REACTIONS TO CRIME IN CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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This paper examines popular reactions to the threat of crime. People vary in the extent to which crime has an impact on their lives. Some pay little attention to crime, while others regularly take precautions to protect themselves and their families from harm. This partly reflects differences in the risks they face in their daily lives. Some people live in highly threatening circumstances, while others face a relatively slight risk of being victimised. Past research has found that the public's fear of crime is strongly related to both their direct experience with victimisation and with the general risk that comes from conditions in their immediate neighbourhood. However, in addition to the measurable risks they face, other factors intervene which determine how people react to the threat of possible victimisation. For example, some live cautious lives because they judge that the consequences of being victimised, if that should happen, are greater than the expense and inconvenience of taking continued precautions. Others feel that they are particularly likely candidates for victimisation, and thus act as if their objective risks were much higher than they actually are.

Unlike a great deal of research on popular reactions to crime, this paper does not dwell on people's fears or perceptions. Rather, it focuses on what they do as a reaction to the threat of crime. It examines three distinctive clusters of crime-related behaviours: the precautions that people take to insulate themselves from personal attack, the things they do to protect the place where they live, and gun ownership. There is a somewhat different pattern of adoption of these three tactics, reflecting differences in the circumstances in which people live, the kinds of crime at which they are directed and the kind of people that are involved.

This paper examines these issues across the 14 nations included in the 1989 sweep of the International Crime Survey (ICS)[2]. Slightly over 28,000 persons were interviewed in the survey, most of them by telephone. In the analyses reported here, the data were weighted slightly so that respondents to the survey resemble the populations of each of the 14 nations involved. Because not everyone answered each question (there are inevitably people who respond "don't know" to almost any question), most of the analyses presented here are based upon about 24,000 respondents.

In addition to describing the ways in which the public reacts to the threat of crime, this paper has a second purpose: to illustrate an approach to cross-national survey research. A unique feature of the ICS is the large number of countries involved. This invites both "micro" and "macro" questions. The latter involve propositions about nations - which are then the unit of analysis. These propositions might refer to institutions, policies, or other features of the national units. For example, one might reasonably hypothesize that in democratic political systems (like those enjoyed by ICS countries), the harshness of criminal sentencing policy reflects the extent of punitive attitudes among politically involved segments of the populace. Many scholars doubtless will use published reports and the original ICS data to examine such issues.

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2 van Dijk, J.J.M., P. Mayhew and M. Killias (1990) Experiences of crime across the world: key findings of the 1989 International Crime Survey, Kluwer Law and Taxation Publishers, Deventer and Boston.

This paper, on the other hand, examines micro-level questions about the behaviour of individuals who are situated in various social, economic, and spatial contexts. Here "nation" takes on a much more limited role, that of being but one of several contexts in which individuals find themselves. Moreover, it is a context which should play no explanatory role, for nation of residence is a nominal category rather than a variable[3]. Just as people are not victimised "because they are French", so that is also not an explanation for their behaviour. Instead, the role of social research is to pose and test variable-based explanatory models. As a result, although the ICS is a cross-national enterprise, national differences should be explained by a properly specified model of individual behaviour. National differences that persist may form a useful basis for further theorizing about missing elements in that model, but they should be taken as a measure of how much further it has to go, rather than what has been discovered[4].

This paper illustrates this approach by first examining the individual-level determinants of behaviour. These include people's experiences with crime, their vulnerability as individuals and households, and the character of the place where they live. It then turns to the context in which they find themselves, examining the impact of the aggregate rate of victimisation on individual behaviour. This societal-level variable accounts for most differences between nations in the extent of crime-related behaviour, leaving relatively little between-nation variance to be accounted for.

Reactions to crime

The ICS examined a number of specific ways in which people react to crime. Responses to these questions were used to form multiple-item indices of the extent of crime-related behaviour. First, there were two indicators of the personal precautions that people can take to protect themselves against the threat of personal crime. One question asked if people stayed away from certain streets or areas to avoid crime on the last occasion they went out after dark, and if on that occasion someone else went with them "to avoid crime". The survey also asked about household prevention measures that people may have taken to protect the security of the place where they live. These included questions about asking neighbours or caretakers to watch their home when they were last away, if they had a burglar alarm, and if they leave lights on at home while they are away. Finally, the survey also asked if the respondent or someone in the household owned a gun.

The survey indicates that, across 14 nations, the most common reactions to crime involved asking neighbours to help (71 percent reported having done so) and leaving lights on at home (54 percent). Twenty-six percent of those who were interviewed recalled that they avoided dangerous places the last time they were out, and 21 percent took someone with them. About half as many respondents reported having a burglar alarm (10 percent), while 17 percent of respondents indicated that they or someone in their household owned a gun.

