NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

M.A. Minor Thesis

'A sociological analysis of the recent rise in assaults on young men in Irish society.'

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'Where the streets have no shame!'
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Chapter 1

Introduction

At the current time, Ireland is experiencing record economic growth, as Mary Dundon highlighted in a recent Examiner article *"our growth rate reached 10% last year and it is expected to range between 6% and 8 % this year, double the European average"* (M. Dundon, 2001). As a result, Ireland's economic boom has completely changed our society. Unemployment is at an all time low and the symbols of Irelands wealth can be seen everywhere, with the increase of new houses and cars in our towns and cities. But beneath this prosperity lies a problem which was long associated with the English lager louts of the 1980s. As Kim Bielenberg states *"there are echoes of the Thatcherite boom of the 80's in Britain when well-off larger louts, with money jangling in their pockets, ran riot outside discos and pubs"* (K. Bielenberg, 2000). Every weekend in Ireland, towns and cities turn into chaos as young men and women go on the rampage. Between 1995 and the most recent Garda Crime figures in 1999, Public Order offences, which include *"being drunk and disorderly, being drunk in a public place, boisterous behaviour and refusing to take the directions of a garda"* (T. Brady, 2001) have risen from 10,209 proceedings to 30,993 proceedings. This figure excludes Garda detections, where no proceedings were taken by the state against the offenders, which would have placed the figure at closer to 50,000 on current projections.

Not only are Public Order offences increasing, but also it's a rarity in any large Irish town at the weekend that there aren't a number of altercations at the local pubs or discos. The number of assaults on young Irish men has increased rapidly in

the last number of years with the visible signs of the assaults becoming increasingly apparent, as a result of a number of high profile victims. The assaults of Guido Nasi, a 17-year-old student from Turin, who was viciously assaulted in Dublin in August 1999, which has left him physically and mentally scarred for life. And Brian Murphy who died after being assaulted by 4 ex-Blackrock students outside the Burlington hotel in Dublin in August 2000, have been the subject of much media attention. While most victims of assault are left with a black eye or a cut, these acts of extreme violence have raised the profile of the growing number of attacks on young men in Irish society, which largely take place at the weekend, after the closure of pubs and discos.

In Irish society crime figures in general have been declining in the last number of years, but as Adam Harvey states *"assaults have been rising steadily since 1995, when there were 6,527 reported to the Gardai. In 1999 there were 8,664 reported assaults"* (A. Harvey, 2001). Despite this gradual increase in recorded assaults, recent reports from the Minister for Health Michael Martin and in particular the 1998 'Quarterly National Household Survey' on Crime and Victimization by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) have highlighted a significant difference between Garda crime figures of assaults and the true extent of the problem in Ireland. The 1998 CSO report recorded 17,200 instances of assault for the previous 12 months. Where as *"the 1998 Garda report records a total of 8,793 instances of assault"* (J. Cusack, 1999). Figures released by Dublin's Casualty Units (see literature review, Assaults), in August 2000, which have reported unprecedented treatment levels for assault related injuries, have further reiterated this inconsistency. These figures highlight a serious under representation of assaults, especially assaults on young men in Irish society. These are

the motivating reasons why I decided to undertake a sociological analysis of assaults on young men in Irish society. There has been a marked absence of sociological or criminological studies on this subject and I hope to give a better understanding, of why there has been a rise in assaults on young men in Irish society in recent years and why the majority of these assaults go unrecorded.

The Hypothesis of my thesis is that: *There has been a significant rise in assaults on young men in Irish Society in recent years, but recent studies have shown that the majority of these attacks are not been reported or recorded in the Garda Annual Crime figures*. I will examine this hypothesis and the rest of my sub-problems over the course of my thesis. The layout of my thesis is as follows:

In Chapter 2, Literature Review, I will examine the literature which I researched to gain a better understanding of the issue of assaults and I will discuss the various books, articles and studies which I have used, under the headings of: 1) Crime in Irish Society; 2) Assaults; 3) The Celtic Tiger and its effect on Irish society; 4) Alcohol consumption among young people; 5) Youth Violence and the 'Crisis of Masculinity' and 6) The role of the Media in heightening public Fear. I will also evaluate the relevance of such sources to my overall study.

In Chapter 3, Theoretical Framework, I will discuss my theoretical framework of the various factors which I believe have contributed to the increase in assaults. These factors will be discussed under the headings of: 1) Increased inequality and polarisation, 2) Rise in alcohol consumption, 3) Crass materialism and Competitiveness of laddish culture, 4) Role of men in modern Ireland, 5) Irish society

becoming increasing impersonal, and 6) Declining influence of the Catholic Church and Family.

In Chapter 4, <u>Statement of the Research Problem</u>, I will give a precise statement of my research problem and the sub-problems of my thesis.

In Chapter 5, <u>Methodology</u>, I will discuss the methods of data collection, sources of data and methods of coding and data analysis, which I used in my study of the 'extent and nature' of assaults in the lives of male sociology students at N.U.I Maynooth. I will also discuss the scope and limitations of my study and I will finally present and analyse the results from my research.

In Chapter 6, <u>Definition of Concepts or Terms</u> I will give precise definitions of the terms 'Summary' and 'Indictable' offences, which I discussed in my Literature Review.

In Chapter 7, <u>Discussion</u>, I will discuss and interpret the main findings of my research and evaluate their significance to my overall study on assaults. I will discuss these findings in relation to previous studies by 'Victim Support Ireland' and researcher Dr. Dorothy Watson, as well as a number of other general findings and theories by various authors to analyze their contribution to my overall hypothesis. These findings will be examined under the heading of: 1) The Extent of assaults in the lives of respondents; 2) The Circumstances under which assaults took place; 3) The General characteristics of perpetrators; 4) The effect of the assault on the victim; 5)

The reporting and nonreporting of assaults; 6) Intervention in assaults; and 7) Rise in violence in Ireland.

In Chapter 8, <u>Summary</u>, Finally I will give a brief overview of my thesis, as well as a number of recommendations which I believe may reduce the number of assaults and the pattern of nonreporting which seems to be characteristic of male victims of assault in Irish society.

The Thesis also contains a bibliography and an appendix along with the questionnaire which I used and the conclusive results to my survey and study at N.U.I Maynooth.

I believe that my thesis incorporates and attempts to give a sociological understanding of as many aspects as possible of the social problem of assaults on young men. So in conclusion over the course of this thesis I will evaluate my hypothesis and sub-problems and I aim to give the reader an in-depth sociological analysis of the recent rise in assaults on young men in Irish society.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

When I set about researching for my thesis and began looking for articles and books on assaults on young men in Ireland, I discovered it was a subject, which had been largely ignored by both Sociologists and Criminologists. In contrast to the wide scale research on Youth Drug Culture or Youth Delinquency, there are very few studies about the nature and extent of assaults on young men in Ireland. Faced with this problem I set about researching articles and pieces written on Assault, by Journalists such as Kim Bielenberg and Fintan O'Toole. It was from this research that I discovered much of my theory and it prompted me to research other journals and sociological studies on the diverse factors, which have led to an increase in assaults in recent years. The literature I researched on assaults comes from an array of sources and I have discussed them under a number of headings. These headings, include 1) Crime in Irish Society; 2) Assaults; 3) Alcohol consumption among young people; 4) The Celtic Tiger and its effect on Irish society; 5) Youth Violence and the 'Crisis of Masculinity' and 6) The role of the Media in heightening public fear. I have studied this literature in order to gain a better understanding of my hypothesis and sub-problems of my thesis.

Crime in Irish Society

In Ireland it was traditionally believed society was so safe that you never needed to lock your door, but this belief is no longer accepted and many people now live their lives in fear of being a victim of crime. In my quest to discover the true extent of the change in the level of crime in the Republic of Ireland, I examined a number of different and often conflicting sources. These sources ranged from the established and broadly accepted Garda Annual reviews, to the informative and influential Quarterly National Household survey on Crime and Victimisation, which was carried out by the Central Statistics Office in 1998, as well as numerous media articles and research studies.

Paul O'Mahony in his study of Irish prison policy traces the change in the crime rate in Ireland. He illustrates how between 1947, when the first annual Garda report on crime was published; and 1995, the number of indictable crimes (most serious) recorded rose from *"a total of 15,000 (429 crimes per 100,000 of population) to an historic peak of 102,000 (2,684 crimes per 100,000 of population), but has declined in both 1996, 1997 and 1998 to now stand at approximately 85,000"* (O'Mahony, 2000: 20). In Pre-modern Ireland crime was extremely low, O'Mahony believes that the strict Catholic ethos as well as the nation being largely un-industrialised was a major reason for this. However from the mid 1960s onwards with the modernisation of Ireland and *"rapidly changing social conditions, such as industrialisation, urbanisation, changes in the family structure and exposure to the international media"* (O'Mahony, 2000: 24), the level of crime began to increase. The majority of these crimes were theft related, as are the most serious indictable crimes, in modern Ireland. As O'Mahony (2000) states *"The largest single category is*

burglary, which normally accounts for about 30% of all crime. Larcenies (taking someone else's property or goods without their permission) of various types account for a further 55% of all indictable crime" (O'Mahony, 2000: 21).

The majority of crime in Ireland is centred in the proximity of its capital city Dublin, which has a population of approximately 1 million people and is by far the most urbanised centre in the country. June Caldwell in her recent article on women in prison 'Jailbirds' writes how recent Garda figures indicate that *"Dublin accounts for 60% of all the crime in the country"* (J. Caldwell, 2001: 9). This is due to the density of its population, social inequalities and superior opportunities for delinquency. Susan J. Smith in her discussion of social reactions to crime, contends that *"in economically, politically and locationally marginal settings environments are vulnerable, potential offenders are most at risk from tempting opportunities, crime rates are highest and fear is most acute"* (S. J. Smith, 1986: 189). Areas of Dublin like Tallaght, Ballyfermot and Clondalkin have major social problems such as unemployment, drugs, poverty etc. They are situated on the periphery of the city, and have large populations of people, for whom the majority have little hope of altering or changing their social situations so some turn to crime, in an attempt to overcome their inequalities.

