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Mayhew, Pat; van Kesteren, J.N.

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# CROSS-NATIONAL ATTITUDES TO PUNISHMENT

Findings from the 2000 ICVS

Pat Mayhew – Pat.Mayhew@vuw.ac.nz

John van Kesteren – INTERVICT, Tilburg University – j.n.vanKesteren@UvT.nl

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Postal address:  
INTERVICT - Tilburg University  
PO Box 90153 - 5000 LE Tilburg  
the Netherlands

Visiting address:  
Montesquieu building, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
Warandelaan 2 – Tilburg - NL

Phone: +31 13 4663526  
Fax: +31 13 4663546  
E-mail: [INTERVICT@uvt.nl](mailto:INTERVICT@uvt.nl)  
[www.intervict.nl](http://www.intervict.nl)

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## CROSS-NATIONAL ATTITUDES TO PUNISHMENT

This chapter takes the latest and most complete results from a question in the International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS) that asked respondents about the sentence they would recommend for a recidivist burglar. One strength of the data is the breadth of countries covered – 58 in this analysis, representing all world regions. Another is that results come via a standardised exercise in which same the questionnaire is used in all countries, similar survey procedures are adopted, and data analysis co-ordinated. A third strength is the ability to link attitudes to sentencing - at the individual, country and global region level - to other measures in the ICVS, victimisation being a principal one. Lynch (1993) described the ICVS as a “quantum leap in international statistics on crime and justice issues”.

Large-scale comparative analyses of social attitudes in different countries are relatively uncommon, in part reflecting the logistical difficulties of mounting standardised surveys in different jurisdictions. By far the two most developed exercises are the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) (<http://www.issp.org/info.html>) and the World Values Survey (<http://wvs.isr.umich.edu/index.html>). Neither of these, however, takes up attitudes to criminal justice matters. As regards these, there has of course been a multitude of ‘local’ surveys looking at what people know and think about sentencing, and what sentences they recommend for different types of offenders (see Roberts (1992) and Roberts and Stalens (1997) for reviews). Outside the context of the ICVS, however, comparative analyses have been sparse. Even attitudes to the death penalty – the focus of a particularly large number of local studies – have not been examined cross-culturally (Hood, 1996). A little work has been done comparing levels of victimisation and fear of crime – though the number of countries involved has been relatively small. Some studies have taken results from independently organised surveys so comparability is far from assured (Maxfield, 1987; Block, 1987). A few studies have fielded companion surveys in a handful of countries (eg, Schwarzenegger, 1989).

A different tranche of work has been comparisons of how the public ranks the seriousness of different offences (Newman, 1976; Lenke, 1974; Scott and Thakeb, 1977; Sanders and Hamilton, 1992). This has showed a broader consensus than might be imagined, though the number of countries examined has again been relatively limited. Newman (1976), for instance, looked at six countries and found broad agreement about more serious offences like murder and high-value theft, although developed countries were more tolerant of minor crimes. A study in 1974 was closer to the theme of this chapter. Scott and Thakeb (1977) interviewed 2,000 respondents in the USA, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Given vignettes of 24 offences, respondents were asked to recommend penalty from which Scott and Thakeb calculated a so-called ‘moral indignation score’. This indicated both the perceived relative seriousness of different crimes (showing the same international consistency as other work), as well as relative degrees of punitiveness. For virtually every crime, Kuwaitis were least tolerant, followed by the US, then Great Britain and then the Netherlands.

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The ICVS has also contributed to the issue of perceptions of crime seriousness through assessments made by victims about the seriousness of 'their' offences (see, e.g., van Kesteren et al. (2000) for the industrialised countries, and van Dijk (1999) for world regions). Victim assessments were made on a simple three-point scale, indicating very serious (3), somewhat serious (2), and not very serious (1). Mean seriousness scores for the crime covered by the ICVS were computed per country, and the crime types were rank ordered on the basis of mean scores. For some purposes, an overall mean score was computed for all crime types taken together (giving each crime type equal weight). The consistency of assessments in industrialised countries and – more surprisingly – across the global regions was notable. For one, overall mean scores did not differ much by country, suggesting the people everywhere have similar attitudinal thresholds about the seriousness of different crime. Moreover, the relative ranking of the seriousness of different types of victimisation was largely consistent, again indicating a high degree of consensus about the import of conventional crimes. For instance, with the 2000 results for seventeen industrialised countries, car theft was rated by victims as the most serious in eight out of sixteen countries, and second or third most serious in all the rest except Denmark. Sexual assault and robbery with a weapon came next, and then burglary with entry vying with assaults with forces around the middle. Rank orders were similar looking at global regions (van Dijk, 1999): for instance, car theft was rated as the most serious highest in four of the six regions, and second in Western Europe. Van Dijk correlated each country's ranking with the overall 'world' ranking: the correlations were all very high. The lowest was for victims in Tanzania. The highest (all more than 0.9) were for Costa Rica, Finland, and the Ukraine – each in a different world region. The worldwide consensus about the seriousness of these conventional crimes suggests that they involve similar elements everywhere, and have a similar impact. For present purposes, then, differences in views about punishing a burglar will more likely reflect real differences in punitiveness than discord about the seriousness of burglary.

## **THE ICVS**

The ICVS was set up to provide an alternative measure of crime to police figures. For comparative purposes, these are problematic because of differences in the way the police define, record and count crime, and because the police in some countries may have more crimes to record simply because of higher reporting levels by victims. The essence of victimisation (or 'crime') surveys is that they ask representative samples of the general public about selected offences they have experienced recently, whether or not they reported what happened to the police. For the offences they cover, then, they potentially provide a 'truer' picture of how many people are affected by crime than the more filtered count from police statistics. Comparisons of independently organised surveys offered limited value however. The number of countries with appropriate surveys is fairly small, and comparability is compromised by differences in survey design and administration. The standardisation of the ICVS, therefore, is a unique feature.