While the frequency with which people took each of these self-protective measures varied considerably, they formed three distinct clusters. Responses to the two forms of personal precaution (avoiding places and taking an escort) went

3 Przeworski, A. and H. Teune (1970) The logic of comparative social inquiry, Wiley, New York.

4 For a further discussion of approaches to cross-national research, see Oyen, E. (1990) "The imperfection of comparisons" in: Oyen, E. (ed.) Comparative methodology, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, California; Ragin, C. (1987) The comparative method, University of California Press, Berkeley.

together tightly (r=+.44), but were not strongly linked to gun ownership or household protective measures. The household measures (alarms; lights; neighbours) were moderately related to one another (an average r of +.13), but they were clearly independent of the other actions. Many of the statistical analyses which follow, therefore, employ summary indices of personal precaution and household protection, which were formed by adding together responses to the appropriate items. Gun ownership, on the other hand, stood by itself. This was evident in its social distribution, which runs quite the opposite of the other measures (for example, gun ownership is most common in smaller towns and not in big cities). As a result, it will be examined separately from the others.

Correlates of self-protection

This section deals with the social and economic distribution of popular reactions to crime. The measures that people take to protect themselves turn out to reflect the conditions in which they live, their direct experiences with crime, and their personal vulnerability to crime. The next section will connect these with some national-level factors (principally rates of crime) that contribute further to our understanding of how people respond to the threat of crime.

Victimisation

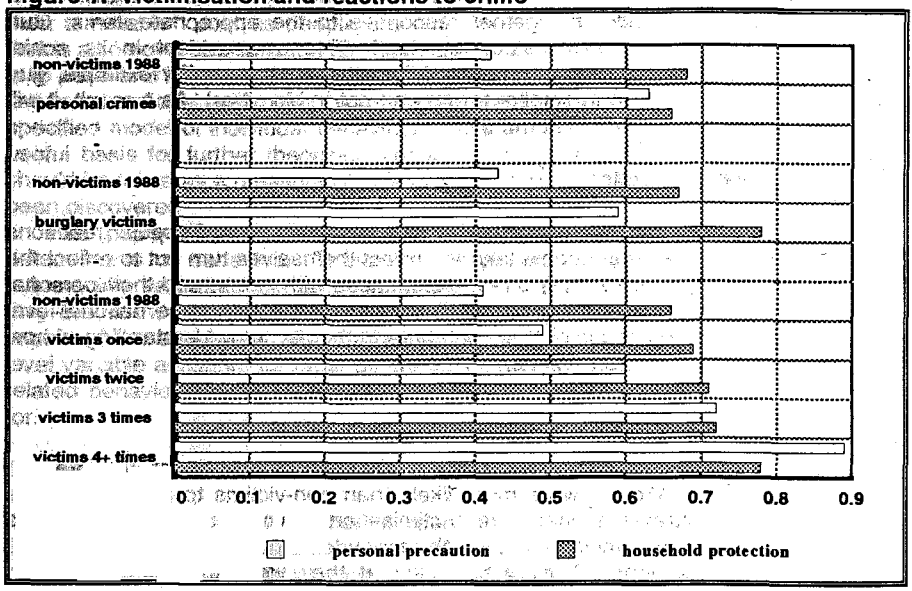
The most obvious factor shaping people's adjustment to the threat of crime was personal experience. Victims were more likely than non-victims to adopt all of the self-protective measures examined here. Victimisation was measured in the ICS by a series of questions about incidents in which respondents might have been involved during the past five years. They were asked if they were threatened, robbed, assaulted, or sexually harassed during that period, if they had their purse or wallet stolen, and if their household had been burglarised. (They were also asked about bicycle and scooter theft, and about a variety of crimes that could happen to or around their cars, but responses to those questions were not very fear-provoking and will not be examined here). Victims were then asked to differentiate between incidents which occurred in the more distant past and those which took place in 1988 or early 1989, a period close to the time of the survey. An analysis of all this data indicates that it was the most recent events which most shaped people's behaviour, so only those are considered in this paper.

Figure 1 depicts the relationship between three measures of recent victimisation and the self-protective measures taken by ICS respondents. The patterns described in Figure 1 reflect the threats posed by different kinds of crime. Note in the lower half of Figure 1 that there were few differences between personal crime victims and non-victims in the extent to which they adopted household protective measures. However, victims were more likely to report taking precautions against personal crime, as depicted in the upper half of Figure 1. Burglar victims were more likely than non-victims to adopt tactics to protect both their person and their household. Burglary involves an intrusion which potentially threatens household residents as well as their property, and its widespread and enduring consequences have been documented in other research on victims.

Figure 1 also examines the effects of multiple, repeated victimisation by dividing respondents into categories based on the number of incidents in which they were involved during the 12 months immediately preceding the interview. It indicates that

the extent of household protection rose only marginally, but that the adoption of personal precautions went up sharply as people's experiences with crime multiplied.