In the National Crime forum report 1998, Garda Commissioner Pat Byrne highlights young people as being largely responsible for the visible crime in Ireland. Invisible crimes include white-collar crimes such as tax evasion, and sexual abuse cases. *"The teenage years are the peek period for offending and young people rank high among those who are victims of crime"* (P. Byrne, 1998: 85). Young people are responsible for the majority of crimes but they are also most at risk of being possible

victims. The Whitaker report on the penal system, which examined why certain groups of young people were liable to commit crimes, concluded *"the majority of young people coming before the courts have a very limited stake in conventional society. Their prospects of employment are bleak. Their poor educational attainment and minimal work skills place them at a decided disadvantage in the labour market even at the best of times...The reward which they perceive for conforming to the values and norms of society is continuing poverty and ineffectiveness"* (Whitaker, 1998: 87). In addition to the many social inequalities facing delinquent youth, Ruth Seydlitz and Pamela Jenkins believe the influence of an individual's family and peer groups are important factors in determining whether a young person turns to delinquent behaviour. They contend that most significantly, an individuals peers have a *"strong influence on the adolescents behaviour...youths behave in the same manner as their friends; if their friends are delinquent they tend to be delinquent"* (Seydlitz and Jenkins, 1998: 65).

In particular it is young men who are responsible for the majority of these crimes and they are also the most vulnerable. While it has long been accepted that men committed more crimes then their female counterparts, paradoxically it is women and the elderly who are most fearful of being a victim, because of their feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty brought about by a rapidly changing society and as well as Sparks analysis that *"frequent exposure to news coverage of crime may lead one to over estimate the probability of victimisation"* (D. Lupton, 1999: 509). A study carried out by Frances Heidensohn into 'public responses to crime' reiterates this point revealing that *"there are considerable variations in reported levels of personal fear of crime and what are seen as particular discrepancies between perceived and*

likely risks" (Heidensohn, 1989: 171). She concludes that the "*high risk' individuals who are most likely to be victimised are young urban working class males who are out in public or inside public houses a good deal... Yet those who fear crime most are not those who appear from the surveys to be most at risk*" (Heidensohn, 1989: 171). Heidensohn's hypothesis of young urban working class men being 'high risk' individuals because of their lifestyles is an important factor in my understanding of assaults, and in understanding why so many assaults occur in public places or public houses.

The media as I will discuss in a later section (see literature review-role of media in heightening public fears), play a central role in informing the general public of the types and the level of crime in Ireland. In recent years the nature of crime seems to have changed as the public see and hear about crimes, which seem to be ever increasingly violent in nature. The revelations about drug and gang related crime in Ireland in the 1990s has also had a negative impact on many people's sense of security. O'Mahony highlights how "*There was a huge public outcry at the killing of Veronica Guerin in June 1996 and it led to a period of more resolute policing and intense legislative activity*"(P. O'Mahony, 2000: 23). The murder rate has increased slightly in the 1990s but there have also been an increased number of high profiled cases of people disappearing in Ireland. Kathryn Holmquist, a journalist with the Irish Times wrote an article on missing people, called Missing in Ireland, where she reports that "*among 1,800 people go missing each year...since 1995, 9,158 people have gone missing: of these 55 cases remain unsolved*" (K. Holmquist, 2001). Even though the majority of missing people are found alive, missing persons such as Trevor Deely, Sean Ryan, Jo Jo Dollard and Deirdre Jacobs have become household names, and

their disappearance without trace has produced much anxiety amongst certain sections of the general public, mostly women and the elderly but some men have shown increased signs of anxiety with the current escalation of random assaults in Ireland. As is evident from an article by the Journalist David Monaghan entitled The bedlam has gone too far, his feelings are summed up by his opening statement *"the level of crime in Ireland has become personally threatening and utterly depressing, precisely because it seems to be so widely tolerated as a national fact of life, from the astonishingly lenient judges on down"* (D. Monaghan, 2001).

In comparison to other countries Irelands crime rate is relatively low. In 1995 indictable crime reached an all time high of 102,000, which resulted in 2,684 crimes Per 100,000 population. Paul O'Mahony contends, how *"even the peak figures for Ireland suggest that it is comparatively speaking a low crime country. The Irish crime rate is about half of that for the U.S (5,060 per 100,000) and a third of that for both England and Wales (9,260 per 100,000)* (P. O'Mahony, 2000: 20). As I stated earlier Dublin accounts for the majority of reported crime in Ireland, but according to Journalist Bill Quinn, the 'World Murder League' for the period between 1997-1999, shows that *"Dublin is one of the worlds safest cities...the number of murder in the capital is lower then most European cities with a killing rate of 2.37 per 100,000 inhabitants"* (B.Quinn, 2001) and it falls well behind the 'murder capital of the world' Washington DC with a killing rate of 50.82 per 100,000.

Recent reports in Ireland reveal that national crime rates have fallen since 1995. Dr. Ian O'Donnell and Eoin O'Sullivan's report 'Crime control in Ireland: the politics of intolerance' *"suggests that crime rates Nationally have fallen dramatically*

since the introduction of so called 'zero tolerance' policies" (B.Quinn, 2001). These policies gave the Gardai increased powers and enabled them to clamp down on crime, resulting in the number of indictable crimes, which peaked in 1995 to drop by 21% in 1999 to 81,274 (P. O'Mahony, 2000: 20). Adam Harvey a Journalist for 'The Examiner' newspaper suggests another cause for the drop in crime in his article Violence shows the ugly face of Celtic Tiger. He believes that crimes rates fall as a "*nation gets richer, and in Ireland almost ever category of crime has dropped. There is less property crime: The number of home burglaries has been falling for six years. In 1994 there were 32,740 burglaries. In 1999 an estimated 23,191 homes were robbed, a 25% decline*" (A. Harvey, 2001). But despite the majority of people being better off in society, violent crimes have been on the increase; in particular "*assaults have been rising steadily since 1995, when there were 6,527 reported to the Gardai. In 1999 there were 8,664 reported assaults*" (A. Harvey, 2001).

Even though the annual crime report of the Garda Siochana is widely acknowledged by researchers and the media as "*the most reliable source of information on the nature and extent of crime in Ireland*" (P. O'Mahony: 19), it is becoming increasingly apparent that Garda statistics under estimate crime levels. Jim Cusack in his article 1999 Crime report figures incomplete in 'The Irish Times' discusses the Quarterly National Household survey on Crime and Victimisation, which was conducted by the central statistics office in 1998. The report "*indicated that the percentage of crime reported to the Gardai varied from 95% in the case of car thefts, where reports must be made for insurance purposes to as little as 40% for offences like larceny and assault*" (J. Cusack, 2000: 1). The foremost problem with Garda statistics is that they "*concerned only... crime which was reported*" (J. Cusack,

1999). The CSO report has discovered a large segment of crime, which for a number of reasons such as the victim's perception of the crime or the Criminal Justice system goes unreported each year.

In the absence of an extensive annual national survey on people's experience of victimisation as well as the 'true' nature and extent of crime in Ireland, similar to the British Crime Survey in England and Wales, Dr. Paul O'Mahony believes that "*it is impossible to find conclusive statistical evidence on the question of whether or not Irish society is becoming more violent*" (P. O'Mahony, 2000). Another major problem, in assessing the extent of crime, is the categorisation of certain types of crime by the Criminal Justice system as 'Summary' or 'Indictable' offences. Summary offences are minor/less serious offences such as most Road Traffic Offences and the bulk of assaults. O'Mahony estimates that summary offences "*normally number about 500,000 a year*" (P. O'Mahony, 2000: 20). The majority of crimes are categorised as Summary Offences, but when it comes to National crime trends they are largely ignored in favour of the more serious crimes which makes up a smaller percentage of all crime, the most recent figure was 81,274 indictable crimes in 1999.

The Categorisation of Crime is central to the general under estimation of assault in Ireland, which I am now going to discuss in addition to the rest of the literature I examined, in relation to assaults on Young men in Ireland.

Assaults

"It started with quick shouts, then footsteps from the dark. Suddenly, Rory Jennings felt a bone-crunching thump in the back of the head. Rory, a 19 year-old university student, was walking alone to his home in the Dublin suburb of Castleknock after a night out with friends when the attackers struck. The first blow came from behind. Before he had time to run, the kicks came raining in. First there seemed to be one assailant, then two. By the time he fell to the ground, there was a group of six- including two teenage girls- punching and kicking him. Three of Rory's teeth were knocked out and his nose broken in the frenzy. Then there was darkness as one particular blow rendered him unconscious" (K. Bielenberg, 2000).

This extract was taken from Blood Simple an article in 'The Irish Independent' by Kim Bielenberg and it serves as a good example of the type of assaults that seem to be occurring more frequently in modern Ireland. Over the last two to three years the media and especially the leading newspapers such as 'The Irish Independent' and 'The Irish Times' have highlighted the issue of assaults in Ireland. Up until recently Irish Sociologists and Criminologists had written very little on a topic which makes up only a minor proportion of the annual Garda crime figures. But there has been a change in a number of significant factors related to assaults and this coupled with the disclosure of the findings and statistics of international and local studies has contributed to the recent amplified concern with assaults in Irish society.

