



2010: Liège Welcomes the ESC

By Michaël Dantinne

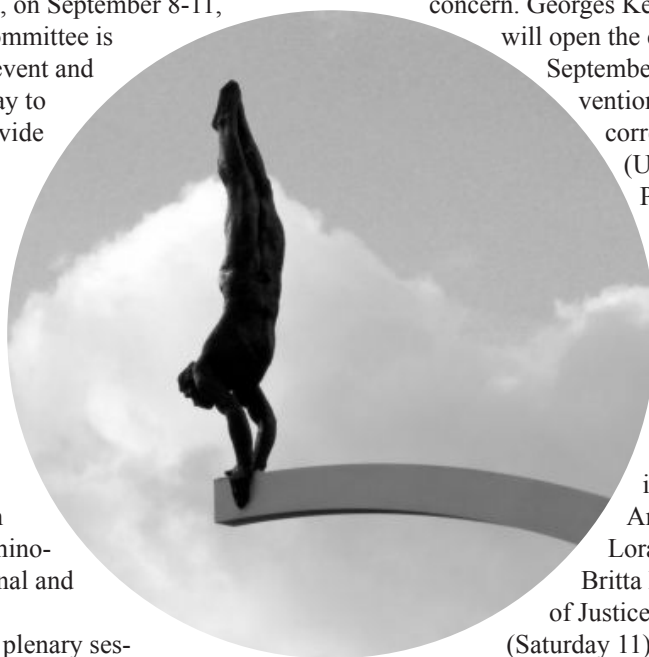
The ESC will hold its tenth anniversary annual conference in Liège, Belgium, on September 8-11, 2010. The local organizing committee is sparing no effort to host this event and preparations are well underway to welcome participants and provide optimal conditions.

The conference theme, "Crime and Criminology: From Individuals to Organizations", reflects a double concern. The first is the need for criminology as a science and criminologists as professionals to stick to a constantly evolving reality of crime. The second lies in the benefits that could result from building bridges between criminological studies on organizational and individual levels.

The organization of the plenary ses-

sions and the "casting" of plenary speakers reflect this last concern. Georges Kellens (University of Liège) will open the conference on Wednesday 8 September 2010 and will discuss prevention of human rights violations in correctional centres. Michel Born (University of Liège) and David P. Farrington (Cambridge University) will discuss juvenile delinquency and developmental theories (Thursday 9). Gary LaFree (University of Maryland) and Carlo Morselli (University of Montréal) will discuss organized forms of crime and criminals involved in them (Friday 10). And Katalin Gönczöl (Eötvös Lorand University, Budapest) and Britta Kyvsgaard (Danish Ministry of Justice) will discuss crime prevention (Saturday 11).

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Belgium and Criminology

By Michaël Dantinne and Judith Duchêne

Sonja Snacken observed in 2003 in this newsletter that "Criminology in Belgium has a long history". This history cannot be described as a long quiet river, however, as several major changes have occurred in the past ten years.

The roots of criminology in Belgium

In the late 1930s and the 1940s, schools of criminology were created in the law faculties of the main Belgian universities (Leuven, Brussels, Gent, and Liege). The classes were mostly focused on legal, medical, and psychological approaches to crime, and included courses in criminal anthropology that were most notably developed in Leuven by Professor De Greeff. The goal of criminology programmes was to introduce students to the crime problem, to train them in scientific methods, and to give them the tools to work as professionals and researchers in the criminal sciences. First considered as a complement to more traditional academic programmes, criminology progressively devel-

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APPLICATIONS SOUGHT: NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Michael Tonry's term as editor of this newsletter expires in Liege. People interested in taking over for a five-year term should contact Marcelo Aebi, ESC General Secretary (see p. 2 for address) by May 15. Good although not necessarily first-language English skills necessary. Experience with desktop publishing helpful.

Message from the President

Riots? What Does it Mean?

By Sophie Body-Gendrot

Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein cautioned about the power of language to make all look similar. A word can hide as much as it reveals. The choice of words therefore is not without consequences. Scholars often have to offer distinctions that have been short-cut by common language.

Take the term riot, for example. The media use elusive words and phrases, such as urban violence, outbursts, riots, disorders, disturbances, unrest, rebellion, uprisings, confrontation, and many more to refer to events that share the common characteristic that they disrupt public tranquillity and social order. Using one word or another indistinctly, they create a “spiral of sense” for the public, blurring isolated events that should have been analyzed according to the logics of the contexts in which they took place into one homogeneous narrative.

When disorders spread through French cities in fall 2005, a picture in the *New York Times* showed burning cars, above the caption: “Disorders in immigrant enclaves in France recall those of the 1960s in the U.S. or Los Angeles.” This comparison is partly irrelevant. The recent French and long-ago American events differed in scale, duration, intensity, destructiveness, political conditions, institutional responses, and categories of difference (involving race, gender, class, identity). The prevailing interpretations, in particular those referring to relative deprivation, are questionable.

Even the term riot is inappropriate in the French case, if we follow Tilly (2003, p. 8) for whom riot “embodies a political judgement rather than an analytical distinction,” or Hobsbawm (1966) who sees riots as a prelude to a negotiation.

Urban violence is hardly new to

cities and has a long history, but it is not frequent. Social order and disorder are deeply intertwined. That they are co-productions is too often forgotten.

Unstable city spaces emerge, become sites of conflict, and mutate.

There are numerous types of urban violence. I do not refer here to politicized, collective, sometimes violent, demonstrations between students and police in the late 1960s or to direct action groups in France, Italy, or Germany in the 1970s. I refer

rather to scattered forms of urban disorders as they appeared in the 1990s and more recently in France, the U.K., and the U.S.

What can we learn from this perspective of “urban violence” and what are the differences between what look like similar causes and processes with numerous variations among time, place, and social setting?

Often what looks similar in these incidents in diverse countries is the involvement of the police. Frequently the police attempt to enforce a law or a rule on offenders, whoever they are—a drunk driver, someone running a red light, or youth trying to escape the police with a stolen car or motorcycle.

Disorders often spring from law-enforcers’ efforts to maintain social control concerning behaviours the community—due to a lack of informal social control mechanisms—is too weak to handle (Rainwater 1970). But police handling of events can have very different outcomes.

The term “police” hides as much as it reveals. In L.A., the victims were not policemen but minority participants: 52 African-Americans died. In Brixton (1981) where most participants were white, 400 policemen were hurt. In 2005 in France, 201 policemen and 26

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Why Are Crime Rates Falling (or Are They)?

Many observers believe that crime rates in most developed countries peaked at some point in the 1990s, or in a few countries a bit later, and have since fallen, in some cases substantially. The greatest attention has been given to trends in the United States, where official crime rates

closely. Australian and English official data and victim survey findings also parallel American patterns though the declines started somewhat later.

Jan van Dijk first pointed out at least ten years ago that trends shown in data from the International Crime

Table 1. Crime Rates per 100, 000, Population, Index Offenses, 1980-2008

	1980	1983	1986	1989	1992	1995	1998	2001	2004	2008
Murders	10.2	8.3	8.6	8.7	9.3	8.2	6.3	5.6	5.5	5.4
Rape	36.8	33.8	38.1	38.3	42.8	37.1	34.5	31.8	32.4	29.3
Robbery	251.1	217	226	234	264	221	166	149	137	145
Agg. Assault	298.5	279	347	386	442	418	361	319	289	274
Burglary	1684	1339	1350	1283	1168	987	863	742	730	730
Larceny	3167	2871	3022	3190	3103	3043	2730	2486	2362	2167
Motor Vehicles	502	431	509	634	632	560	460	431	422	314

peaked in 1991-92. Since then rates for most major crimes have fallen by half or more. Data from the U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey reveal a similar pattern.

Crime rates in the United States began rising in the 1960s and—with a brief hiatus in the early 1980s—rose through 1991-92, and then began to decline. Table 1 shows crime rates for the seven Index Offenses at 3-year intervals from 1980 to 2008.

It soon became apparent that the decline was not an aberration or short-lived. In recent years a sizable American literature has accumulated that attempts to explain the American developments. The American literature is generally not very persuasive, because it looks for distinctively American explanations, such as mass incarceration, for trends that have occurred in many countries.