Figure 1: Victimisation and reactions to crime



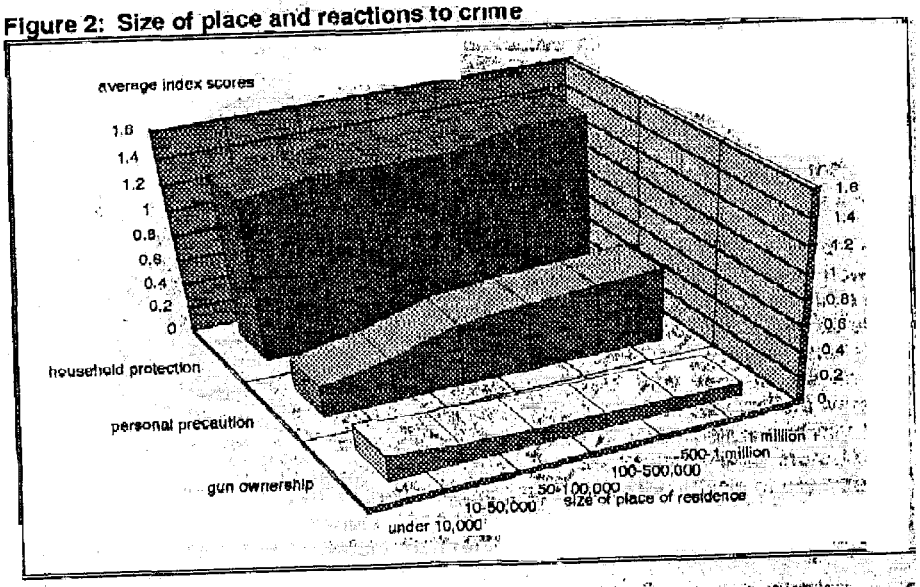
Although it is not shown in Figure 1, gun ownership also displayed a tendency to rise with multiple victimisation. It was particularly frequent (reaching almost 25 percent of victims) among those who had been victimised three times or more during the months preceding the survey. There were similar effects of victimisation by both personal crime and burglary on gun ownership.

Figure 1 documents some systematic behavioural consequences of victimisation, effects that persist when other features of people's lives are also taken into account (see below). Recent, direct experience with crime had consequences for the lives of ICS respondents. However, the most notable feature of the crimes measured in the ICS is their infrequency. Only about 1.2 percent of those who were interviewed recalled being robbed during the recent past, and the numbers were not much higher for either physical or sexual assault (3 percent each) and purse or wallet theft (4 percent). Even when combined together only about 8 percent of ICS respondents were recent victims of personal crime. Another 4 percent indicated that their household had been burglarised during the recent period; they overlapped a bit with victims of personal crimes, so in all about 11 percent of all ICS respondents fell into the recent victim category. As a result, recent victimisation cannot explain very much, for many more people were fearful than were victimised. This indicates that we need to look elsewhere for the factors that shape popular reactions to crime.

City living

City living provided another source of disquiet among ICS respondents. In the ICS, people were asked to characterise "how many people live in your village or town or city?". Their responses fell into six categories, ranging from small towns (under 10,000 inhabitants) to large cities (of more than one million people). Not surprisingly, city living proved to be one of the most consistent correlates of precautions against personal crime, and was also related to adopting household protective measures. This is illustrated in Figure 2, which documents the (average) distribution of personal precautions, household protection and gun ownership, by size of place. Both precautions and household protection rise with city size, but the gradient is much steeper for precautions against personal crime. As noted above, gun ownership actually decreased with city size.