Before examining the more revealing literature on assaults, I begin my study by looking at the definitions of the criminal offence of assault. Assaults are dealt with under the laws of the 'Non Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997'. Under this

act there are three categories of offence: Assault, Assault causing harm, and Assault causing serious harm. The definition of Assault under section 2(1) of the act states that *"A person shall be guilty of the offence of assault who, without lawful excuse, intentionally or recklessly:(a) directly or indirectly applies force to or causes an impact on the body of another, or (b) causes another to believe on reasonable grounds that he/she is likely to immediately to be subjected to any such force or impact, without the consent of the other"* (Non Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997). The penalty for a person being convicted of *"an offence under this act shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or both"* (Non Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997). The section 3 offence, Assault causing harm and the section 4 offence Assault causing serious harm, foremost distinction from the section 2 offence of Assault is that under section 3 offences the perpetrator inflicted harm to the mind or body of the victim and under section 4 offences the perpetrator caused serious harm to the victim. Serious harm *"means injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious disfigurement or substantial loss or impairment of the mobility of the mobility of the body as a whole or of the function of any particular bodily member or organ"* (Non Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997). Section 4 offences are the most serious category of assault offences, and these are indictable offences dealt with in the circuit court. Section 2 and Section 3 offences are lesser crimes and they are generally dealt with under summary conviction. The vast majority of assaults are dealt with under summary conviction in the local district court.

Dr. Dorothy Watson's report on the 'Profiles of victims of recorded crime' found that the *"typical victim of an assault is a young man, probably aged twenty or*

younger" (N. Haughey, 2000). Of the 428 indictable offences of assault recorded by the Gardai in 1999, 353 of the victims were male (*82%*) and 75 of the victims were female (*18%*) (The Garda Annual review, 1999). Reaffirming existing figures Dr. Dorothy Watson's study found that "*victims are not necessarily society's most vulnerable individuals...3/5 of the victims of recorded crime were male, as were four out of five victims of assault*" (N. Haughey, 2000). The stereotypical image of the victim of a crime is a women or an elderly person but the victims of assaults tend predominantly to be young males, in their early twenties or younger. Commissioner Pat Byrne remarked in the 1998 National Crime Forum report on 'visible' street crime " *the teenage years are the peek period for offending*" (National Crime Forum Report, 1998: 85). Besides being the main victims of assault young men are also the chief perpetrators. A number of theories have been put forward for this, for example the 'Crisis of Masculinity' and the increased alcohol consumption among young males, but I will discuss these in detail in my Theoretical Framework.

In addition to these findings Dr. Watson also revealed that "*most incidents of assault occurred in public places or in the vicinity of pubs and nightclubs*" (N. Haughey, 2000). Susan J. Smith in her discussion of the victims of crime maintains that victimisation is closely associated to an individuals 'lifestyle'. She believes that "*different lifestyles: the characteristic ways in which individuals allocate their time to leisure activities, are differently related to the probability of being in (or leaving accessible) particular places at particular times, and coming into contact with (or leaving an attractive opportunities for) others, who are potential criminals. A certain level of victimisation might then be expected to accompany particular urban lifestyles*" (S.J. Smith, 1986: 90). As I will discuss in a later section (Lit. Review-

Alcohol consumption among young people) the major leisure activity of most young men is going to a public house or a disco, and this lifestyle brings potential victims and offenders together. The majority of assaults that take place in the vicinity of a public house take place after closing time, when crowds of people congregate outside.

Dr. Dorothy Watson's report found that assaults and *"crime tended to be concentrated in urban areas, particularly in the Dublin region"* (N. Haughey, 2000), which accounts for 60% of all crime. Official Garda statistics on recorded crime and assaults also confer this belief but Eamonn Waters; spokesman for the National Youth Council believes that *"this type of violence is becoming increasingly common, not only in Dublin, but across the country"* (K. Bielenberg, 2000). Places from Dublin to Galway and Cavan to Cork are experiencing increased numbers of violent assaults on young men. There has also been a visible rise in the number of unprovoked and random assaults on young men, carried out by youths who have no relationship to the victim. As Bielenberg (2000) states *"many of these assaults seem to involve groups of men and women carrying out acts of violence as Eamonn Waters puts it 'just for the hell of it as a form of entertainment"* (K. Bielenberg, 2000). The incident involving Kian Egan from Irish band 'Westlife' in Sligo was an example of this random violence, when he was assaulted outside an AbraKebabra restaurant at 3.30am because of his celebrity status. John smith's article <u>That's what Kian gets for hanging out some where as savage as Sligo</u> in The 'Sunday Independent' revealed that the perpetrator had approached Kian and asked him *"How would you like to play the point with a black eye?"* (J. Smith, 2001), before punching him in the face.

As I discussed in 'Crime in Irish Society' assaults make up a minor percentage of all reported crimes to the Gardai Siochana. Dr. Ian O'Donnell and Eoin O'Sullivan's report on 'Crime Control in Ireland: the politics of intolerance' demonstrated that *"offences against the person such as murder assault and sexual assaults accounted for 2% of the total crime load"* (B. Quinn, 2001). But Official crime statistics from the Gardai have become increasingly scrutinised in the light of the release of a number of studies and reports on crime and victimisation. Paul O'Mahony estimates that *"a rough guide derive from Irish and International studies suggest that there is about 3 times as much crime as appears in Official statistics. Minor larcenies, public-order offences vandalism and petty acts of aggression or bullying constitute most of these unrecorded crimes"* (P. O'Mahony, 2000: 19). This variation was highlighted in the 1998 Quarterly National Household survey on Crime and Victimisation, by the CSO, which recorded 17,200 instances of assault for the previous 12 months. Where as *"the 1998 Garda report records a total of 8,793 instances of assault"* (J. Cusack, 1999). The Quarterly National Household survey in 1998, led to increased scrutinising of Crime figures in Ireland.

In August 2000, the release of medical figures by the minister for Health Michael Martin seemed to reveal a more disturbing situation. In her article <u>Blood Simple</u>, the Journalist Kim Bielenberg examines these figures, revealing *"according to official Garda figures only 27 young men under the age of twenty five were the victims of recorded unprovoked assaults during the first three months of the year. But figures supplied to the Fine Gael TD Frances Hughes by the Minister for Health show that there were 1,400 victims of assault treated for injuries in the casualty units of just four Dublin hospitals during the first seven months of the year"* (K. Bielenberg,

2000). There were no figures available for the other three casualty units in the city. The foremost criticism of these figures is that it is impossible to tell, whether the patients were the perpetrators or the victims of the assault. But it does prove that the majority of assaults go unrecorded, as the majority of victims are not reporting their attacks to the Gardai.

From the figures above it can be inferred that there is a significant difference between the recorded figure of assaults and the true extent of the problem. It's obvious from the 1998 Quarterly National Household survey on Crime and Victimisation, that the majority of victims are not reporting crime and especially incidents of assaults to the Gardai. There is a range of reasons for this, for instance fear of reprisals or a general concern that the Gardai or the criminal justice system will do nothing about it. The 1998/1999 'Crime impact survey' by Victim Support Ireland, found victims experienced varying physical and emotional and behavioural effects following the crime. The report concluded that *"although fear, worry and general emotional effects tend to be reported more often by female victims, male victims tend to report their effects behaviourally... the results of our study challenge traditional views that females are more adversely affected by crime than men"* (www.victimsupport.ie). Another reason for the nonreporting of assaults is raised by Paul O'Mahony, who subsequent to his analysis of the British Crime Survey and British police, court and prison statistics stated that the figures *"had indicated only 3 out of every 100 crimes against individuals and their property in Britain result in a conviction or police caution. An even smaller proportion of crimes eventuate in imprisonment...while the situation in Ireland may not be as extreme, the general pictures holds. Only a small minority of crimes are cleared up with the conviction of*

an offender known to have committed that crime" (O'Mahony, 2000). The majority of assaults are prosecuted as summary offences and they carry a less significant penalty then indictable offences. In 1999 there were 8,664 reported assaults for the first nine months of the year, of the total figure, 428 of the cases were indictable offences and Claire Murphy states from these reported assaults there was 3,600 convictions of which there was 150 convicted of serious assault (indictable offences) (C. Murphy, 2000).

The official Garda statistics have increasingly been shown to underestimate crime in Ireland, and despite the significance of the influential 1998 Quarterly National Household survey crime and victimisation survey, a more reliable source is needed to supplement the Garda Annual reports on unrecorded crimes. The British Crime Survey in England and Wales has been shown to be very reliable in indicating the extent and nature of crime in Britain. As the British home office website states "victims do not report crime for various reasons. With out the BCS the government would have no information on these unreported crimes" (www.homeoffice.gov.uk). An Irish Crime survey would uncover most of the invisible unrecorded crime in society and as a result government policy could be readdressed to deal with the social problems.

In the next section I will look at the social changes, which have been taken place in recent years in Ireland, especially the effects of the Celtic Tiger economy on Irish society and its connection to my understanding of the rise in assaults on young males.

The Celtic Tiger and its effect on Irish society

The last decade of the 20th century saw immense and unprecedented social and economic change in Ireland. As Kieran Allen remarks the *"evidence of Irelands boom is everywhere. Dublin's skyline is now marked by scores of construction cranes. More women have joined the workforce in the five years between 1991 and 1996 than in the twenty previous years. A burgeoning restaurant culture has emerged as leisure habits change"* (K. Allen, 1999: 31). But it is becoming increasingly apparent that the majority of people are losing out, as the dominant businessmen and entrepreneurs claim the 'lions share' of Irelands new found economic wealth and the way of life that comes with it. The rise in prosperity has also been accompanied by fundamental changes in Irish society plus the rise of an increasingly disgruntled minority. By utilising Kieran Allen's analysis of the 'Celtic Tiger as well as exploring a number of other articles and studies on the changing complexion of Irish society, I hope to trace the link between Irelands booming economy and the rise in assaults on young men.

