

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a black balaclava, looking intently through a window. The person's eyes are visible through the eye holes of the mask. The background is a blurred view of green foliage outside the window. The entire image has a blue color cast.

Residential burglary in Austria

Dr. Armin Kaltenegger | June 13, 2018 | Stockholm

INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY

Duration of the study:

February 2017 – August 2017



Partner:

IRKS Institute for the Sociology of Law and Criminology

INSTITUT FÜR RECHTS- UND KRIMINALSOZIOLOGIE
INSTITUTE FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY

IRKS

Scope:

- Analysis of 150 police reports
- Interviews with 26 convicted burglars
- Interviews with 5 experts
- Background information from relevant statistics

GOALS OF THE STUDY

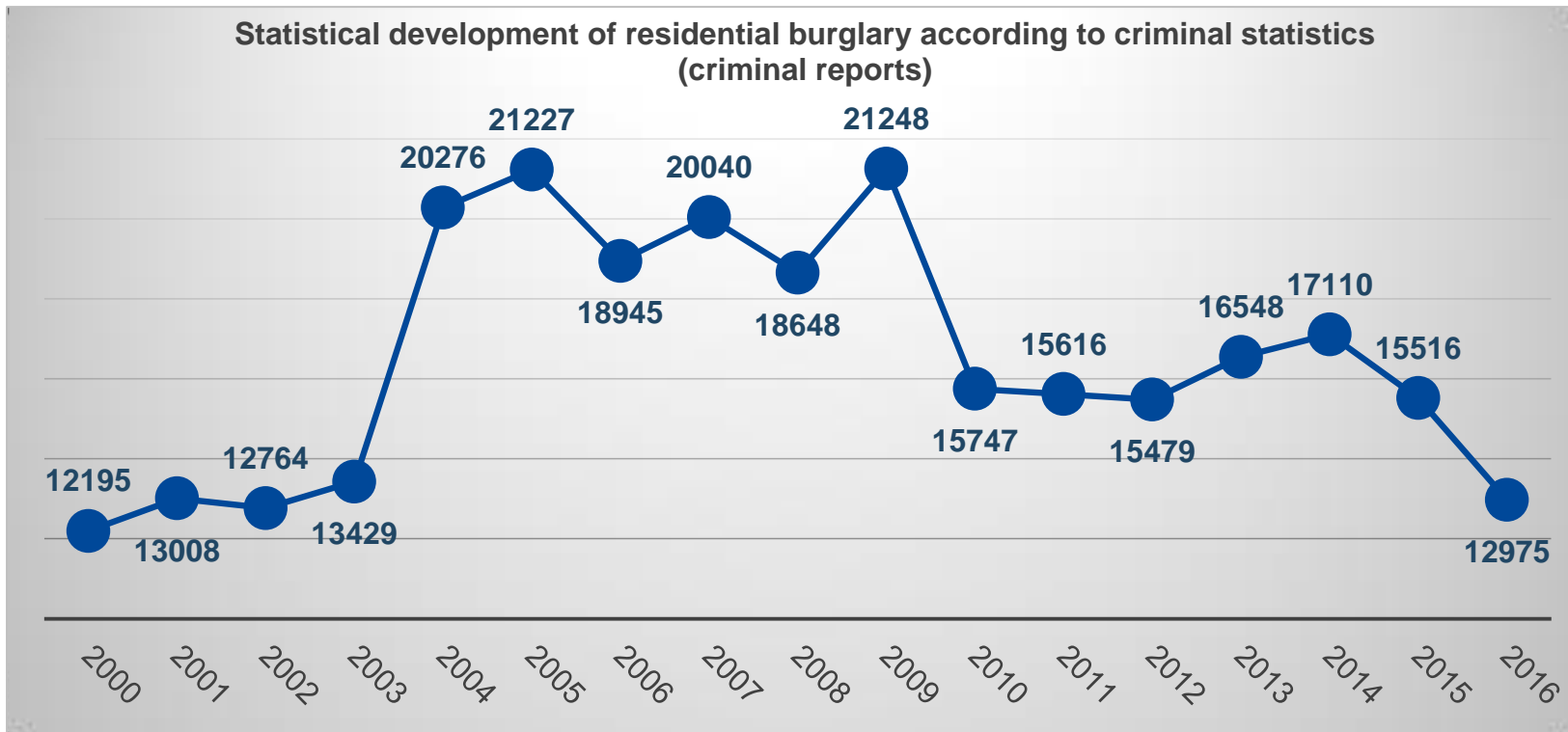
Insights into the background and methods of residential burglary based on interviews with convicted burglars:

Based on what criteria are crime scenes selected? How do perpetrators operate during a burglary? Which safety measures act dissuasive?