The ICVS has now been conducted in just over 60 countries (58 of which are used here). Survey were done in 1989, 1993, 1996 and 2000 in just over 20

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industrialised countries in Western Europe and the New World (Canada, United States, Australia and New Zealand), with more than one sweep in many of them. Here, the ICVS has been organised by an International Working Group, drawing in additional national co-ordinators who have been responsible for the conduct of fieldwork, and where necessary for ensuring sound translation of the questionnaire. Note 1 Around the time of the second main sweep, UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Criminal Justice Research Institute) started developing similar surveys in non-industrialised countries. Note 2 For the most part, these surveys were at city level because sampling frames for other areas were often inadequate, and fieldwork more difficult. By now city surveys have been done in 19 East and Central European countries (for key results see Zvekic (1998) and Alvazzi del Frate and van Kesteren (forthcoming)), and just over 20 developing countries (see Alvazzi del Frate, 1998).

In the industrialised countries, interviews were mainly done by telephone, partly for cost reasons, partly for better standardisation. Elsewhere, personal interviews are used. Early methodological work on the ICVS offered no strong evidence that mode of interview made much difference to victimisation estimates. Whether it would for attitudinal questions remains open. Response rates have been variable (and not always high), but again technical work has not shown that variable response bias results in any substantial way. In industrialised countries, samples of 2,000 people aged 16 or more are the norm, although in less developed countries they are usually about 1,000. The questionnaire is mainly devoted to people's experience of household and personal crimes, but there are a few attitudinal questions. That on the recommended punishment for a burglar is one of them. We take it as measuring punitiveness and this term is used throughout to describe those who opted for imprisonment.

#### *The punishment question*

People were asked about the case of a 21-year-old young man who had stolen a colour television, and is found guilty of burglary for a second time. Note 3 Respondents were invited to say what sentence they felt would be most appropriate, with the choice read out as: fine, prison, community service, suspended sentence, or another sentence. Those who opted for imprisonment were asked how long they felt the sentence should be. (Sentence length options were not read out, but the interviewees coded answers.) Community service was intended to denote a sentence that involved the burglar performing specific tasks or working for a certain number of hours in the community. A suspended sentence was meant to be one not put into immediate effect, but that could be activated in the event of further offending.

Limitations need stating. First, international attitudes are being tapped essentially by one question. There is no way of knowing whether the differences in attitudes observed would hold across offences other than burglary. Second, the original and replacement value of a colour TV will differ according to the development status of the country, and this may influence punitiveness. There is little to be done about this. Thirdly, some respondents may simply give a 'top of the head' response, not very reflective of their true opinion. Again, this remains open, although Roberts (1992) argues that people tend to have firm opinions about sentencing that are

relatively stable over time. Fourthly, the details given in the hypothetical burglary scenario were fairly limited. There was enough information to guide a lay opinion, but probably not enough for a professional sentencer to be able to decide on the appropriate sanction. Finally, preference for imprisonment (the main focus of paper) may in part reflect understanding of the other sentencing options (and indeed whether other options exist much at all). Kuhn (1993) argues, for instance, that people in countries where community service is rare may interpret it as hard labour and consider it 'tough'. The best defence here is that more or less everyone will understand the same thing about imprisonment, and will opt for this if they feel it appropriate, and will not otherwise. This also justifies the emphasis on imprisonment in this chapter.

#### *Previous analyses*

There have been some previous analyses of the punishment question that this paper extends. Each of the main ICVS reports has covered the question to some degree. Shinkai and Zvekic (1999), using global results from the 1996 ICVS but with fewer countries than here, found support for imprisonment strongest in Asia and Africa. With 1989 results for industrialised countries only, Kuhn (1993) showed most support for imprisonment in the USA, with relatively high levels too in the UK, Australia and Canada – all what might be called 'Anglophone'. Kuhn looked at socio-demographic variables in relation to punishment attitudes, as did Besserer (forthcoming). This is returned to.

#### *The data*

The analysis reported below covers 58 countries. For many purposes they are grouped into six global regions: West Europe (14 countries), the New World (4), East and Central Europe (ECE, 19), Asia (8), Latin America (6) and Africa (7) - where there is better coverage of southern Africa than the north. Table A1 at the end of the chapter shows the countries included, the type of survey (city or national), the date of the results being used, and the sample size involved (all told, results here are based on 90,000 respondents). Note 4 All samples are respectable enough in size for attitudinal measurement - and indeed cope with this task better than measuring victimisation. There are four cities with samples between 500 and 700. The median sample size was 1,500; it was lowest (c. 1,000) in Africa and Latin America, and highest in Western Europe (2,000) and the New World (c 2,000). (All averages and median used here and henceforth gives each country equal weight to avoid results being biased in the direction of countries with larger samples.)

We were conscious that that covering city areas only in some countries might introduce bias – although findings as regards urbanisation and punitiveness are somewhat mixed, with urban dwellers in higher crime areas sometimes more punitive, but those in rural areas sometimes more so, at least as regards some kinds of offences (Walker and Hough, 1988). Possible bias was tested for all countries where there was appropriate data by comparing attitudes among respondents living in areas of more than 100,000 population against those in smaller localities. Results indicated no strong pattern. In most countries there was little difference, in a few there were marked differences, but they worked in both directions.

Results from countries who participated only in the 1989 sweep are omitted to ensure timeliness (Spain, Norway, West Germany). Otherwise, data from the latest sweep in each country is used. There are seven countries where attitudes were measured in 1992; eighteen in 1996/7; and 33 in 2000/1. In each country, those aged 16 or more were interviewed. To improve representativeness, results here are weighted by age and gender, and for the national surveys also by region within the country. Of course, country totals ignore within-country differences between people as regards their attitudes, although these are given some attention later.

Three measures of punitiveness are used below. The first is simply the percentage of respondents who opted for imprisonment - the 'percentage prison measure'. (Those who could not recommend a sentence ('don't knows') are included in the base throughout. Overall, 4% fell into this category, with the regional figures similar except in Africa, where few respondents did not have an opinion. Note 5) The second measure - the 'punitiveness score' - takes account of the length of sentence recommended by those who opted for imprisonment. A mean number of months in prison is calculated on the basis of the sample as a whole; this, then, reflects both the level of support for imprisonment, as well as the severity of the term. (Those who could not specify a sentence length were set to the mean of those who could.) The third measure - the 'sentence length measure' - is the mean number of months in prison calculated only for those who opted for imprisonment. Table A2 at the end gives the full range of results.

