



Kolektiv BRIZOLIT

**Labyrintem zločinu a chudoby
Kriminalita a viktimizace v sociálně
vyločených lokalitách**

Společensko-ekologická edice
Nakladatelství DOPLNĚK

Summary

The main aim of BRIZOLIT was to learn about the extent, forms and structure of victimization of people living in socially excluded localities (SEL) in the Czech Republic. In the first phase of research, we conducted 2566 structured survey interviews with inhabitants of socially excluded localities across all Czech regions except for Prague and 590 structured survey interviews with people living outside SEL in selected municipalities we visited. Besides victimization, the interviews focused on fear of crime, self-report crime, attitudes to various social problems, trust in formal institutions dealing with security and crime prevention, as well as experience of respondents with hate crime, discrimination, criminalization and stigmatization. Our survey also produced the first systematic overview of sociodemographic characteristics of SEL inhabitants, allowing us to set our victimological findings in the proper social context.

At the end of each chapter of this book, there is a summary of findings relevant to its topic – here, however, we would like to present the main findings of the project in a set of 10 questions and answers.

1. Who lives in socially excluded localities and how does this population differ from the general population of the Czech Republic?

Socially excluded localities were first identified in the Czech Republic in the 2006 Gabal Report (GAC spol. s r. o. 2006). Despite a decade has passed, the sociodemographic characteristics of their inhabitants remained largely unknown, becoming a matter of more or less informed guesses and myths.

When compared to the average Czech population or to their NON-SEL neighbours (living in the same municipalities but outside SEL) SEL inhabitants differ in the following demographic characteristics: marital status, education, economic status, average number of household members, type of housing, migration and nationality or ethnicity. In other words, SEL inhabitants:

- are more often single;
- are significantly less educated (and in between generations, average education level tends to decrease even further);
- have lower income and are more often unemployed;
- live in more numerous households;
- live more often in rental apartments and dormitories;
- migrate more often;
- identify more often as Roma.

These characteristics constitute a set of disadvantages in the context of Czech society and the basis for increased vulnerability of this population. This must be taken into account especially with regard to trends in victimization which will impact SEL inhabitants more than other, less vulnerable groups.

2. What is the extent and character of victimization of SEL inhabitants?

By victimization we understand the process or experience of being a victim of a crime. Our project focused on its extent as well as its structure and character. The victimization survey allowed us also to delve deeper into crimes that are not included in official crime statistics, that is, unreported crime.

Our key finding is that SEL inhabitants were significantly more often victimized in the last 12 months than their NON-SEL neighbours, both in the sense of the proportion of people who were victimized at least once (15 per cent more than NON-SEL), as well as in the sense of victimization rate (average number of victimizations per person, 0,8 victimizations more than NON-SEL).

Prevalence of victimization among SEL inhabitants is influenced mainly by age, and, to a lesser extent, by ethnic/national self-identification. Younger people were victimized more often, especially by physical violence, intimidation, hate crime and theft; hate crime is mainly responsible for the increased prevalence of victimization among persons who identified as Roma. We did not find any significant influence of gender among SEL inhabitants, among NON-SEL however, males were victimized more often. Nor did we find any relation between prevalence of victimization and municipality population, crime index or population of SEL.

Rate of victimization shows similar trends: it decreases in older age groups, the most victimized in both populations are persons between 15 and 29, the lowest rate is among persons older than 60. Rate of victimization is slightly higher among persons who identify as Roma. Gender does not seem to have any influence, nor does the local crime index, municipality population or proportion of SEL population to municipality population. There seems to be a relation, however, between SEL population and repeat victimization – in bigger SEL, people are more often victimized repeatedly, especially by hate crime.

Both populations, SEL and NON-SEL, are victimized mainly by property crime, overall victimization by violent crime as well as repeat victimization by violent crime tends to increase among SEL inhabitants (with repeat violent victimization 15 per cent higher than NON-SEL). This trend again seems to be related to increased victimization by hate crime among SEL inhabitants.

SEL population was most frequently victimized by hate crime, bike and motorcycle theft, simple theft, intimidation and vandalism. NON-SEL population, on the other

hand, was most frequently victimized by drug abuse, simple theft, intimidation, vandalism and fraud. We will discuss hate crime more extensively later. The difference in drug-related victimization might be interpreted by focusing on the perpetrators and place of victimization. SEL inhabitants were more often victimized near their home by a person they knew. As the social networks in SEL are denser, we might infer that drug traffic is more frequent among known drug users, while among NON-SEL population, where the social networks are less dense, it tends to extend further. The difference in bike/motorcycle theft might be explained by differences in the spatial dimension of socially excluded localities. SEL inhabitants do not have at their disposal as many safe spaces where they could leave their bikes and must leave them in public spaces, unguarded and easier to steal.

