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# Attitude of Young People to the Criminality Problem in Ukrainian Postmodern Society

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**Abstract:** The research paper contains key findings of the random monitoring survey of the Ukrainian students covering the period 2002-2017, in the course of which it was explored the attitude of young people to the problems of crime and the police's activities aimed at counteracting it in the city (Kyiv). The analysis of the survey findings allowed to identify the level of students' fear to become victims of certain types of crime, a degree of their victimization in general and their fear to suffer from particular crimes, their assessments of the character of crime dynamics in the city and the police's activities, to learn the opinions on the situation with personal security at a given time and in future. Among the trends identified in the course of the research are a high level of the respondents' fear to become a victim of violent and most spread minor offences; high level of their victimization that distinctly decreased in recent years; prevailing negative assessments of the crime dynamics, assessment of the police's activities and trust to it as unsatisfactory irrespective of the improvements in these indicators in the recent three years, prevailing negative assessment of the situation with personal security and positive expectations in relation to the changes in future.

**Keywords:** *police; youth; criminality; victimization.*

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## 1. Introduction

Effective crime counteraction in a society is impossible without taking into account the population's attitude to this problem, its assessment of the police's activities aimed at counteracting such phenomenon (Birzu, 2017; Hoggett et al., 2019; Valieiev, Polyvaniuk et al., 2019; Săraru, 2016). Such knowledge allows drafting adequate policy to counteract crime in the country, improving the forms and methods of the police bodies' work, and conducting the task-oriented cultural and education activities among citizens (Damme, 2017; Kohlström et al., 2017; Morris et al., 2020; Van Dijk, 2015; Yesberg & Bradford, 2019).

The best way to receive the mentioned information is a selective population survey on the mentioned issues. The best-known and the most world wide spread selective population surveys on the problem of crime are the crime victimization surveys, conducted in order to find citizens who became victims of certain types of crime and find out the results of their contacts with the police in this regard. The first large-scale survey of a kind was conducted by the American occupying authority on the Sicily in 1943 (Royband, 2001). Since the 1970th, the victimization surveys have been conducted annually or regularly (each 2 or 3 years) in a number of countries such as the US, UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Russian Federation, etc. and worldwide under the auspices of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) (Hashima & Finkelhor, 1999; Mendel et al., 2017; Van Dijk et al., 2007).

Numerous population surveys are also conducted on more general issues concerning the essence of crime, its causes, the crime problem importance for the society, fear to become a crime victim, etc. In particular, the issue of the relevant content is regularly being cleared up in the course of the Ukrainian postmodern society: Monitoring of Social Changes annual monitoring survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Science of Ukraine (Kulyk, 2011; Vorona, & Shulha, 2016).

**The purpose** of the study is to find out the general and victimological aspects of the attitude of young people to the problem of crime in the country and the activities of the police to combat crime. The object of the study is to counteract crime by the police. The focus is on youth's attitudes to crime and the police's anti-crime activities.

## 2. Methodology

The investigation was conducted among the students of the fourth and fifth years of Kyiv higher educational institutions (Ukraine). It included

the students of any faculty, except the faculty of law because their answers could differ significantly from the answers of the rest of students owing to the awareness of the criminality problem. The research was held in 2002-2017; 10.379 students participated in the research (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The number of students who participated in the research every year

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
547	604	684	542	662	799	676	556	649	708	565	692	622	759	772	542

Source: Authors own conception

On the basis of domestic and international experience, we introduced a sample monitoring survey of the students from Kyiv. Since 2002, the survey has been conducted annually and involved students of 5 non-legal Kyiv higher education institutions. Sampling was two-tiered, random and based on the principle of maintaining the distribution quota of Kyiv universities' students with respect to sex and age. The applied survey method was filling in the questionnaires by respondents themselves. The sample proportions generally matched the proportions of statistical population, calculated in reliance on the data of the Kyiv Head Department of Education and the Kyiv City Department of Statistics.

On the basis of the analysis of victimological surveys in other countries, in order to conduct a research, a special questionnaire, including 61 questions, was created. When creating it, we were trying, on the one hand, to maximally embrace the aspects of victimological situation actual for the students, and on the other hand, to make a questionnaire compact to encourage respondents to fill it in. The survey was conducted by filling in the questionnaire by a group of students (20-30 people) of a higher educational institution. When conducting a survey, a member of research team, who previously explained the aim of the survey and the order of filling in the questionnaire, was present. During filling in the questionnaire, a member of research team left the room and did not influence the survey in any way.

Research methods: theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific and methodological literature, observation, questioning, methods of mathematical statistics.

Processing of received data was held by adding them to spreadsheets using MS Excel and by analysis, using the methods of descriptive statistics –

construction of analytical tables, production of pictures, calculation of statistical indicators.

The work is prepared according to the Code of ethics for a scientist in Ukraine, approved at general meeting of offices and by the Decree of the Presidium of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine of 08 April 2009 No. 105, which requires the scientists to be honest and clear at all stages of scientific research and to present only authentic results of their own studies in publications.

### **3. Results**

The key findings of the surveys conducted during 2002-2017 are as follows.

Fear of crime, victimization degree and character distribution of the respondents' answers to the question on the crimes they are afraid to suffer from are presented in Table 2. During the period of questioning, a larger portion of the respondents were afraid of brigandage (the average rate of the respondents who gave such answer is 49.7%). Then, according to the frequencies of mention, there are assassination attempt (47.7%), rape or attempted rape (46.2%), pickpocketing (44.4%) and robbery (40.0%). In other words, a group of crimes that cause anxiety of a substantial number of the respondents includes offences of two types, i.e. offences that may cause a grievous harm to a victim's life and health (assassination attempt, brigandage, rape or attempted rape) and offences most frequently suffered by young people (pickpocketing, robbery).

The next group comprises the criminal offences, 30% to 39% of the respondents to the survey are afraid to suffer from. These are road traffic offences causing medium bodily harm or more severe consequences (35.7%), household burglary (34.4%) and disorderly conduct (29.9%). A relatively lower number of those who was afraid to suffer from the first two crimes are determined by the fact that certain portion of the students, due to their young age and social standing, do not have any own cars and/or flats yet. As for the cases of disorderly conduct, the harm resulting from such offences is probably treated by young people as not too material. Almost one fifth of all respondents are afraid to become victims of the next group of crimes. Such offences include bribe demands (21.8%), fraud (21.5%), and car theft (19.0%). In other words, these are the offences committed in criminal situations in which young people find themselves not often. There is a very low rate of students who are afraid of the possibility to suffer from theft at a summer house or garden plot (9.8%). Probably most of the

students neither have any such property nor believe there is anything of value there.

