



Q - Step

**Nuffield
Research
Placements**

Crime Rates Change in Scotland

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Abstract

Globally, criminal conviction rates are significantly higher for men than for women, a trend which is also evident in the UK (Heiskanen and Lietonen 2016). This project set out to investigate crime and social justice in Scotland, with a specific focus on the role of gender. Police statistics on criminal convictions are a useful tool but have also been criticised for failing to provide important details about the context of crimes and the impact on victims (Walby and Myhill 2000). This study uses official crime statistics alongside a national household survey to examine attitudes and experiences of crime among men and women in Scotland. Detailed analysis of the Scottish Crime and Social Justice Survey 2016-17 (n=5,567) provides a number of new insights. The research highlights the importance of gender when considering crime and social justice. Women were found to have lower conviction rates than men, consistent with the global trend. Men and women reported similar levels of harassment and conflict with neighbours. In addition, the analysis examines the differences between women to highlight that they are not a homogenous group. For example, the results reveal the important role of social economic class, age and ethnicity. In conclusion, this project illustrates the need to further explore the connections between gender and crime, but to do this alongside other factors such as social class, ethnicity and age.

Introduction

Crime rates have been falling in Scotland since the mid-2000 (Matthews 2018). This research sets out to contribute to our understanding of the factors which cause and act as a catalysis to this decline. The project will investigate experiences and attitudes towards crime, with a specific focus on the role of gender.

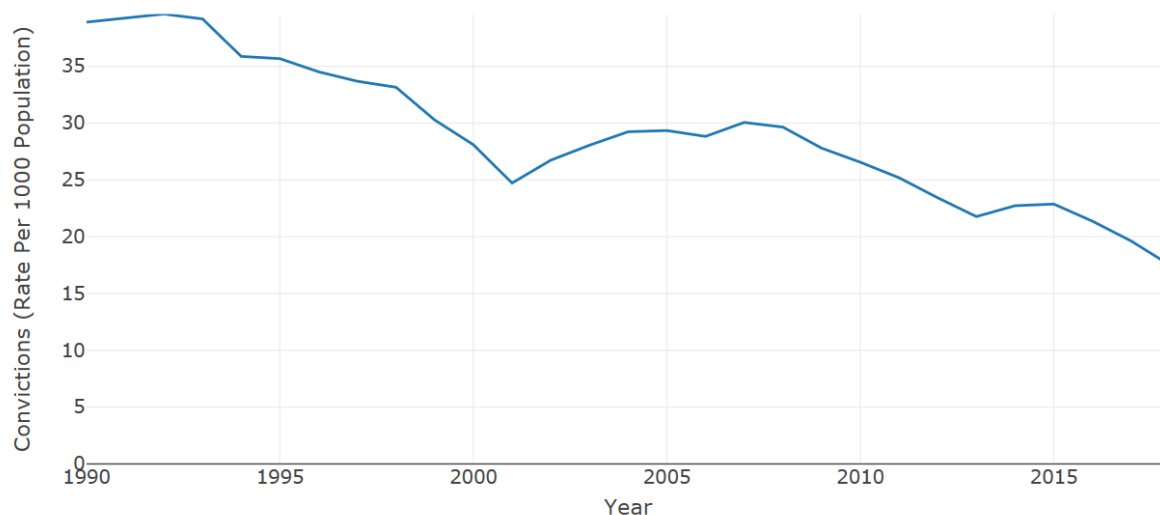
Skott and McVie (2019) suggest that Scotland has had a longstanding reputation for violence, especially involving gangs of young people using knives in public places. Yet from 2007 onwards, both homicide and non-lethal violence decreased significantly in Scotland. Skott and McVie's analysis of the Scottish Homicide Database (SHD) and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) did not establish whether all types of homicide and violence decreased or just gang violence and knife crime specifically. (Skott and McVie 2019)