Figure 2: Size of place and reactions to crime

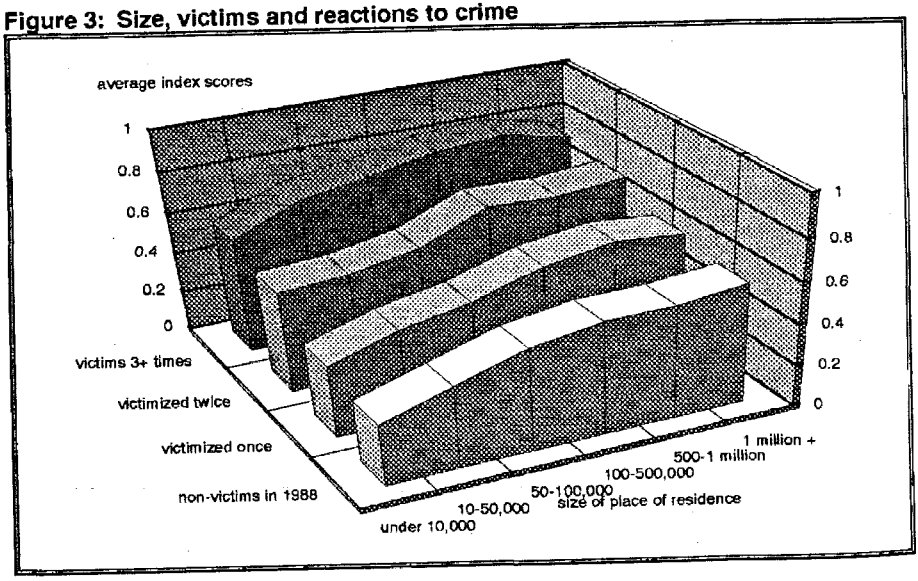


As seen, both victimisation and city living were linked to higher levels of self-protection among ICS respondents. These two factors are not independent, however. City size was linked with victimisation: for residents of big cities were also more likely to report being victimised. This was particularly true for robbery, personal thefts like pickpocketing and purse snatching, and household burglary. This raises the question of whether the effects of either city size or crime are being confused for the effects of the other. This issue is addressed in Figure 3, which plots the relationship between size of place and the index of personal precautions, for various groups of victims.

Two points are illustrated by Figure 3. First, both victimisation and city living mattered; levels of precaution were higher at the high end of each category. As we consider the influence of yet more factors on the adoption of self-protective

measures, it will be impossible to duplicate the analysis presented in Figure 3, but statistical controls can be used to identify similarly independent effects). The second point illustrated by Figure 3 is that victimisation mattered more than city size, in the sense that city size was most clearly related to self-protection only among those who had been victimised once or not at all. Both personal precautions and household protection (which is not shown in Figure 3) were already so common among multiple victims that city living did not make much of a difference for them. This can be seen in Figure 3; the increasing rate of precaution-taking with city size is stronger among those who were victimised less frequently, while that increase is somewhat "flatter" among frequent victims. This is an example of an "interaction effect", which also can be identified using statistical controls. More interactions will be evident in other aspects of the ICS survey.

Figure 3: Size, victims and reactions to crime



Vulnerability

The third set of factors that are linked to self-protection reflect the potential vulnerability to crime of segments of the population. Skogan and Maxfield identified two dimensions of vulnerability, one physical and the other social[5]. Physical vulnerability means openness to attack, powerlessness to resist attack, and exposure to more traumatic physical consequences if attacked. In past research, higher levels of fear among women and the elderly have been attributed to their greater physical vulnerability to crime[6]. People are socially vulnerable when they are

5 Skogan, W.G. and M.M.Maxfield (1981) Coping with crime, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, California.
6 Killias, M. (1990) "Vulnerability: towards a better understanding of a key variable in the genesis of fear of crime" *Violence and Victims* 5:97-108.

exposed to more frequent victimisation because of their personal characteristics or household organisation, or when the consequences of victimisation weigh more heavily upon them for the same reasons. Some studies have explained higher levels of fear among US racial minorities and poor people by alluding to their frequent residential proximity to areas with high rates of crime and their more limited resources for dealing with the consequences of crime[7]. Along both dimensions, more vulnerable people should feel more fearful, not because of what has happened to them, but because of what might happen to them.

The ICS included several measures of social and physical vulnerability. Figure 4 charts the relationship between three social vulnerability factors and self-protective measures that people reported taking. All of the results are congruent with past research on fear of crime. For example, home ownership implies a greater extent of control over one's immediate environment. Numerous studies report that home owners are more likely than renters to invest in physical security arrangements and make defensive modifications to their homes. As Figure 4 indicates, there was a big difference as well between owners and renters in the ICS survey - the latter were much more likely to employ household protective measures. On the other hand, home owners were only slightly more likely to report taking precautions to protect themselves from personal crime. Figure 4 also examines the influence of whether ICS respondents lived in multiple-unit apartment buildings ("flats") rather than in smaller row houses, detached homes, or (as a few did) in institutions, boats, and other kinds of quarters. While apartment dwellers were more likely than their counterparts to take precautions against personal crime, they were far less likely to engage in household protective measures.

Of course, home ownership and types of dwelling units go together, as did crime and city living. The effects of both differences were statistically significant, however. In the case of personal precautions, the effect of living in a flat was about three times that of home ownership; for household protection, being a home owner was almost four times as important as living in a flat. (The effects of the two were almost identical when it came to having a gun at home, but they were in the opposite direction - home owners were more likely to have guns, while flat dwellers were less so). Living arrangements even mediated the impact of victimisation and city living. Only people who lived in smaller buildings or detached homes were more likely to take protective measures when they were victimised, and the effects of city size were largely confined to home owners. (And the decline of gun ownership in larger cities was greater among home owners than renters, and lesser among flat dwellers than everyone else).