The first reference to the 'Celtic Tiger' economy was in a newsletter by Morgan Stanley, the America Investment bank on 31st August 1994. In this newsletter on the Irish economy, the reporter asked if the Irish economy was a 'Celtic Tiger' comparing it *"to East Asian tiger economies like South Korea and Taiwan. To back up his claim, he cited growth rates well above the European average, low inflation, growth of exports and a firm exchange rate"* (www.geocites.com/celtictiger.html). Ireland has achieved and sustained its phenomenal economic growth by succeeding in attracting foreign investment and multinational companies such as Intel and Hewlett Packard to set up their business operations in Ireland. By offering incentives such as 'tax-free profits' and its close proximity to European markets, Ireland has become the

I.T capital of Europe. As Mary Dundon explains, "with the lowest corporation tax in the E.U at 12%, Ireland has a distinct advantage over its European neighbours, when it comes to attracting the big name multinational companies to it's shores" (M. Dundon, 2001). With manufactures such as Intel, Hewlett Packard and Dell locating in Ireland and supplying much needed investment and employment. Adam Harvey in his article Violence shows ugly face of Celtic Tiger in the 'Irish Examiner', comments how in 1993 the unemployment rate stood at 15.7%, but since then "*the unemployment rate has dropped regularly each year and is now 4.3%*" (A. Harvey, 2001). Mary Dundon reiterates that the Irish economy is booming, pointing out that "our growth rate reached 10% last year and it is expected to range between 6% and 8 % this year, double the European average" (M. Dundon, 2001).

There is no doubt that Ireland has become increasingly affluent in the 1990s, and there are many visible signs that its inhabitants are now better off both financially and socially than ever before. As Kathryn Holmquist, affirms "*Our children don't have to emigrate and by all the standard measurements we are prospering: we're dining out more, buying more cars, taking more holidays, spending more on our houses and furnishing them more extravagantly then ever before*" (K. Holmquist, 1998). But despite all the visible wealth in society and the endless commentary from politicians and economists alike, telling people that they are better off, Kieran Allen believes that the majority of people are becoming increasingly discontented with the current situation. Holmquist (1998) asserts how "many people feel they are working harder longer hours and that realistic aspirations that they had to own their own house are slipping away" (K. Holmquist, 1998). The 'Celtic Tiger' economy has placed increased strains and stress on people, such as financial and job insecurity. The

government devised system of 'Social Partnership' which was designed in theory to take care of those who were most disadvantaged and excluded from an equal share of the wealth, only resulted in increasing the inequality. Holmquist (1998) contends that *"the discontented majority has agreed to wage restraints through the programme for Economic and Social partnership. Only to see the wealthy benefit through lower corporate and capital gains taxes"* (Holmquist, 1998). Wage agreements were designed to insure increased equality but while the majority of workers have endured wage restrictions, the wealthy elites increase their profits and affluence. In the supposed golden era of Irish society, Holmquist highlights that according to the UN Human Development report "the proportion of people with incomes below the poverty line has risen to 34%, compared to 31% a decade ago" (K. Holmquist, 1998). So in spite of the increased affluence in Irish society, workers in comparison to the wealthy elites are generally financially worse off then they were before the boom. Rather than everyone benefiting from the economic boom and increased wealth, Irelands Celtic Tiger economy has merely resulted in making the wealthy, wealthier.

From the discontented majority, distinctions can be made between those who are not enjoying all the benefits of the economic boom and a minority of people who are becoming increasingly marginalised in Irish society. Kathryn Holmquist believes Irelands economic boom has led to augmented social mobility, since *"more people are joining the middle, upper-middle and professional classes"* (K. Holmquist, 1998). Which has left a disgruntled minority who are experiencing the economic side effects of the tiger economy (eg. shortage of public housing, rapid inflation, low-paid employment) and they are becoming increasing excluded from the rest of society (eg. education, consumer society etc.), because they are not seen to 'fit in'. The majority

of these people are working in low paid jobs and their lives have not benefited from Irelands new acquired wealth. Holmquist (1998) maintains that an exclusionist society, which has 'right' people and 'wrong' people *"brings social unrest and mindless violence on a terrifying scale as the US has shown"* (K. Holmquist, 1998). I will return to this point in further detail in a later section (Literature review-Crisis of masculinity).

Not only has the Irish economy been transformed in the 1990s, but Irish society has also experienced immense changes as a result of an increasingly globalised Ireland and the impact of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy. Kathryn Holmquist a journalist with 'The Irish Times' wrote in her article Generations Apart that nowadays in Ireland people are working longer hours and their jobs are taking up more of their time and playing a more significant part in their life, as a result their emotional lives are suffering (K. Holmquist, 1998). The family and the church have always been the two most important institutions in Irish society, but the 1990s has seen a decline in the power and influence of both on young people. These two institutions were essential in maintaining order in society, but the decline of the Catholic churches influence especially among young people in Irish society, following a number of scandals and the decline in young people's religious beliefs, accompanied by the large scale inflow of women into the work place in the 1990s has had a influential effect on Irish life. A sentiment echoed by Father Bolan the Director of the Rural Housing Organization, who asserts that *"two fundamental changes are ripping the soul out of Irish society: the demise of the churches power and the economic riptide pulling women into the workforce"* (K. Holmquist, 1998). The decline in the influence of the family and the Church and its replacement by T.V and the Internet, etc. has led to a decrease in

morals among young people; Patricia Redlich believes that *"respect and standards have gone out the window"* (P. Redlich, 2001) in Modern Ireland. Redlich concludes that *"it is a philosophical fallacy to presume that human beings are innately good and all we have to do is give them the freedom to express themselves. Innately we are selfish and self centred, unmindful of others and drawn by our desires* (P. Redlich, 2001). Instead she believes that human beings have to be socialized in order to act in a thoughtful and caring way.

An equally significant factor in the transformation in Irish society is the movement away, especially by young people from a communal (eg. Family, Church) lifestyle, to a more individual lifestyle. One of the main reason for this Kathryn Holmquist (2000) believes, is that Irish society is increasingly embodying 'Survival of the fittest' values and that *"there is a growing tendency for a society to value anyone who is economically productive and regard everyone else whether they are physically or mentally disabled, or simply elderly as a burden"* (K. Holmquist, 1998). People are increasingly valued in economic terms; their significance to the 'Celtic Tiger' economy is decided by their monetary worth. Irish society is increasingly fuelled by the Capitalist values of money, power and success. People are competing for the best jobs, promotions and success in their careers. These values and rivalries are central to what Dr. Paul O'Mahony, deems *"the rampant tiger culture of laddish competitiveness and crass materialism"* (P. O'Mahony, 2000). This laddish competitiveness is not just confined to the market place but it also impacts on people's daily lives. 'Keeping up with the Jones' is just one instance of cultural rivalry. The rampant tiger culture also places excessive emphasis on materialism; you are what you wear, own etc. Cars, designer labels are just two examples of the

material possessions that are the objects of desire in our society. People are identified and categorised by their appearance and possessions, eg. BMWs and Mercedes cars are associated with wealthy individuals. In Irish society laddish competitiveness and crass materialism are particularly influential among young people, especially men who have become increasingly competitive and materialistic. But unfortunately as in all competitions there will only be a certain number of winners and as K. Holmquist remarks in her article Drowning in the Celtic Tiger the downside of *"a competitive society like the one we have become...is that it breed isolation and feelings of worthlessness for those who fail in the race for success"* (K. Holmquist, 1998).

With more money to spend than ever before young people are enjoying an unprecedented standard of living and they are also spending a large percentage of their wages on alcohol and socialising. Recent British Crime Surveys have shown that there is a strong relationship between the rise in alcohol consumption among young people and the increase in youth violence and especially assaults. I will explore this hypothesis in further detail in the next section. Fintan O'Toole a journalist with 'The Irish Times' in his article <u>Macho thugs in losing war with winning wimps</u> discussed the rise in unprovoked assaults on young men. He remarked that there may have been an increase in the number of unprovoked assaults in Ireland but he believes that this is not a new phenomenon. In his opinion *"what's changed, in fact is not the crime itself, but the nature of the society in which it happens and of both the perpetrators and victims"* (F. O'Toole, 2000). In the past Ireland was a 'smaller' place, society was more intimate and informal. O'Toole believes in the past *"because the world was smaller and more local, there was a good chance that if some one attacked you, you would know who they were and where they lived. And that knowledge was combined*

with the possibility of rough informal justice" (F. O'Toole, 2000). O'Toole believes the higher possibility of being caught and the ensuing revenge, either from the Gardai or a family member would deter a potential offender from assaulting someone. So as a result of the transformation in Irish society he believes one of the main reasons why unprovoked attacks have "*become more common is that the attackers have good reason to believe that they will get away with it. They have, in the far less intimate Ireland today, a much better chance of being anonymous*" (F. O'Toole, 2000), this is especially relevant in Dublin, which has approximately 1 million inhabitants and accounts for 60% of recorded crime.

As I discussed previously Ireland's 'Celtic Tiger' economy has predominantly benefited the wealthy elites and the majority of people are relatively financially worse off now than they were before Ireland's economic boom. But there is a minority of increasingly disgruntled people who are predominantly young men, who are economically and socially marginalised and excluded because of their social status. They often don't receive an adequate education and society by and large disregards them. These young people are similarly influenced by the competitiveness and crass materialism of modern society but because of a number of factors they are unable to possess the same lifestyle, goods, money etc. This exclusion has an adverse effect on those who are marginalised and in certain circumstances it can result in appalling acts of violence, such as assault.