It should be noted that in the mentioned period there were material changes in percentages of the respondents who expressed fears that they could suffer from certain criminal offences. There was a substantial growth in the rate of those who were afraid of the offences such as assassination attempt (13.4% in 2002, 43.5% in 2005, 64.2% in 2013, 62.2% in 2017), brigandage (37.0% in 2002, 49.6% in 2005, 58.9% in 2013, 53.7% in 2017), car theft (14.8% in 2002, 12.2% in 2005, 22.4% in 2013, and 24.2% in 2017). Instead, there has been observed a reduction in the percentage of individuals who were scared of the possibility to suffer from pickpocketing (13.4% in 2002, 43.5% in 2005, 64.2% in 2013, 62.2% in 2017) and disorderly conduct (41.8% in 2002, 29.5% in 2005, 29.9% in 2013 and 29.0% in 2017).

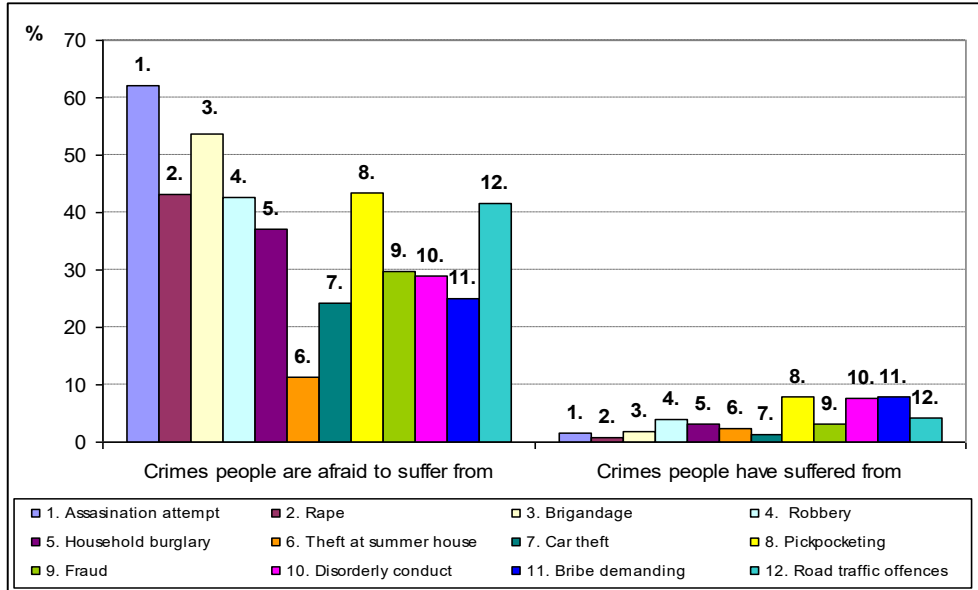
These data show that there are changes that take place in the students' minds in relation to the offence gravity assessment criteria. In recent years, the gravity of offences has been becoming more important for them.

**Table 2.** List of crimes the respondents were afraid to suffer from most of all (% of the total number of the respondents)

Types of crimes	Years of study											
	2002	2005	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Assassination attempt	13.4	43.5	54.7	55.7	49.9	58.9	53.3	64.2	61.9	56.4	55.3	62.2
Brigandage	37.0	49.6	56.7	56.3	47.9	55.3	53.8	58.9	52.3	48.1	51.1	53.7
Rape or attempted rape	40.5	42.4	50.1	52.5	48.1	54.1	55.3	51.6	53.8	40.5	45.8	43.2
Street pickpocketing	69.4	40.6	42.5	39.7	36.8	42.3	48.0	36.6	42.5	36.2	39.6	43.4
Household burglary	35.4	29.2	35.3	38.9	31.0	35.4	33.5	39.6	39.5	35.5	39.6	37.1
Robbery	41.6	47.0	38.7	38.0	31.0	36.6	38.7	36.6	39.9	35.1	35.8	42.6
Road traffic offence	29.1	33.2	39.9	36.1	35.5	40.9	43.0	35.6	35.1	31.4	35.0	41.5
Fraud	25.5	18.3	23	18.1	18.4	24.8	27.7	24.8	25.9	23.5	23.7	29.7
Disorderly conduct	41.8	29.5	27.1	27.3	24	27	28.6	29.9	28.9	22.2	22	29
Car theft	14.8	12.2	26.5	18.5	18.4	20.9	20.2	22.4	18	21.6	20.8	24.2
Demanding bribe	21.3	17.7	18.4	19.7	20.2	22.8	21.3	28.5	28.5	22.4	20.1	25.1
Theft at a summer house	10.9	9.0	10.6	7.1	8.4	9.1	9.2	11.8	12.8	9.2	13.1	11.3

Source: Authors own conception

The mentioned conclusion confirms the comparison of the 2017 survey findings as for the criminal offences the respondents are afraid to suffer from and the offences they have actually suffered from this year (Fig. 1).



Source: Authors own conception

**Figure 1.** Comparison of the portions of the respondents who suffered from certain criminal offences in 2017 with the portions of individuals who were afraid to suffer from them (%)

In 2017, a larger portion of the victims among the respondents to the questionnaire suffered from the bribe demands (8.0%), pickpocketing (7.9%) and disorderly conduct (7.6%). At the same time the highest percentage of the respondents comprises students who are afraid to become victims of assassination attempts (62.2%), assaults (53.7%) and rape (43.2%).