## RESULTS

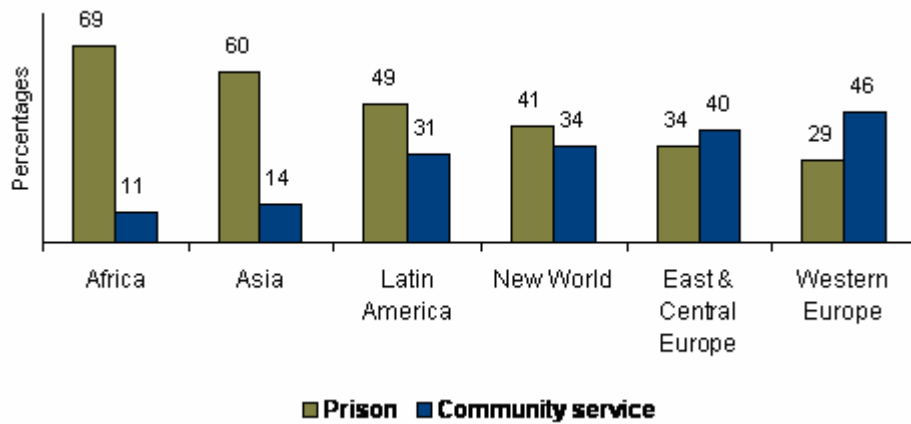
### *Imprisonment*

Just over four in ten of all respondents chose imprisonment as the most appropriate sentence for the young recidivist burglar (average value). Regionally, the figure was 69% in Africa, 60% in Asia, and about 50% in Latin America (Figure 1). Support was lowest in Western Europe (just over a quarter opted for imprisonment). There is a clear divide, then, between developing countries and others. The features of the punishment question mentioned earlier may contribute in part to this, but would not plausibly explain all of it.

There were country differences within each region, and the range of opinion was most marked in Western Europe and Asia. In the former, support for imprisonment was strongest in the UK and Malta (with just over half opting for prison); it was weakest in France, Austria and Catalonia. In the New World, those in the USA and Canada were more punitive than Australia or New Zealand. In East and Central Europe (ECE), the most punitive were in Romania, Latvia and Albania, and the least in Poland and Georgia (where fines got above average support). In Asia, people in China and the Philippines supported imprisonment most (eight out of ten did so); there were lower values in Mongolia and Azerbaijan. In Africa there was uniformly strong support for imprisonment, but Uganda and Zimbabwe stood out most. There was comparatively less variation in Latin American countries, where between four and six out of ten opted for prison. Table 1 summarises the country positions by dividing the range of values (percentage recommending imprisonment) into quartiles, and grouping them by region. For instance, the most punitive respondents in Western Europe were those in Northern Ireland; the very least punitive were in Catalonia.



**Figure 1: Support for imprisonment and community service, by global region**



**Table 1: Support for imprisonment, by regions (based on % opting for imprisonment)**

	Quartile 4 (most punitive)	Quartile 3	Quartile 2	Quartile 1 (least punitive)
Western Europe	N. Ireland	Scotland, Malta, Eng & Wales,	Netherlands, Sweden,	Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Austria, Catalonia
New World	USA	Canada	Australia	New Zealand
East and Central Europe		Romania, Latvia, Albania, Belarus, Yugoslavia	Macedonia, Bulgaria, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan	Czech Republic, Lithuania, Croatia, Poland, Georgia
Asia	China, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Cambodia	Japan,	Mongolia	Azerbaijan
Africa	Uganda, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, South Africa, Egypt, Botswana, Tunisia			
Latin America	Paraguay.	Argentina, Costa Rica, Colombia, Brazil	Bolivia	

As one would expect, results on the basis of the sample punitiveness score were fairly similar to the percentage prison measure (the correlation between the two was 0.738;  $P < 0.001$ ). However, there was a tendency for the rank order of countries in Western Europe and the New World to be lower on the sample punitiveness score, reflecting more of a preference for shorter prison sentences. (The same

applied to Japan.) The converse held in ECE. Here, several countries that opted for imprisonment wanted comparatively long sentences, and thus ranked higher on the punitiveness score measure than they did on the percentage prison measure.

Table 2 shows some details of the average length of imprisonment (in months) recommended by those who opted for imprisonment. The range on the values is to be noted. On this measure, the most punitive respondents were in Botswana, Tanzania and Cambodia where a sentence of seven years or more was the average recommended.

**Table 2: Average length of sentence recommended (those who opted for imprisonment)**

	Average length of sentence recommended (months)	Standard deviation (months)	Highest values	Lowest values
Africa	69	36	Botswana (123) Tanzania (117)	Egypt (44) Tunisia (34)
Asia	43	25	Cambodia (87) China (62)	Philippines (31) Japan (19)
Latin America	38	11	Costa Rica (49) Paraguay (48)	Colombia (27) Brazil (26)
East and Central Europe	36	14	Romania (75) Ukraine (54)	Macedonia (22) Estonia (7)
New World	21	7	USA (30) Canada (22)	New Zealand (16) Australia (15)
Western Europe	17	7	Italy (30) Eng. & Wales (24)	Finland (8) Denmark (7)

#### Fines and suspended sentences

Fines and, even more so a suspended sentence, generally attracted little support (Table A2). At the regional level, there was no marked variation in support for a fine, with 10% of all respondents opting for this. At the country level, there was more variation, with strongest support in Azerbaijan, (36% chose a fine), Albania (31%), and Georgia (25%). Overall, 5% opted for a suspended sentence, with the highest level in ECE, and the lowest in Africa.

#### *Community service order*

The most evident polarisation was between support for imprisonment on the one hand and support for community service on the other (the negative correlation between them was 0.89). Community service was the most favoured sentencing option overall in West Europe and ECE (see Figure 1). It attracted particularly strong support in France, Catalonia and Austria - where about two out of three

respondents chose it in preference to any other sentence. About half made the same choice in six of the other West Europe countries. Support was surprisingly high in Latin America – although there is possibly some question as to the interpretation of the sanction.