Alcohol consumption among young people

Ireland has always had a 'fondness' for alcohol, but in recent years drinking and going to the pub has become the favourite pastime for the majority of Irish people, as was highlighted in a number of recent European and international studies on alcohol consumption. In 2000 the 'World Drinking Trends' survey found that Irelands consumption of alcohol is the second highest in the world with an intake of 11.6 litres per person a year (J O'Reilly, 2001). But as O'Reilly commented in his article <u>We drink too much and much too young</u>, *"news of this predominance in the world boozing league was greeted, not with national shame, but barely concealed pride. 'The drinks are on us- Ireland tops booze league' trumpeted the tabloids"* (J. Reilly, 2001). Irelands drink culture is widely accepted in society and where once frequent drinking was generally frowned upon, its now accepted as a characteristic of being Irish. When U.S Presidents Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan came to Ireland, they had to sample a pint of Guinness in an Irish bar. Drinking plays a key role in Irish life, not only as a pastime but its also central to our celebrations and sorrows, in the words of Marie Murray *"we have created a society that celebrates life and mourns its dead to the accompaniment of drink"* (M. Murray, 2001).

We drink to laugh as well as to cry, so its no surprise to find that young Irish people are influenced by the culture of 'boozing'. Christenings, Holy Communions, Confirmations, Birthdays, Weddings and Funerals, involve the consumption of alcohol and accordingly young people mimic their elders by drinking alcohol. As Marie Murray regretfully concludes *"if we ask why young people get drunk, the answer is clear: they drink because we drink, the way they were thought by us, by the adults who have a very bad record of alcohol consumption control"* (M. Murray,

2000). Admittedly people drinking at a young age is not a new phenomenon in Irish society, as highlighted by John Waters article Is alcohol a spiritual disease of the state?. He states *"A survey as far back as 1984 found that 65% of post primary pupils between 14-17 had already had their first drink"* (J. Waters, 2001). In fact the 1999 study by the European Schools Project on Alcohol and Drugs (ESPAD) has shown that the majority of young people in most western societies have consumed alcohol before the legal age. But what seems to be different in modern Irish society is the rise in regularity and quantity of alcohol, which is now being consumed by young people, and the effects that this consumption is having on the Individual and society as a whole.

The recent publication of ESPAD caused a lot of controversy and realization in Ireland. Jody Corcoran's article Teen drug culture exposed, discussed the main findings of the study and contrasted them with the results of the 1995 study. The 1999 ESPAD study involved a random survey in each European country of study, of approximately 2,500 to 3,000 students aged 15-16 years and it covered a population of 80,000 students (J. Corcoran, 2001). The most significant changes in alcohol consumption among Irish students between 1995 and 1999, Corcoran believes were firstly the number of students *"who had used any alcoholic beverages 20 times or more in the last 12 months had increased from 32 percent to 39 percent, the second highest of 21 European countries studies"* (J. Corcoran, 2001). These results highlight that young men and young women are increasingly consuming alcohol. The second major finding Corcoran asserts was the number of Irish students *"who have been drunk 20 times or more in their life times has increased from 19% to 25 %, the fourth highest behind Denmark (41%), U.K (29%) and Finland (28%)...In this category*

there was a 6% increase among boys and a 3% increase among girls" (J. Corcoran, 2001). Not only are these young people drinking more, but they are also getting drunk more.

As you would expect from these results and the 'World Drink Trends' survey young men and women in their late teens and early twenty's have also been consuming more alcohol. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, Irelands pub culture has placed the pub at the centre of its social life and young people have imitated their elders by following on in the drinking tradition. This socialisation, accompanied by a national acceptance of drinking has reinforced pub culture's dominant position in Irish society. Jerome Reilly believes that this has always been the case in Ireland, but he believes *"what is different now…is that teenagers, University students and young entrants to the workforce appear to have enough cash to fully sake their thurst for alcohol during a four/five day week, 52 weeks a year"* (J. Reilly, 2001). Young people are better off now than they ever were previously, the 'Celtic Tiger' economy while it may not be benefiting everybody, has led to an increased amount of disposable income in society. The majority of young people have no mortgages, less commitments and their main objective is to enjoy themselves. As a result of the changes in Pub opening hours, to permit late closings on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Reilly (2001) deems accordingly *"for those in the early twenties with money to burn, the weekend starts on Thursday nights"* (J. Reilly, 2001). Single men and women in their early 20s, are socialising more and drinking more then their predecessors ever did.

The drinks market and suppliers such as Smirnoff and Guinness have increasingly targeted younger audiences in Ireland. Through a campaign of vigorous marketing and the launch of a new range of products such as 'Smirnoff Ice', aimed at the younger market, they have been able to attract new customers and the majority of these are young adults. These products are designed for a new type of drinking, which has become increasingly characteristic among young people. As Father Sean Casey commented *"young Irish people appear to drink to get drunk rather than to relax and associate more easily with others"* (S. Greenan, 2001). In contrast to going for a 'Quiet One', 'Binge drinking' (where someone drinks alcohol in order to get drunk), has become increasingly common among young people in Ireland. Also as the ESPAD study shows its not only young men who are drinking more, but young women are also consuming more alcohol. In a recent article in the 'Sunday world' by Amanda Brunker, entitled Boozer-Mad Chicks, Brunker reiterates this point revealing that *"according to the National Health & Leisure surveys overall 27% of males, and 21% of females in Ireland consume more than the recommended weekly limit for alcohol"* (A. Brunker, 2001). The pub which had traditionally been a male enclave, is now been equally inhabited by women. Both men and women have become increasingly caught up in the pub culture and a way of life, which has increasingly become known as 'laddism', and as a result they are going out more and drink more often with the purpose of getting drunk.

The consequences of this increased alcohol consumption for the individual and society as a whole is unwelcome. Excessive alcohol consumption has considerable effects on the individual's self-consciousness and their capacity for good judgement. Linda Hill deems *"the effect of alcohol on higher brain functions reduce the number*

of cues to understanding a situation which the intoxicated person is able to perceive. It also affects how the person reacts to actions of others that may appear unreasonable, while impairing visual coping mechanisms" (www.aphru.ac.nz.htm).

An intoxicated person has less inhibitions and understanding of what's going on around them and may interpret a situation or sign as a threat, and react in a manner that they wouldn't under normal circumstances. Linda Hill believes that "*situational factors combine with moderate intoxication to trigger violent incidents, particularly those which arouse feelings of frustration, such as perceived loss of control in personal relationships; crowded, poorly designated venues; or inept refusal of entry or service*" (www.aphru.ac.nz.htm). A male or female under the influence of alcohol can be prone to react violently when they become agitated or frustrated by situational factors such as overcrowded pubs or nightclubs.

In Irish society, it's no coincidence that the majority of assaults take place on a weekend night, outside a pub/nightclub or fast-food restaurant. The victims of these assaults are generally young men who have been out drinking or socialising in a pub, and they have been set upon by an individual perpetrator who normally tends to be male, but Irish society in recent years has seen a rise in gang assaults, with an increased number of female perpetrators involved in these random unprovoked attacks. Young people from all social backgrounds are increasingly drinking more and as a result of socialising in pubs and clubs more often, Working Class, Middle class and upper classes youths are at risk from alcohol related assaults The rise in assaults has occurred in rural as well as urban areas, as a result of the rise in alcohol consumption. Dr. Michael Loftus, a Mayo GP and county coroner, is no doubt of this

link, stating that *"when you look at the assaults in my area 80% of them are caused by drink. As a doctor I see it all the time"* (K.Bielenberg, 2000).

In the absence of accurate informative Garda Figures on the victims, perpetrators and locations of recorded assaults, I turned my attention to the British Crime Survey to obtain a better perspective of the links between alcohol consumption and assaults, so as to understand the current rise in assaults on young men in Ireland. Britain has again in recent years experienced a rise in alcohol related violence, with the upsurge in football hooliganism, being just one example. The 2000 British crime survey revealed that *"drunken offenders are responsible for 40% of violent crime, over three quarters of all assaults and 88% of criminal damage cases"* (www.bbc.co.uk). There is a strong relationship between not only alcohol and assaults but also with criminal damage cases, which are both predominantly caused by a drunken offender. The BCS also highlighted that the majority of drunken violence incidents occur on Friday and Saturday nights, in and around pubs in England and Wales. In relation to the location, influences, victims etc. there seem to be many similarities between assaults in Britain and Ireland. Also similar to Ireland the *"latest British Crime Survey shows an overall drop in crime of 10%, but violence by a stranger has jumped by 29%"* (www.bbc.co.uk). The seriousness of the problem of alcohol related violence, was publicised in a 1999 statement by Home Office Minister Charles Clarke when he admitted *"Alcohol related crime is a significant problem in Society, it's a problem which has no single cause and no magic solution...only by working together across government, law enforcement, voluntary agencies and the licensed trade can we reduce crime related to alcohol abuse"* (www.bbc.co.uk). I will discuss this in further detail in Chapter 8.

To conclude in the absence of a precise insightful crime survey on victims in Irish society, like the BCS in Britain, Ireland will be unable to fully realise and comprehend the true nature and the extent of alcohol related violence in society. But as the BCS study has shown there is a strong link between the rise in alcohol consumption and the rise in assaults on young men.

Youth violence and the 'Crisis of Masculinity'

The changing complexion of Modern Ireland has led to an escalation of insecurity amongst Irish men. Susan Faludi in her book 'Stiffed: The betrayal of modern man' remarks how this insecurity among men has been the subject of much research and analysis in America, by social Psychologists and researchers who have investigated the *"troubling rise in male distress signals stretching out over the last several decades"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 6). Examples of these distress signals include *"anxiety and depressive disorders, suicides and attempted suicides, physical illness, certain criminal behaviours and a 'mortality gap that was putting the average man in his grave seven years before the average woman"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 6). Many of these distress signals have become increasingly common in Ireland in recent years. There are a number of common factors which have contributed to men's insecurity in Ireland as well as in the USA and many other patriarchal societies. In the course of this literature review I aim to explore the extent of the effects that this insecurity has on Irish men, and to determine its significance to the rise in assaults by young men.