Our data shows that the police classified 28 per cent of reported victimizations (6 per cent of all victimizations) of SEL inhabitants as criminal offences. This means, in comparison with official crime statistics in the Czech Republic, that SEL population is two to three times more often victimized than average Czech population.

3. Who are the perpetrators?

If our respondents reported victimization in the last 12 months, they were asked to provide details on the perpetrator or perpetrators if available (about one third of victimized respondents). Individual perpetrators were most often male and represented about 50 percent of reported cases, groups of two or more persons, representing the second half of known perpetrators in reported cases, were most often mixed.

Among NON-SEL respondents, the perpetrator was more often a person unknown to the victim than among SEL respondents. This finding corresponds with the fact that in comparison with SEL respondents, NON-SEL were victimized more often outside their home or neighbourhood. SEL respondents knew the perpetrator more often, usually it was either an acquaintance or a neighbour. We can however only speculate about whether the respondents were reluctant to provide accurate answers as to the identity of the perpetrator in case it was a person close to them (e.g. family member).

Almost nine out of ten perpetrators were 18-65 years old: juvenile and senior perpetrators are responsible for only a minor fraction of the reported cases of victimization. One of the main age differences between perpetrators of SEL and NON-SEL victimizations is in the 18-25 age group, which was more often present (by 11 per cent) in cases reported by NON-SEL respondents.

SEL respondents reported the ethnicity/nationality of perpetrators most often as Czech, one third reported a “Roma” perpetrator. As we are dealing with ascribed identity, it would be analytically untenable to draw any conclusions.

Perpetrators were most often unarmed, with minimal differences between SEL and NON-SEL reported victimizations (6 per cent armed perpetrators among SEL victimizations, 4 per cent among NON-SEL).

4. What were the conditions of victimization?

Most of the reported victimizations in the last 12 months happened in the respondents' home municipality. SEL respondents were more often victimized in their private space, that is in their homes or homes of their friends and relatives including apartment buildings' communal spaces, dormitories etc. They were less victimized in private spaces with public function (shops, restaurants, discos etc.).

These differences in victimization might be related to poverty, segregation and discrimination of SEL inhabitants, and, in effect, with different modes of spending their free time. They do not necessarily mean that socially excluded localities are inherently more dangerous – due to the fact of their exclusion, SEL inhabitants tend to spend more time at home and near their homes and thus they are victimized more often there. This is indicated also by the time of day of their victimizations: they tended to happen during daytime, especially in the afternoon. During daytime, NON-SEL respondents tended to be victimized more often outside their homes. Most evening and night victimizations however tended to happen at home or near home for both groups.

Bodily harm caused by victimization was similar for both SEL and NON-SEL populations. SEL respondents however reported more severe psychological trauma as a result of victimization and less property damage.

5. What kinds of crime are least reported to the police and who reports crime?

The so-called unreported or hidden crime is one of the most discussed phenomena of security in socially excluded localities. The reasons for this lie in the frequent assumption that it is this hidden force that is responsible for increasing tensions between “old” and “new” residents, and that the main source of this hidden crime are the „newcomers“. Though the reasons for hidden crime might well lie somewhere else, it is certainly a significant problem that we will shortly.

In general, most of the victimizations in the last 12 months were not reported to the police, with minimal differences between SEL and NON-SEL respondents. SEL inhabitants reported 23 per cent of victimizations, while NON-SEL respondents reported 26 per cent. The most reported category of crime among SEL respondents was car theft, followed by a relatively large margin by theft from motor vehicles, robbery and burglary. The least reported crimes were loan-sharking, human trafficking for labour exploitation, human trafficking for sexual exploitation, corruption, hate crime, drug abuse and

fraud. SEL inhabitants thus most frequently reported theft-based crimes, and least frequently crimes related to the structural problems of social exclusion.

For SEL inhabitants, loan-sharking represents a vital service through which they can compensate their limited access to financial resources. Exploitation of labour is directly related to the precarious and unstable position of SEL population in the labour market, fraud and corruption are often related to the abuse of power in relation to SEL inhabitants, as well as to the limited enforceability of laws in this area. Drug abuse hate crime and sexual exploitation are hidden mostly due to the extent and normalization of the drug economy, normalization of prejudiced behaviours, humiliation, threats of violence or declarations of consent in relation to reporting sex crimes.