#### *National imprisonment rates*

Some previous analyses of ICVS results for industrialised countries have shown some correspondence between public attitudes to the sentencing of a burglar and actual use of imprisonment (eg, Mayhew and van Dijk, 1997; Besserer, forthcoming). The interpretation of this, of course, is equivocal. Public attitudes may mirror judicial practice, or alternatively judicial practice may simply reflect dominant public attitudes.

In any event, though, with the current range of countries and timing of results, there is no evident relationship between current imprisonment rates and either the ICVS percentage prison measure ( $r = 0.028$ ) or the overall punitive score ( $r = 0.105$ ). (Walmsley's (2002) figures are taken as the best guide to comparative imprisonment rates, although they are inevitably vulnerable to different practices in different countries – for instance as regards whether pre-trial detainees and juveniles are held under the authority of the prison administration.) Even taking the West Europe and New World countries, which have featured most in previous analysis, the relationship was relatively weak on the current data (Spearman's  $r = 0.245$ ;  $n = 18$ ; ns). For the ECE, it was negligible (Spearman's  $r = 0.153$ ;  $n = 19$ ; ns).

#### *Trends*

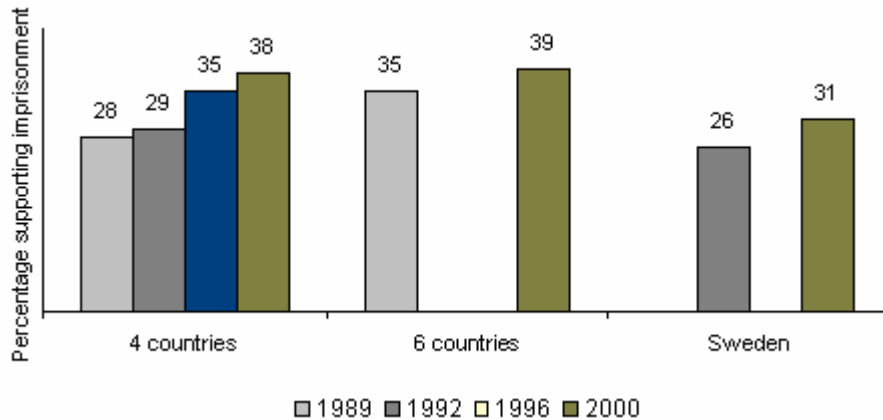
A number of countries have taken part in more than one sweep of the ICVS. One can look, then, at whether the most punitive countries tend to stay the most punitive, as well whether support for imprisonment increased or decreased). Among the industrialised countries looked at by Van Kesteren et al. (2000), there was much consistency in relative ranking for countries with repeat measures. For instance, of ten countries with measures for 1989 and 2000, rank order positions on support for imprisonment were near identical.

For ECE countries with repeated measures (there are 15 with more than one), there is the same general consistency, although among the six countries with measures for 1992 and 2000, the relative position of Georgia, and the Czech Republic changed most – with fewer in favour of imprisonment at the later date. For the fifteen countries with measures for 1996/7 and 2000, country positions did not shift much either (Spearman's  $r = 0.80$ ;  $n = 15$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ).

Leaving aside changes in relative levels of support for imprisonment, there are distinct differences by region as regards changes in attitudes. Taking West Europe and the New World together, support for imprisonment has generally increased (at the expense of a decline in the popularity of community service). Figure 2 shows the average percentage in favour of imprisonment in the four countries that took part in all four sweeps of the ICVS; in six countries for which there are measures for 1989 and 2000, and in Sweden with measures for 1992 and 2000. Support increased in each country over these periods with the exception of France (no significant difference) and Belgium, where there was fall in support between 1989

and 1992 but then an increase by 2000. The most marked increase in support since 1989 has been in Canada, the UK, and the Netherlands

Figure 2: Changes in support for imprisonment, selected West Europe and New World countries (percentage supporting imprisonment for the burglar)



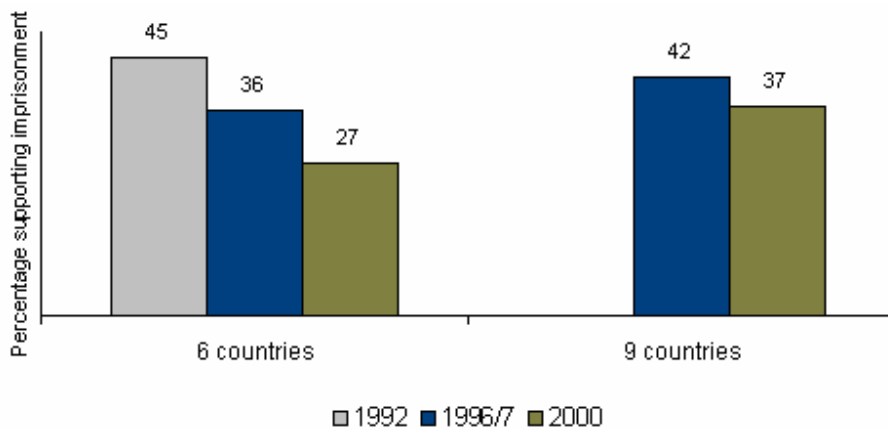
Note: The first four countries are: England and Wales (an increase of 13 percentage points between 1989 and 2000), Finland (4), the Netherlands (12) and Canada (12). The next six countries are: Belgium (-5), France (-1), Northern Ireland (9), Scotland (13), the USA (3) and Australia (2).

In contrast, the proportion of respondents choosing imprisonment for the burglar generally fell in the ECE countries, and in three Asian countries with two measures (Mongolia, Indonesia and the Philippines). Of 15 ECE countries with measures in 1996/7 and 2000, support fell in ten, remained on much of a par in three (Bulgaria, Latvia, Belarus), and rose in Poland and Croatia. The most marked falls were in Georgia, Lithuania and Albania, where the number in support of imprisonment fell by 15 percentage points or more. Figure 3 summarises the overall picture. In Asia, the biggest fall was in Indonesia (1992-1996).