But firstly I wish to examine the concepts of Gender, Sex and Masculinity. In society, people are primarily differentiated on the basis of their sex and gender, but whilst the everyday use of the terms implies ambiguity since they both generally appear to be one and the same, there is a fundamental difference between the two. Giddens highlights the difference as *"sex refers to physical differences of the body, gender concerns the psychological differences between males and females"* (A. Giddens, 1989). There are a number of physical features, which are universally accepted to distinguish between men and women. But the gender concepts of masculine and feminine have become increasingly scrutinised by Feminist and

sociologist theorists, since these differences are socially constructed rather than being authentic physical differences between the sexes. In the words of Giddens, *"gender does not refer to the physical attributes in terms of which women and men differ, but to socially formed traits of masculinity and femininity"* (A. Giddens, 2000: 158). Consequently Giddens defines masculinity as *"the characteristic forms of behaviour expected of men in any given culture"* (A. Giddens, 1989: 743) and femininity is the characteristic forms of behaviour expected of women in any give culture. The traits and characteristics of Masculinity and Femininity vary between cultures and societies, but the general difference in gender characteristics in Western societies is that men are characterised by courage decisiveness, bravery and leadership where as women are characterised as being caring, gentle and passive (A. Giddens, 1989).

The fundamental question concerning gender theorists, especially in the last number of decades, is whether behavioural differences are biologically based or formed as a result of nurturing and socialisation (Nature VS Nurture). Biological theorists understanding of gender difference in R.W Connell's opinion is that *"the body is a natural machine which produces gender differences through genetic programming, hormonal difference or the different role of sexes in reproduction"* (R.W Connell, 1995: 45). One of the most popular illustrations of this argument is that men are alleged to have a higher level of testosterone and as a result are naturally more aggressive then women, because of this natural aggression and women's 'natural' more nurturing nature, it explains why men are the natural leaders and 'breadwinners' in society. Nurture theorists have an contrary viewpoint on the formation of masculine and feminine characteristics, as R.W. Connell comments in their reasoning *"the body is more or less a natural surface or landscape on which a*

social symbolism is imprinted" (R.W. Connell, 1995: 46). This theory, which has become increasingly popular in the social sciences, determines that gender is established as a result of an individual's socialisation through their relationships with their kin group, friends and peers, among other influences that socialise a person to behave in a certain manner according to their gender. As Giddens remarks "*Gender socialisation begins as soon as an infant is born. Even parents who believe they treat children equally tend to react differently to boys and girls. These differences are reinforced by many other cultural influences such as T.V, school and peer-group influence*" (A. Giddens, 1989: 199). Society through its institutions, traditions and norms continually reinforces gender differences, which in turn maintains the patriarchal system. Masculinity and Femininity for both theories is based on "*opposite traits*" (K. Trigiani, 1998), and this is their weakness, since most roles in modern society are blurred between genders. Nurturing and looking after children is seen as a fundamental characteristic of femininity, but in this day and age men are taking increased responsibility for child rearing, which raises question marks about what it means to be masculine in Modern Ireland.

Anthony Giddens defines patriarchy as referring to "*male dominance over women*" (A. Giddens, 1989: 199). All societies are patriarchal to some extent, but in western capitalist society, women were up till recently and still are by and large dominated by men. By confining the majority of women to the home and making the public sphere and the market a male dominated arena, patriarchy has succeeded in subordinating women. R.W. Connell points out that "*the majority of men gain from its hegemony and subordination of women*" (R.W. Connell, 1995: 79). Hegemony is a sociological concept devised by Antonio Gramsci, which Kathleen Trigiani remarks

"describes the process which keeps the dominant groups in power by ensuring that subordinate groups support or at least accept the ways things are" (K. Trigiani, 1998). In contrast to Nature and Nurture theorists, Connell believes that in every society at any one time there are a number of competing masculinities. He believes the *"interplay between gender, race and class"* (R.W. Connell, 1995: 76) leads to multiple masculinities such as working class and middle class masculinities etc. Masculine and Feminine characteristics vary between race and classes which eliminates the possibility of a homogeneous category of gender. Society accepts the system of hegemonic masculinity since most people; both men and women believe the patriarchal system is the best way forward for every one. Trigiani defines Hegemonic Masculinity *"as the socially dominant form of masculinity in a particular culture within a given historical period"* (K. Trigiani, 1998). In modern American society, Trigiani believes *"hegemonic masculinity is defined by physical strength and Bravado, exclusive heterosexuality, suppression of 'vulnerable' emotions such as remorse and uncertainty, economic independence, authority over women and other men, and intense interest in sexual conquest"* (K. Trigiani, 1998). These characteristics are not applicable to all men but they are generally accepted as the norm.

While the majority of women have been subordinated by the patriarchal system, the majority of men have benefited from the system. Higher status, increased employment opportunities and better pay are just some of the benefits men have gained from the patriarchal system. But as recent studies in the U.S have shown, modern men are experiencing a 'Crisis of Masculinity'. For this section I used Susan Faludi's book as a guideline in order to gain a better understanding of the crisis. In my

opinion there are a number of factors which have contributed to this predicament. Most significantly Faludi believes that one of the dominant characteristics of masculinity *"is the desire to be in charge"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 7). Men have always seen themselves and have equally been seen in society as the natural 'bread winner' but increasingly this status is being eroded away by the influence of consumerism and economic forces. The patriarchal system, which had placed men in their position of ascendency, is increasingly been challenged by women and men alike, and this is being accompanied as Connell points out by a "global movement for the emancipation of women" (R.W. Connell, 1995: 85). Many men feel their position is being challenged not only by women, but also by many men who support women's liberation.

The 1990s in Ireland has seen a major influx of women into the work force. A point highlighted by Kieran Allen, who states that *"More women have joined the workforce in the five years between 1991 and 1996 than in the twenty previous years"* (K. Allen, 1999: 1). This increase in participation by women in the Labour movement was brought about by the change in economic fortunes in Ireland. In order to fill their positions and vacancies, employers turned to women and now in many families both parents are working outside the home, which is in stark contrast to Irish society a number of decades ago. A man's role as being the main breadwinner, as Faludi terms to be the *"master of your own universe"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 14), has taken on less significance as women are progressively earning the same amount of money as men and they are also carrying out the same roles as men. Today not only are women working outside the home as much as men, but they are also challenging men's dominance of the public sphere and the controls of power. Faludi remarks that many

feminists believe *"men are in crisis because women are properly challenging male dominance. Women are asking men to share the public reins and men can't bear it"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 9). The number of women getting involved in politics is rising and women are increasingly challenging men's dominance, as controllers and regulators of power. Many feminists believe this loss of power is leading men to despair and crisis.

The all-pervasive culture of consumerism has also become increasingly influential in Irish society and some theorists believe that this consumerism has led to an escalation in men's isolation and insecurities. As Faludi states, in a *"consumer culture…what was 'needed' was the ability to buy and not produce"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 531). Men have become objects rather than subjects, they are now being judged more on their looks and appearances and increasingly less on their use to society. As Faludi highlights for men living in the modern social order *"usefulness to society becomes less and less, and celebrity hood even more and more"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 598). As a result of this commodification men feel increasingly insignificant. In Faludi's opinion men in American society arrived at this feeling of worthlessness *"as a result of their power-striving, which led to a society drained of context, saturated with a competitive individualism that has been robbed of craft or utility, and ruled by commercial values that revolve around who has the most, the best, the fastest"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 599). Men's embracement of crass materialism has led them to a situation devoid of feeling just objects. Led by a sense of consumerism they have conformed to the ideology you are what they wear! The feelings of worthlessness which have been compounded by the increased emancipation and participation of women in the public sphere, has led to a deep feeling of worthlessness and insecurity amongst men.

In my introduction I listed examples of masculine distress signals that have been associated with the increase in men's insecurities in society. There are strong similarities between the distress signals shown by men in the U.S and the increased occurrence of suicides among adults and young men in Ireland and there has also been an increase in the regularity of youth violence and in particular assaults. Dr. James Gilligan, concluded after a study of the origins of violent male behaviour in America, that *"the purpose of violence is to diminish the intensity of shame and replace it as far as possible with it's opposite, pride, thus preventing the individual from being overwhelmed by the feeling of shame"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 144). Many men are feeling increasingly insecure and under threat in Modern Irish society as a result of intense economic and social changes. The rise in violent attacks especially by young men in Irish society can be attributed to a number of different motives, which includes increased insecurity and distress among frustrated men who feel increasingly marginalised from the rest of society and especially other men. The last number of years has also seen a rise in violent acts, such as assaults by women, which disproves biological theorists belief that men are naturally more aggressive then women.

Fintan O'Toole in a contentious article on the issue of assaults and youth violence, disagrees with general beliefs that there is a general 'Crisis of Masculinity' in Ireland arguing instead that *"what's really redundant in other words, is not young men, but a kind of masculinity that relies for its validation on the ability to smash someone's face. Only in a gang, kicking a victim on the ground can those who are stuck with the old ways of being a man really feel that they are still on top"* (F. O'Toole, 2000). O'Toole believes that young people are doing better for themselves now then they ever were, by moving away from 'machoism' and the use of violence,

they have achieved success in the Celtic Tiger economy. The success of these young men in education, work and life and the life style that comes with this has made those who 'dropped out' of the system jealous, and as a result, O'Toole says they do *"what out groups have always done in these circumstances, using violence to make their weakness look like strength"* (F. O'Toole, 2000). The insecurities of modern man manifest themselves in a number of different ways, from personal disorders to violent outbursts. These insecurities are also another symptom of a rapidly changing society in Ireland and there relevance as an explanation for the recent rise in assaults must be examined, in terms of the overall changes in Ireland.