A similar, if lagged pattern appears to have occurred in many countries. Canadian official data and victimisation survey findings parallel American patterns

Source: Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online, Table 3.106.2008

Table 2. ICVS, One Year Prevalence Rates, by Country, in Percent, Ten Crimes, Various Years

Country	1989	1992	1996	2000	2005
Australia	23.3	24.0	--	25.2	16.3
Belgium	13.4	15.2	--	17.5	17.7
Canada	22.4	24.0	21.8	20.5	17.2
England	15.2	23.9	25.4	22.3	21.8
Estonia	--	27.6	28.3	26.0	20.2
Finland	13.0	17.2	16.2	16.6	12.7
France	16.4	--	20.8	17.2	12.0
Netherlands	21.9	25.7	26.0	20.2	19.7
Poland	--	24.6	20.5	19.1	15.0
Scotland	13.9	--	19.6	17.5	13.8
Sweden	--	18.7	22.0	22.6	16.1
Switzerland	13.0	--	21.6	15.6	18.1
USA	25.0	22.2	21.5	17.6	17.5

Victims Survey broadly parallel official recorded crime patterns in many countries. They show, for example that American aggregate rates as shown by ICVS data declined continuously throughout the five ICVS waves but that rates for most countries rose after 1989, to peak sometime in the 1990s and to fall after that.

Table 2 shows ICVS data on percentages of respondents reporting victimization by any of ten offenses for the 13 countries that participated in at

least four of the five waves. Rates were lower in 2005 compared with 1996 in all eleven countries that reported in those years. Among all countries, only Belgium fails to show a decline at some point in the five waves.

We asked several prominent scholars who have been trying to understand and explain what lies behind the apparent general decline in crime rates to offer their explanations. We write “apparent” because one of them, Martin Killias, is not convinced that there is a general decline in European crimes rates. Their explanations follow. ■

Source: van Dijk, Jan, John van Kesteren, and Paul Smit. 2007. Criminal Victimization in International Perspective (The Hague, Netherlands Ministry of Justice), Appendix table 9.1

WHY ARE CRIME RATES FALLING?



A Scandinavian Perspective

By Hanns von Hofer

This short commentary from a Scandinavian perspective restricts itself to a discussion of theft offences. Theft offences have become so numerous in Western-

type societies that they determine the shape of the aggregate crime panorama. The number of theft offences reported to the police has risen in all Scandinavian countries since at least the beginning of the 1960s. In Sweden, the increase started as early as the mid-1920s.

These developments are on the whole much the same as those found in other western European countries. It has also been claimed that police recorded theft trends in the 1990s may have been in the process of changing direction. The available data from national victim surveys corroborate this for Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. The case of Norway is not altogether clear.

The most common explanations for the observed increase of theft offences after World War II are major changes in the opportunity structure and social control, both formal and informal. But how to explain the levelling rates since around the 1990s?

From a theoretical point of view, crime is a social construct—labelled as “deviant” behaviour, which means that crime cannot increase endlessly, otherwise it would become “common” behaviour. This implies—in theory—that there has to be an upper level for every crime curve. Where exactly the upper limit lies empirically, is hard to say, because we lack reliable theories within the field. In mathematical terms, though, a rising crime curve should take the form of an S-curve (e.g. logistic curve) as shown in figure 1.

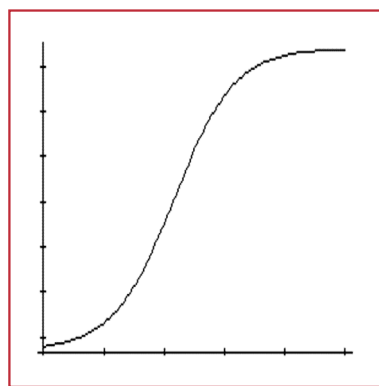


Fig. 1: A logistic Curve

The logistic model has very attractive properties and is widely used in different fields of scientific knowledge. For example, it is used to describe the spread of epidemics or of learning how new technologies substitute for each other or how products are introduced on the market.

All these different applications can be said to have parallels in criminological thinking. The rise of property crime after World War II can be interpreted in terms of an epidemic. Both lawbreakers and controllers can be said to

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A Missing Piece in the Crime Drop Puzzle

By Eric P. Baumer

It is tempting to take a stab at saying something creative and provocative about possible explanations for the crime drop that has been observed in the United States, many

parts of Europe, and elsewhere since the mid-1990s. I do not have a good explanation. What I comment on instead is the current role of the scientific enquiry in the study of crime trends, what I see as problematic about that role, and what I see as critical needs if we are to move beyond speculation.

I value highly the process of describing data patterns and generating hypotheses from and about those patterns. These are obviously critical stages in the scientific process, and they can be done reasonably well even with fragmentary data and relatively limited testing. The scholarly and policy communities have done a good job describing what appears to be a widespread crime drop since the mid-1990s, even though it took awhile for most of us to notice this trend and it continues to be a challenge to provide timely data on whether it has continued.

The list of possible explanations is long and impressive. For example, plausible arguments have been made about objective and perceptual economic shifts, changes in the quantity and quality of policing and punishment practices, the stabilization of drug markets, increases in immigration, changes in abortion laws, regulations of and changes in lead gas exposure, rising civility and self control, transformations of family arrangements, reduced alcohol consumption, and increased use of psychiatric pharmaceutical therapies.

My concern is that the list of possible hypotheses outnumbers the number of serious empirical tests of what may be going on and, even more troubling, the pioneering empirical efforts to date are rather selective in the factors considered. We who write about crime trends are in a bit of a rut, producing interesting hypotheses without much to stand behind them. When asked why crime is dropping we speculate, pointing to anything that happens to have trended in the same (or opposite) direction enough to have generated at least a moderate correlation. This has been a productive stage of reasoning, but it is time to begin meaningful and definitive testing of the main ideas in circulation.

There have been some good empirical studies of the 1990s crime drop, but it took too long to recognize that this was something that transcends national boundaries¹. To my knowledge, there has been just one multivariate cross-national study (Rosenfeld and Messner 2009). The results point to improved economic sentiment as an important factor in explaining declines in burglary in America and nine European nations. We need more such studies, and we need

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WHY ARE CRIME RATES FALLING?



The European Crime Falls: Security Driven?

By Jan van Dijk

The idea that crime is going down has reached the public eye, most notably in The Netherlands where the government has announced plans to close down several prisons due to a lack of prisoners. The concept of a crime drop poses two fundamental challenges to criminology. First, the discipline must reach consensus on the facts. Secondly, criminologists should, ideally, reach a global consensus on the main causes of the drop.

First the statistical facts. As discussed in detail elsewhere (van Dijk 2008) police statistics on recorded crimes cannot be safely used as measures of either the volume or trends in crime. Victimization surveys should be the primary source of information. Fortunately, these are now readily available.

The International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) results indicate a levelling off of the rise in crime and significant drops in burglaries and car thefts for most participating

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General Crime Drop: Where? When? Why?

By Martin Killias

Europeans tend to see their continent as something like a replication of America, with a time-lag of a few years. We are, therefore, inclined to presume automatically that crime “must” drop now also in Europe, since it started to do so in the United States more than a decade ago. Against such “natural” beliefs, data have little chance to prevail, even if they suggest nuances. We shall try the exercise.

Obviously and as we know from stock-exchange markets, no trend will eternally continue as it started. In the same vein, there is no reason why crime should increase way into the future. Even over the last 30 years, there were many crimes that decreased. This has been true for car theft after the generalisation of steering-wheel locks, for motorcycle theft after the adoption of laws making wearing crash-helmets compulsory, and for obscene phone calls after caller identification (caller ID) became a generally available option. During the same period, other offences,

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Are Crime Rates Falling in Italy?

By Eugenio Arcidiacono and Rossella Selmini

Marzio Barbagli in 1999 organized a conference in Bologna with the title “Why are Crime Rates Falling in the United States?”

Publication of the papers raised a widespread debate about crime trends (Barbagli 2000). Italy, however, at that time was experiencing a remarkable increase in crime rates. Increases, mostly for property crime, and particularly burglary, continued for nearly 40 years. Italy’s unexpectedly strong economic performance qualified it to join the club of high-crime societies (Garland 2001).