Strategies have been introduced in Scotland to tackle the problem of gang violence and knife crime (Deuchar 2014). For example, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) was set up in 2005 to look for the reasons to why there was such high gang problems in Glasgow. For instance, in the East End of the city of Glasgow consisted of a huge number, there were 55 street gangs with over 600 members in total (Violence Reduction Unit 2011). Police and community leaders visited Cincinnati in Ohio to get a better understanding of these gang issues, members of the VRU and Strathclyde Police brought CIRV (re-named the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence) to Glasgow. Young adults who participated in the crimes and were members of these gangs from the east and north of Glasgow were brought to Glasgow Sheriff Court and given the same types of messages as those in Cincinnati, and a wide range of social agencies collaborated with the police in order to divert the young adult's violent activity onto more productive pursuits. (Williams et al. 2014)

Context

The figures below collected from the Scottish Government website on the highlight the crime rate trends in Scotland.

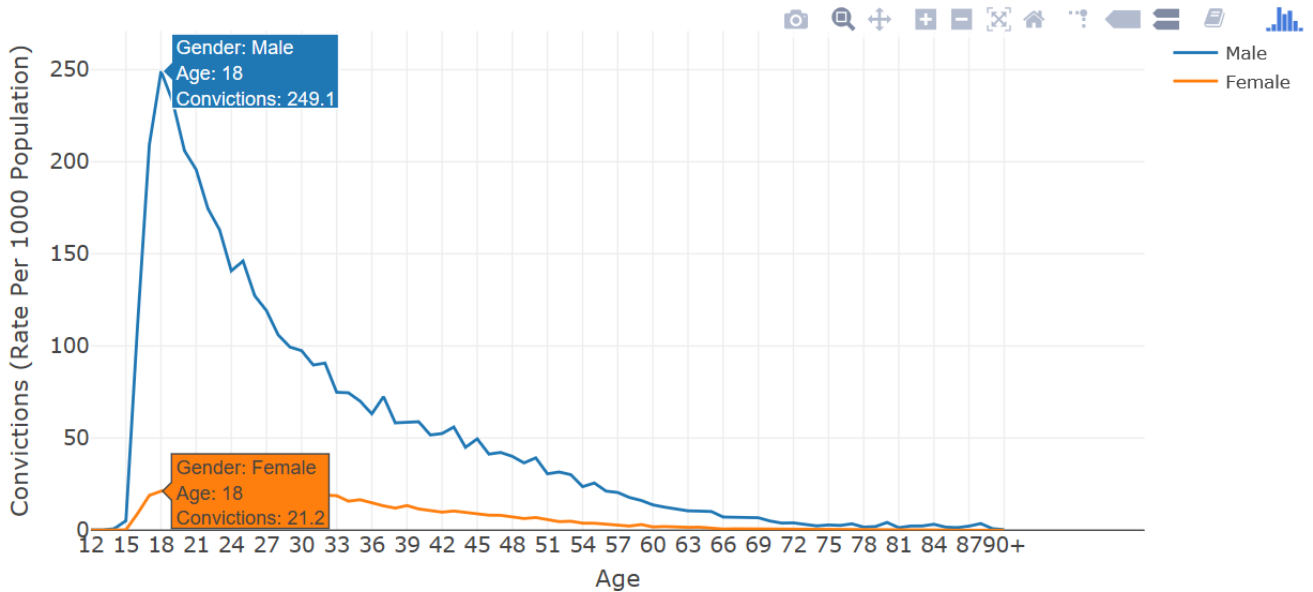
Figure 1: Convictions for all crime and offences over time



Source: Scottish Government Conviction Rates, see [<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-convictions/>]

Figure 1 clearly shows that from 1990 to 2013 the crime rates have decreased in Scotland. From 1990 to 2000 there was a gradual decline in crime rates however this began to spike up from 2001 when crime rates rose. This stayed relatively constant until 2004 when crime rates fell significantly. From 2009 to 2011 crime rates had increased slightly until it began to drop until 2013.