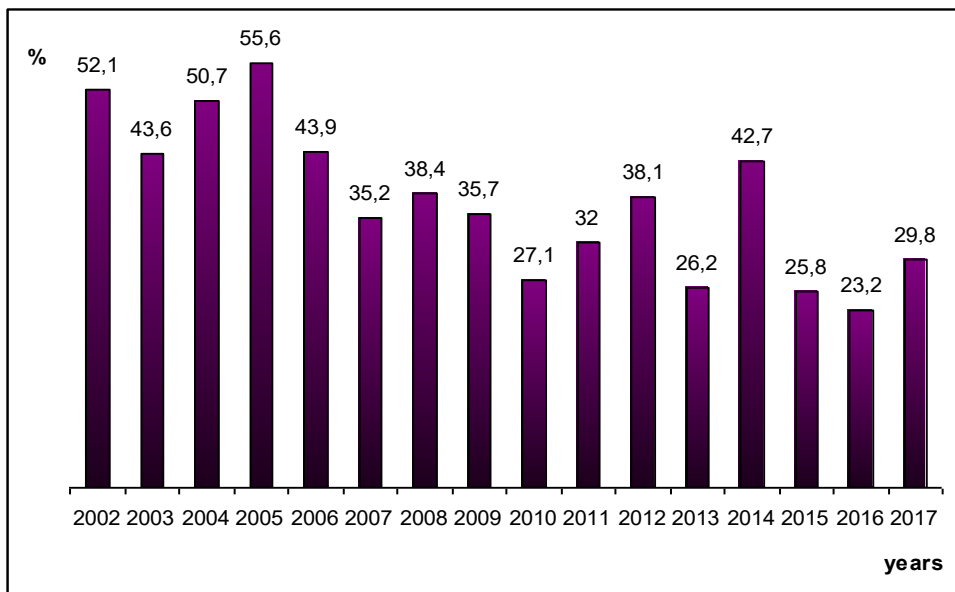
The criminal offences, which the respondents were afraid to suffer from, as listed by women practically coincided with those listed by men. A material difference was only observed in relation to rape that was in average referred to by more than 70% of women and 12.5% of men, which is absolutely normal. The portion of the women was also considerably larger among the individuals who expressed fears in relation to robberies (on the average 43.8% of women and 34.1% of men), household burglaries (39.5% and 29.9%) and pickpocketing (43.7% and 35.9%).

In order to receive data for the assessment of the victimization degree of the respondents (the number of people who suffered from crimes

during the last year), they were offered to answer a question: “Were you a victim of any crime last year?”

According to the findings shown at Figure 2, the victimization degree of Kyiv students is high. This assertion is fair even taking into account the limited nature of the surveys, potential errors of the respondents in their assessment of the wrongful acts committed against them.

Instead, there can be observed a trend towards a gradual reduction in the portion of the respondents to the survey who alleged that they became victims of crimes in the previous year. In 2002-2005, the average percentage of such individuals accounted for 50%, and in 2006-2010 it dropped to 27.1%, while in 2011-2014 it was generally growing and reached 34.8% (in 2014, it made up 42.7% which has been the highest index since 2006). During the last three years in the period of analysis, the proportions of the students, who suffered from crimes committed against them, were the lowest for the whole period of survey and amounted to 25.8%, 23.2% and 29.8%, respectively.



Source: Authors own conception

**Figure 2.** The percentage of the respondents who alleged that in a year preceding the survey they suffered from an offence committed against them (in % of the total respondent number)

It should be noted that a substantial portion of those who became victims during a year, suffered crimes more than once (Table. 3).

**Table 3.** Distribution of the victimized respondents per number of crimes committed against them during a year (% of a total respondent number)

The number of times that respondents suffered from crime	Years of study											
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	2016	2017
1	35.2	40.3	33	43.2	40.9	43.6	40.7	35.4	44.2	42.4	45.5	46.6
2	24.6	23.3	25.6	22.4	19.3	21.5	21.6	20.2	20.2	24.6	20.9	19.9
3	14.6	11.9	9.1	13.7	11.7	9.4	11.1	10.1	12.4	12.7	16.4	11.8
4	6.3	5.0	4.0	5.5	8.2	8.1	6.2	7.3	6.2	5.1	5.5	8.7
5	6.6	3.8	5.7	2.2	4.1	2.7	1.9	5.6	4.7	1.7	3.6	3.7
6	4.0	3.8	3.4	3.3	6.4	3.4	5.6	8.4	1.6	4.2	2.7	1.9
7	1.0	1.9	2.3	3.3	1.8	1.3	1.9	4.5	4.7	3.4	0	1.9
8	1.7	1.9	1.7	2.2	0.6	2.0	1.2	1.1	1.6	2.5	1.8	0.6
9	1.3	1.3	2.8	1.1	2.3	4.0	1.2	0	2.3	0	1.8	1.2
10 and more	4.7	6.9	12.4	3.1	4.7	4.1	8.6	7.3	2.4	3.4	1.8	3.7
Total individuals who suffered from crimes	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

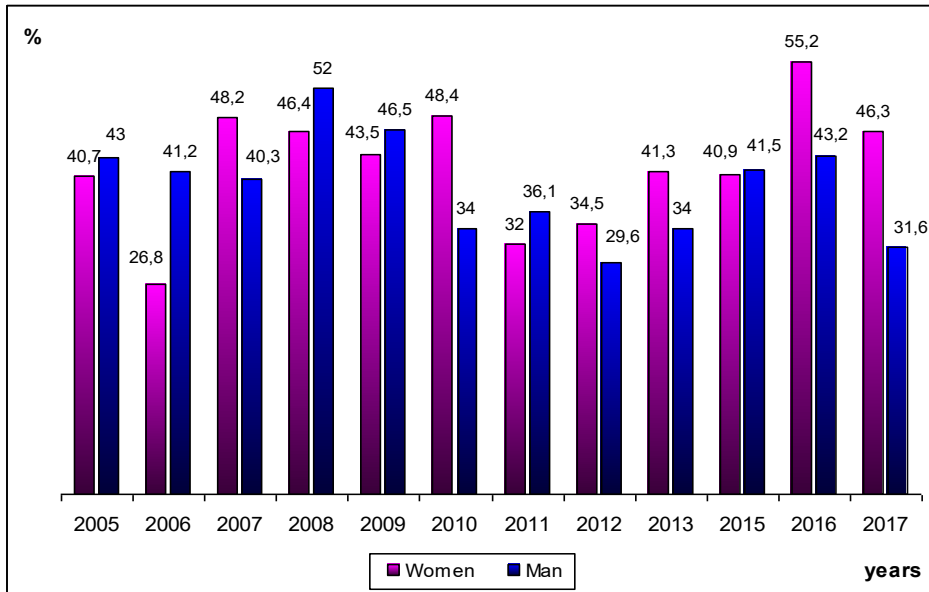
Source: Authors own conception

As expected, most of them were the individuals who suffered from crimes once only. Their average proportion of all the victims of the offences was 37.8%. There can be observed a further trend towards reduction in the proportion of the individuals who suffered from crimes in terms of the growing number of such cases. The individuals who became victims of two crimes accounted for 20.5% of all the victims, those who suffered from three crimes made up 11.4%, victims of four crimes accounted for 6.2%, those suffered from five ones made up 3.9%, and victims of six crimes made up 4.2%. All in all, they make up 84% of all the crime victims. Most of remaining 16% probably erroneously assessed the situations that happened to them or provided inaccurate data in general. It could make sense to establish, in the course of survey, the circumstances of each criminal offence as alleged by the respondents, but this will need significant changes in the questionnaire and switching, for purposes of survey, to an in-depth interview method, which will substantially complicate the monitoring research.