The data we discuss are based on crime reported to the police (the so called *Statistiche della delittuosità*). Data from national victimization surveys are available only for 1997 and 2002. Data from the 2007 survey are not yet

available. Figure 1 (on page 17) shows official data on recorded crime in Italy for 1967-2008. Part A shows recorded total crime in absolute numbers (not rates) with a steady rise through 1991 followed by a period of fluctuation and a second peak in 2007. Parts B and C show similar data for theft and robbery, which reveal a broadly similar pattern. Part D shows attempted and completed homicide.

Differently from the United States and many other European countries, which have experienced general crime declines in the past ten or fifteen years or longer, Italy from the 1970s through the ‘90s experienced an almost uninterrupted increase in property crimes (except bag-snatching). Some violent crimes, especially robberies, but not homicide, also increased. After 1991 the linear increase shifted to a more variable trend, with some ups and some

downs, but in 2007 a second peak was reached--even higher than in 1991.

In 2008 something different happened: a strong (8%) decrease occurred in the overall crime rate everywhere in the country, and even more pronouncedly in areas of Northern Italy that had witnessed in the past the largest increases. The 2008 drop was driven by major decreases in thefts and robberies (to the contrary, assaults were still increasing).

It is too early to say that crime is falling in Italy, following a more international tendency, but the strong and widespread change in 2008 raises the possibility. Preliminary data for 2009 provisionally confirm the possible fall. Only if this trend continues for some

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"2010: Liège" *Continued from page 1*

The conference will be held on the campus of the University of Liège, which is located in a forest environment outside the city (about 15 minutes by bus). The "Europe Lecture Halls" will be the "hot spot" of the conference: they will provide rooms and modern infrastructure for workshops, table sessions, and poster displays. This building offers a large entry hall that will be used for book exhibits sponsored by international and national publishers.

Information concerning venue, abstract submission, registration, and accommodation is available on the conference Website: www.eurocrim2010.com. Information concerning registration fees is shown in the table. Please note that fees include lunches on Thursday and Friday and a lot of extras. Do not hesitate to contact the organizers through the website if you have any question. Registration is, as usual, directly handled by the ESC Secretariat.

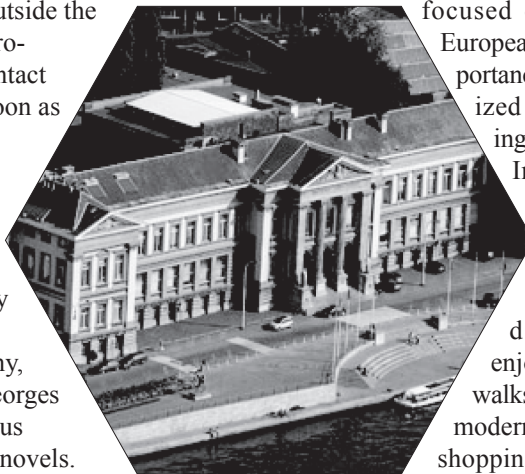
The local organizing committee is working hard to plan an exciting and unforgettable social programme. The Welcoming Reception, in the University of Liège exhibition centre, located in the centre of the city, will include a private viewing of an exhibition of photos related to prison and imprisonment.

The exhibition was organized by the School of Criminology of the University of Liège. It will continue for three months after the conference, and will be open to secondary school students as an initiative aimed to raise concern about prison questions.



Pre-conference events will also be held in this building. Anyone wanting to arrange a working group session or other meeting outside the main conference programme should contact the organisers as soon as possible.

The conference will be livened by social events. Each will relate to a distinctly Belgian theme: Belgian Gastronomy, Surrealism, and Georges Simenon, the famous writer of detective novels. Please note in your personal schedule that there will be a Belgian



official conference website (www.eurocrim2010.com). Called the "Cité ardente" (The Fiery City), Liège is

focused on being a European city of importance characterized by a melting-pot culture. In Liège, all is about atmosphere! Delegates will undoubtedly enjoy going for walks in the city's modern pedestrian shopping streets. A primary difficulty will

be having to choose evening (and night!) activities from among the numerous restaurants implanted all around the city and the hot vibe of the Carré district and its countless different-styled pubs. And maybe, at the end of their stay, they will meet *Tchantchès*, the folklore puppet that is one of the mascots of the city.

Liège offers a wide range of hotel categories, from two to four stars. As the conference will take place outside the city, shuttles will be organized to bring delegates to the conference venue. Members of the organizing team will be present at the different hotels to help delegates get to the campus.

Delegates must handle hotel reservations by themselves. We have pre-reserved rooms in all the hotels of the city and have negotiated preferential rates. On the conference Website you will find all the relevant information, including descriptions of the hotels, their locations, and the negotiated rates. To be sure you benefit from these preferential rates, please mention in your reservation the code "ESC 2010". As total hotel capacity is around 1,000 rooms, we strongly recommend early booking.

Preparations are well underway. Local organizers are working hard to make sure that each delegate will have a unique experience—scientifically and socially. We look forward to seeing you in Liège in September 2010. ■

Description	Before 1st July	After 1st July
ESC Members	180	255
ESC Student Members	90	130
Non-ESC Members	255	330
Non ESC-Student Members	130	170

beer bar on Thursday 9 at the end of the afternoon! How is that for a good example of the Belgian sense of hospitality?

Information about the gala dinner will be provided later. At this stage let's just reveal that its theme will be the tenth anniversary of the ESC annual conference and that it will happen in a unique and astonishing place located in the full centre of the city: quite usual to have some mystery around a birthday party!

Liège, the daughter of the Meuse river, is situated at the crossroads of an important motorway network linking Paris, Amsterdam, and Cologne. It is 100 kilometres from Brussels International Airport which is connected to Liège by an excellent railway network (about an hour and a quarter trip).

Useful information concerning travel to Liège is available on the

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM CRIMPREV



Déviance et Société.

L'évolution des usages de drogues et des politiques. De l'Europe aux Amériques

Eds. **Dominique Duprez** (CLERSÉ-Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Lille, France) and **Marie-Sophie Devresse** (University of Leuven, Belgium)

With the contributions of M.S. Devresse, D. Duprez, P. Bouhnik, S. Brochu, A. Cottino, J. Domingues Vargas, C. Jeanmart, M. Misse, M. Orsi, G. Pearson, F. Prina, K.H. Reuband and M.M.J. van Ooyen-Houben.

September 2008 vol. 32, n° 3 132pp ISBN 978-2-82570-955-9



Studi sulla Questione Criminale.

Subordinazione Informale e Criminalizzazione dei Migranti

Ed. **Dario Melossi** (University of Bologna, Italy)

With the contributions of D. Melossi, V. Ferraris, P. Saitta, S. Becucci, V. Ruggiero, M. Fitzgerald and F. Vianello.

December 2008 n° 3 128pp ISBN 978-88-430-5054-3



International Journal of Social Economics.

The Informal Economy and its Links to Organised Crime: Parts 1 and 2

Eds. **Paul Ponsaers** (University of Ghent, Belgium), **Joanna Shapland** and **Colin Williams** (University of Sheffield, UK)

With the contributions of P. Ponsaers, J. Shapland, C.C. Williams, H. van de Bunt, B. Dobovšek, P. Rodgers, J. Round and G. Vande Walle (Vol. 9); T. Sanders, T. Seddon, L. Massy, T. Vander Beken and H. Nelen (Vol. 10).

December 2008 vol. 35, n° 9 and 10 120pp ISSN 0306-8293



Violences à l'école : tendances européennes de la recherche

Eds. **Cécile Carra** and **Maryse Esterle-Hedibel** (University of Artois, Arras, France, and CESDIP-Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Guyancourt, France)

With the contributions of M. Esterle-Hedibel, C. Hayden, M. Kohout-Diaz, S. Fonseca Carvalhosa, C. Moleiro, C. Sales and M. Fuchs (n° 9); J. Deklerck, M. Verhoeven, E. Serhadlioglu, G. Steffgen, A. Rodriguez Basanta, A. Salarich I Banus, C. Carra, J.D. Lompo (n° 10).

September 2009 n° 9 120pp ISSN 1778-4387 / December 2009 n° 10 130pp ISSN 1778-4387

Electronic Publications : <http://www.ijvs.org/4-6037-Numeros-precedents.php>



Déviance et Société.

La justice pénale des mineurs en Europe et ses évolutions.

