

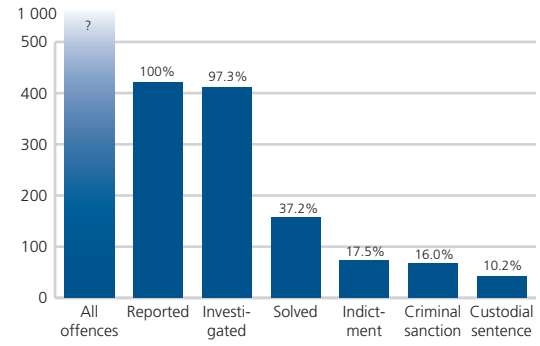
# The short arm of the law

## From crime to punishment

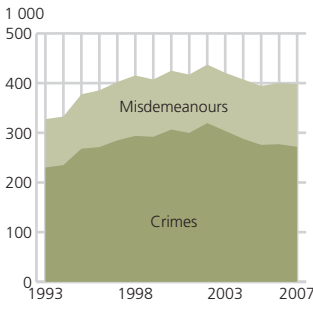
If we follow all offences reported to the police in 1997 through the legal system, we can check their status five years later: prosecution was dropped for 3 per cent because it was found that no criminal offence had been committed.

A further 60 per cent were dropped because they were unsolved (including 6 per cent where the decision was unknown). This gives a detection rate of 37 per cent. The majority of these cases ended in a decision not to prosecute or a fine (especially for minor offences/misdemeanours). Slightly more than 17 per cent of all offences resulted in prosecution; ending in penal sanctions in 16 per cent of the cases, and an unconditional prison sentence in 10 per cent.

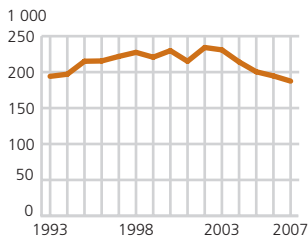
From offence to sentence. Progress through the legal system



Number of offences reported, by type of offence



Number of offences for profit reported



## Almost 1 100 offences reported daily

Every year around 400 000 offences are reported. After an increase in the 1990s, the number of offences reported peaked in 2002 at 437 000. The number has declined every year since. It is mainly the number of crimes (in general, offences that can result in prison sentences of more than three months) that has decreased, while the number of misdemeanours (e.g. traffic offences) has increased.

Of the 398 000 offences in 2007, 68 per cent were crimes and 32 per cent misdemeanours.

## Sharp increase

In a longer perspective, the number of offences has increased sharply: for instance, the number of crimes investigated shows a ten-fold increase since the end of the 1950s. If we take into consideration that the population has risen by about 1 million in this period, this represents a six-fold increase. The number of crimes investigated now amounts to around 60 per 1 000 inhabitants.

This increase may be due to the fact that we are more inclined today to report some types of offences, for example theft, and that police routines for registering and reporting crimes have become more efficient.

### Thefts dominate, but decline

The most common type of crime is theft; with 143 000 thefts reported every year. Crimes for profit now account for almost half of all criminal offences. At the same time it is precisely when it comes to crimes for profit that the reduction has been greatest in recent years. Theft from private homes and cars is showing a marked decrease in particular. One of the reasons for this decline might be the increased use of various security systems (e.g. locks and alarms) both in cars and dwellings. Petty theft and pilfering are also decreasing.

### More drugs

Drug-related crime accounts for approximately 15 per cent of all reported offences, a figure which has soared since the end of the 1960s – from 200 to almost 46 000 in 2001. The figure has subsequently fallen. In particular, it is the number of less serious drug-related crimes (use and possession) that explains the growth and decline: serious drug-related crime accounts for only 3 per cent of the total number of drug-related crimes, and has been relatively stable in the period.

### No increase in serious violent crimes

After an increase in the 1990s, violent crimes have now stabilised and account for more than 6 per cent of all offences reported to the police. Again, the less serious crimes – threats and common assault – dominate.

In surveys, roughly 5 per cent of the population say that they have been the victim of violence or threats of violence during the past year. This proportion has remained stable since the beginning of the 1980s.

### One out of three crimes solved

In 1960, four in ten crimes were solved. The detection rate was more than halved up to the end of the 1980s, followed by an increase. In 2005, 35 per cent of all crimes were solved. With regard to minor offences, approximately eight in ten were solved.

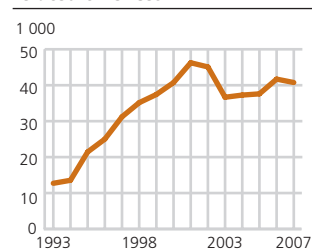
However, there are major differences in the detection rate for different types of crimes. While almost all murder cases and drug offences are solved, the detection rate for thefts is about 10 per cent.

### Young men dominate the statistics

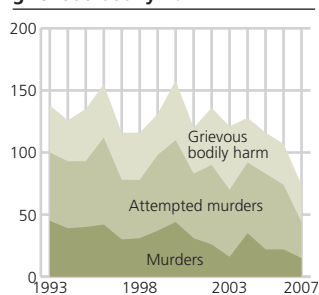
Those who are charged with offences are often young: in 2005, 39 per cent of all those charged were under the age of 25, with the majority in the 18-20 age group. A total of 6 per cent of the latter are charged with offences each year.

Most of those charged are men. Less than 20 per cent are women. The share of women varies considerably by type of offence and is especially high for crimes for profit, such as petty theft and pilfering, where young girls dominate. Also, fraud, forgery and embezzlement and use of drugs are 'typical' female crimes in the sense that the share of women charged is higher than for other types of offences.

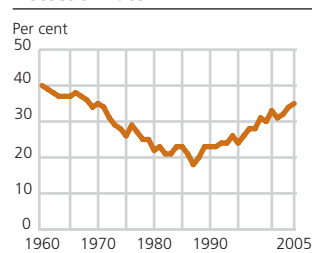
Number of reported drug related offences



Number of reported murders, attempted murders and cases of grievous bodily harm



Detection rate



Number of people charged with offences. Women and men by age. Per 1 000 inhabitants. 2005