The analysis of the questionnaire survey findings shows (Fig. 3) that in 2012, the percentages of women and men, who suffered from crimes, of all respondents of the relevant gender, was almost the same and prevailed by turn. In the recent six years, the proportion of women who became crime



victims of a total number of the surveyed women was higher than the same indicator for men.



Source: Authors own conception

**Figure 3.** The percentage of the surveyed women and men who alleged that a crime was committed against them during the last year (% of the total number of the respondents of relevant gender)

The structure of the respondents who suffered from crimes, per types of crimes is set out in Table 4.

Generally, this structure is quite customary, but the figures of the individuals victimized as a result of crimes of certain types have dramatically changed. In most cases the respondents became victims of pickpocketing. On the average, 15.1% of the respondents recognized that they suffered from this crime. The proportion of the individuals suffered from this crime on the average accounted for around 20% in 2002-2008; in 2009-2014 it made up 13% and dropped to 8-9% in the last three years of the mentioned period.

The second most frequent type comprises the instances of bribery (bribe demanding, bribe offering under pressure, etc.). On the average, 9.7% respondents suffered annually as a result of such offences. Material fluctuations were the main feature characterizing the number of victims from such offences. The highest victimization indices were registered in 2004 (14.3%), 2005 (13.9%) and 2014 (15.7%), whereas they were the lowest in 2016 (3.9%), 2010 and 2015 (6.3% in each one). In general, in the

analyzed period, there was observed a trend towards a moderate reduction in the number of individuals who suffered from such offences. An average proportion of the respondents who became victims of such offences in 2002-2009 accounted for 11%, whereas in 2010-2017 it was 8.4%.

Students frequently became victims of disorderly conduct. On the average, 9.1% of the respondents suffered annually as a result thereof. Similarly to the two abovementioned types of crime, there can be observed peaks in victimization growth in 2002, 2004 and 2014 (12.8%, 14.1% and 13.6%, respectively). In other years, these indices were very insignificant: 6.1% in 2010 and 4.3% in 2016. In the second half of the monitored period there was a reduction in the indices of victimization resulting from this crime, notably in 2015-2017 (6.3%, 4.3% and 7.6%, respectively).

**Table 4.** Degree of the Kyiv students' victimization resulting from crimes of certain types (% of the total respondent number)

Types of crimes	Years of study													
	2002	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pickpocketing	20.6	18.4	23.6	17.2	18.7	14.5	10.3	12.5	17.4	8.3	14.8	8.7	8.6	7.9
Bribery	11.4	14.3	13.9	9.0	8.6	10.9	6.3	8.1	10.4	8.1	15.7	6.3	3.9	8.0
Disorderly conduct	12.8	14.1	13.6	8.8	7.3	9.4	6.1	9.1	11.3	7.1	13.6	6.3	4.3	7.6
Robbery	5.4	11.4	10.4	7.8	6.7	5.0	4.4	4.0	6.0	5.1	8.2	5	3.1	3.9
Theft from a car, theft of money or things at work	4.3	7.6	8.9	5.2	8.6	6.9	4.4	4.0	6.4	3.2	5.2	4.8	2.7	4.3
Road traffic offences	8.7	6.5	7.1	6.6	5.4	5.5	2.8	5.4	5.7	3.6	5.6	1.7	3.1	4.2
Thefts at summer house	6.7	6.0	9.0	3.4	4.3	3.6	4.1	4.0	5.0	2.0	5.0	1.5	1.7	2.3
Fraud	12.3	5.4	5.4	3.6	4.0	3.5	2.2	3.0	4.9	3.7	6.1	2.0	3.2	3.2
Violent infliction of medium and minor bodily harm	7.6	6.8	3.9	3.2	2.5	2.7	2.6	1.0	2.8	1.6	3.0	2.4	1.0	1.9
Household burglary	3.1	4.6	4.1	3.0	3.8	3.4	2.7	2.8	1.5	2.2	3.8	2.4	2.1	3.2
Brigandage	3.6	3.9	4.8	3.2	2.7	1.5	2.6	2.2	2.5	1.8	2.7	2.6	0.8	1.9
Rape, attempted rape	5.6	1.5	3.7	1.4	0.6	1.7	0.4	0.8	1.7	0.4	1.0	1.1	0.2	0.9
Assassination attempt	1.6	1.9	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.7	0.9	1.8	1.9	1.2	1.8	1.7	1.2	1.5
Car theft or carjacking	3.1	1.2	1.8	1.2	1.0	1.0	0.7	1.2	0.2	1.2	2.3	2.2	0.4	1.3

Types of crimes	Years of study													
	2002	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Violent infliction of grievous bodily harm	1.6	2.1	0.9	1.6	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.8

Source: Authors own conception

On the average 5.4% of the respondents mentioned that they suffered as a result of road traffic offences. The number of victims from such offences is also characterized by a trend towards reduction. In 2002-2007, the proportion of such individuals accounted for 7-8%, whereas in 2008-2014 it was mostly at the level of 5%; it reduced to 1.7% in 2005 and in the last two years it accounted for 3.1% and 4.2%, respectively.

On the average, 4.4% of the respondents noted that they were victims of fraud committed against them. There was observed a dramatic difference between the indices at the beginning of the monitored period, when there was a peak in mass frauds against citizens, and same in the next years. In 2002, the proportion of the fraud victims accounted for 12.3%, during the next three years, it exceeded 5%, whereas it fluctuated close to the level of 3% in 2007-2011 and grew to 6.1% in 2012-2014, but it decreased again in recent years and accounted for 3.2% in 2017-2018.