La criminalisation des mineurs et le jeu des sanctions

Eds. **Francis Bailleau** (CESDIP-Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Guyancourt, France), **Yves Cartuyvels** (Facultés Universitaires Saint Louis, Belgium) and **Dominique de Fraene** (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium)

With the contributions of D. Balahur, M.J. Bernuz-Beneitez, J. Castro, J. Christiaens, E. Dumortier, K. Filipic, R. Hastings, V. Irtis, S. Lewis and L. McAray.

September 2009 vol. 33, n° 3 162 pp ISBN 2-8257-0966-2



Varstvoslovje. Revija za teorijo in prakso zagotavljanja varnosti

Journal of Criminal Justice and Security

Relationships between the Private and Public Security Sectors

Ed. **Gorazd Meško** (University of Maribor, Slovenia), **Tom Cockerft** (Canterbury Christ Church University, UK), and **Tim Hope** (Keele University, UK)

The issue presents organisation and implementation of private security in SE Europe. The special issue consists of articles from FYR of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Slovenia.

September 2009 n° 2 88pp ISSN 1580-0253



Belgium and Criminology *Continued from page 1*

oped into a degree in its own right.

In the 1960s, Belgian criminology changed radically, widening to encompass the social sciences, and becoming increasingly more influential. Criminology enlarged its scope, reaching out to study deviance and the delinquent person. In the following decades, sociological approaches have thrown light on criminological subjects. Deviance was studied not only from the perspective of the offender, but also in ways that take account of community reactions towards deviant behaviour and crime. Sociological perspectives remain important today, and help us understand the social environments of crime and delinquency.

Educational programmes

The Bologna Reforms to higher education in Europe were implemented in Belgium in 2004. Since then, studies in criminology last 4 years in Dutch-speaking Flanders and 5 years in French-speaking Wallonia.

In Wallonia, the students who want to become “criminologists” have first to undertake a bachelor’s diploma in law, psychology, economics, or social and political sciences. In their third year, students can adopt a “minor” or an “option” in criminology. These optional courses “fertilize” bachelor studies by throwing a criminological light on important topics and serve as the first step in the criminology curriculum.

After obtaining the diploma in their main field, students can register for the master’s in criminology which lasts two years. Students who have obtained a three-year non-university degree also can join the master’s programme after one preparatory year. Once in the master’s programme, students can choose between two options: the specialisation (where they learn both theory and concrete applications) and research focus (where they acquire methodological techniques and critical knowledge to advance to further research activities including a PhD). The richly interdisciplinary programme examines issues in law, sociology, psychology, methodology, psychiatry, and

forensic sciences to give criminologists exposure to a wide range of tools for understanding the complexities of crime and delinquency.

In Flanders, academic programmes in criminology are available from the first year of the bachelor’s course. During their first three years, they are exposed to the interdisciplinary nature of criminology as a science; juggling philosophy, pedagogy, statistics, law, sociology, anthropology, and economics with the concepts and preoccupations of criminology. During the master’s year, students can choose among several optional courses.

The organization of doctoral studies slightly differs in the two communities. In the French-speaking part of the country, there is one doctoral school in criminology jointly managed by representatives of the three universities involved in criminology: Université de Liège (ULG), Université catholique de Louvain-la-neuve (UCL), and Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). This doctoral school, placed under the banner of the National Science Foundation, organizes training and high-level seminars for PhD students. In the Flemish part of the country, each university (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universiteit Gent, and Vrij Universiteit Brussel) has its own doctoral school and offers training and seminars for PhD students.

Research Funding

There are four traditional sources of research funding. At the individual level, criminologists can apply for grants from the national science foundations (FNRS and FWO) and the universities. These grants are usually used to support PhD projects.

At the project level, criminological departments of the six universities must obtain external research funding. One source is the Belgian Science Policy Office, a national public service aimed at fostering and coordinating research. Acting on its own behalf, or on behalf of other federal agencies, it finances short- and sometimes, medium-term interuniversity and inter-regional research.

Ministries also sometimes offer funding for research. For example, each year, the Ministry of Interior releases a call for research proposals in seven or eight predetermined fields. This funding usually involves very short-term projects and tight budgets.

Regional and local authorities also sometimes offer financial support. Due to the limited scope of their political authority, this kind of financing opportunity is scarce and generally involves restricted budgets.

Funding in the “criminological research market” has become more difficult to obtain during the past ten years. There are several reasons for this. One is the emergence of a scientific policy emphasis oriented more towards physical and biological sciences than towards social sciences. This has created increased competition among universities for scarce resources.

Competition will undoubtedly increase. A kind of cultural acceptance of private companies performing criminological research has emerged; such companies have already gained access to the training market relating to crime and delinquency.

Tighter financing in a tighter market, combined with increasing administrative burdens related to budgets, has heightened dependency of universities on public authorities. This could easily threaten the independence of research and researchers. One consequence is a serious decrease in fundamental research in favour of applied research. This has sometimes resulted in research projects that should be assimilated to the externalization of administrative tasks.

Research Priorities

Some mention should be made of the topics targeted by criminological research. Since the mid-1990s, Belgium has experienced, a series of crimes (the Dutroux case, the murder of Joe van Holsbeeck, Hans Van Temsche,...) that has seriously affected the country. Most importantly, citizens’ confidence in the capacity of the state to ensure their security and run a fair and effective justice system has been

undermined. As a result, many legislative and institutional changes have occurred and universities have been asked to evaluate their implementation and effects.

One major area concerns the penal system and alternative sanctions. This has resulted in several studies, among others, on penal mediation, community service orders, and restorative justice. Many projects have focused on juvenile delinquency, trying to identify the reasons for violence, the influence of the social and urban environment in the emergence of deviant acts, and the effects of restorative justice. There is however a complete absence of large-scale research on fundamental questions such as the impact of these alternatives, or imprisonment, on recidivism.

A second focus is the functioning of the police and their relation to the public. As a consequence of the Dutroux case, Belgian police were

reorganized 1998, with a differentiation between local and federal police services. Several projects have sought to identify the duties of each service. Police handling of cultural diversity (interaction between police and migrants, police intervention in some riots, police arrests, the police presence in some districts...) is another important subject being studied.

Financial and economic crime forms another major field of interest for Belgian criminologists who have developed a research tradition that is recognized internationally.

The mediatisation of crime and the sensational nature of this kind of information is a universal phenomenon that naturally also affects Belgium and has resulted in several research projects.

Criminological research in Belgium covers a broad range of topics. Every "classical" theme seems to be studied. Belgian criminologists can

rely on two main national journals to publish their results: *La Revue de droit penal et de criminologie* (in French), which celebrated its 100th birthday in 2007, and *Panopticon* (in Dutch), which was founded in 1979.

Criminology in Belgium has a long history and both in university curricula and in research has become a well-developed discipline. Due to political and sociological events, and the reconfiguration of the research market, this story has not been a quiet one. Criminologists sometimes have to face epistemological attacks that raise doubts about the discipline's true scientific nature. And they must make daily efforts to be recognized as the right persons at the right places for jobs related to crime and delinquency. Maybe the light that will be shed on Belgian criminology through the hosting of the ESC annual Conference in Liège in September 2010 will strengthen the discipline in Belgium. ■

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President's Message *Continued from page 2*

firemen were wounded, but the disorders caused no deaths (Waddington et al. 2008, p. 5).

How outbursts are managed varies depending on police leadership, initiatives, accountability, and ethics, and on public expectations. Sometimes stops and searches in neighbourhoods reveal more about modes of policing than about the race or ethnicity of those who are stopped.

The labelling of participants also is deceptive. In most interpretations of the L.A. events, the race and ethnicity of the participants, some of them linked to competing gangs, was a key element. In Britain in the 1990s, white youths clashed with the police. By contrast, in Bradford, Oldham, and Burnley between 2001 and 2005, far-right activists opposed immigrant youth. "It is important to view the riots as an expression of identity politics exacerbating the potentiality of conflicts," Kalra and Rhodes (2008, p. 51) observe, "powerfully echoed by biased news reporting".

In Germany also, the presence of people of the far right in conflict with immigrant youth marked episodes of collective violence. In France, however, the youth fighting the police and targeting symbols of the state identify with the collective space of the "banlieues". This identification overrides religious, ethnic, or racial differences.