The role of the media in heightening public fears

The media have become increasingly influential in Irish society over the last number of decades. The decline of peoples 'faith' in traditional institutions such as the Catholic Church as a source for answers, has led to a rise in the popularity of the Internet, newspapers, T.V etc. Where once people turned to religion for answers, they can now turn on a television channel or log on to a computer, which will provide them with explanations. For the majority of people in Ireland the Media especially television and newspapers are their primary source of information as to what is going on in the world. Society has also experienced a rise in public fears of crime and victimisation in recent years. In the course of this section I wish to examine the media's influence on society and to assess its significance as a factor in the current rise of public fears of assaults in Ireland.

As I discussed earlier, the Irish Annual Garda statistics on recorded crime is relatively low in comparison to the crime rate of other countries but this hasn't prevented people from becoming increasingly fearful of crime. Maxfield describes this fear of crime *"as an emotional and physical response to a threat. It is the sense of danger and anxiety that arises from one's personal likelihood of being harmed"* (S.J. Smith, 1986: 109). This fear of crime among people has resulted from fundamental changes in Irish society as Paul O'Mahony remarks, Ireland in the *"last 20 or 30 years has seen a very dramatic decline in the average Irish person's sense of personal security and interpersonal trust, related to the greatly increased crime rate"* (P. O'Mahony, 2000: 22). Stories and accounts of child sexual abuse and business tribunals were unheard of in Irish society 20 to 30 years ago but they are now almost common news. The growth in the Irish crime rate from the 1960s to the mid 1990s,

even though it was relatively low in comparison to the crime rate of other countries at the time, created intense feelings of insecurity among many Irish people (P. O'Mahony, 2000: 24). The rise in violent crimes such as murder and the emergence of Drugs in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as the increased occurrence of drug related crimes; such as muggings, burglary and Syringe attacks, heightened people's tensions even further. This growth in the nature and seriousness of crime has also been accompanied by a decline in the influence of established institutions, such as the church and politics (K. Homquist, 1998). Traditionally, priests and politicians have been essential to instilling public order in society, but as a result of increased allegations of abuse and tax evasion respectively, Ireland's social order has become unbalanced and this is another factor in the rise of people's insecurities.

O'Mahony believes the fear of crime has also been amplified by *"the small size of the Irish community and it's still considerable level of interconnectedness"* (P. O'Mahony, 2000:24). Despite the widespread Urbanisation of Irish society and with the possible exclusion of the informality of City life in Dublin and Cork, the Republic of Ireland by and large still remains a 'small' country with a population of approximately 3.5 million people, and as a result people are still very much connected to each other. At a parochial level if a serious crime occurs in a region such as parish or district, it has a subsequent effect on the other inhabitants as the story will spread to them by word of mouth and as result this will increase their insecurities. Garofolo (1981) highlights two important public reactions to uncertainty about the risks of crime, which he terms 'information seeking' and 'communicative behaviour', as he states there *"is a tendency to turn to the media and the local grapevine in order to clarify their image about crime"* (S.J. Smith, 1986: 117). 'Communicative behaviour'

involves interacting and communicating with local friends, neighbours etc. in an attempt to discover the true extent of crime in Irish society through the 'grapevine'. But increasingly people are turning to the media to determine the 'true' nature of crime in Ireland.

According to the 2001 Joint National Readership Research Study *"1.46 million people read morning newspapers in 2000, a 6.4 percent rise on 1999 figure of 1.39 million"* (A. Beesley, 2001). But of the four National daily newspapers only one of them is based outside Dublin. The 'Irish Times' (which has 311,000 daily readers), 'The Irish Independent' (644,000) and 'The Star' (433,000) are based in the Capital, while 'The Irish Examiner' (238,000) is based in Cork city, but *"92.6% of its readers in 2000 lived in Munster"*. The consequences of the Irish media being largely centred in Dublin in Paul O'Mahony opinion, is that it has a bias effect on the nations general news content and picture of crime. O'Mahony deems because of Dublin's high crime rate and the location of three out of the four of the national newspapers in the city, the media as a result is largely focused on Dublin. In O'Mahony's opinion the focus of the media on Dublin, *"means the whole country is very familiar with the situation in the most crime ridden area and tends to take the situation to be the norm, despite the fact...that it has a crime rate (42 per 1,000) that is at least twice as high as that of any other Garda region and four times higher then some"* (P. O'Mahony, 2000: 24). O'Mahony believes that the extent of the crime problem in Dublin is exclusive to the city, rather than being the norm, but as a result of the focus of the National media on Dublin in general, the public believe high levels of crime in Dublin are the equivalent for the rest of Ireland. While I agree with Paul O'Mahony's hypothesis on crime in general, contrarily I believe assaults are a national problem and they are not

exceptional to Dublin and other urban areas as Kim Bielenberg points out *"the attacks do not seem to be confined to urban areas as there has been an increase in the number of assaults in rural areas"* (K. Bielenberg, 2000).

Besides the newspapers, Irish television and T.V programmes such as prime time and the news broadcasts are very influential in alerting and notifying the general public as to the risks of crime and victimisation in society. David Kitt-Hewitt in his article Crime and the media: A Criminological perspective discusses the British television crime reconstruction programme 'Crime Watch', which he says *"certainly stands accused of contributing significantly to increasing their audiences fear of personal attack"* (D. Kitt-Hewitt, 1995: 19). Since its first screening in June 1984, Crime Watch has been used by the police to highlight incidences of crime, which the police hope viewers might be able to help them with. Real life crime has become a television spectacle, and David Kidd-Hewitt believes that *"its style of dramatic reconstruction has treated the viewing public to a vast number of portrayals of violent crime acts in the process of its crime survey"* (D. Kidd-Hewitt, 1995: 20). In their attempts to catch the perpetrators the police and the shows producers reconstruct the scenes with actors and each month demonstrations of these acts of violence are beamed in to peoples homes. These crimes are the most serious types of crime, and the image of crime the programme sends out is off murders, rape, robbery etc. It's paradoxical that the shows aim is to allay public fears by catching criminals, but programmes such as 'Crime Watch' can have a negative effect on public confidence and feelings of safety, if the viewers accept these images as being part of reality. In Ireland 'Crime line' can also stand accused of heightening peoples insecurities. Since the launch of the programme in the early 1990s, people have been bombarded with

images of all types of serious crime. Grabosky believes, that *"frequent exposure to news coverage of crime may lead one to overestimate the probability of personal victimisation"* (D. Lupton, 1998) and in the case of Crime Line, it may lead people to accept the crime reconstructions as social reality.

O'Mahony like many criminologists and sociologists believe that the media are responsible for *"fermenting the general publics 'inappropriately' high levels of fear of crime"* (D. Lupton, 1998). An opinion shared by Susan J. Smith who believes that *"reporting by the national and provincial does not reflect the frequency and character of known offences"* (S.J. Smith, 1986: 118), but in her opinion its not intended to. Smith states that *"crime is easy news, and the most serious and therefore sensational crimes which occur least frequently are most newsworthy"* (S.J Smith, 1986: 118). The editors of newspapers have two functions to report the news but they also have to sell the papers. In her opinion the media are more focused on finding crime stories which are sensational and that will attract readers rather then giving an accurate picture of crime in society. A recent analysis of the newspaper USA Today, as revealed by Dr. Chris McCormack in his article <u>Newsmaking Criminology: Responding to mediated fear of Crime</u> concluded that *"a major factor in whether a crime was reported in the news was not the crime itself but the circumstances surrounding the crime, the public nature of the offender or victim, or the humorous nature of the incident- that is the news worthiness of the crime"* (see appendix). What makes crime news worth is intensely connected to the media's reporting of assaults. Even though there has been an immense increase in the number of media reports and articles on the rise in assaults on young men in Irish society, in my opinion it still remains largely under reported by the media. Most incidences of assault which occur

that are recorded by police, are not mentioned in the media, with the exception of being used as statistics to back up journalists' theories on the rise in assaults. On March 26th 2001, Olivia Kelleher in an article in the 'Irish Independent' stated that *"Adrian Moynihan of Bollyvollane in Cork city...sustained serious injuries following an incident outside Sidetrax's nightclub in the Grafton street area of the city"* (O. Kelleher, 2001). He died a short time after as a result of the injuries and the national media, reported it in the papers and radio but since then there has been little or no mention of the incident in the media. In contrast the death of ex-Gonzago schools rugby player Brian Murphy following a row with four Blackrock students outside the Burlington hotel on August 31st 2000 (K. Bielenberg, 2001) was headline news and it has been the subject of many media reports and articles in the eleven months since he died. The difference in the killings was that both Brian and his killers were from supposedly 'good' middle class backgrounds and came from established private colleges; the media sensationalised their story as a result.

In relation to assaults in Ireland, the last number of years has seen an increase in the number of media articles and reports on the rise of male assaults. The Irish Independent's journalist Kim Bielenberg and The Irish Times writer Fintan O'Toole are just a number of the commentators who have attempted to explain this male 'phenomenon'. Despite only making up less then 2% of all official recorded indictable crime, assaults have been the focus of an increased level of media and public attention. But, contrary to what the Official Crime figures suggest and as was shown in the 1998 Quarterly National Household survey on Crime and Victimisation there is a significant difference between actual crime and recorded crime figures in Ireland. As I discussed previously its young men who are most at risk from crime and

especially assaults in Ireland but it's generally women and the elderly who are most fearful of being a victim. In the absence of a definitive study into people's fears of victimisation and the proper level of crime in Ireland, it impossible to assess the rationality of their fears. In conclusion fears of crime and victimisation have increased over the last number of decades; there are a number of factors, which have contributed to this rise in fear and insecurity, such as immense social and economic changes, an increase in the nature and intensity of crime, as well as an increasingly influential media who have an strong influence on the public's perception of crime.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

At a time when there is differing opinions as to whether Irish society on the whole is becoming more violent and Garda statistics on recorded crime clearly show a general decrease in crime in Ireland, there has been a significant rise in assaults on young men in Irish society. The system of recording and categorising assaults by the Garda Siochana has led to a situation of increased ambiguity when it comes to understanding why there has been a significant visible but not immediately apparent statistically parallel rise in recorded serious assaults on young men. The recent publications of the 1998 CSO report on crime and victimisation and the 2000 British Crime Survey has indicated an invisible level of assault, which for a number of reasons are not reported by the victim. But the rise in reported assaults to the Gardai between 1995 and 1999 from 6,527 to 8,664 (A. Harvey, 2001), as well as the ever more common occurrence of the treatment of assault victims in Irelands casualty units are just two of the visible indicators of the rise in assaults. In the absence of an in-depth sociological analysis of crime and assaults in Modern Ireland, I have identified a number of factors which I believe have contributed to the rise in assaults on young men in Irish society. These are 1) Increased inequality and polarisation, 2) Rise in alcohol consumption, 3) Crass materialism and Competitiveness of laddish culture, 4) Role of men in modern Ireland, 5) Irish society becoming increasing impersonal, and 6) Declining influence of the Catholic Church and Family. In the course of this theoretical framework, I will discuss these factors in detail and evaluate how they have contributed to a rise in assaults on young men in Ireland.