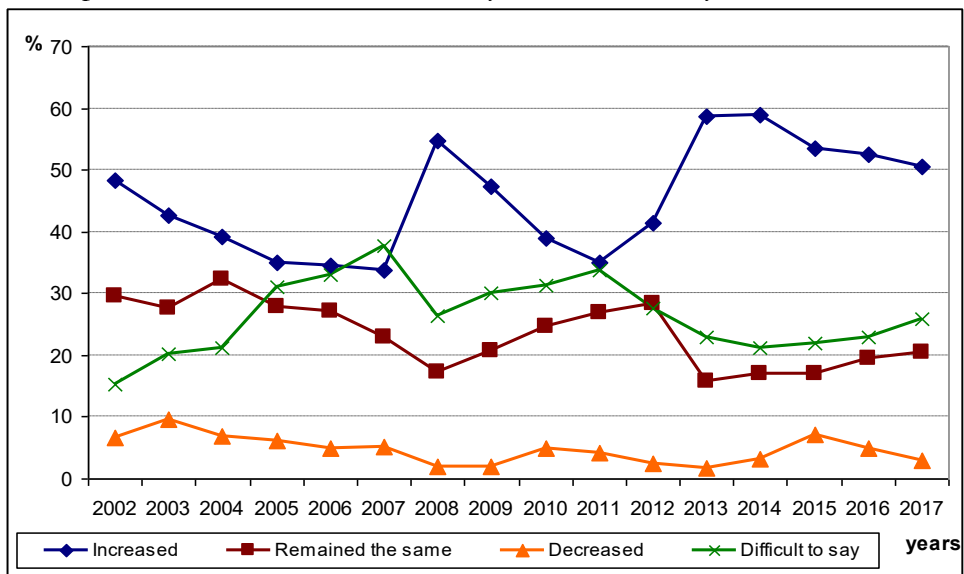
A notable number of the respondents recognized that they were victims of thefts from summer houses (4.3% on the average) and household burglaries (3.2%). In 2002-2007, the average percentage of the summer house theft victims was high and accounted for 6.4%, in 2008-2012, their level was 4% and it seriously fluctuated between 2% and 5% during the next five years. The victimization indices of household burglaries were relatively stable in 2002-2009 (3-4%); the average proportion of the victims of that crime was equal to 2.6% during the next few years and annual deviations from the average one were insignificant.

The car thefts and carjacking offences were committed rather seldom against students. The average rate of the respondents who suffered from this crime is 1.4%. The annual data fluctuated between 0.2% in 2003 to 3.1% in 2002. In 2017, the victimization level of that offence accounted for 1.3%.

The percentages of the individuals victimized by grievous violent offences were insignificant and dramatically dropped during the period in question. In particular, the proportion of the rapes and attempted rape victims accounted for 5.7% in 2002, and it was on the average 3% during the

next three years, in 2007-2015 it accounted for 1.1% and less than 1% in the last two years. In 2002-2009, on the average 1.4% of the respondents suffered from willful infliction of bodily harm, and their 2010-2017 index accounted for 0.6% (it was 0.4% in 2016 and 0.8% in 2018). In contrast to the victims of the preceding two types of criminal offences, the proportion of the individuals who suffered from the assassination during these years was rather stable and on the average accounted for 1.5%.

Assessment of criminal situation and the police's activities aimed at counteracting it. The respondents were offered to assess the character of the criminal dynamics in Kyiv in a preceding year. As is seen from Figure 4, the majority of the respondents believed that criminality increased in the mentioned period. In 2002-2007, the percentage of the individuals who share this opinion decreased from 48% to 35% and grew to 55% in 2008, whereas it dropped again during the next three years, to 36%. In 2012-2013, this index grew to 59%, but decreased in 2014-2017; however, it accounted for more than half of all respondents. It can be asserted that the majority of the respondents assessed the criminal dynamics in the city as unfavorable.



Source: Authors own conception

**Figure 4.** Distribution of the respondents' answers the question "Did the criminality grow in Kyiv in the current year?" (%)

According to the statistics, people of young age are frequently involved themselves in robberies and brigandage attacks, and they frequently become victims of such conduct. The average indices of the individuals

wronged by these crimes accounted for 6.5% and 2.8%, respectively. The proportion of the individuals who suffered from robberies increased in 2002-2004, from 5.4% to 11.4%, and exceeded 10% during the next two years. During the next five years, this index was continually decreasing and reached 4.0% in 2011, in 2012-2015 it fluctuated between 5% and 8%, and in 2016-2017 it reduced and accounted for 3.1% and 3.9%, respectively. Similar dynamics was also characteristic of robberies, but the percentages of such crime victims were not affected by such material fluctuations. In 2002-2006, the relevant indicator increased from 3.6% to 5.1% and in 2017-2015 it on the average accounted for 2.4%; it dropped to 0.8% in 2017 and accounted for 1.9% in 2018.

A number of respondents suffered from the thefts from car, thefts of money or things at work (an average proportion is 5.5%). During 2002-2009, the average proportion of individuals who suffered from this crime accounted for 6.7%, having decreased to 4% during the next two years, and fluctuated close to average 4.4% in 2012-2017.

The proportion of the individuals believing that the last year crime rate remained unchanged accounted for 15% to 30% in different years. In 2013-2017, it varied insignificantly and accounted for 16%-20%.

The proportion of the respondents who supported the allegation that the crime rate had dropped, was insignificant and did not exceed 10%.

It is necessary to point out to a considerable rate of the respondents (on the average 30% of all people in the survey), who were unable to answer this question. Probably for the lack of reliable information on this issue, they did not want to form assessment based on own impressions.

