which sentencing options are available besides imprisonment, and presenting a menu of options to choose from reduces the proportion of respondents who select imprisonment (Gelb 2008).

In the UNICVS, we found that the response of respondents who had been victims of burglary or other crimes did not differ significantly from non-victims; therefore, the fact that the CVS asked only victims of crime about their opinion on sentencing should not significantly impact the responses. Yet, a recurring problem with 'top of the head' attitude surveys is that, when people are asked to quickly give their opinion on an issue they may not have thought about before, they are likely to give the first answer that comes to mind rather than an informed judgement (Gelb 2008). We can assume that CVS respondents (i.e. victims) would have thought about which sentence should be imposed on the person who attacked them, and would be more likely to give a considered opinion compared to UNICVS respondents' 'top of the head' answers. In addition, research has shown that judgements of appropriate sentence vary with both the type and amount of information provided about the crime (Durham III 1993). UNICVS respondents were asked what they thought the sentence should be for a recidivist burglar; CVS respondents, *who had been a victim of personal crimes only*, were asked what they thought the sentence should be for the specific crime of which they were the victim. Therefore, we can expect UNICVS responses about a property crime to differ from CVS responses about personal crimes. In addition, the CVS should produce a wider range of responses because respondents refer to different types of crime. And even within the same crime category, victims would have a range of experiences. Since the CVS did not ask burglary victims their judgement of the appropriate sentence, we cannot compare the results of the two surveys on sentencing opinions for burglary only.

9.2.4. Summary

Comparing the results of the UNICVS and the HKCVS highlights the ways in which methodology, sample size and wording impact the findings of victimisation surveys. The rates of victimisation in the two surveys differ for some crimes, but are similar for others. Overall, the HKCVS finds higher rates of crime against households, and lower rates of crime against persons than the UNICVS. This could be attributed to the large difference in sample size (and possibly sample representativeness), and the ways in which crimes were defined and counted. It is likely that the CVS is less accurate than the UNICVS in recording sexual victimisation and violence against women. Rates of reporting to the police also differ for some crimes in the two surveys. The UNICVS finds higher reporting rates for burglary, robbery and threats; however, reporting rates are comparable for car theft, personal theft and serious assault.

Both surveys record high levels of satisfaction with the police response. Attitudes to sentencing were difficult to compare because: (1) the CVS only asked the opinion of victims whereas the UNICVS asked all respondents; (2) the victims' judgement of the appropriate sentence referred to different crimes against persons whereas UNICVS respondents were provided with a standard scenario of burglary; and (3) the CVS provided 10 sentences that were more representative of sentencing options in Hong Kong than the UNICVS which presented only four options. This may explain why UNICVS respondents appeared to be more punitive (i.e. a larger proportion opted for imprisonment) than HKCVS respondents.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Media and News Reports

- Anon (2006). 'Rip-off shopping trips put billions at risk', *South China Morning Post*, 8 October, 14.
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Yangtze Evening News (2006). 'Safety index in HK among the highest in the world', 8 October, Domestic News.

B. Non-conventional crimes, household and respondent information, attitudes and opinions

Consumer fraud	One year victimisation (2005) Type of fraud; was it credit card related Report to the police and/or other agencies
Street level Corruption	One year victimisation (2005) Who was the corrupted official Anyone reported
Cyber victimisation	Screener: computer access; how many computers; where; access to the Internet; computer protection Victimisation last 12 months via attack by virus, spyware, malware; threats of attack; obscene messages; breach of software copyright; other cyber attacks Any monetary loss; value of loss Report to police and/or other agencies
Drug problems in neighbourhood	Witness drug-related problems in neighbourhood last 12 months

Attitudes, opinions and household information

Attitudes to crime	How safe do you feel walking after dark in your area?
	How likely a burglary in the coming year?
Attitudes to the police	How good are the police at controlling crime in your area?
	How helpful are the police in your area?
Attitudes to sentencing	Type of sentence a recidivist burglar should receive—if prison, how long for?
	Willing to solve dispute with offender out of court?
	Willing to solve problems arising from criminal event with offender in informal out of court process involving community members?
Respondent information	See informal out of court processes as alternative to traditional court system
	District of residence of respondent/type of house
	Gender/age of respondent
	Marital status
	Educational level/occupational position/income level
	Anti burglary protection?
	How often going out in the evening?