Factors of location, age, and socioeconomic inequalities intersected in the production of cleavages. As for ethnicity, it is no more fixed than the situations in which it is produced and reproduced, in particular in interactions with the police and other state agents. What a minority of mobilized young men, particularly those least connected to the mainstream and least organized, wanted was to express their pain and anger, and to be seen on television, to "exist."

But they had no message, no potential for negotiation, no ambitious goals, no leaders and no organization, unlike the Black Panthers or to some extent the Bloods and Crips in Los Angeles. Acting out after a very emotional incident, in which two youth, chased by the police, were accidentally electrocuted, young people burned cars and engaged

in "irrealistic conflicts." Resorting to aggressive action per se (Coser 1982) was part of their limited repertoire, but numerous other youth, beyond working class backgrounds and territorial identities, identified with them.

Given errors made by police, poor relations between youth and the police in the concerned areas, and the isolation from adults in which these youth operate, violence advanced without impediment. The media acted as a magnifying glass night after night, creating a unifying narrative and sense from what were in fact isolated episodes. Some individuals took advantage of the chaos to exercise personal revenge, to burn things, and to vandalize public and private goods. These forms of 'crumbly' violence are the most difficult to control. They call for fast and tailor-made responses that the upper echelons of the bureaucratic state are seldom able to provide.

Explanations linking all these events often incorporate the theory of relative deprivation. It emphasizes mounting and cumulative burdens on specific groups in specific places. The burdens may come from shrinking public subsidies, or from the concentration and isolation of groups.

In the case of L.A., however, deprivation theory may not be relevant. The unrest did not occur between 1982 and 1988 when federal help shrank or in the 1990s, when urban "hardship" in 55 major cities in the U.S. was roughly in the middle (Body-Gendrot and Savitch 2010).

In France, the usual high-risk zones supported by governmental subsidies did not erupt in 2005 whereas new problem areas did (due to other causes that cannot be developed here). The explanation of shrinking governmental help is not valid either, since budget cuts for community organizations supposed to prevent risks of social disintegration occurred as early as 2002, a rather quiescent time.

Space probably plays a major part in the analysis. It explains the background of segregation, isolation, and surveillance. It provides a clue to understanding which "weapons of the weak" are mobilized and where violence

occurs. It reveals identities and tensions between actors of violence and victims living side by side with accumulated memories of past grievances.

Conceptions of space ownership contradict shared visions of public space. "Spatiality is always and everywhere full of power because it is constituted out of relations of dominance and subordination" (Massey 1997, p. 114)

The murky problem of why unrest occurs can be illuminated by thinking about the obverse: why does it not occur more often in situations when we might expect it to happen or, as is sometimes asked, "why do men revolt?" or, why do they not revolt more often? It may be suggested that urban violence is catalyzed through a labyrinth of relatively discreet, highly dispositional events which, at a defining moment, fold into one another. This combination of chance, context, and causation within an interactive framework should guide research.

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"Security Driven?"

Continued from page 5

nations¹. Trends in individual countries such as Switzerland and Ireland (both formerly low-crime nations) may be somewhat delayed but a drop in crime around 1995-2000 seems to be the norm.

Those wary of the relatively small sample sizes of the ICVS can check its results against findings of national victimisation surveys. These have been annually carried out among huge samples of the public in several European countries, including England and Wales, The Netherlands, and several Scandinavian countries, for fifteen years or more. Figure 1 shows results for burglary.

The available, survey-based evidence shows unambiguously that in most European countries household burglary rates turned around in 1995-2000 (and car theft five years earlier). It is not only rates of property crime that were universally lower in 2010

than in 1995. The statistics show that crime increased linearly between 1980 and 1995 and has decreased since then.

This universal curvilinear pattern poses a well-defined question for criminology theory. What

known criminogenic factors increased for twenty years or more, peaked around 1995, and have declined ever since?

The crime drop in the USA started some years earlier. Our American colleagues have had an enviable head start in the search for explanations. Their favourite explanatory factors are a reduction in the crack trade, increased incarceration, better policing, economic growth, and liberalization of abortion laws. From the European competition the crack factor can be eliminated at the outset since there never was a crack epidemic in Europe.

Liberalization of abortion laws seems an unlikely contender because its timing shows huge variation across Europe (in some countries abortion was liberalized before this happened in the

USA and in others it was never liberalized).

In my tentative view, the claims for better policing and increased incarceration, though obviously valid to some extent in the United States, are not very promising in a European context either. These factors show diverging trends in Europe (for example, incarceration rates tripled in the UK and the Netherlands, dropped in Finland, and remained stable in France).

The conventional economic explanations seem equally insufficient to explain the crime curve under scrutiny. Obviously, living conditions across Europe have not linearly deteriorated since 1980. And they have not improved linearly since 2000 either. According to economic cycle theories, crime rates should now be booming because of the

eventually begin to fall due to reductions in opportunities caused by improved self protection (van Dijk 1994).

When crime rates go up, marginal benefits of protective measures increase and at a certain point outweigh marginal costs. Potential victims will be ready to invest in security. When levels of crime prevention rise, the costs/benefits ratio of offending becomes less favourable. At some point offending starts to become economically unattractive. At this juncture crime rates will start to fall.² As was to be expected, the drop started in the USA a bit earlier than in Europe.

Statistics at the macro level, collected by the ICVS, confirm that across the developed world households have stepped up their investments in protection against property crime since 1980 in response to rising losses. I have

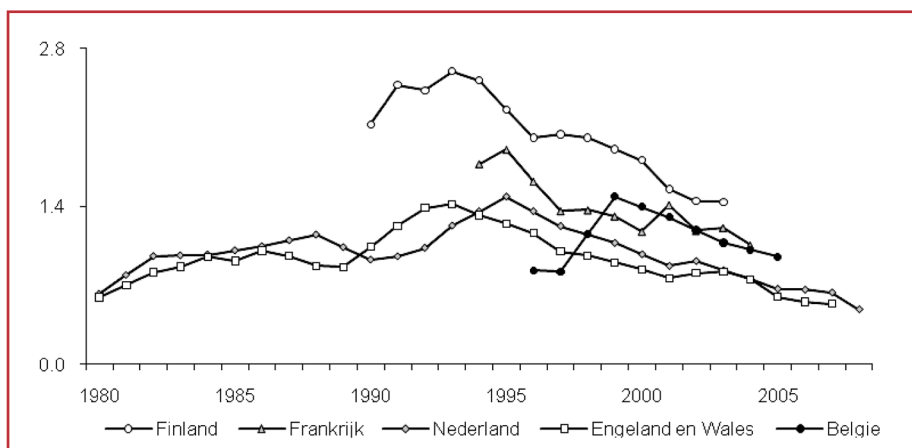
dubbed this trend "responsive securitization" (van Dijk 2007). It may well have been the main driver of the crime falls.

Some American commentators are sceptical about the role of security. But several studies have demonstrated that the fall in car thefts has indeed been

largely caused by in-built security (e.g., Farrell et al. 2008). In a recent study, Ben Vollaard (2010) of Tilburg University assessed the effects of legislation that made state-of-the-art household security mandatory in houses built after 1999 in The Netherlands. He shows that burglary victimization rates in newly built houses were a quarter lower than in the older ones. There were no signs of displacement to other neighbourhoods in the city. The implementation of the new legislation alone has prevented the commission of 10,000 burglaries. The reduction has caused a drop in national burglary rates of over 7 percent.

This shows that large-scale implementation of security measures can have considerable effects on rates of property crimes. It suggests that crime

Figure 1: Burglary Trends in Rates of Victimization



drops in Europe might be expected to be most pronounced in countries where situational crime prevention has been promoted as an official policy priority (e.g., the UK and The Netherlands) and less pronounced in countries where situational crime prevention has been ignored or resisted (e.g., Denmark).

The hypothesis of security-driven crime falls deserves further empirical testing. If it is confirmed, the policy implications are far-reaching. It would suggest that governments in Europe and the United States have unduly relied on the interventions by expensive state institutions such as police forces and prison departments to reduce crime. They might have gained better returns on investment if they had assisted the gentle but forceful hand of crime prevention rather than the iron fist of arrest and incarceration.