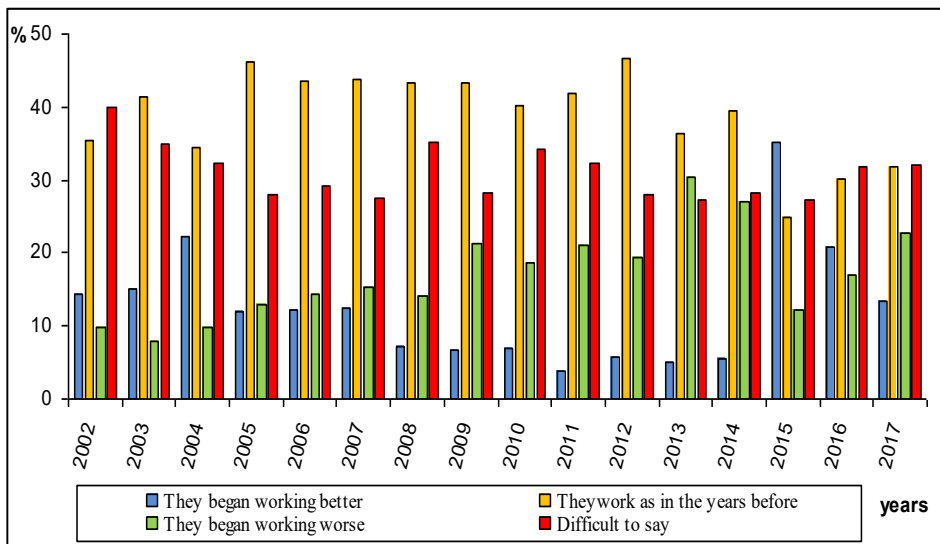
It should be noted that the students' assessments did not correspond to public statistics in terms of the crime dynamics in the city. For example, according to statistics, the number of registered crimes dropped in Kyiv in 2004, 2006, 2007 and during 2017-2018. Instead, most respondents believed that the criminality in the city grew in these years and 20% to 30% of the respondents believed it remained the same.

These data show that official information on the numbers of registered crimes does not come to the respondents' possession or they are immune to it. Maybe their opinion on the criminal situation in the city was largely influenced by the factors such as prevalence of negative opinions in mass media, critical comments on these issues by top public officials, political leaders and seeing themselves the facts of commission of criminal offences.

In the course of the survey, the respondents were offered to assess the work of the police in the city of Kyiv. According to the received data

(Fig. 5), during the monitored period, most respondents (38.9%) were of the opinion that the police's work is at the same level as in the preceding years.

During the larger part of the analyzed period, the rate of such individuals exceeded 40%. In the recent three years, there was a substantial decrease in this indicator: 24.8% in 2015, 30.1% in 2016 and 31.7% in 2017. 17.1% of the respondents answered that the police began working worse. The annual fluctuations here were more significant. In 2002-2004, such assessment to the police's work was given by 8-10% of the respondents; this index grew from 9.9% to 21.4% in 2015-2009 and remained the same during the next three years. In 2013-2014, due to the political developments that took place in the country, the rate of the individuals who negatively assessed the police's work jumped to 30.5% and 27%, respectively. In 2015, as a result of the expected improvements in work of the police owing to reformation of the latter, the proportion of the respondents who shared that opinion decreased more than twice and reached 12.2%. However, these expectations did not materialize and this index grew to 16.9% already in 2016 and to 22.7%, in 2017.



Source: Authors own conception

**Figure 5.** Distribution of the respondents' answers the question "Give your assessment to the police's work in Kyiv this year" (%)

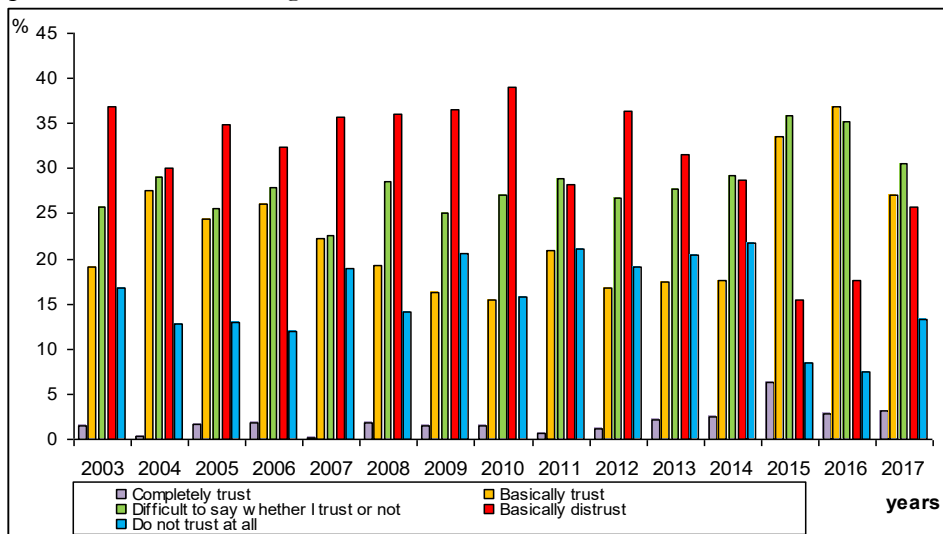
The answer regarding improvement in the work of the police was supported on the average by 12.4% of the respondents. The movements in the percentages of the individuals, who disagreed with this allegation, were different. In 2002-2004, the proportion of such individuals increased from

14.3% to 22.3%, mostly decreasing during the next years and it accounted for only 3.9% in 2011, whereas in 2012-2014 it was at the level of 5-6%. In 2015, due to the mentioned expectations from the police reforms, the rate of those who recognized the improvement in their work, grew immediately to 35.1 %, however, it decreased to 20.8% already in the next year, and to 13.5% in 2017. The cited data show that the police reforms in Ukraine, in the opinion of the respondents, have not generated any noticeable results yet.

It should be noted that there is a considerable percentage of the respondents (the average rate was 31.0%), who were unable to assess the police’s work. We assume that the majority of such individuals did not answer this question in view of insufficiency of the information available to them in relation to the activities of the given law enforcement body.

It is understandable that negative assessment of the police’s activities was more frequently given by the victimized respondents. The average rate of the crime victims, who negatively assessed the police’s activities, accounted for 21.7%, whereas among the individuals who were not crime victims, such index was 16.4%.

An important condition for the maintenance of law and order in the society is the trust of the population to the bodies that ensure it. The respondents to the survey were offered to answer what was the extent of their trust to the Kyiv police. The distribution of the students’ answers this question is shown at Figure 6.