Appendix III

Weighting procedures used in Hong Kong UNICVS, 2006

The sample demographics revealed differences in the age and sex of participants by regional distribution when compared with the 2005 population data compiled by the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2006b). Our sample had a significantly higher proportion of younger respondents (16–34 years) and a lower proportion of respondents 55 and over than the general population (Table 1).

Table 1. Sex and age group by region for UNICVS sample and Hong Kong population

Region	Sex	Age Group (years)					
		HK UNICVS ^a N=2,040			HK population data ^b N=5,795,770		
		16–34 %	35–54 %	55+ %	16–34 %	35–54 %	55+ %
Hong Kong Island	Male	3.4	2.6	1.5	2.5	3.6	2.3
	Female	2.6	4.3	1.9	3.1	4.5	2.6
Kowloon	Male	5.8	4.7	2.7	4.2	5.9	4.4
	Female	6.1	7.6	2.4	4.9	6.6	4.6
New Territories ^c	Male	12.5	9.6	3.2	8.4	10.5	5.6
	Female	12.3	14.0	2.7	9.1	11.9	5.6
All regions ^d	Male	21.7	16.9	7.4	15.1	20.0	12.3
	Female	21.0	25.9	7.0	17.1	23.0	12.8
Total per age group ^d		42.7	42.8	14.4	32.2	43.0	25.10

Notes ^a 243 cases had data missing in either field and were excluded. ^b Revised figures obtained from the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2006b: 15–17, Table 5). ^c Including Marine Islands. ^d Total does not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Statistical weighting was applied to compensate for the over- and under-sampling of particular groups within the sample and to make the results more representative of the HK population aged 16 and above (Table 2). Weights were calculated as the ratio of the population distribution by age group, sex, and region, compared to that of the sample using the formula:

$$\text{Weight} = \text{proportion in population} / \text{proportion in sample}$$

Table 2. Weights applied to HK UNICVS data, 2005

Region	Sex	Age group (years)		
		16–34	35–54	55+
Hong Kong Island	Male	0.74	1.35	1.52
	Female	1.16	1.05	1.34
Kowloon	Male	0.72	1.25	1.62
	Female	0.80	0.86	1.93
New Territories ^c	Male	0.68	1.10	1.72
	Female	0.74	0.85	2.03

Appendix IV
Home Security Measures, Hong Kong and Internationally, 2006

Home security measures ^a	Hong Kong %	UNICVS average main cities ^b %
Burglar alarm	13.5	20
Special door locks	25.3	56
Special window/door grilles	33.0	-
A dog that would detect a burglar	7.3	-
Closed circuit television	6.3	-
A high fence	5.0	-
A caretaker or security guard	5.1	-
A formal neighbourhood watch scheme	47.2	-
Friendly arrangements with neighbours to watch each other houses	49.5	-
At least one security measure	82.5	-
Median N security measures	2	-

Notes ^a Multiple answers were allowed; percentages add up to more than 100%. N are for valid answers only (i.e. excluding 'don't know' and 'refusal'). ^b Average from 25 developed countries, for two types of security measures only (van Dijk et al. 2007: 136-37).