Another indicator of social vulnerability presented in Figure 4 is whether or not ICS respondents lived in a family setting. Several measures pointed to the importance of protecting the family in explaining the adoption of household protective measures. ICS respondents living with other adults were more likely to do so than those who lived alone, a relationship which is presented in Figure 4. In addition, respondents with children were also more likely to do things to protect their households. Isolating family households (couples with children) revealed that victimisation had a significantly greater effect on household protection among families, and multivariate analyses also revealed that the effects of city living were much greater among families than among single or childless respondents. There

7 Fattah, E.A. and V.F. Sacco (1989) Crime and victimization of the elderly, Springer-Verlag, New York.

were no family-related differences in patterns of either gun ownership or precautions against personal crime, however.

Figure 4: Vulnerability and reactions to crime

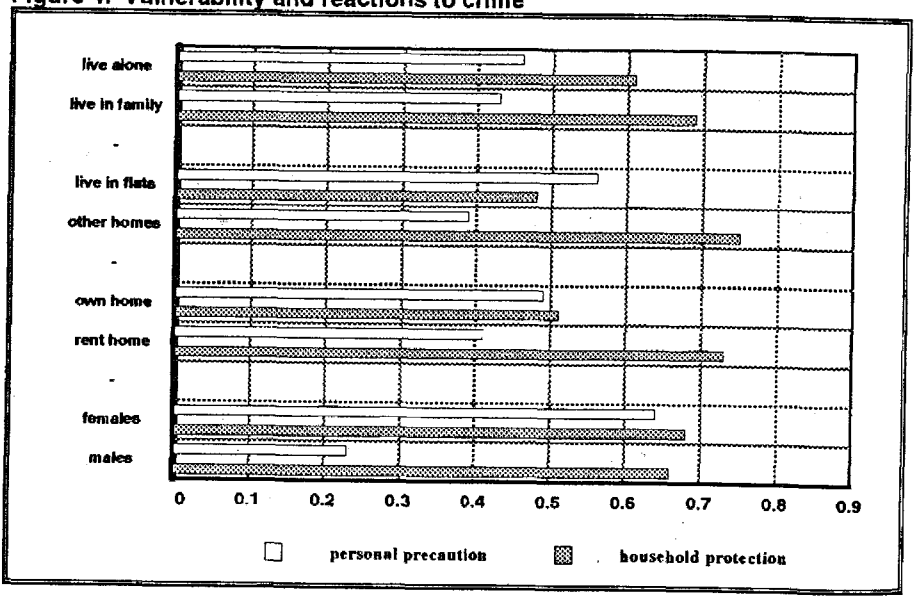


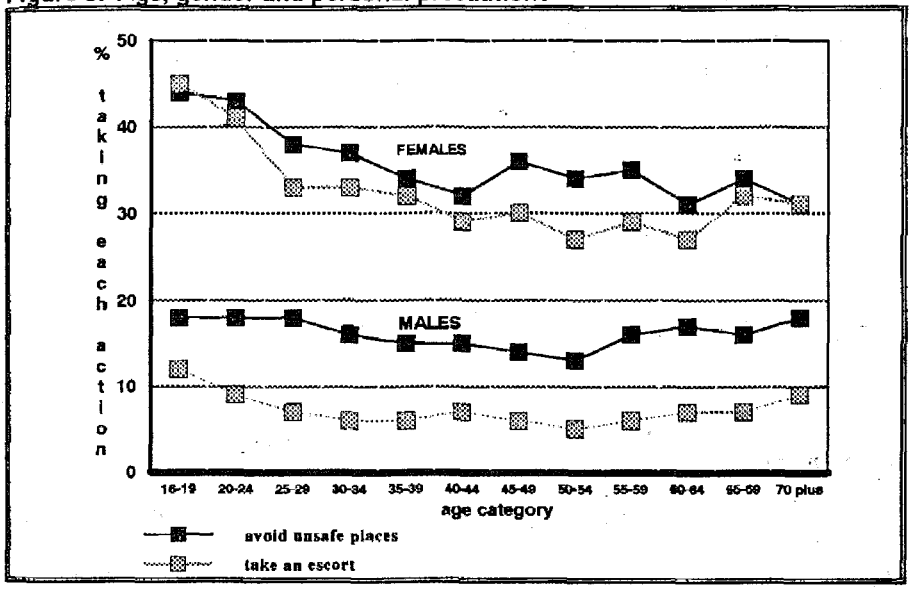
Figure 4 also depicts the relationship between gender and self-protection. This link usually is attributed to the greater physical vulnerability of women to predators, who usually are young males and who often act in groups. When asked in surveys to recommend ways of avoiding personal crime, women are much more likely than men to pick strategies like going out with an escort or avoiding strangers, rather than indicating they might fight back or carry some sort of weapon. Women are also much less likely to feel that they can successfully defend themselves from attack[8]. There was almost no difference in the extent of household protection reported by male and female respondents in the ICS, for gender was evenly distributed across income groups, housing type, and other indicators of living arrangements. However, Figure 4 describes a very large gulf between men and women in the extent to which they took precautions against personal crime - the average index score for females was almost three times that for males. This parallels other findings based on attitudinal indices of fear of crime; women typically are four times more likely than men to indicate they would fear places or situations they might confront alone after dark.