This change over what is a relatively short time span is notable. Some variability in the figures might be expected because of sample sizes, although of the thirteen ECE and Asian countries with falls, the change was statistically significant in eleven (10% levels, two-tail test). Social and political change over the last decade cannot be ruled out. There was no particular upward shift in the countries' rankings in terms of the UN Human Development Indicator, which is strongly associated with national-level support for imprisonment, as will be seen. Nonetheless, the change in views is consistent with 'modernisation'. It is also broadly consistent with falls in imprisonment. Of the 13 ECE countries for which data are available, national imprisonment rates fell in eight of them roughly between the middle and late 1990s. In truth, there was no neat correspondence between the extent of the falls in imprisonment and those in preference for prison (for instance, imprisonment rates fell more in Latvia where preference for prison did not change much, than in the Czech Republic where it dropped markedly). However, the background fall in the use of imprisonment alongside a general

softening of attitudes in ECE countries is an interesting coincidence, and all the more so as it contrasts with the situation in West Europe and North America. Here, the prison population rose in all countries where public support for imprisonment increased, with the exception of Finland and North Ireland, where special circumstances applied. (There was no sound data for the three Asian countries as regards change in imprisonment rates.)

**Figure 3: Changes in support for imprisonment, selected East and Central Europe countries (percentage supporting imprisonment for the burglar)**



Note: The first six countries are: Georgia (a drop of 21 percentage points between 1996 and 2000), the Czech Republic (-12), Russia (-11), Estonia (-9), Slovenia (-7), and Poland (+5). The other nine countries are: Lithuania (-20), Albania (-16), Romania (-13), Ukraine (-6), Hungary (-3), Bulgaria (no change), Latvia (+3), Belarus (+3), and Croatia (+7).

*Correlates of punitiveness*

We now turn to the question of which types of people most favour imprisonment, and how invariant the picture is across different countries. Results from the ICVS have so far focussed mainly on industrialised countries, albeit a wider range than in other studies. (Walker and Hough, 1988, is still a good review of these). One of the firmest findings is that the less educated hold more punitive views. Many studies also indicate that the elderly have more repressive views, but not all studies do, including ICVS analyses (eg, Kuhn, 1993; Besserer, forthcoming). Men are usually found to be more punitive than women, and indeed this was the only consistent correlate in Besserer's look at 1996 and 2000 ICVS results for ten industrialised countries. There is no consistent evidence that experience of victimisation increases punitiveness. Walker and Hough (1988) suggest that this may be because few respondents have suffered crimes with long and serious effects, and that most victims realise from personal experience that what happens is not overly serious, whereas non-victims may instead exaggerate the consequences. Since burglary is generally seen as a particularly upsetting offence, one might

suppose this explanation holds up less well. In fact, though, ICVS analyses have not produced a clear picture even relating burglary victimisation specifically to punitiveness. There are also mixed results as regards fear of crime and punitiveness – though different measures of each may be an issue. A recent study by Sprott and Doob (1997), using the large sample in Canada's 1993 General Social Survey, found the more fearful to be markedly more punitive, holding age and gender constant. (They measured fear through questions of feeling safe at home and on the streets, and punitiveness by whether the courts were too lenient or not.) With regard to the ICVS, Besserer (forthcoming) also found some relationship between punitiveness and fear in ten industrialised countries taking account of other factors. Kuhn (1993), however, presented more equivocal results perhaps because he included in his model a 'country effect', which Skogan (1993) showed was itself related to fear net of other things.

Some underlying attitudinal disposition linked to authoritarian or disciplinarian views seems a key factor in preferring repressive crime control - indeed more so than demographic characteristics. Most of the local studies have measured such a disposition at individual level. Although the ICVS included no such personal measure, it allows the possibility of testing whether a dominant socio-legal tradition – subsumed by the global regional variable – is a major factor in shaping attitudes.

The 58 countries here, then, provide an opportunity to look at the correlates of punitiveness across a very broad span. As a first step, we compared people who chose imprisonment as the sanction for the burglar to others in relation to a number of the key variables discussed above. Table 4 summarises the results by showing the number of countries in which results went in the dominant direction, and the number in which they did not. A relaxed significance level of 20% was taken to assess this. The most consistent effect was in relation to gender (with men more punitive in 46 out of 58 countries). Other relationships were rather less consistent although the overall message was that punitiveness was higher for younger people, the less well-educated, those who had been victimised by burglary in the last five years, and who felt fearful either out of the streets at night or because they felt burglary was likely in the next year. There were deviations from the dominant pattern in all regions, but rather more so in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

We next developed multivariate models using log linear analysis to assess differences in punitiveness taking account of any overlap between key variables. Marital status and feeling safe/ unsafe after dark were excluded (the first because its effect was very small, the latter because it is more difficult to relate to punishing a burglar than is perceptions of the likelihood of burglary). The national burglary victimisation rate (the five-year measure) was added as a covariate on the assumption that this could influence individual attitudes.

**Table 4 Bivariate relationships between punitiveness and key variables (number of countries)**

More punitive	Dominant direction		Other direction		No difference	N countries (1)
	P<0.1	P<0.2	P<0.1	P<0.2		
N. countries						
Men	40	6		1	11	58
Young (16-39 vs 40+)	20	12	12	2	11	57
Married	12	8	6	5	26	57
Lower education (2)	26	9	3	2	17	57
Lower income (2)	13	11	7	8	18	57
Burglary victim (5 yrs)	15	19	2	9	13	58
Feel unsafe after dark	21	15	3	6	12	57
Thinks burglary likely	21	11	3	7	16	58
Dissatisfied with police	20	10	5	6	16	57

Notes (1). Some information missing for Estonia. (2). Education and income measures are dichotomised for each country so do not constitute a international measure.

Six models are shown in Table 5. The first applies to all cases in all regions (the overall model); it includes an indicator of global region to capture socio-cultural background. There are then separate models for each of five other regions - with West Europe and the New World taken together as 'industrialised countries'. Eight common variables were entered in four stages. Gender, age, education and income were entered first. (Education and income were, as one would expect, correlated with each other, but not sufficiently so (especially in Africa and Latin America) to consider omitting income.) The second stage entered personal burglary victimisation, and the national rate of burglary. The third stage entered perceived risk of burglary, and satisfaction with the quality of local policing. The model for industrialised countries included a variable denoting 'Anglophone' countries (grouping the three UK countries, Malta, and all four New World countries) since previous analyses has suggested that these are more punitive than other industrialised countries, possibly because of commonalities in legal tradition.