Additional information through analysis of police acts, expert interviews and statistical evaluation:

What mistakes are most common when it comes to safety precautions? What role do the internet and social media have? Which measures could be undertaken in order to make one's residential property more secure? How have residential burglaries developed statistically over recent years?

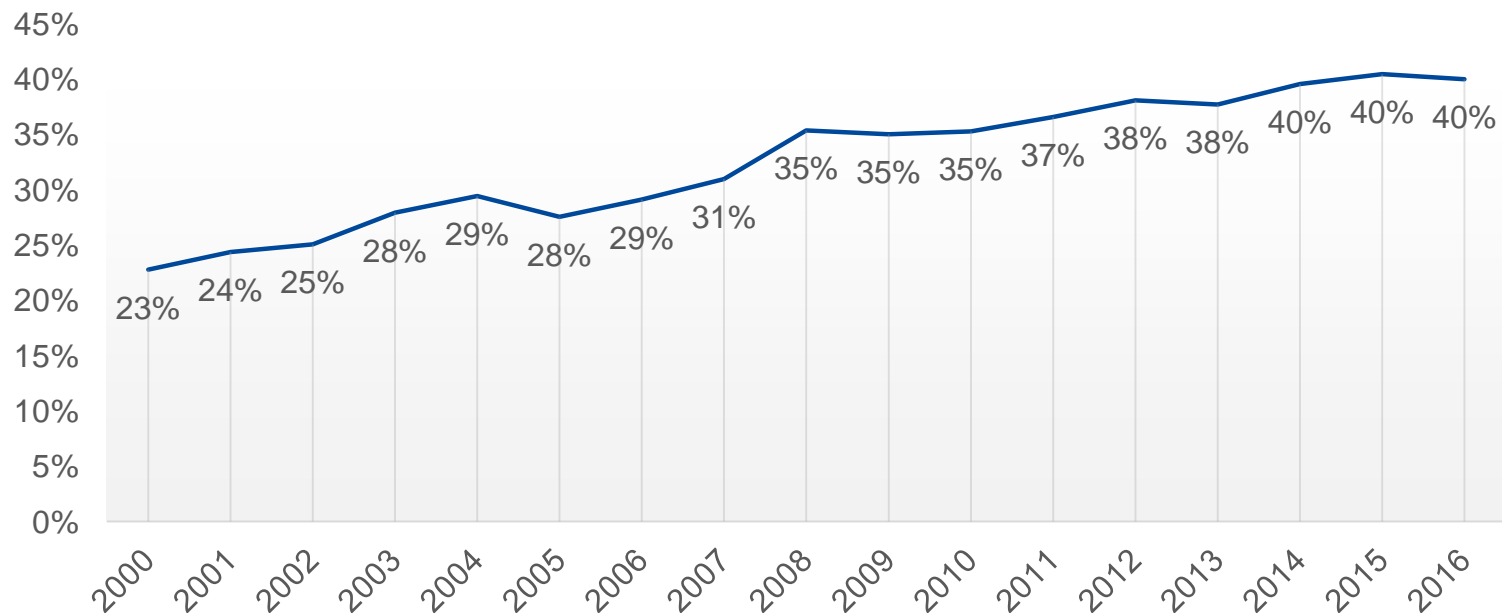
FACTS AND FIGURES



- Residential burglary belongs to the top 5 criminal offences
- Criminal reports are in decline since 2009

DEVELOPMENT OF BURGLARY ATTEMPTS

Rate of attempted burglary



The percentage of interrupted burglaries is rising

- Safety precautions are proving effective
- Awareness in the general population has been growing

HOW DO PERPETRATORS CHOOSE THEIR CRIME SCENE?