The final indicator of individual vulnerability to be considered here is age. Many studies of fear of crime have documented the distinctive and widespread concern over the threat of personal crime expressed by older persons. They often are not

8 Gordon, M.T. and S. Riger (1989) The female fear, Free Press, New York; Skogan and Maxfield, Coping..., op. cit.

very agile, and may more easily fall victim to younger predators. They also may be subject to more extreme consequences of victimisation, especially physical injury, and their capacity to recover fully from serious harm during their lifetime may be more limited. As a result, the findings of the ICS with respect to the self defence strategies of various age groups are somewhat surprising. Figure 5 illustrates the relationship between age and two measures of personal precaution, the kind of self-defensive behaviour which was most clearly linked to age. Figure 5 indicates that personal precautions were not particularly characteristic of the elderly across the 14 nations involved in the survey. Instead, avoiding unsafe places and going out with an escort was more commonly reported by younger females, at rates which declined steadily among women in their late 20s and 30s. Precautionary measures were essentially unrelated to age among males, and as a result the elderly as a group were the least likely to report taking defensive actions, and differences between males and females were the smallest at the upper end of the age distribution.

Figure 5: Age, gender and personal precautions



The most obvious explanation for the pattern of self-protection depicted by Figure 5 is that older people less often report taking defensive measures due to large differences in the extent to which their lifestyles place them at risk of victimisation. These differences are illustrated by responses to a question in the ICS about the frequency with which people go out in the evening for recreational purposes (including going to a pub, restaurant, cinema, or to visit friends). This question is often used as an indicator of exposure to risk in studies of victimisation. Among those 60 years of age and older, more than 50 percent indicated that they made such trips less than once a month; the comparable figure for everyone under 60 was

23 percent. On the other hand, 57 percent of respondents under 60 reported that they went out in this fashion at least once a week; the comparable figure for older people was 32 percent. However, the pattern depicted in Figure 5 persists even when this measure of exposure to risk is taken into account. Within every category of night-time activity, elderly respondents were less likely than others to report taking precautionary measures. In fact, the largest difference between the elderly and non-elderly was among those who reported going out "almost every day". More complex multi-variate analyses controlling for several determinants of precautionary activity also documented that this form of self protection generally declines with age.

There also was a tendency for the effects of city living to be greater among the elderly than those under sixty. In smaller towns, the elderly were somewhat less likely than others to report taking personal precautions, but that pattern was reversed in big cities.

Rates of crime

Until this point consideration has only been given to the relationship of self-defence measures to the attributes of individuals, including their social backgrounds, the circumstances under which they live, and their personal experiences with crime. In addition, people must be expected to be fearful - and to adapt to their perceptions of the risks they face - even if they have not themselves been victimised. The impact of neighbourhood rates of crime on fear of crime has been well documented. Fear mounts steadily with levels of personal crime and serious property offences[9]. Skogan and Maxfield found that, compared to those who felt "very safe", neighbourhood robbery rates were twice as high among Chicagoans who reported that they felt "very unsafe" near their home after dark[10]. Area burglary rates, on the other hand, were about one third higher among those in the most fearful group. This section examines an analogous question; that of the impact of societal rates of crime on behavioural measures of fear. It tests the proposition that people who live in higher crime countries are more fearful, net of the effects of other measured variables.

The ICS was designed to produce national rates of victimisation, and cannot be used to make estimates of local crime rates parallel to those which have been employed in neighbourhood studies of crime and fear. However, there was considerable variation in levels of crime across the 14 nations involved in the ICS, variation that could be at least weakly reflected in the self-protective measures taken by residents of the various countries. Residents of the United States were four-and-a-half times as likely as the Swiss to be victimised by assaultive violence, and Australians were burglarised at seven times the rate of residents of Finland. The effects of these national levels of crime were examined by first calculating the "expected" level of defensive action for each ICS respondent, based on their personal background and experiences with crime[11]. Deviations from this prediction -

9 Maxfield, M. (1984) "The limits of vulnerability and victimization at work" *Journals of Quantitative Criminology* 3:283-300.