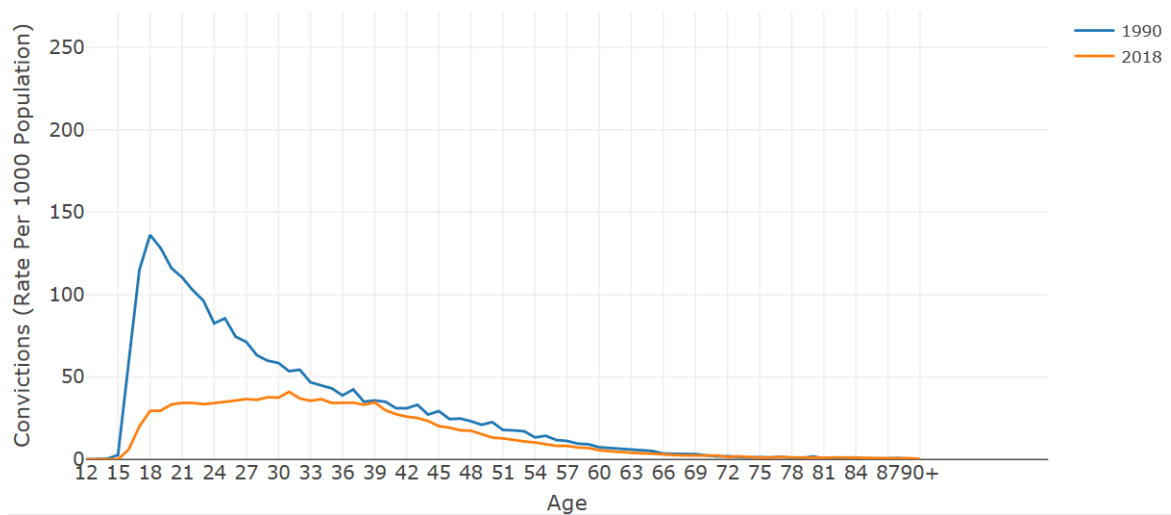
Figure 2: Convictions for all crimes and offences, by age and gender, in financial year ending 1990



Source: Scottish Government Conviction Rates, see [<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-convictions/>]

Figure 2 represents and reveals that conviction rates are much higher for males than for females. For example, at aged 18 the conviction rate for men is 249 per 1000 of the population, compared with only 21 for women. This trend shifts in the older age, where men and women over the age of 69 appear to have very similar conviction rates. Figure 2 also shows that males see a peak in crime rates in the teenage years, especially between 15 and 18. This was not seen with females where conviction rates rising between 15 and 21 and then gradually decrease over time.

Figure 3: Convictions for all crimes and offenses, by age, in financial years ending 1990 and 2018 (All)



Source: Scottish Government Conviction Rates, see [<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-convictions/>]

Figure 3 illustrates the changing pattern of conviction rates between 1990 and 2018. There were significant changes in relation to crime rates. Firstly, conviction rates in 2018 were much lower than in 1990. In 1990 there were nearly 150 convictions per 1000 of the population aged 18, whereas in 2018 this had fallen to 25. In 2018 and in 1990, conviction rates tend to drop in the older the age group by slowly decreasing from age 30 onwards to levelling off to little to no convictions for both 2018 and 1990 from age 69 onwards. This indicates that fewer older people are convicted of crimes. A major difference between the two time frames is that in 1990, the crime rates were usually higher within the teenage ages whereas in 2018, it was fairly distributed.

Therefore, the research questions of this report are:

- 1) In Scotland specifically do males still commit more crimes than women?
- 2) Are differences in gender (Women specifically) likely to change the outcome of their experiences
- 3) Do different women experience crime differently, for example depending on ethnicity, age and social class?

The hypothesis of the research is as following:

H (a) Women and men have a different experience in relation to crime.

H (o) Women and men do not have a different experience in relation to crime.