Source: Authors own conception

**Figure 6.** Distribution of the respondents’ answers the question “What is the level of your trust to the police?” (%)

A relative majority of the respondents accounted for those who basically (average rate is 31.0%) and completely (15.7%) distrust the police. In 2003-2004, the rate of the individuals who basically distrust the police was on the average 34% and in 2015 it dramatically dropped for the mentioned reason to 15.5%, whereas during the next two years it increased to 17.6% and 25.8%. The percentage of the individuals who did not trust the police at all was 16.8% in 2003; during the next three years it was 12-13% and in 2007-2014 it accounted for 19.0%, on the average. Then, this index decreased to 8.5% and 7.4% in 2015-2016, but in 2018 it grew to 13.3%. On the average 22.7% of the respondents alleged that they basically trust the police. The percentage of those who completely trusted the police was insignificant and accounted for 1.9%, on the average. In 2003, the rate of the individuals who basically trust the police was 19.1% and this index was on the average 25% in 2004-2007, whereas it fluctuated close to the rate of 18% during the next 7 years. In 2015, at the outset of the police reforms, the proportion of the individuals who shared this opinion increased to 33.6% and it was equal to 36.9% in 2016, whereas in 2018 it decreased to 27.1%. The percentage of the respondents who completely trust the police was insignificant during the whole analyzed period and noticeably fluctuated from year to year. In 2003-2012, the average rate of such individuals accounted for 1.2%; during the next two years it accounted for over 2%, whereas in 2015, it was 6.3% (the highest index in the monitored period). During the last two years of the survey, it accounted for 2.8% and 3.1%, respectively.

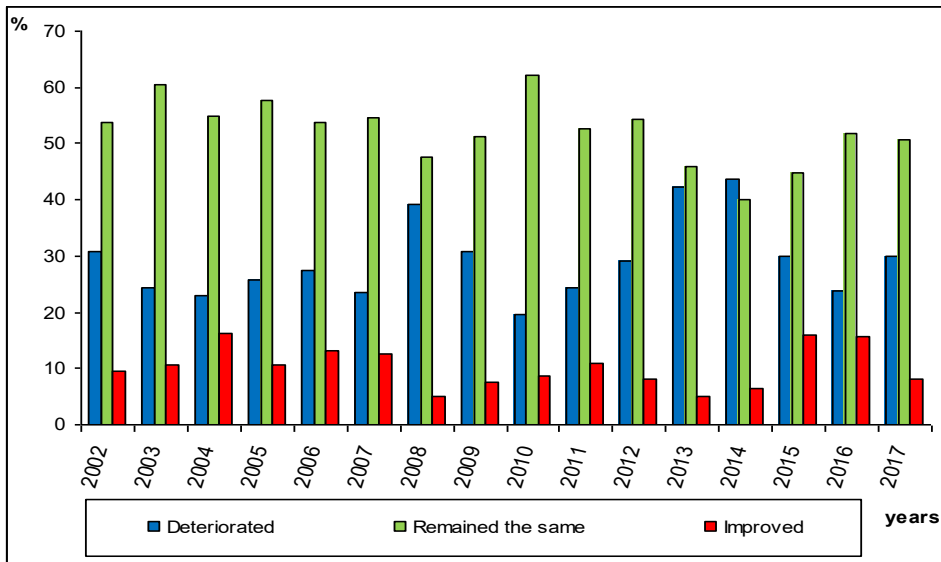
It can be asserted that there was a significant increase in the level of trust to the police in 2015, which remained significant during the next two years, though a trend towards its reduction is already in place.

As in the case with the answer to the previous question, a substantial percentage of the respondents were unable to decide whether they trust the police (their average rate was 28.4%). Moreover, in 2003-2014 such answers were given on the average by 27% of the respondents, whereas during the last three years, by more than one third. We can assume that such a substantial proportion of the individuals who were unable to answer this question are determined by insufficient information on the police's work that is available to the students.

The respondents to the survey were also asked two questions on the situation with their personal security. In the first one, the respondents were requested to assess the situation with their personal security in a year preceding the survey. At Figure 7, it is seen that during the whole period of monitoring, the majority of the respondents (on the average 52.3%) believed



their situation with personal security was the same. During a larger part of the analyzed period, such opinion was shared by more than half of the respondents, and their rate exceeded 60% in 2003 and 2010. This indicator was less than 50% in 2010 and during 2013-2015 for the account of the increase in the portions of the respondents who stated that their personal security improved or deteriorated.



Source: Authors own conception

**Figure 7.** Distribution of the respondents' answers the question on the situation with their personal security in the preceding year (%)

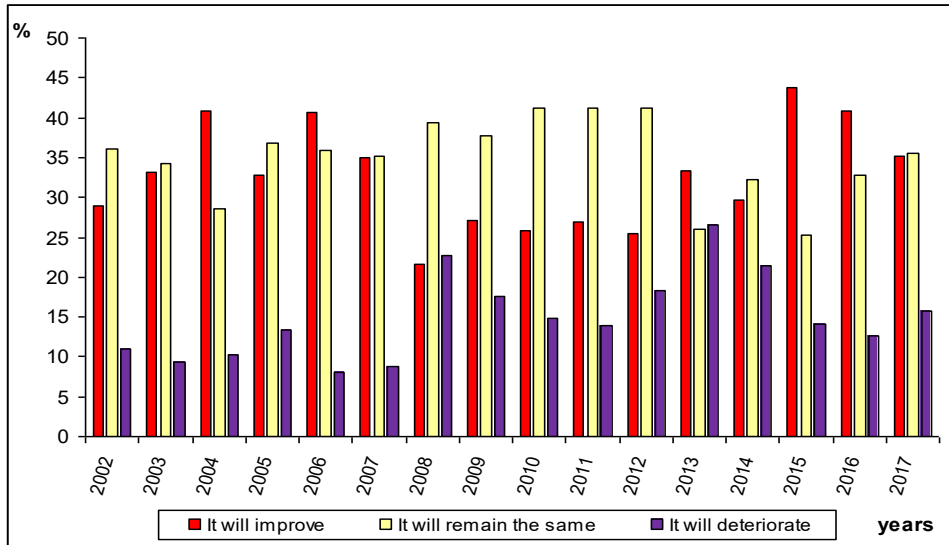
Among the other respondents to the survey there was a majority who believed that the situation with their personal security became worse compared to the preceding year (on the average 29.2%). During the larger part of the analyzed period, the rate of such individuals fluctuated between 25% and 30%. Sharp changes only took place during four years: reduction (19.7%) in 2010, but increase (39.3%) in 2008 and during 2013-2014 (42.3% and 43.7%, respectively). The last increase in this indicator took place amid the escalating social and political situation in the country.

The average rate of the students who noted that the situation with their personal security improved in the preceding year accounted for 10.3%. Distinct deviations from the average index were registered in 2006 (5.0%), 2013 (5.1%), and 2015-2016 (16.1% and 15.7%, respectively). The 2015-2016 increase in the rate of such individuals took place amid the

expectations for the improvement as a result of the police reforms. On the average 7.7% of the respondents were unable to answer this question.