Appendix V
Definitions and Computations of Rates of Incidence of Victimization,
UNICVS and Hong Kong CVS, 2006

Type of crime victimisation	UNICVS	HKCVS
Crimes against households		
Vehicle-related theft	<i>Theft of car + theft of motorcycle</i>	<i>Theft of vehicle, as reported</i>
	<i>Theft from car</i>	<i>Theft from vehicle</i>
Criminal damage	<p><i>Criminal damage to car</i></p> <p>Prevalence question asked for the five years 2001–05, and 68 respondents said that they had been victim of car vandalism. N for 2005 estimated as mean per year: 68/5 = 14</p>	<p><i>Criminal damage to any household property</i></p> <p>Broader definition than the UNICVS</p>
Burglary	<i>Burglary</i>	<i>Burglary</i>
Crimes against persons		
Personal theft	<p><i>Theft of personal property</i></p> <p>Question includes all theft of personal items in the street, at school, at work, etc.</p> <p><i>Pick-pocketing and snatching</i></p> <p>An additional item asks if the victim was holding or carrying the item that was stolen, (i.e. pick-pocketing and snatching) and how many times it happened in 2005.</p>	<p><i>Personal crimes of theft:</i></p> <p>The CVS question is more precise than that of the UNICVS and differentiates between snatching, pick-pocketing, other personal theft, and deception. The overall rate of personal theft in the CVS excludes deception.</p> <p><i>Pick-pocketing + snatching</i></p> <p>We combine pick-pocketing + snatching for comparison with the UNICVS.</p>
Violent crime	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Robbery</i>
	<i>Indecent assault</i>	<i>Indecent assault</i>
	<p>The UNICVS asks about all sexual victimisation (i.e. contact and non-contact offences). An additional item asks if victims consider the most serious sexual victimisation as rape, indecent assault, or offensive behaviour, and how many times each type of victimisation occurred in 2005.</p>	<p>Definition is narrower than the UNICVS question and limited to 'an assault accompanied by circumstances of indecency' (ie, excludes rape and non-contact offences such as indecent exposure).</p>
	<p><i>Assault occasioning injury and threats</i></p> <p>The UNICVS question is broad and includes common assault without injury to the victim, as well as serious assault resulting in injuries. One question asks victims of assault whether they were injured during the attack, and how many times it happened in 2005. Therefore, we can compare the rate of assault with injury in the UNICVS with the rate of wounding and assault in the CVS.</p> <p><i>Threats only</i></p> <p>An additional item asks victims if the incident involved the use of force or only threats, and how many times each type of incident occurred in 2005.</p>	<p><i>Wounding and assault, blackmail, and criminal intimidation^a</i></p> <p>Includes only assault occasioning injuries, minor and serious, to victims.</p> <p>For comparison with the UNICVS category of assault with injury and threats, we combine wounding and assault, blackmail, and criminal intimidation.</p> <p><i>Blackmail, and criminal intimidation</i></p> <p>We also compare the sub-categories of blackmail and criminal intimidation in the CVS with the threats only category in the UNICVS.</p>

Combined rates for common crime

Crime against household	Theft of car + theft of motorcycle + damage to car + burglary	Theft of vehicle + damage to property + burglary
Personal crime	Theft of personal property + robbery + indecent assault + assault with injury and threats	Pick-pocketing, snatching, and other thefts + robbery + indecent assault + wounding and assault + blackmail + criminal intimidation
Crimes of violence	Robbery + indecent assault + assault with injury and threats	Wounding and assault + blackmail + criminal intimidation
Overall crime	Theft of car + theft of motorcycle + damage to car + burglary + theft of personal property + robbery + indecent assault + assault with injury and threats	Theft of vehicle + damage to property + burglary + pick-pocketing, snatching, and other thefts + robbery + indecent assault + wounding and assault + blackmail + criminal intimidation

Non-conventional crime

Other offences	<i>Consumer fraud</i>	<i>Personal theft: deception</i> No specific question about consumer fraud, but a question about deception/cheating asked under theft of personal property.
	<i>Corruption</i>	Not asked
	<i>Cybercrime</i>	Not asked

Note^a Blackmail is defined as 'making an unwarranted demand with menaces with a view to extracting money from a victim'; and criminal intimidation is defined as 'using violence, threats, etc. to compel the victim to do or abstain from doing what the victim has the legal right to do or abstain from doing'.