Among SEL respondents, victimizations were more often reported by females and seniors, prevalence as well as rate of victimization among these groups was however relatively low. Respondents also tended to report crimes resulting in bodily harm more frequently than crimes causing financial or property damage.

Among the two most often reported reasons for not reporting a crime to the police was trivialization (“it wasn’t worth it”) or distrust in the capability or interest of the police („the police would not do anything about it“).

6. What is the extent and structure of prejudice-based harm done to SEL inhabitants?

Prejudice-based harm done to SEL inhabitants might be classified into two basic categories. First, hate crime and crimes motivated by prejudice. Hate crime represents victimizations defined directly by their prejudicial motivation, there are other crimes, however, which might have a secondary prejudicial motivation (e.g. regarding the choice of victim, place or type of crime). Second, discrimination, that is, prejudicial treatment motivated by the perceived identity of individuals which, in contrast with hate crime, does not constitute a criminal offence. In our research, we tried to distinguish between the two, though we did not base our survey on a strictly legalistic approach.

In the last 12 months, almost one in five SEL respondents was victimized by prejudice-based crimes. Hate crime constituted 12 percent of all victimizations, the rest was mostly represented by intimidation, assault, psychological abuse, bullying or extortion. Hate crime is the single most frequent category of victimization for SEL respondents, with more than a third of SEL respondents reporting victimization during their lifetime. Prevalence of discrimination among SEL inhabitants is even higher. In the course of the last 12 months one in four SEL inhabitants was discriminated against at least once, and almost a half of SEL inhabitants experienced discrimination during their lifetime, with housing and hiring discrimination as the most frequent types.

Prevalence of victimization by hate crime, prejudice-based crime and discrimination is among the most significant differences between SEL and NON-SEL population,

and they appear to differ significantly also from the findings of other researchers regarding the prevalence of discrimination or hate crime in Czech society.

Victimization by prejudice-based harm is rampant in socially excluded localities. Regarding hate crime, ethnic self-identification and age appear to play the most significant role. Similar to overall victimization, also the prevalence of hate crime victimization tends to decrease with age, and people who identify themselves as Roma tend to be victimized more often. Moreover, hate crime appears to be strongly related to discrimination. Three out of four hate crime victims were discriminated against in the course of the last 12 months, 60 per cent of them were discriminated against repeatedly (five or more times). There also appear to be a strong relation between discrimination and victimization in general. In the last 12 months, one in five SEL respondents were both victimized and discriminated against, and more than two thirds of people who were discriminated against were victimized in the last 12 months. Being discriminated against also seems to influence the rate of victimization: the more a person was victimized, the greater chance of repeat victimization.

We can view hate crime, prejudice-based crime as well as discrimination as instruments of social control serving the purpose of maintaining and cementing the low social position of SEL inhabitants. Barbara Perry (2001) perceives the main function of hate crime to be the reproduction of the inferior status of marginalized groups. It tends to make victims feel that they do not belong and that they are not welcome in the society they live in. It may increase feelings of displacement and alienation, depression and anxiety based on the fact that the victimization was motivated by the identity of the victim, perceived as immutable and impossible to change.

Respondents victimized by hate crime in the last 12 months tended to assess the harm caused by the victimization as serious, with most respondents classifying it as grave.

Victimization happened usually during daytime, in home municipality and in public space. The most frequent specific place where hate crime victimizations happened were the homes of victims (more than a fourth of respondents victimized by hate crime in the last 12 months). On the other hand, only a few cases did the respondents report bodily harm or property damage, which seems to point at verbal abuse as the main form of hate crime.

Victims of hate crime usually did not know the perpetrator (83 per cent, in contrast with overall victimization where the perpetrator was more often a person the victim knew). Though in most cases there was a single perpetrator, a group of five or more persons was identified as perpetrator in 25 per cent of reported cases of hate crime victimization (more than two times more than perpetrators overall). The perpetrators were most often young adults (18 to 25), while overall the perpetrators were older (persons from 26 to 35 and 36 to 45 age groups were identified more often as perpetrators

overall). Hate crime perpetrators thus tend to be younger, though our data only record cases when the victim saw the perpetrator.