The parameters presented are the independent contribution of each variable. For each model there is a 'main effect' that is the odds ratio of choosing a prison sentence as against another sentence. For other variables (e.g., gender), the odds ratios are given relative to a reference category. For instance, in the overall model, men are 1.27 times more likely to opt for imprisonment than women, who are the reference category. The reference category for the regional variables in the overall model is the 'main effect'.

**Table 5 Loglinear models explaining preference for imprisonment in relation to selected variables, all cases and five global regions**

	All cases	Industrialised countries	East & Central Europe	Asia	Africa	Latin America
MAIN EFFECT	0.72 *	0.48 *	0.47 *	1.21	1.81 *	0.76
GENDER (female is the reference category)						
Male	1.27 *	1.4 *	1.29 *	1.08	0.87	1.61 *
EDUCATION (high is the reference category)						
low	1.24 *	1.38 *	1.18 *	1.12 *	0.91	1.61 *
INCOME (high is the reference category)						
Low	1.01	1.13 *	1	0.73	1.1	1.13
AGE (40+ is the reference category)						
16-39	1.12 *	1.32 *	0.93 *	1.35 *	1.17 *	0.86 *
VICTIM OF BURGLARY (non-victim is the reference category)						
Yes	1.04	0.95	1.12	0.95	1.09	0.95
BURGLARY RATE						
Covariate	1.02 *	1.01	1	1.03 *	1.01	1.01
ASSESSMENT OF RISK (low is the reference category)						
High	1.09 *	0.94	1.28 *	0.96	1.26 *	0.99
SATISFIED WITH POLICE (satisfied is the reference category)						
No	1.06 *	1.26 *	1.1	0.82	1.08	1.06
REGION						
WE	0.54 *	Non-Anglophone countries (1)				
NW	0.78 *	0.56 *				
ECE	0.56 *					
Asia	2.02 *	Anglophone countries (2)				
Africa	2.21 *	1.8				
Latin America	0.94					

\* Indicates significance at p<0.05 level on a two sided t-test.

(1) Western Europe without UK and Malta.

(2) Anglophone countries (New World plus England & Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Malta).

The ‘main effect’ results show large differences between the five regions. The industrialised and ECE countries are the least punitive. Latin America is near the overall average. Asia is above this average and Africa even more so. The ‘region effect’ in the overall model confirms the same results, although it additionally shows that the New World is more punitive than West Europe as a whole. Taking the two regions together in the second model, though, and grouping the four New World countries with the UK and Malta, shows a clear ‘Anglophone effect’. The odds ratio for Anglophone countries equals  $1.80 * 0.48 = 0.86$ , whereas that for the other industrialised countries (ie, the rest of Western Europe) is  $0.56 * 0.48 = 0.29$ , making them the least punitive of all.



The importance of region in the overall model suggests that there is some overarching factor at play such that support for imprisonment is stronger in countries lower down on the social and economic scale. Figure 4 illustrates this by grouping the countries in terms of their values on the 1998 UN Human Development Index (HDI). The Anglophone countries are kept as a separate group. There is a clear increase in punitiveness as HDI values fall, with the divergence from the overall pattern coming only from the Anglophone countries.

**Figure 4: Percentage supporting imprisonment, by Human Development Indicator scores ('Anglophone' countries showed separately)**

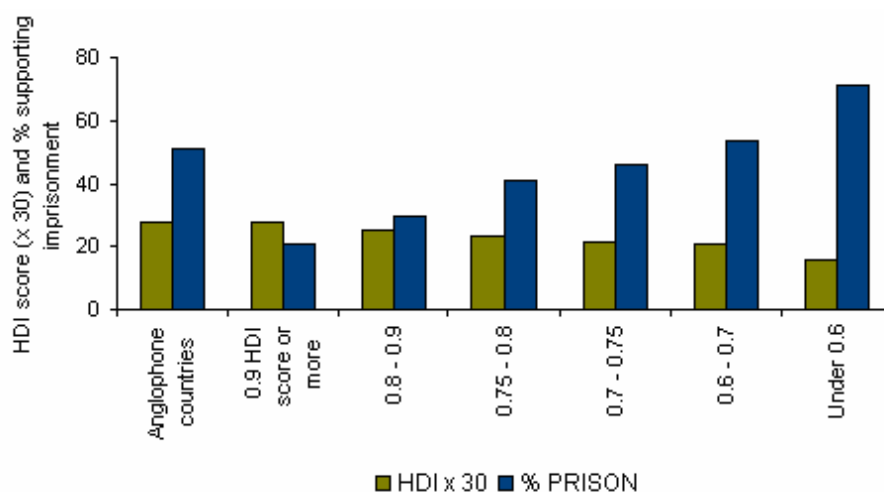


Table 5 also shows that the effects of the other variables are not completely consistent over the regions.

**Gender.** In four out of five of the global regions, men are more punitive than women, but this ranges from 1.08 times more in Asia (not statistically significant) to 1.61 times more in Latin America. The gender effect is in the other direction in Africa, but this is not statistically robust, taking other variables into account.

**Education.** Overall, the less educated are 1.24 times more often in favour of imprisonment than others. This holds in four regions, being strongest in Latin America (1.61). Again, the effect is in the opposite direction in Africa but is not statistically robust.

**Income.** There is no significant income effect in the overall model, and a significant one only in the industrialised countries where it seems that low income increases punitiveness, independent of poorer educational standing.

**Age.** People aged 16 to 40 are more punitive in the industrialised countries, Asia and Africa. But the reverse applies in Eastern Central Europe and Latin America. (Additional analysis with more refined age breakdowns showed much the same results.)

**Burglary victimisation.** This does not show any significant effect in any region.

National burglary rate. This only showed a significant effect in the overall model and in Asia. Note 6

Perceived risk of burglary. Respondents who regarded themselves as likely to be burgled in the coming year were more punitive in East and Central Europe and Africa only.

Satisfaction with the police. Dissatisfaction with police performance only exerted an independent significant effect on punitiveness in the industrialised countries.