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*** *** ***

(Endnotes)

1. Preliminary results were published in "What Comes Up, Goes Down" (ESC Newsletter, December, 2006). In January 2010 Andri Ahven of the Ministry of Justice in Tallin informed me that the latest repeat of the ICVS in Estonia in 2008 confirmed a continued crime drop in the country.
2. The costs/benefits ratios of offending are obviously also influenced by the opportunity costs of offending and by external factors such as policing and penal deterrence but in my view self protection by potential victims is the key factor in the equation. ■

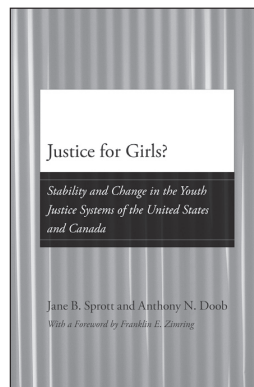
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Justice for Girls?

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Jane B. Sprott and Anthony N. Doob

With a Foreword by Franklin E. Zimring

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"Missing Piece"

Continued from page 4

to begin asking a broader set of questions.

The main factors mentioned as potentially relevant can be categorized as either "period" conditions that reduce the likelihood of criminal behavior among contemporary populations, or "cohort-based" explanations that focus primarily on whether and why the people who have moved into high-crime age groups during the 1990s and 2000s have a lower propensity for criminal behavior than those who preceded them.

The period conditions include factors thought to enhance social control among contemporary populations and others that are believed to reduce motivations, pressures, and opportunities for crime (e.g., the nature of policing, incarceration, economic conditions, and drug-market activity). The propensity-based explanations encompass arguments about a possible abortion dividend, reduced exposure to toxins, increased use of anxiety and depression drugs, and changes in socialization on matters such as conflict management. These arguments ultimately attribute changes in crime over time to cohort differences in levels of self-control or in norms about conflict resolution. Until recently, this brand of argument has been a favorite mainly of crime historians who have applied it to centuries-long reductions in violence, but it has become increasingly popular also in discussions of the very recent crime drop.

Each of these general approaches appears to have merit, but they are rarely integrated within a study and, even worse, they tend to be applied individually in a relatively narrow way. Studies that highlight so-called period conditions tend to focus on just a few of them, often assuming at least implicitly that the propensity for crime has remained constant. On the flip-side, cohort-type studies that bring to light the

f o r

possibility that propensities crime have changed substantially over time because of shifts in an earlier era (e.g., abortion laws or regulation of lead exposure) usually pay little attention to period conditions and seem not to be taken very seriously by the larger scholarly community.

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Tchanchès--- Folklore puppet

C o n -
ducting comprehensive research crime trends is and challenging, especially in a cross-national setting. But we need to direct more of our

attention to that effort, lest we find ourselves at the same point several years from now when the next and possibly different crime trajectory is described. There has been a steady stream of good cross-national time-series research over the past decade or so; while it focuses on the increases in crime observed in many places between the 1960s and 1990s, it demonstrates capacity for doing similar types of research on the decline that has followed.

This body of work should provide a foundation rather than a blueprint for a new generation of crime-trends research. That foundation would encompass the usual causal suspects (e.g., employment or other economic indicators, incarceration, policing, etc.), but we should add to this many other factors that have been argued as keys to the contemporary crime drop.

For example, most developed nations have fielded reputable social surveys over the past few decades and many have participated in integrated efforts of this type (e.g., the World Values Survey). If changes in civility are important, we ought to be able to extract a relevant indication of those changes in such surveys and be able to integrate that information into a conventional crime-trends study.

If there have been notable shifts in self-control over the past few decades, surely this could be detected by comparing surveys of young people throughout the period. If contemporary populations in age groups that typically account for the majority of serious crimes are different in other ways from previous generations (e.g., in how they've been raised, how they spend their time, etc.), this too should show up in available data that could be integrated into the traditional pooled cross-sectional time series study of crime trends.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of topics for future research. Rather, I am trying to drive home the point that we can and should now move forward in the scientific process in studying crime trends, continuing to develop interesting hypotheses but devoting more time to testing them.

The crime drop of the last decade or so is like a really good mystery novel that beckons you to look at the last few pages to learn what happened and why. Unfortunately, in this case the book is only half-written. Count me among those who would like to contribute to writing the second half.

Endnotes

1 For a review, see *Understanding Crime Trends*, edited by Goldberger and Rosenfeld (2008) and published by The National Academies Press.

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"Where? When? Why?" Continued from page 5

such as burglary, robbery, and violent offences against the person continued to increase way beyond the 1990s—at least according to police statistics.

The usual reaction in the field of criminology was to point to many well-known deficiencies of counts of

Fig. 1 police-recorded crime. In the face of the ap-
(Source: ICVS Database)

take, for every country, available ICVS data from 1989 to 2005 (or from the first to the most recent year available), and if we group countries into those with increasing or decreasing trends (i.e., with changes in any direction of more than 20 percent), we see that countries with increasing rates of assault (left side of figure 1) are the clear majority. For robbery, the picture is somewhat more balanced, but there are still as many

countries with increasing trends as there are with stable or decreasing trends together.

Given that police-recorded assaults and robberies increased in most European countries during the same period (*European Sourcebook*, editions of 2003 and 2006), there is little doubt that at least these two offences did not decrease before 2005. It is equally true, however, that trends were not uniform, and that raises the interesting question why trends (e.g. in robbery) were so strikingly dif-

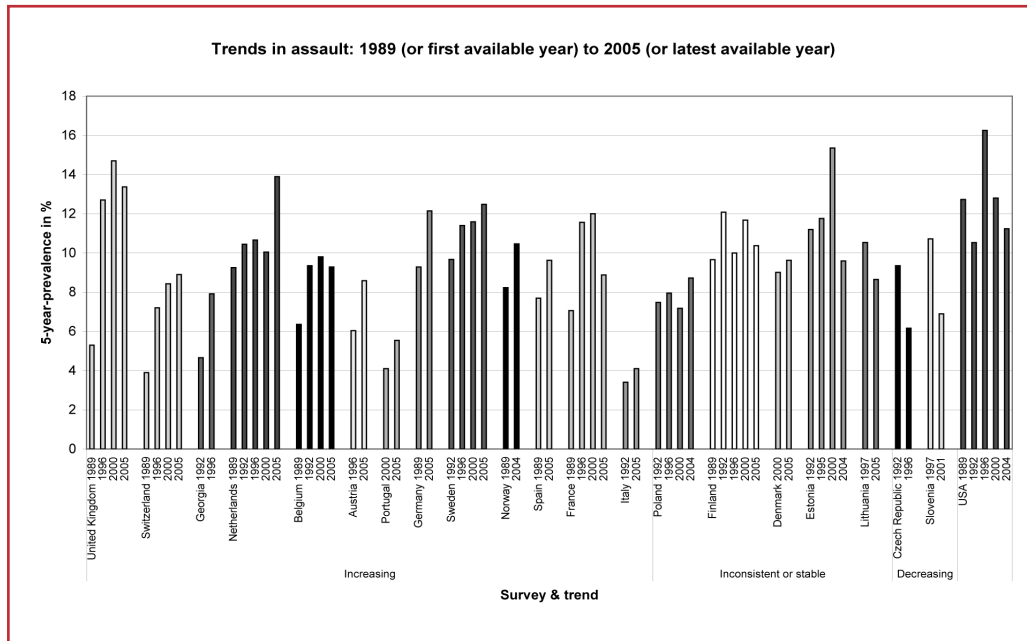
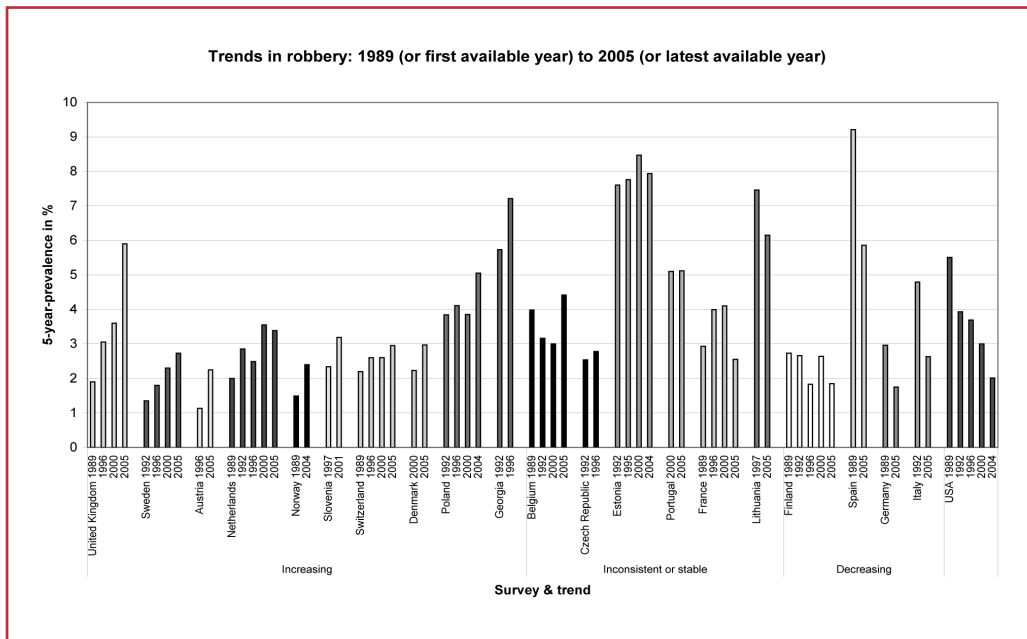