Methodology

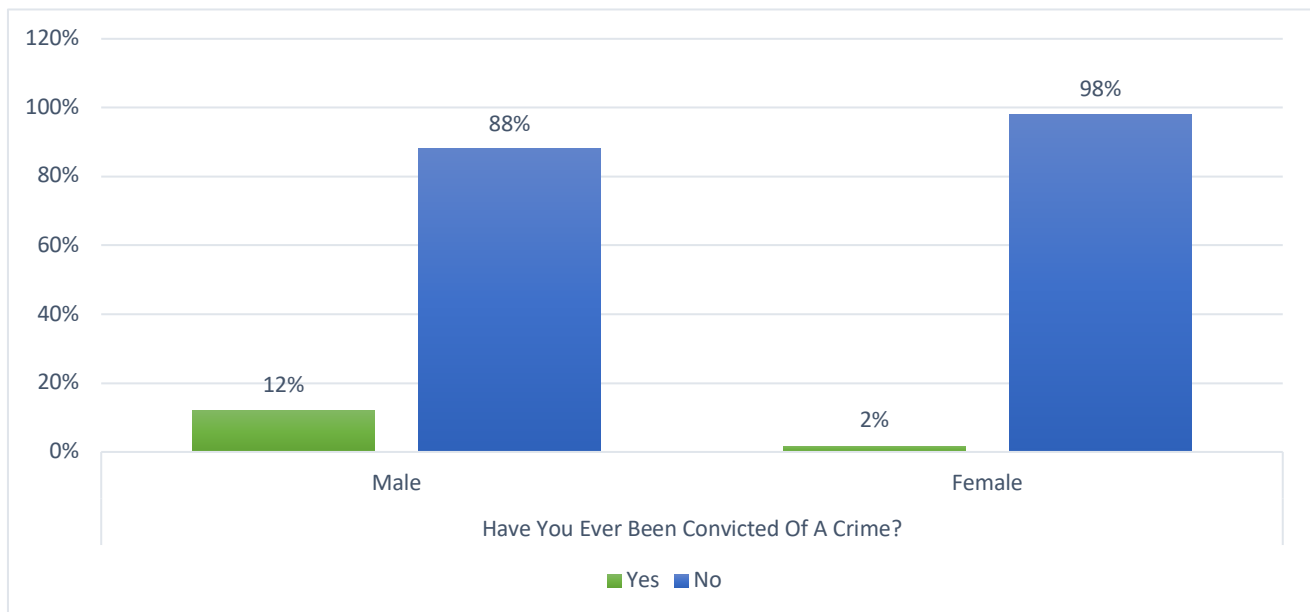
The data used for analysis in this report was collected from the UK Data service website. The data selected was the Scottish Crime Justice Survey (2016-2017) this survey is carried out as it's an important resource for both the government and public of Scotland. The main aims of the SCJS are to; provide reliable statistics on people's experience of crime in Scotland, assess the varying risk of crime for different groups of people in the population, examine trends in the level and nature of crime in Scotland over time, collect information about people's experiences of and attitudes on a range of crime and justice related issues. The survey was carried out to adults aged 16+ living in random-sampled private households in Scotland (victim form subsequently completed by those who had been a victim of crime in the reference period only). It was a face to face interview and 5567 people participated in this survey.

The analysis was carried out using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. SPSS was used to calculate frequencies and produce frequency tables to display results. SPSS was also used to carry out cross tabulations to compared and discover trends between different variables. SPSS was also used to represent statistical significance or of course insignificance between different variables. To ensure the information was clear enough SPSS was used to recode variables into code names instead of the survey questions. Once the information was displayed in tables on SPSS the figures were taken onto Microsoft Excel to produce graphs, such as bar charts, including stacked bar charts to present the findings as clearly as possible.

Results

The first two variables analysed were gender and if they have ever been convicted of a crime (excluding motoring offences).

Figure 4: Have you ever been convicted of a crime?



Source: Authors' own analysis of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2016-17

Figure 4 clearly shows that of the 5,554 people sampled in this survey, a much larger proportion of male's men than females have been convicted of a crime. As 12% of the total males have been convicted of a crime compared to just 2% of females who have been convicted of a crime. Therefore a higher percentage from the survey who have been convicted of a crime (excluding motoring offences) were men. This is consistent with the national trends, shown in Figure 2 To explore whether there is a difference in the number of males and females who have been convicted of a crime, the data was further analysed. A Chi-square test (n=5554) shows that there is statistically significant association between gender and if they have ever been convicted of a crime: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 228.4, p=0.00$.