The overall thrust of these results, then, is that none of the key variables considered have the same effect on preference for imprisonment in all five regions. It is hard to know why. It may reflect cultural divergences, or perhaps some diversity in the significance of imprisonment for different groups of people in different jurisdictions.

## DISCUSSION

The ICVS is mainly known for its cross-national comparisons of victimisation (see, e.g., van Dijk, 1999; van Dijk and Kangaspunta, 2000), with some of the other topics it covers having got less attention. With regard to attitudes to punishment, though, ICVS results provide unique information on people's views across a very wide range of countries. Indeed, there has been nothing approaching this scale of coverage outside the ICVS. The questions on attitudes to punishment have been subject to some previous analyses, but this paper goes further.

The scope of the punishment questions is much more limited than the scope of countries covered. Restrictions on the size of the questionnaire (to keep costs down, and ensure adequate response) means that only burglary has been asked about – albeit a common offence, and one regarded with much the same seriousness in different countries. There remains plenty of scope for more comparative work. For instance, it would be valuable to assess whether there are differences in attitudes towards the punishment of juveniles as against adults. Work in the UK shows that people are especially unhappy about how they believe the courts handle juveniles (Mattinson and Mirrlees-Black, 2000), although work in Canada shows that they nonetheless see imprisonment as less appropriate for them (Tuft and Roberts, 2002). It would also be useful to know more about what people in different countries think about the aims of punishment in terms of retribution, rehabilitation or deterrence. It would be illuminating, too, to assess whether the public belief that the courts are too lenient (a persistent finding of research in industrialised countries) holds up in a wider range of judicial contexts.

Four features of the results merit drawing out. The first is that this current analysis does not confirm any relationship between the level of public support for imprisonment and its use by the judiciary. Such a relationship has been found in ICVS analysis based on a smaller set of countries and using slightly different imprisonment data (or at least different reference periods). In the present analysis, though, even taking West Europe and New World together, there was only a very weak relationship between support for imprisonment and the frequency of its use. The lack of a broader relationship is notable since it seems more plausible than not

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that there should be some mirroring of public attitudes and judicial practice. It may be that a more precise measure of incarceration for burglars would perform differently. Or it may be that current measures of imprisonment rates in some countries may not be sufficiently reliable.

A second feature of the results regards the correlates of punitiveness. With bivariate analysis, the dominant patterns were for higher levels of punitiveness among men, the less well educated, younger people, burglary victims, the more fearful, and those dissatisfied with police performance. Yet results from many countries did not conform (albeit that some variation is to be expected simply due to sampling error). Multivariate analysis at the global region level confirmed some of the patterns, but dented the contribution of personal victimisation and dissatisfaction with police performance. Moreover, none of the key variables had the same effect on preference for imprisonment in all regions. \*\*for different groups of people in different jurisdictions.

Setting measurement error aside, this suggests cultural divergence that remains essentially unmeasured. The regional grouping in the ICVS come nearest to capturing the socio-legal background against which respondents in different countries gave their views – and it is not of course very satisfactory in this regard. Social development, however, appears one facet of context that is of overarching importance insofar as there was more support for imprisonment in countries lower down on the UN Human Development Index. The greater punitiveness observed in Africa, Asian and Latin America is of course consistent with this. So too is the ‘softening’ of attitudes observed over time in those ECE countries which have entered the ICVS more than once. It may well be that the wider support for imprisonment in less developed countries reflects the fact that there are generally fewer non-custodial alternatives available, and greater difficulties in implementing them (Joutsen and Zvekic, 1994). Indeed, it is worth bearing in mind that even in advanced countries other options are far from well known. Hough and Roberts (1998), for instance, showed that, when asked to identify as many community-based sanctions as they could, only a third of people in England and Wales mentioned probation, and even fewer mentioned a suspended sentence. In a recent Canadian study, too, Tuft and Roberts (2002) showed that approaching half of those who had initially chosen prison were prepared to support other options when they were explained to them. Credible alternatives to prison, then, seem under-appreciated and it could well be that if people were more familiar with them, support for imprisonment would decline. Modernisation and social development will play some part in this.

Thirdly, the analysis does not endorse the idea that experience of victimisation (even of burglary itself) increases support for imprisonment. This is an important finding (especially given some inconsistency in other studies) in that hardline criminal justice policy is often justified by the claim that victims are the main proponents of a ‘tougher’ approach to sentencing. Those who seek improved services for victims, in contrast, tend to want to undermine the idea that they are consistently punitive – both because it provides a more benign climate for arguing for better victim provision, and because it dents a main argument against victims taking more of a part in sentencing procedures, which is that they will be overly punitive.

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Finally, the emphasis here on attitudes towards imprisonment should not obscure the level of support that community service attracts. The current data shows in 23 out of the 58 countries worldwide more people supported community service than imprisonment, and in West Europe, the New World, and the ECE countries, 22 countries out of 37 did so. As political rhetoric about crime and punishment is fuelled by the idea of unshakeable and widespread public support for imprisonment, the backing given to community service in this global context is worth emphasising. This has been done before on the basis of ICVS results. It bears being done again.

## Notes

1. In the main, each industrialised country has met its own survey costs, with much of the administrative overheads borne by the Dutch Ministry of Justice. The technical management of most of the surveys in industrialised countries has been carried out by InterView-NSS, a Dutch survey company. They subcontracted fieldwork to survey companies in the participating countries, maintaining responsibility for the questionnaire, sample selection and interview procedures. The data from the surveys have been integrated and processed by researchers at Leiden University.
2. Surveys in developing countries and in East and Central Europe were most funded by the Dutch government, the UK Home Office and the United Nations on an ad hoc basis.
3. The precise wording of the question was: 'People have different ideas about the sentences which should be given to offenders. Take for instance the case of a 21-year-old man who is found guilty of burglary/housebreaking for the second time. This time he has taken a colour TV. Which of the following sentences do you consider the most appropriate for such a case [read out]: fine, prison, community service, suspended sentence, and other sentence?'
4. Poland is included here in the group of East and Central Europe countries, though in some publications it has been included in the industrialised Western European countries. In the report of the second sweep of the ICVS, Czechoslovakia was also reported on as a western industrialised country (van Dijk and Mayhew, 1992).
5. In a separate overall model, omitting the regional variable, the national burglary rate showed a large, significant effect. This indicates both that burglary levels vary greatly across region and that they correlate with the attitude towards punishment. The burglary effect, though, is subsumed by the broader regional variable.