The comparison of the answers to this question given by the individuals of different sex showed that men assess their personal security more positively than women. For example, on the average 22.9% of the men believed that the situation with their personal security deteriorated; the average rate of women was 32.5%. Among the male respondents, the rate of those who recognized general improvement in the personal security accounted for 13.2%, whereas among the female respondents, it was 8.4%.

The students were also offered to forecast changes in the situation with personal security during the next year. Most of the respondents (on the average 35.5%) noted that the situation with their personal security would remain the same (Fig. 8). They made up the majority during a larger part of the period in question, except for five years that will be discussed below.



Source: Authors own conception

**Figure 8.** Distribution of the respondents' answers the question on the forecast of the situation with their personal security in the next year (%)

It should be noted that a substantial percentage of the respondents optimistically assessed the situation with their personal security in the next year. Their average rate accounted for 32.6%, which is only slightly less than those who supported the allegation that the situation with their personal security would not change. The highest rate of optimists was particularly in those five years: in 2004 (40.9%), 2006 (40.6%), 2013 (33.3%), 2015 (43.8%) and 2016 (40.9%). These are the years of elections, changes in the higher

public authorities that generated expectations for the improvement in the situation in the society, including security. Such expectations are particularly spread among the youth, the particular quality of whose psychological and social condition is an excessive optimism and high hopes for future.

The average rate of the respondents to the survey who predicted deterioration in the area of personal security (pessimists) was 14.9%. During the period in question, the lowest rates of pessimists were observed in 2003 and 2006-2007 (9.4%, 8.0% and 8.8%, respectively), whereas they were the highest in 2008 and 2013-2014 (22.7%, 26.5% and 21.5%, respectively). It should be noted that 2008 was the only year when the pessimists prevailed over the optimists. The phenomenon of 2013-2014, when both the rates of optimists and pessimists were significant, is also of interest. Obviously the events of these years contributed to the breakdown of the students into two groups – those, who expected that the changes in the society would lead to the improvement in their personal security, and those, who believed that it would deteriorate as a result of such events. An average rate of the individuals, who had difficulties answering this question, was 15.7%. There was no material difference between the forecasts made by women and men in relation to personal security situation. There were a larger proportion of the respondents among the women than among the men, who expected that it would significantly improve, and those who was unable to decide what to answer.

The distribution of the answers to this question among the respondents victimized by crime and those who escaped it was insignificant. A substantial proportion of the students who were respondents to the survey hope that situation with their personal security will improve, but this rate is a bit lower among crime victims. A degree of victimization of Kyiv student youth is rather high though by the end of the analyzed period there can be seen a trend towards distinct reduction thereof. Substantial portion of the individuals victimized during the year became crime victims more than once. In most cases, the respondents became victims of pickpocketing, bribery, disorderly conduct, robberies, thefts from cars, thefts of money or things at work, road traffic offences and thefts at summer houses. The majority of the respondents to the survey were of the opinion that the criminal dynamics in the city is unfavorable. However, there was a significant rate of the respondents who were unable to answer this question. Most students, who responded to the survey, opined that during the period of survey the police was working at the same level as in previous years, or were in general unable to decide how to assess their work. The rate of those who believed that the police work had improved was less than the rate of

those who alleged that it deteriorated. A relative majority of the respondents expressed distrust to the police. The percentages of those who trusted the police for many years were insignificant, but larger than the one according to the general national surveys.

The situation with personal security was assessed by the respondents more frequently as stable. The portion of the individuals, who answered that it had deteriorated, was distinctly larger than the portion of the respondents who were of opposite opinion. Forecasting the changes in the situation with personal security for a perspective, most respondents opined that it would remain at the level of a previous year or will improve.

#### **4. Discussion**

The results of the investigation approved the hypothesis concerning a significant level of victimization of students from Kyiv and considerable excess of real kinds of criminal offenses against students (theft, robbery, hooliganism, etc.), in comparison with the number of these criminal offenses, registered by police agencies. One of the significant causes for the data difference is no reports from victims to police agencies about crimes committed against them. The survey data let provide a sense of the real state of criminal offenses in Kyiv, the victims of which are young people.

The research showed that the fear to become a crime victim is quite considerable among students. It is a reasonable factor influencing their behavior. The interviewed students started to state a decrease in the state of safety more often, although the level of their hopes for the improvement of personal safety was increased.

The results of our research are partly in line with the findings of scientists from other countries (Berthelot et al., 2018; Langton et al., 2017; Littleton et al., 2019; Lorincz & Magureanu, 2017; Owens, 2017; Xie & Baumer, 2019; Valieiev, Tohochynskyi et al., 2019).

The results of the study may be used while creating a questionnaire for victimological survey of the country population in general.

#### **5. Conclusions**

Most of all, the respondents to the survey were afraid to become victims of especially dangerous crimes that may cause harm to their life and health (brigandage, assassination attempts, rapes or attempted rapes), as well as criminal offences the young people suffer most frequently (pickpocketing, robberies). There was observed a trend towards increase in the percentages of the respondents being afraid to become victims of grievous violent

offences and crimes against property, and also towards the reduction in the portions of the individuals frightened by a possibility of suffering from offences that do not present any great social threat. A degree of victimization of the Kyiv student youth is rather high though by the end of the analyzed period there can be seen a trend towards distinct reduction thereof. Substantial portion of the individuals victimized during the year became crime victims more than once. In most cases, the respondents became victims of pickpocketing, bribery, disorderly conduct, robberies, thefts from cars, thefts of money or things at work, road traffic offences and thefts at summer houses.

The majority of the respondents to the survey were of the opinion that the criminal dynamics in the city is unfavorable. However, there was a significant rate of the respondents who were unable to answer this question.

Most students, who responded to the survey, opined that during the period of survey the police was working at the same level as in previous years, or were in general unable to decide how to assess their work. The rate of those who believed that the police work had improved was less than the rate of those who alleged that it deteriorated.

A relative majority of the respondents expressed distrust to the police. The percentages of those who trusted the police for many years were insignificant, but larger than the one according to the general national surveys.

The situation with personal security was assessed by the respondents more frequently as stable. The portion of the individuals, who answered that it had deteriorated, was distinctly larger than the portion of the respondents who were of opposite opinion. Forecasting the changes in the situation with personal security for a perspective, most respondents opined that it would remain at the level of a previous year or will improve.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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