Research suggests that crime and the fear of crime can have a significant impact on people's lives. Disturbances with neighbours and domestic incidents can have a particularly damaging impact (Age UK 2006). For this reason, the next variables investigated related to challenges

with neighbours in the last 3 years, specifically focussing on whether this varied between men and women.

Figure 5: Problems with neighbours in the last 3 years Crosstabulation

Count		Problems with neighbours in last 3 years		Total
		No	Yes	
QDGEN: Respondent's gender	Male	538	86	624
	Female	661	104	765
Total		1199	190	1389

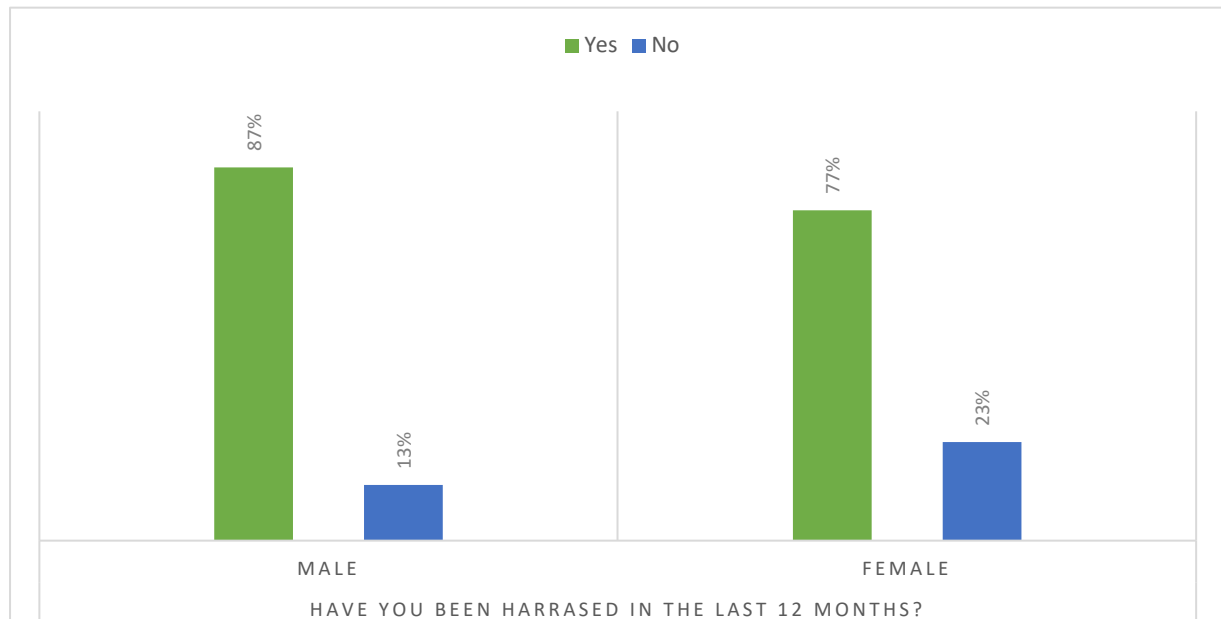
From this table generated from SPSS it can be clearly seen that the same number of females and males have had a problem with their neighbour. Overall the same number of males and females have had a problem with their neighbours in the last 3 years than men.

To explore whether there is a statistically significant difference in the number of males and females who have had a problem with their neighbour in the last 3 years, the data was further analysed. A Chi-square test (n=1389) shows that there is no statistically significant association between gender and if they had a problem with their neighbour in the last 3 years: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 228.4, p=0.00$.

This finding indicates that there is no gender difference in people who have had a problem with their neighbour in the last 3 years: a similar percentage of males and females have had a problem with their neighbour in the last 3 years. A reason to which this could be is a significant number of men and women live together therefore a similar number have a problem with their neighbours in the last 3 years.

There has been extensive research on whether women under report incidents of harassment (Hur 2010, Alvi et al 2001). This dataset allows for the investigation of whether men and women differ in their response to the question ‘Have you been harassed in the last 12 months?’ The results are displayed in figure 6.

Figure 6: Have you been harassed in the last 12 months?