Perpetrators usually choose the **path with least resistance!**

Preferred sites:

- Places with easy **access to public transport** (trains) or in the area of main roads or motorways
- Houses located on the **edge of residential areas**
- **Unprotected houses**
- **Secluded houses**
- In apartment buildings rather the lower (**for instance easy access through balconies**) or upper (**lower frequency**) storeys

CONCRETE SCENE SELECTION

CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAKE THE BURGLARY ATTEMPT EASIER OR MORE DIFFICULT



- Obviously uninhabited or empty sites
- Indications of absence
- Secluded properties (for instance high hedges)
- Easy entry possibilities
- Dummy CCTV (are easily identified)
- Tools that are obtainable on-site
- Alarm systems that are easily accessible and tampered with
- Insider tips from the milieu



- Highly frequented areas
- Indications of presence of owners
- Visible properties
- Alarm systems with visible outdoor siren
- Safety doors, windows and rolling shutters
- CCTV and motion sensors
- Dogs

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERPETRATORS

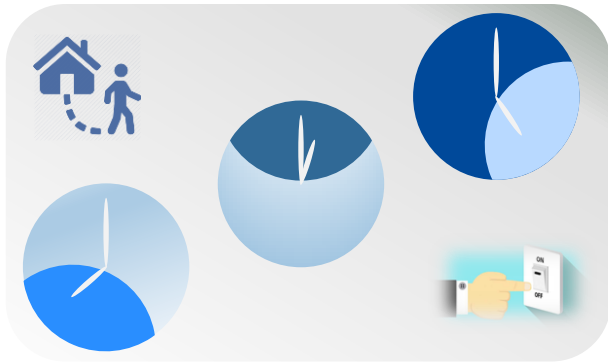
Equipment:

- Perpetrators often acquire their **break-in tools on site!**
- The most used tool is the **screwdriver**
- Other tools: bolt cutters, spanners, pliers, crowbars, hammers, pipes, jigsaws, ... but also garden tools, axes, rocks, fire extinguishers, ladders, chairs
- Other pieces of equipment: flashlights, radios, pepper-spray, gloves, ski masks

How long do burglaries usually take?

- The majority of burglary attempts take **20 minutes** at the most.
- Only isolated cases take longer than that.

WHEN DO BURGLARIES HAPPEN THE MOST?



Preferred time of day:

Morning or mid-day (when the residents are away) or at **nightfall** – very few perpetrators are active at night.

Preferred time of year:

Most burglaries happen during the winter months (**November till March**) – up to twice more burglaries during the dark seasons.



THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES WITH SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Mistakes, which make one's property an easy target:

- Open (tilted) windows
- Open or unlocked doors (when residents are in the house or in the garden)
- Indication of absence

Mistakes, which make the burglary easier:

- Scattered tools and other entry aids which make the break-in easier
- Not using available safety devices
- Installing alarm systems, motion sensors, CCTV cameras in easily accessible places
- Using cheap electronics: these often use foreign servers (for instance Russian) and can be easily hacked
- Leaving valuable items, such as wallets, cars key etc., near the entrance

INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA & CO.

Significance for burglars

- ✓ The Internet serves burglars as a source of information for methods and techniques (how to hack the software of alarm systems, information about alarm systems)
- ✓ Online maps, such as Google Maps, are often used in order to learn pathways
- ✗ Burglars usually do not invest any time in monitoring Facebook profiles

Significance for victims

- ✓ Device tracking: allows, often successfully, to track stolen items
- ✓ Searching for stolen items on online marketplaces

RESULTS

Based on the results of the **triangulation method** (information from perpetrators, expert interviews and analysis of police reports) relevant overlaps were analysed and **3 fields of action for prevention** were derived:

Behavioural



Mechanical



Electronic



Perpetrator statements:

“If there is an alarm system, we wouldn’t go in”

“Going in through a window, when it is tilted, is relatively easy. All you need to do is to unlatch it from the bottom with a screwdriver and it pops open.”

PREVENTION TIPS



Behavioural

- Close windows when absent
- Lock doors (even when present at home)
- Avoid indications of absence respectively simulate presence
- Don't deposit any tools or entry aids near the home



Mechanical

- Install or upgrade safety doors
- Install special locking devices or additional locks on windows
- Use burglary-resistant roller shutters
- Install safety-bars on cellar windows



Electronic

- Install alarm systems
- Use time switches
- Install motion sensors
- Consider high quality CCTV equipment



THANK YOUR FOR YOUR ATTENTION!



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