As we stated before, hate crime tends to get reported to the police less than other crimes. Hate crime as well as discrimination were usually not reported to the police. Victimization by hate crime was only reported to the police in 8 per cent of cases of persons victimized in the last 12 months, the most frequent reasons given by respondents we “it wasn’t worth it”, “police would not do anything about it” and “I do not trust the police“. This seems to indicate that distrust in the police or their capability to deal with hate crime might be among the reasons why hate crime does not get reported. As regards discrimination, it was reported only in 16 per cent of cases, which is only slightly more than the value reported by the office of the Czech Public Defender of Rights.

7. Is crime considered to be a serious problem and who fears crime more?

SEL as well as NON-SEL inhabitants consider crime along with unemployment and immigration to be the most important social problems, with the most favourable attitudes recorded toward schools and education, health and environment.

Though the official Czech crime rate declines since 2013, about 60 per cent of SEL and about half of NON-SEL respondents estimated that it is on the rise. At the municipal level, only 40 per cent of both SEL and NON-SEL respondents estimated that crime is rising.

There were however differences in concern about crime in municipality. SEL respondents who were concerned about crime in their municipality tended to select more extreme values than NON-SEL respondents. SEL respondents also reported more often that they are afraid to walk alone at night in their neighbourhood.

Fear of crime was generally higher among women, older age groups, respondents from more populated municipalities and respondents who were victimized in the last 12 months. The proportion of SEL population to municipality population does not appear to have any significant effect, just as ethnic/national self-identification (though respondents who identified as Roma expressed slightly lower fear of crime). The least fearful were men in 15-19 and 20-29 age groups (that is, the most victimized groups).

Predictors of fear of crime appear to be different than predictors of victimization (young age, ethnic/national self-identification and the proportion of SEL to municipality population). In other words, fear of crime is more present among persons who are less victimized, which constitutes the paradox of fear of crime.

SEL inhabitants view crime as a serious problem, along with other areas. They tend to be more sensitive to crime at municipal level and toward the notion of walking alone at night in their neighbourhood.

8. How do SEL inhabitants assess security institutions?

Trust and satisfaction with official institutions dealing with security in socially excluded localities (state police, city police, crime prevention assistants and municipal government) are important both for formulation and implementation of local and national public policies. SEL inhabitants are often considered to be less aware of the workings of law and to have lower levels of trust in official institutions, especially the police.

Our research did not bring an unambiguous answer to the above question. Average satisfaction with and trust in security institutions is in the middle of the scale, with SEL respondents scoring slightly more negative values. There is also a stronger tendency among SEL inhabitants to assume extreme positions (either absolute trust and satisfaction or distrust and dissatisfaction). That is also why the average value is neutral with a slight tendency toward negative assessment.

SEL inhabitants expressed the most trust in and satisfaction with in crime prevention assistants, the lowest scores were recorded in their attitudes to municipal government. NON-SEL respondents assessed official institutions the other way around, trusting municipal government the most and crime prevention assistants the least.

Though the state police was viewed rather neutrally on average, it is the most often mentioned institution SEL respondents would turn to if they would fear for their safety or the safety of their relatives (43 per cent). When compared with NON-SEL respondents, their willingness to cooperate with state police is almost 10 per cent lower, and they tend to involve other institutions.

One in eight to nine SEL respondents did not know about any crime prevention measure in their neighbourhood. Out of the all the various crime prevention measures implemented across the Czech socially excluded localities, SEL respondents are the most aware of crime prevention assistants.

Trust in state police, city police, crime prevention assistants and municipal government does not seem to have any measurable relation to objective variables (e.g. crime index, municipality population, unemployment rate, number of welfare benefit recipients, victimization in the last 12 months) or subjective variables (fear of crime, concern about crime, number of victimizations in the last 12 months).

Explanation of these differences in trust and satisfaction with official institutions might be found in future research: (1) at the local level, focusing on how the activities and representation of these institutions impact the everyday life of SEL inhabitants; (2) at the cognitive level, focusing on how attitudes of trust and satisfaction arise.

9. How often do SEL inhabitants have to face checks and inspections?

Checks and inspections by various institutions constitute an important issue especially regarding the so-called zero-tolerance policies and local regulations designed specifically

to discipline SEL population. Though these measures tend to be represented as security measures, some inhabitants might interpret them as sources of insecurity, seeing them as abuse of power and unjust treatment. In some municipalities, on the other hand, the absence of state police as the main law enforcement and security institution might be considered a problem. That is why we decided to focus on this area in our research.