Fig. 2 parent contradiction of increasing police-
(Source: ICVS Database)

ferent in apparently similar countries such as Sweden and Finland, Belgium and the Netherlands, or Austria and Ger-

many. Beyond Europe, the strong decrease of robbery in the United States is even more intriguing.

What has been the trend since 2005? Unfortunately, new Europe-wide survey data will be missing for some years to come. However, data on police-recorded offences collected for the 2010 edition of the *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics* show, for the years 2003 to 2007, stable trends for completed homicide, assault, rape including



recorded violence and stable trends in victimisation and self-report surveys, a majority of criminologists, intuitively more sympathetic to survey counts than to statistics, did not have much trouble dismissing increasing trends of violence shown in official counts.

However, what does the evidence actually show? If we

sexual assault, and decreasing trends for robbery (particularly in Eastern Europe) and theft (including domestic burglary). However, the picture is far from uniform, and there are several countries where trends do not match the mainstream. With police counts starting to show decreasing trends, we can expect the debate on their validity as trend indicators to

come to a sudden end. This leaves time and energy to look for explanations.

Perhaps the real challenge of European trends is how we can explain the diverging picture our continent leaves in this area. For property offences, trends are easy to explain in terms of changing opportunity structures, either under the form of availability of goods and targets or in terms of increased measures to protect property in shops, private dwellings, or public places. For violent offences, however, such explanations are hard to find and even harder to document. It certainly makes sense that the revolution of leisure time, extending going out and drinking later into the evening, way

beyond mid-night in many – but not all – European cities, has contributed to increased violence in the streets.

Unfortunately, however, we were so busy questioning the validity of police-indicators that we missed the moment to collect adequate indicators of leisure-time activities. Whatever we find nowadays, it will be hard to collect data for the early 1990s before these new trends started. But it might be worth trying, particularly if such an endeavour is to be done in many cities and coordinated throughout the continent. In this way, it might become possible better to understand why violence increased in some places but not in others – or why we may see a drop in the near future. ■

"Crime Rates in Italy?" *Continued from page 5*

years could we eventually say that Italy is following a general pattern, with the delay that often characterizes Southern European areas with respect to other Western countries. The results of the third wave of the national victimization survey will be also helpful in confirming the drop.

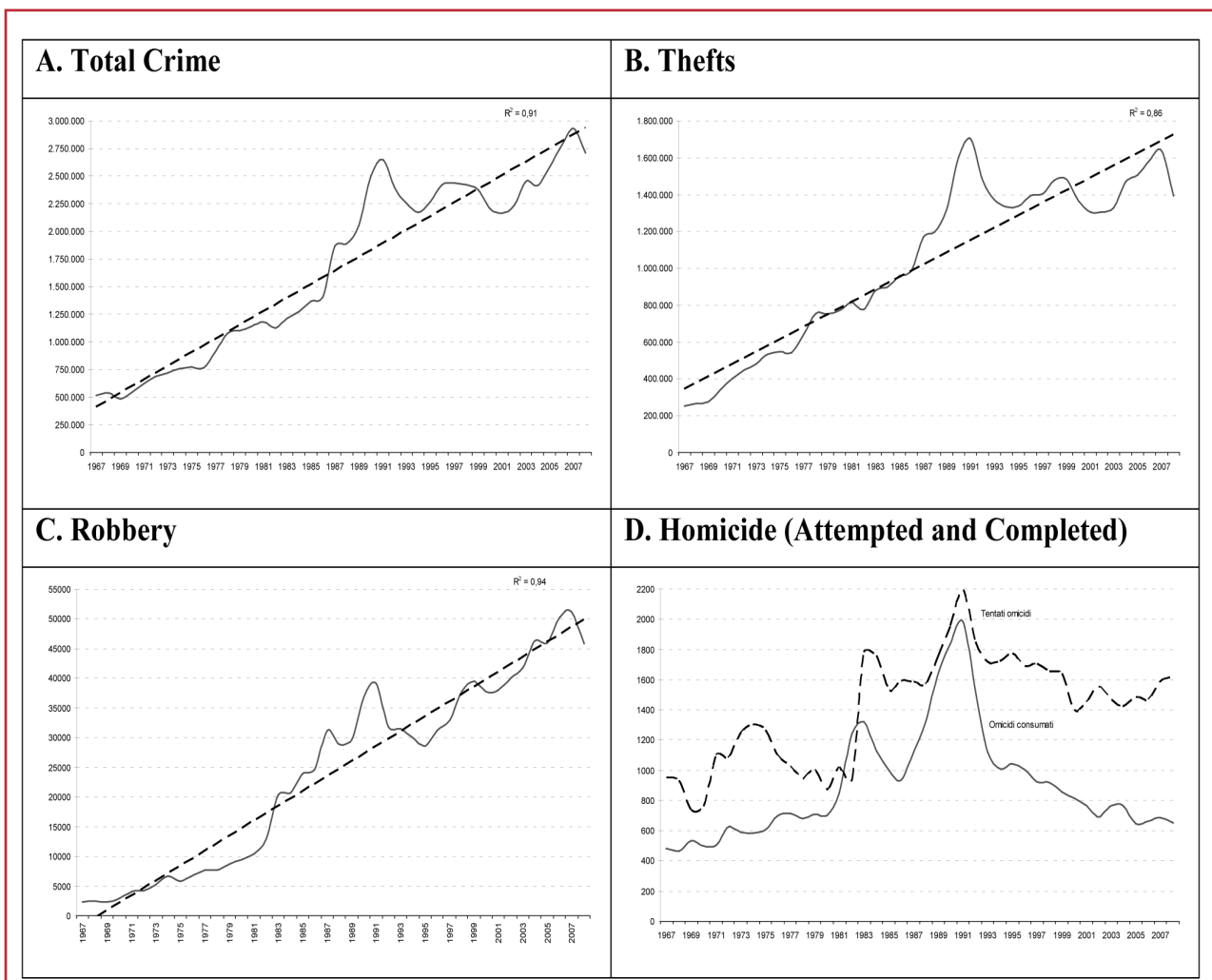
A closer look at specific crimes shows that Italian trends may not be so different from the rest of Europe. The difference may concern when the drop begins. Burglary and car theft, for instance, were falling in Italy by the end of the

'90s (figures 2 and 3), and bag-snatching dropped earlier (figure 4). Homicide trends also are not different than in the rest of Europe. So the differences between Italy and other countries become thinner when we look at specific crimes.

Some of the explanations offered for the decreases of those specific crimes are probably also true for Italy: changes in offenders' behaviours, improved security measures for cars and buildings, target hardening, and changes in victims' lifestyles.

Continued on next page

Fig. 1: Recorded Crimes, Italy 1967-2008



Source: Minister of the Interior and Justice. Different years.

The 2008 Italian drop was largely the product of a sharp fall in pickpocketing and “other thefts.” Drops in pickpocketing and minor theft might be the result of an increase in people’s self-awareness about their possessions, and a consequence of an uninterrupted nationwide campaign to promote self-protection and adoption of crime-avoidance strategies.

