

## NSfK Meeting minutes 1/2024

# Nordic victimization surveys

Contact seminar: 31 October – 1 November 2023

Host and minute taker: Anne-Julie Boesen Pedersen

### Names of Nordic delegate members:

Rannveig Þórisdóttir (IS), National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police (Ríkislögreglustjóri)

Jónas Orri Jónasson (IS), Reykjavik Metropolitan Police (Lögreglustjórinn á höfuðborgarsvæðinu)

Matti Näsi (FI), University of Helsinki (Helsingin yliopisto)

Sanna Wallin (SE), The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå)

Maria Molin (SE), The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå)

Mette Løvgren (NO), Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet)

Britt Kristine Ludvigsen (NO), The Ministry of Justice and Public Security (Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet)

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Helena Birk Oxlund (DK), Funen Police (Fyns Politi)

Jonas Mannov (DK), Danish National Police (Rigspolitiet)

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*The opinions expressed in these meeting minutes are the author's own and do not reflect the view of the Nordic Research Council for Criminology.*

## Background

Crime victimization surveys have been conducted in all Nordic countries for several years. While some countries have a longer tradition for conducting crime victimization surveys than others, it is acknowledged that the crime victimization surveys are of great importance and therefore widely used and referenced in all of the Nordic countries.

The overall purpose of the seminar was to share experiences and discuss problems related to crime victimization surveys in the Nordic countries. The seminar was divided into four sessions over two days. The structure of the discussions followed this agenda in an informal manner:

1. The Nordic crime victimization surveys: The purpose of this session was to give an overall introduction to each Nordic country's crime victimization survey. Each country therefore presented an overview of their surveys, data, and methods (such as sampling strategies).

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2. The questionnaire: The starting point for this session was the questionnaire. Each country presented their respective questionnaire and considerations regarding the included/excluded types of crime.
  3. Sampling and data collection: This session focused on challenges regarding decreasing response rates and initiatives to counter these challenges.
  4. Summary and the future.

## Outcomes

### Crime victimization surveys and criminal law:

- There was overall agreement that the questions regarding the various types of crime included in the crime victimization surveys should represent the definitions in the respective countries' criminal law rather than people reporting victimization by their own definitions.

### Comparative crime victimization surveys:

- The possibilities of comparing results across the different countries' crime victimization surveys were discussed. For example, it was proposed that the countries agreed on common measures for cybercrime. However, it was concluded that new common measures for cybercrime and various types of crime in general might be unfeasible – to practical and legislative reasons – and it was therefore suggested that the countries should look into ways of comparing the already existing measures and surveys.

### Problem of decreasing response rates:

- Various methods and strategies for addressing the problem of decreasing response rates were presented and discussed. Some examples are priming the respondents by sending a letter with an initial inquiry before digital follow-ups or reminders, using a group of respondents who have agreed to participate in surveys beforehand, referring to the previous survey's main results, offering rewards, and splitting up the survey in several parts.

### Representativeness in crime victimization surveys:

- There was an overall discussion of how to improve sample representativeness in the crime victimization surveys. Strategies such as oversampling otherwise underrepresented groups and utilizing data on methods of reporting were proposed. Other issues, such as whether phone respondents underreport violence and other serious crimes compared to web respondents, were also discussed.

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- Finally, using control questions to test the representativeness of the sample was suggested. It was overall concluded that such questions must be simple and accessible in registers or similar population statistics.

## Recommendations

Comparative crime victimization surveys:

- There was overall agreement that the Nordic countries should look into the possibilities of comparing the crime victimization surveys. First of all, this entails sharing an overview of the existing measures in each country. It was also recognized that making comparisons is a complicated task: Legislation (different criminal laws) and different of the survey questions make it difficult to directly compare surveys across countries. Focus should therefore be on overall trends in the crime rates.

The problem of decreasing response rates:

- A general suggestion was utilizing the samples to experiment with different methods for gaining respondents in order to systematically identify the most rewarding methods in terms of increasing the response rate.

### Host and minute taker

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### Contact seminar

Contact seminars serve as a cross-professional expert forum in various areas of common concern for the Nordic countries and is funded by the Nordic Research Council for Criminology (NSfK).

### NSfK

The Nordic Research Council for Criminology serves to promote criminological research in the Nordic region, and provides the governments with assistance in criminological matters and information on Nordic criminology.