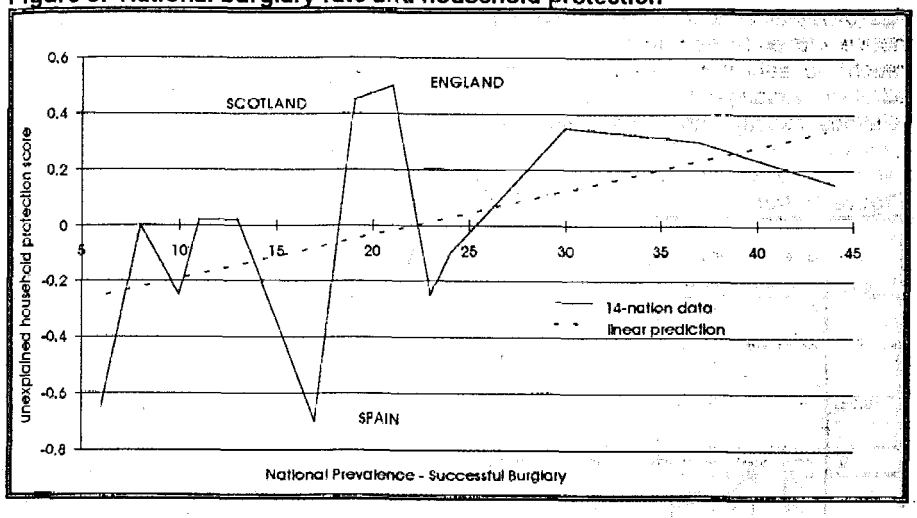
10 Skogan and Maxfield, Coping..., op. cit.

11 These expected levels of behaviour were estimated using multiple regression. The explanatory variables and interaction terms included all of those discussed above in the text, plus education, whether each respondent had an automobile, and if each had a job. These also had consistent but weak effects on two or more of the dependent variables.

the "unexplained" level of defensive effort - were then plotted against appropriate rates of crime for the 14 nations[12].

The results of this analysis are illustrated in Figure 6. It charts the relationship between national burglary rates and whether people reported higher or lower levels of household protection than predicted by their individual circumstances. The two measures went together in fairly clear fashion, with the bulk of unexpectedly low-protection respondents residing in lower-burglary nations, and many unexpectedly high-protection people living in high-burglary places. (The correlation between the two measures is +.46). Figure 6 also identifies three of the most obviously deviant nations: Spain (where household protection was lower than anticipated given the burglary rate), and England and Wales (labeled "England" in Figure 6), where household protection was unexpectedly high.

Figure 6: National burglary rate and household protection



Parallel analyses for gun ownership pointed to similar conclusions; it was significantly "unexpectedly" high in high-burglary and high personal-crime places. On the other hand, there was no clear patterning of personal precaution - there was variation in how unexpectedly high or low it was in various nations, but those differences were not linked to national levels of personal crime.

National differences

The final question to be addressed by this paper is, are there still "national" differences in fear? The argument at the outset was that the goal of social research is to avoid reliance on the use of "nation" as an explanatory concept, because in an

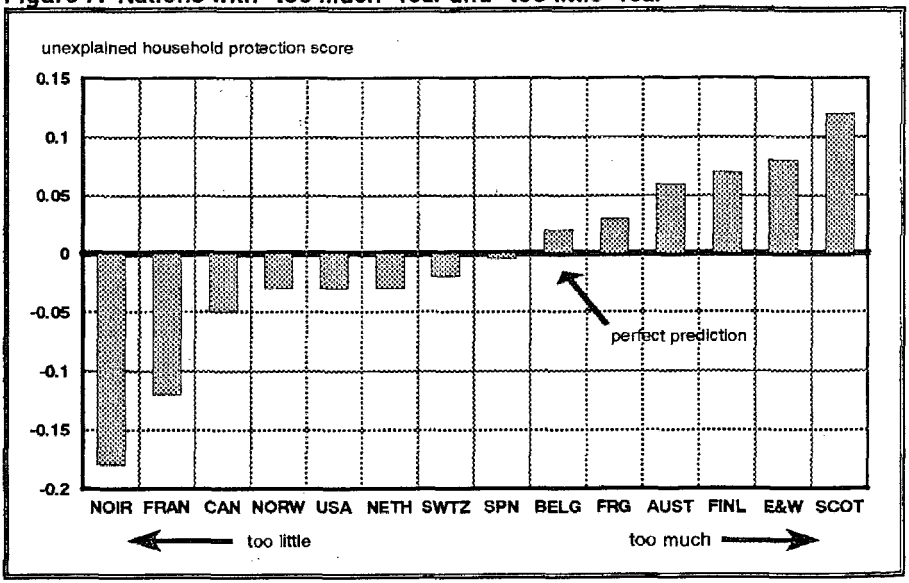
12 The aggregate-level crime rates are technically measures of the "prevalence" of victimisation - the percent of ICS respondents who recalled being victimised in 1988 in major crime categories. They were taken from Table E-1 of van Dijk et al., Experiences..., op. cit.

important sense it provides no explanation at all. National differences are instead descriptions of phenomena that cannot be accounted for in a truly explanatory fashion.