Two thirds of SEL respondents reported seeing the police in their neighbourhoods at least once a day and more than a half of respondents see the police more than once a day. Though there are no data to compare these values with, we suppose that this indicates a relatively high presence of the police in socially excluded localities. On the other hand, more than a fifth of SEL respondents reported that they see the police in their neighbourhood only once a week or even less frequently (though this might be a problem of individual perception rather than differences between localities). In any case, most of SEL respondents come into contact with state police on everyday basis. We also asked respondents whether they think that the police focus on their neighbourhood more than on other parts of the municipality and what do they think about that. In most cases (two thirds) the respondents viewed the increased presence of the police positively, more than a half of respondents considered such approach to be very good. We might thus say that increased police presence is generally welcome by SEL inhabitants.

This is despite a significant number of SEL inhabitants have experience with ID checks or on-the-spot fines by the police, with 8 per cent who were checked five or more times. 14 per cent of SEL respondents were fined, 5 per cents of them were fined repeatedly (two or more times).

Perception of police presence is influenced by the proportion of SEL population to municipality population: the greater the proportion, the more police presence. The frequency of on-the-spot fines and ID checks however tends to decrease with greater proportion of SEL population to municipality population and increase with greater municipal population. Ethnic self-identification seems only to play a role with ID checks, as the respondents who identify as Roma were checked slightly more frequently.

We also focused on contact between child social services and SEL population. Among SEL respondents, 15 per cent came into contact with child social services in the last 12 months, 6 per cent of them came into contact five or more times. This means that SEL inhabitants come into contact with child social services six times more often than the average Czech population. The frequency of contact with child social services appears to be higher with certain types of housing, with the most frequent contact with respondents living in dormitories.

Based on the above indicators we may argue that SEL inhabitants have to submit to various checks relatively often – this problem calls however for further research, as there is no comparable dataset for the average Czech population.

10. What is the extent and character of self-reported crime and drug use?

Self-reported crime refers to criminal behaviours admitted by respondents themselves in the course of the interview. Prevalence of self-reported crime among SEL respondents is generally lower than prevalence of victimization. While every other SEL respondent was victimized in the last 12 months, only one fourth of them admitted perpetration of a crime. Among NON-SEL respondents, 16 per cent of respondents admitted having perpetrated a crime. Differences in prevalence are influenced by smaller number of respondents who were convicted and imprisoned for their crimes.

16 per cent of SEL respondents admitted having spent some time in prison – in contrast, among NON-SEL respondents this figure was only 3 per cent. Most of the SEL respondents with prison experience were male, meaning that 29 per cent of all male (and 4 per cent of female) SEL respondents had experience with prison. The most frequent crimes listed as reasons for imprisonment were assault and theft. Respondents who identify as Slovak or other tended to be imprisoned more often than respondents who identified as Czech or Roma. Differences between Czech and Roma respondents were minimal.

Furthermore, we focused on self-reported crime that did not lead to prison sentence (that is, either sentence of probation, classification as misdemeanour or crime not dealt with by the police). In this case, the differences between SEL and NON-SEL respondents diminished. While 20 per cent of SEL respondents reported such crime, among NON-SEL respondents it was 14 per cent. Again, the offences reported included most often assault and theft with a slight difference between SEL and NON-SEL respondents in that NON-SEL reported assault more often, and SEL reported more theft. Majority of respondents admitted to a single crime, but one in five admitted having committed five or more crimes, signalling the presence of repeat offenders.

Victimization and ethnic/national self-identification appear to be most relevant for crime that did not end in prison sentence. Respondents who were victimized and who identified as Roma or other non-Czech ethnicity admitted to perpetrating a crime more often.

How to explain higher prevalence among SEL respondents? The first reason lies in the smaller proportion of NON-SEL respondents with prison experience. Marginalized groups tend to end up in prison more frequently as their behaviours tend to be classified more often as criminal and prison-worthy. Also, the socioeconomic condition of persons released from prison might make it problematic for them to find housing outside socially excluded localities. However, it is possible that it is a matter of sample size: if the SEL and NON-SEL samples were of more comparable sizes, maybe the differences in proportion would change.

Experience with “hard” drugs was very similar for both populations, with a slightly higher prevalence among SEL inhabitants (8 per cent, 1 per cent active users). The most frequently mentioned drug was methamphetamine, with a significantly higher prevalence among SEL respondents.