Source: Authors' own analysis of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2016-17

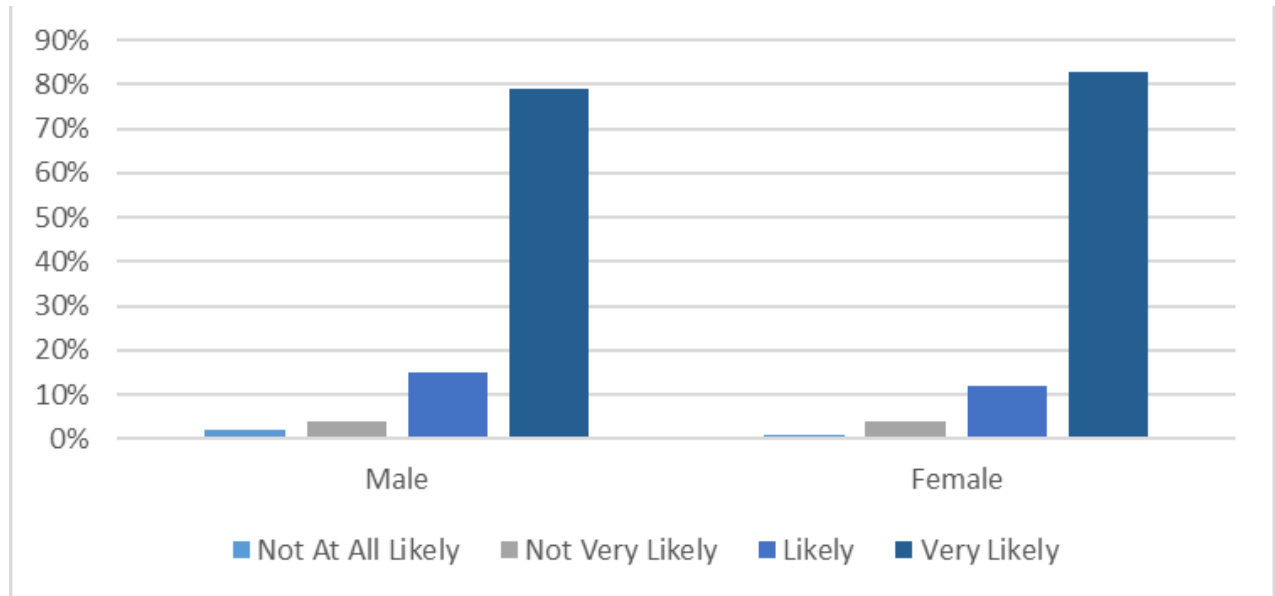
It can be concluded from figure 6 that more males report harassment over the last 12 months, with 87% of males reported this compared with 77% of females. This finding may add to the evidence which suggests that although men and women may experience similar levels of harassment, this often under reported by women.

To explore whether there is a statistically significant difference in the number of males and females who have been harassed in the last 12 months, the data was further analysed. A Chi-square test (n=190) shows that there is no statistically significant association between gender and if they have been harassed in the last 12 months: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 2.9, p=0.91$.

This finding indicates that there is no gender difference in the people who have been harassed in the last 12 months: a similar percentage of males and females have been harassed in the last 12 months.

Another set of variables analysed were gender and a question which asked about the likelihood of calling the police after a robbery. Figure 7 shows the results.

Figure 7: Imagine that you were out and saw someone push a man to the ground and steal his wallet. How likely would you be to call the police?



Source: Authors' own analysis of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2016-17

From figure 7 it can be concluded that for both male and females they are very likely to call the police. Males are the slightly less likely to call than women. Therefore in regards to the hypothesis it may be said that women are more cautious of crime as, as a whole there is a higher number of women who would act upon a crime happening and contact the police.

To explore whether there is a statistically significant difference in the number of males and females who are likely to call the police after seeing a crime being committed, the data was further analysed. A Chi-square test (n=13467) shows that there is no statistically significant association between gender and if they are likely to call the police after seeing a crime being committed: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 6.2, p=0.10$.