The drop is too recent and too

short to justify a search for more general, exhaustive, and better explanations – including the effects of the economic crisis and the reduction in overall consumption. What is clear, however, is that criminal policies had no effect on the 2008 drop, even assuming that they could have one. Legislative changes aimed at making punishment harsher and strengthening law enforcement were adopted only late in 2009, a year after

the overall drop and several or many years after drops in particular crimes.

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Fig. 2: Burglary, Rates per 1, 000 households, 1970-2008

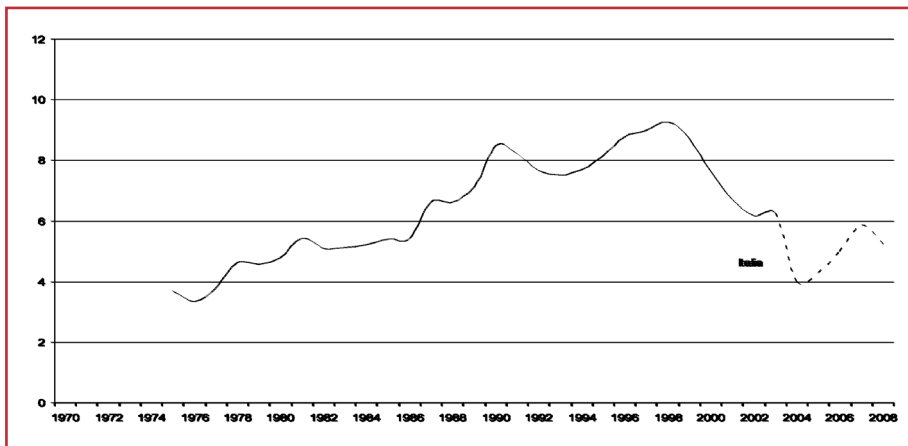


Fig. 3: Car Theft, Rates per 1, 000 vehicles, 1970-2008

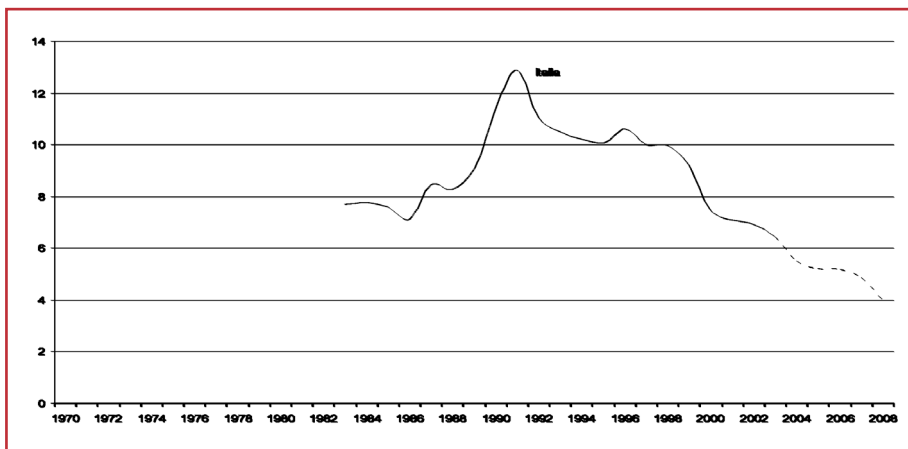
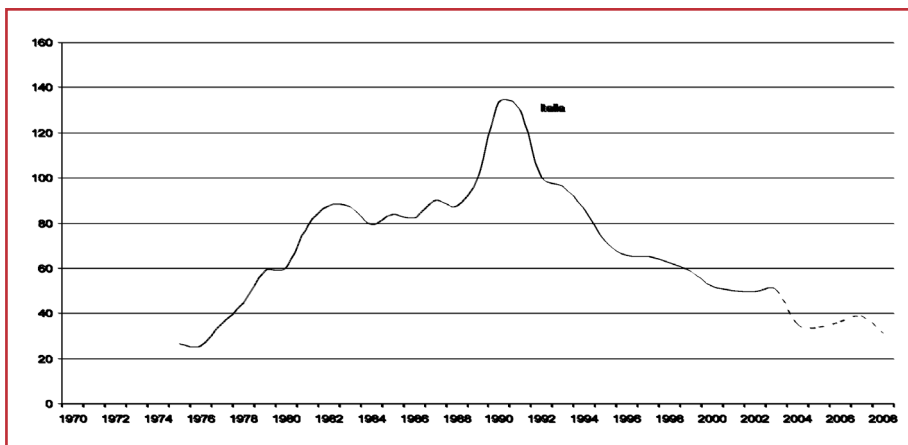


Fig. 4: Bag Snatching, 1970-2008



(Source: Minister of the Interior and Justice. Different years.)

"Scandinavian Perspective" Continued from previous page X

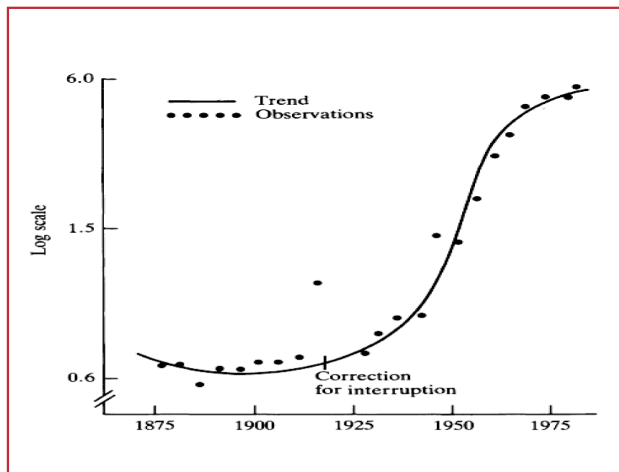
learn “how to” commit theft and “how to” prevent it. The course of new products on the market (e.g. motor vehicles after World War I) is a very telling case of how the opportunity structure can change.

So, if the S-curve model is a valid representation of, say, Scandinavian theft trends, then we are now the witnesses of an inflection process that started long before the 1990s—in the Swedish case probably as early as in the 1960s and 1970s (as already proposed more than 20 years ago; see figure 2 from von Hofer and Tham 1989, p. 34).

The logic of the S-curve model suggests that it would be futile to look for a few single causal factors that could explain the observed inflection process. The change in a single variable will rarely dominate, since the series lie at the end of a long causal chain, with their values determined by various variables that often work in different directions (McDowall 2002, pp. 728-29). Thus, the series will move with the general constellation of prevailing forces and the S-curve should be seen as the product of incremental changes in the social fabric of the society in question.

Theoretically, either the number of people who steal or the frequency of individual stealing will stabilize or some action will be redefined as not criminal by the general public, trade, and industry or the authorities. Moreover, control measures of various kinds will be implemented in order to

Fig. 2
Sweden.
Theft Convictions, 1875-1985, per 100, 000



hold crime down. But, as said before, it is impossible to predict where the point of inflection actually lies. At best, we are able to determine it *ad hoc* with the wisdom of hindsight.

To be sure, the proposed model does not imply that (theft) crime has to increase everywhere, and the shape of the S-curve can vary widely between countries. The model predicts, however, that rising crime trends will stop rising at some point of time. So, the model is not a causal model, but a model describing the probable course of a natural process. Unfortunately, since we lack good theories, it also can happen

that the process of rising crime starts all over again after a while – like the recurrent crises in our Western-style bubble economies.

*** *** ***

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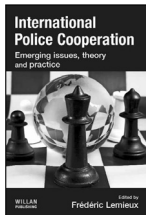
von Hofer, H., and H. Tham. 1989. “General Deterrence in a Longitudinal Perspective. A Swedish Case: Theft, 1841-1985.” *European Sociological Review* 5(1):25-45.

See <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/LogisticEquation.html>. Accessed January 17, 2010. ■

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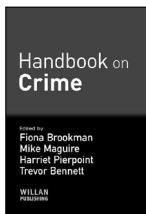


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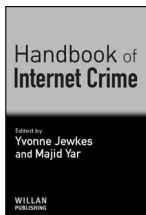


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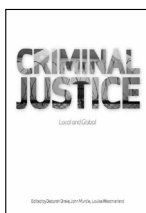


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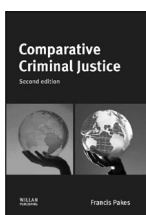


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