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**Table A1: Details of samples used (type of sample, date of results, and sample size)**

	Type of survey (other than national)	Date of results used	Sample size		Type of survey (other than national)	Date of results used	Sample size
<b>Western Europe</b>				<b>Asia</b>			
		1996	1,507	Azerbaijan	city	2000	930
		2000	2,501	Cambodia	city	2001	1,245
Catalonia	regional	2000	2,909	China	city	1992	2,000
Denmark		2000	3,007	India	city	1996	1,200
England & Wales		2000	1,947	Indonesia	city	1996	1,400
Finland		2000	1,782	Japan		2000	2,211
France		2000	1,000	Mongolia	city	2000	944
Italy		1992	2,024	Philippines	city	1996	1,500
Malta		1997	1,000	<b>Africa</b>			
Netherlands		2000	2,000	Botswana	city	1997	644
Northern Ireland		2000	1,511	Egypt	city	1992	1,000
Portugal		2000	2,000	South Africa	city	1996	1,006
Scotland		2000	2,055	Tanzania	city	1992	1,002
Sweden		2000	2,001	Tunisia	city	1992	1,086
<b>New World</b>				Uganda	city	1992	1,023
Australia		2000	2,005	Zimbabwe	city	1996	1,006
Canada		2000	2,078	<b>Latin America</b>			
New Zealand		1992	2,048	Argentina	city	1996	1,000
USA		2000	1,000	Bolivia	city	1996	999
<b>East and Central Europe</b>				Brazil	city	1996	1,000
Albania	city	2000	1,498	Colombia	city	1997	1,000
Belarus	city	2000	1,520	Costa Rica	city	1996	1,000
Bulgaria	city	2000	1,505	Paraguay	city	1996	587
Croatia	city	2000	1,532				
Czech Republic	city	2000	1,511				
Estonia	city	2000	502				
Georgia	city	2000	1,000				
Hungary	city	2000	1,513				
Kyrgyzstan	city	1996	1,750				
Latvia	city	2000	1,002				
Lithuania	city	2000	1,526				
Macedonia	city	1996	700				
Poland		2000	5,276				
Romania	city	2000	1,506				
Russia	city	2000	1,500				
Slovakia	city	1997	1,105				
Slovenia		2001	3,887				
Ukraine	city	2000	1,509				
Yugoslavia	ciy	1996	1,094				



Table A2: Recommended punishments, by region and country

	% recommending different sentences						Average length of imprisonment (months)	
	Fine	Prison	Community service	Suspended sentence	Other sentence	Don't know	Those wanting prison	All respondents
<b>Western Europe</b>								
Austria	14	10	62	8	2	4	10	1
Belgium	11	21	57	5	3	3	17	3
Catalonia	15	7	65	1	2	9	23	1
Denmark	9	20	50	13	4	4	7	1
England & Wales	7	51	28	5	4	5	24	12
Finland	15	19	47	16	2	2	8	1
France	8	12	69	5	2	4	14	2
Italy	10	22	47	4	5	13	30	6
Malta	8	52	29	4	7	0	18	9
Netherlands	11	37	30	10	5	6	19	6
Northern Ireland	8	54	29	4	2	3	21	11
Portugal	9	26	54	1	6	4	23	6
Scotland	11	52	24	5	4	4	21	10
Sweden	11	31	47	4	3	4	11	3
<b>New World</b>								
Australia	8	37	35	10	4	5	15	5
Canada	9	45	32	3	7	3	22	10
New Zealand	10	26	51	3	7	4	16	4
USA	9	56	20	1	8	6	30	16
<b>East and Central Europe</b>								
Albania	31	46	15	0	2	6	28	13
Belarus	11	43	32	1	5	8	45	19
Bulgaria	8	40	38	6	2	6	35	13
Croatia	6	22	55	7	3	7	38	7
Czech Republic	6	26	57	7	2	1	26	6
Estonia	6	30	51	8	3	3	7	7
Georgia	25	16	42	14	2	2	41	6
Hungary	6	29	44	9	7	4	30	8
Kyrgyzstan	15	27	35	21	2	0	46	12
Latvia	7	48	30	9	4	2	35	17
Lithuania	13	24	46	2	7	9	37	8
Macedonia	11	41	25	12	3	9	22	9
Poland	10	21	55	6	4	5	31	6
Rumania	6	49	33	2	5	5	75	34
Russia	9	38	43	3	8	0	29	9
Slovakia	5	36	43	7	5	4	42	16
Slovenia	13	31	42	8	3	3	24	7
Ukraine	9	34	43	4	3	6	54	17
Yugoslavia	5	42	39	6	3	5	35	14

Continued

Continued	% recommending different sentences						Average length of imprisonment (months)	
	Fine	Prison	Community service	Suspended sentence	Other sentence	Don't know	Those wanting prison	All respondents
<b>Asia</b>								
Azerbaijan	36	24	19	12	4	3	42	10
Cambodia	17	64	4	6	7	3	97	61
China	3	84	7	2	4	0	62	51
India	10	67	13	2	1	8	37	24
Indonesia	2	68	10	3	10	6	25	20
Japan	17	51	19	1	0	13	19	10
Mongolia	11	40	35	3	6	5	32	12
Philippines	11	79	3	1	2	3	31	24
<b>Africa</b>								
Botswana	9	62	16	0	8	4	123	75
Egypt	6	66	8	1	20	0	44	28
South Africa	9	66	16	3	2	3	47	31
Tanzania	6	75	13	1	4	0	117	87
Tunisia	17	56	11	1	14	0	34	19
Uganda	8	80	7	1	4	0	51	41
Zimbabwe	8	79	6	2	2	2	63	49
<b>Latin America</b>								
Argentina	8	54	32	6	0	1	30	16
Bolivia	8	40	18	16	9	9	46	17
Brazil	0	44	54		0	2	26	11
Colombia	11	45	34	2	4	5	27	12
Costa Rica	7	52	27	2	7	5	49	24
Paraguay	7	58	22	3	6	4	48	27