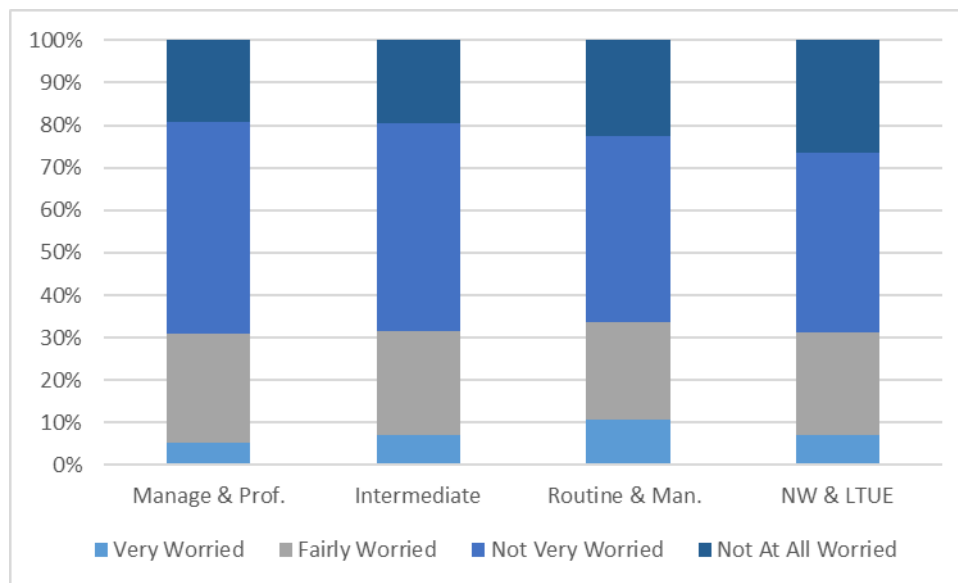
This finding indicates that there is no gender difference in the people who are likely to call the police after seeing a crime being committed: a similar percentage of males and females are likely to call the police after seeing a crime being committed.

The data was then further analysed through SPSS by selecting only 'females' in the dataset to get a further understanding of women and the differences between them and their experiences

of crime. This step in the analysis was designed to reflect that women are not a homogeneous group. This means their responses and actions to crime can be very different. A few of the many factors which could result in this variation include ethnicity, social class and age.

Variables analysed in the modified data set was women, their social economic group and their extent of worry of their house getting broken into. The results can be seen in figure 8

Figure 8: How worried are you that your house will get broken into?



Note: NW<UE = Not Working or Long Term Unemployed

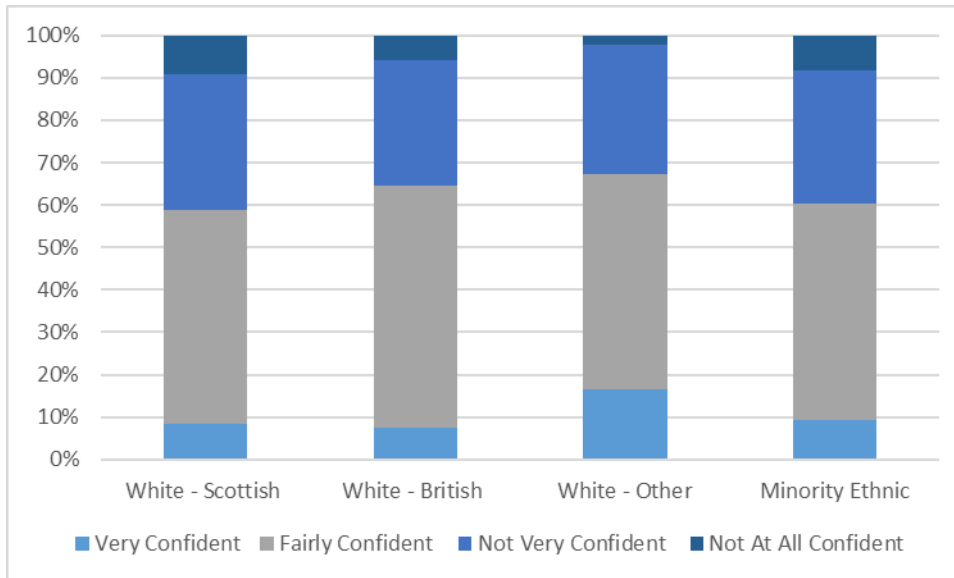
Source: Authors' own analysis of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2016-17