To isolate remaining, unexplained levels of defensive behaviour, more measures were added to the multivariate analyses described above. The personal characteristics and multiple measures of the victimisation experiences of each ICS respondent were entered into analysis. They were joined by measures of national-level crime rates, resulting in a model of fear of crime combining individual and contextual effects. These variables then were used to predict in statistical fashion the extent of personal precaution, household protection, and gun ownership across the 14 nations. What then remained was the level of defensive behaviour that was ultimately "unexplained" by personal factors, individual experiences, and contextual measures of the general risk of victimisation.

Figure 7 illustrates the results of this analysis, relating unexplained levels of household protection to the national association of each ICS respondent. It arrays this unexplained behaviour so that nations where respondents reported "too little" household protection lie to the left, and nations where respondents reported "too much" household protection lie to the right. (If the analytic measures had predicted all of the variation in behaviour, all of respondents would lie at the "zero" line, which is almost exactly where Spain falls).

Figure 7: Nations with "too much" fear and "too little" fear



As in Figure 6, respondents in two of the surveys in the United Kingdom reported more fear than the various individual and contextual factors included in the analysis

would predict. On the other hand, respondents from Northern Ireland were by far the most likely to report "too little" household protection, followed by those from France.

While there remain unexplained national differences in behaviour like those depicted in Figure 7, they are relatively small in magnitude. Table 1 presents a summary of the importance of remaining national-level differences, relative to the explanatory power of the individual and contextual effects examined here. It divides the explained variance of each behaviour measure into the components attributable to individual or contextual factors and the fraction clearly still linked to nation of residence. A third component labeled "multicolinearity" summarises the relative contribution of effects which cannot be parsed between them.

Table 1 suggests that "nation" plays a relatively weak role in explaining the extent of personal precaution and household protection, once people's background, experiences, and the threats they face are taken into account. This should not be surprising, in light of the sample of nations included in the ICS. They are all pluralist social and political systems characterised by considerable internal diversity. It has been suggested that such systems generally provide a weak context for explaining differences among individuals because there often can be greater diversity within them than between them[13]. Table 1 documents that there is indeed more explainable variation within these nations than across them, on two of three measures. The exception is gun ownership, which has a relatively strong "national" component. This could well reflect national variation in weapons policies, including both how difficult firearms are to obtain and the legal penalties associated with their use.

Table 1: Decomposition of individual and unexplained national level effects

	Personal precaution	Household protection	Gun ownership
Explained variance attributable to individuals and national crime rates	13.5%	5.8%	4.7%
Attributable to country of residence	0.2%	0.6%	5.9%
Multi-colinearity	1.4%	19.6%	6.0%
Total explained	15.1%	26.0%	16.6%

Conclusions

There are, of course, a number of limitations to the analysis presented here. First, the analytic model obviously did not include all of the factors that are known to affect levels of fear. One prominent omission is a collection of neighbourhood factors known as "disorders"[14]. Disorders are activities that run counter to the standards that people hold for behaviour in public places (including public drinking and street harassment), and physical conditions (such as vandalism and building abandonment) which signal that an area is in decline. The ICS also could not capture the extent to which work-related factors structure people's behaviour patterns,

13 Scheuch, E.K. (1990) "The development of comparative research: towards causal explanations" in Oyen, Comparative..., op. cit.

14 Skogan, W.G. (1990) Disorder and decline: crime and the spiral decay in American cities, Free Press, New York.

perhaps by exposing them to risks which they would prefer not to face[15]. People's activities might also be affected by exaggerated levels of crime coverage by mass media, although the bulk of the empirical evidence is that levels of fear are not directly influenced by newspapers or television[16]. Finally, there were no good measures of the extent to which ICS respondents were embedded in social networks, which might provide assurance and alleviate fear. And in addition to the known causal factors that are omitted, there is doubtless a long list of unknown causes of fear that also were omitted from the list. Together, these known and unknown omissions constitute an "omitted variable bias" which challenges the empirical inferences that can be made from the analyses reported here.

In addition to the omission of important factors from the analysis, there are also methodological reasons why the individual and contextual model employed to generate Figure 7 falls short of explaining all apparent national differences in behaviour. The most important is measurement error. Single-question measures of such complex issues as "taking an escort" undoubtedly fall far short of capturing the various and complex tactics that individuals adopt to protect themselves from crime. In addition, respondents were asked to characterise "the last time" they left home, which may not capture the regular and routine habits of many individuals. Despite these shortcomings, however, it is apparent that individual and contextual factors accounted for most national differences in behaviour.

15 Mayhew, P., D. Elliot and L. Dowds (1989) The 1988 British Crime Survey, HMSO, London; Lynch, J.P. (1987) "Routine activity and victimization at Work" *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 3:283-300.

16 For a review, see Fattah and Sacco, Crime..., op. cit.

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