From this we can see that most women are either 'not very worried' or 'not worried at all' about getting their houses broken into. Although this does give us an insight on how there is difference between women; women whom are not working or are long time unemployed have the highest percentage of 25% of 'not being worried at all' about their houses being broken into. While 19% of women who are in profession I.e. lawyer, doctor etc. report 'not being worried at all'. Women employed in routine and manual work appear to have the highest percentage of being very or fairly worried that their house will be broken in to.

To explore whether there is a difference in the females profession and their worry of their house getting broken into, the data was further analysed. A Chi-square test (n=2979) shows that there is a statistically significant association between a females profession and their worry about their house getting broken into: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 33.7, p=0.00$.

Another set of variables which were analysed on the modified data set was ethnicity and confidence in the police at protecting them from crime. These results are shown by figure 9

Figure 9: How confident are you in your local police to prevent crime?



Source: Authors' own analysis of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2016-17

Although confidence in the police appears to be similar within different ethnic groups, there are still some differences. For example, White-Scottish women has the lowest levels of confidence, with 9% of women not at all confident in their local police at preventing crime. The ethnic group with who expressed greatest confidence was the White Other group, 17% said they were very confident in their local police at preventing crime, compared to only 9% of Minority Ethnic women.

To explore whether there is a difference in ethnicity and confidence in their local police preventing crime, the data was further analysed. A Chi-square test (n=270) shows that there is a statistically significant association between a female ethnicity and their confidence in their local police at preventing crime: $\chi^2_{(1)}=49.7$, p=0.00.

This finding indicates that there is a difference in women and their ethnicity who are confident in their local police at preventing crime: women of different ethnicities have a differing levels of confidence in the local police.

Conclusions

Figure 4 clearly answers the first research question. Yes, in Scotland specifically men commit more crimes than women. This is shown by the answers of the survey which showed 12% of men have been convicted of a crime (excluding motoring offences) whereas only 2% of females.

Figure 4 also answers the second research question. Yes, differences in gender (Women specifically) likely to change the outcome of their experiences. As from this graph it is clearly shown that only 2% of women have been convicted (excluding motoring offences).

Figures 8 and 9 both answer the third research question. Yes, women's differences will change their outcome or experience. It is clearly valid in figure 8 as through a Crosstabulation there is a statistically significant association between a female's profession and their worry about their house getting broken into. The bar chart reveals differences between women (in terms of social economic background) will affect their experience of crime (worry about their house getting broken into). It is also evident in figure 9, as through a Crosstabulation there is a statistically significant association between a female's ethnicity and their confidence in their local police at preventing crime. Differences between women will affect their experiences of crime (confidence in their local police to prevent crime).

Figure 6 raises questions about reporting of harassment by women, as both men and women were found to report similar levels of harassment in the last 12 months.

Figure 7 also shows that gender does not play a role in how likely a person to call the police after seeing a crime being committed. As both men and women are very likely to call the police after seeing a crime being committed which is clearly presented by the bar chart.

In conclusion, this project illustrates the need to further explore the connections between gender and crime, but to do this alongside other factors such as social class, ethnicity and age.

Evaluation

Using the Scottish Crime and Justice survey dataset provided opportunities as well as some challenges. This was a large and complex dataset. Due to the volume of variables it took a lot of understanding and a lot of breaking down into a form which was easier to analyse which was time consuming. Presenting the data was a big hurdle as it took a while to comprehend what the data was saying and what it was not. To make the data accurate and precise extra caution was taken.

Another drawback of using a survey is that the results are not definitive. Questions are answered based on perception. It could be said all the adults who got asked questions have different concepts, ideas and experiences of crime. So, this could make the results not fully reliable or fully suitable to be compared. In the future to limit this effect on research, qualitative methods as well as quantitative methods could be used to gain results.

Another setback was variables not having significance. Next time only using variables which have significance could make it a more reliable research report.

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