Increased inequality and polarisation

Young people growing up in Ireland in the age of the Celtic Tiger, have witnessed a dramatic change in the fortunes of a country, which until recently had traditionally experienced high levels of unemployment, nationwide economic depression and it had a crippling social problem of emigration. Emigration had deprived Ireland of many of its finest and brightest sons, who had to go abroad in order to find a job and make a living for themselves. But the 1990s has seen a radical change in Ireland's economic fortunes. As Harvey comments unemployment in Ireland, which stood at 15.3% in 1993, *"has dropped regularly each year and is now at 4.3%"* (A. Harvey, 2001), and Irelands economy is booming; experiencing immense growth rates as Ireland prospers. Irish 'Diaspora' has long been a despairing situation in Ireland, as Elizabeth Connolly revealed *"since the 1950s there has been net emigration of 628,000"* (E. Connolly, 2001). This situation continued into the early 1990, with an average of 34,200 emigrants leaving Ireland a year but between*"1996-1998 this trend was reversed with over 127,000 immigrating during these three years"* (E. Connolly, 2001). Ireland's economic fortunes have radically improved and the evidence of its increased affluence can be seen everywhere, with the significant increase in the purchase of new houses, cars and designer clothes.

On the surface it seems everyone is enjoying the boom but this is not the case for the majority of people, who as Kieran Allen points out feel that *"only the wealthy have gained"*(K. Allen, 2000). While it is generally perceived that economic booms are meant to benefit everyone, Allen believes *"many feel they are working harder...longer hours"*(K. Holmquist, 1998), in order to sustain a decent standard of living, but they feel they are not enjoying all the benefits of Irelands current boom.

Instead they see the elite minorities attaining record profits, while many feel they are little better off than before the Celtic Tiger boom. While the majority of people are not enjoying all the benefits of Irelands boom, they still by and large have a good standard of living, especially young men and women for whom many are earning higher wages then the majority of their predecessors. But in the midst of this 'discontented' majority there is a 'disgruntled' minority, who are becoming increasingly marginalised and are experiencing increased inequality as a results of Ireland's economic prosperity.

The downside of the Celtic Tiger has led to an augmentation in the number of poor people in Irish society who are financially and socially 'worse off' then before the boom. The most recent Poverty League Table published in July 2001, as Mary Dundon highlighted in a recent article in the examiner, shows that *"15.3% of the population are struggling to survive- a poverty rate that is only second to the United States"* (M. Dundon, 2001). That transfers to over 500,000 people living below the poverty line. The majority of these people are working in low skilled jobs or unemployed and receiving social welfare payments and despite Irelands prosperity an increased number of people are earning a wage below the poverty line. 'Social Partnership' which was designed to benefit societies less well off has contributed to increased inequality in society. As Kieran Allen remarks *"wages have been restrained for over a decade through the partnership deals...everything else is deregulated rents can shoot up, the price of building land can go sky high, profits can sour but wages are strictly controlled"* (K. Allen, 2001). Workers wages under the partnership are restrained in order to maintain Ireland's prosperity and benefit everyone, but recent years have seen a major increase in the price of houses and rents etc, as well as a

continuing rise in the rate of inflation which is raising the cost of living in Ireland. While most workers are affected, it's the low skilled and low earners who are affected the most, as they are the main victims with their low incomes, from the rise in inflation and the cost of living.

Despite the growing inequality between the wealth of the low-income minority and the business elite, the less well off are also encountering increased polarisation from other workers. The evidence of Ireland's boom is everywhere and for young people in low paid jobs or looking for work, this evidence is an unwanted reminder of their inequality and poverty. Not only is Irelands wealthy youth enjoying increased prosperity, the majority of young people are earning decent standards of living and can afford to live the lifestyle of a consumer culture, with designer clothes and new cars etc. In addition to the increased inequality these young people are becoming increasingly marginalised from the rest of society and other young people, who are benefiting from the Celtic Tiger. Many of these young people are not suited by the current education system, which awards college places on the basis of student's points. As Kieran Allen reiterates *"the children of unskilled manual workers experience, forms of social exclusion when it comes to entry to a college education"* (K. Allen, 1999: 32). With a limited number of college places and the cost of education, many young people are unable to benefit from Ireland's education system. Young people are also increasingly marginalised as a result of the rise in consumer culture in Irish society and I will discuss this in a later section.

The Celtic Tiger economy and Ireland's new prosperity has led to an increasingly marginalised section of people who are experiencing increased inequality

in modern Ireland. This inequality and marginalisation can lead to increased resentment and aggression especially amongst young men who are increasingly deprivated in comparison to their counterparts. In certain circumstances such as intoxication, this aggression and resentment will lead to acts of violence and misbehaviour and it's a significant factor in the rise of assaults on young men in Ireland.

The rise in alcohol consumption

The most distressing and detrimental social problem amongst Irish youth today is the significant rise in alcohol consumption in recent years by young men and women. This rise has been exposed by the 1999 ESPAD study on Irish and European students, as well as the 2000 'World Drinking Trends' survey. Not only has this increased alcohol consumption had an adverse effect on the person, with an increased number of young people missing school/college and work on a Monday as a result of the weekends 'session'. But it has also led to an increased number of alcohol related crimes in Irish society. There are a number of factors, which have contributed to this rise. Firstly Ireland's pub culture is very influential and widely accepted in Irish society. Alcohol plays a central role in all aspects of life and it's the predominant recreational past time of the majority of Irish people especially young men and women. Secondly, the rise in prosperity in Ireland has led to increased affluence among young people, for whom the majority in contrast to previous generations have less commitments, such as a family to rear or a farm to look after. As a result they have a significant amount of disposable income from their wages, which Jerome

Reilly believes allows them *"to fully sake their thirst for alcohol during a four/five day week, 52 weeks a year"* (J. Reilly, 2001).

Dr. Ian O'Donnell a research fellow at the institute of Criminology at U.C.D has recently commenced a study into the relationship between Ireland's newfound prosperity and the rise in street violence. He deems there is a strong relationship between the two, but as Adam Harvey points out O'Donnell and his colleagues analysis has been *"limited by the Garda statistics, which don't break assaults down into categories like street assaults or assaults outside nightclubs or assaults in the home"* (A. Harvey, 2001). Despite these limitations O'Donnell believes *"alcohol and young people in public places are related to changes in the economic cycle. Peoples routines and activities change when they have more money."* (A. Harvey, 2001). Young people are relatively better off than their predecessors, they have more money and in Ireland's pub culture, they can afford to socialise and go out more than young people previously could. As Jerome Reilly points out *"for those in their early twenties with money to burn, the weekend starts on Thursday night"* (J. Reilly, 2001). Recent changes in the pub licensing laws have extended weekend drinking hours till 12.30 on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday night in order to satisfy the public's demand for longer opening hours. For an increased number of people in urban and rural areas the weekends socialising and drinking now runs from Thursday till Sunday; for those who have the disposable income to finance their lifestyles and as a result there is an increased number of younger and older people interacting in public places. Not just this but young people from all social backgrounds are drinking and socialising in pubs and nightclubs together now, where once the frequent drinking and socialising of the working-class was looked down upon, pub culture is now largely accepted especially

by young people in society. Susan J. Smith believes that "*a certain level of victimisation might then be expected to accompany particular urban lifestyles*" (S.J. Smith, 1986: 90). People are going out more often to pubs and discos, thus increasing their risk of victimisation but as recent studies have shown this is especially true for young men.

The culture of 'binge drinking' and drinking to get drunk is becoming increasingly popular among young Irish drinkers, in contrast to the older generations one or two 'quiet ones'. Under intoxication, the effect which alcohol has on the brain as Linda Hill points out is that "*it reduces the number of cues to understanding a situation which the intoxicated person is able to perceive. It also affects how the person reacts to the actions of others that may appear unreasonable, while impairing visual coping mechanisms*" (www.aphruac.nz.htm). A drunken person is more likely to misread and react to a situation or an incident in a way, which in a normal sober state would cause them to react in a different more reserved manner. As Maire Murray reiterates, "*alcohol can cause self deception, grandiosity, depression and alcohol related pathological jealousy and can lead to extreme acts of violence*" (M. Murray, 2001). While alcohol and drunkenness does not impel all drinkers to react violently, it does reduce a persons inhibition and restraints, and a person under intoxication is more likely then a sober person to react violently when frustrated or feel threatened etc. After drinking young men become more brave and have less inhibitions, as pubs close and young people congregate outside, their bravado and machoism often takes over and minor incidents such as skipping cues in a fast-food restaurant or exchange of words can often lead to matters "*getting out of hand as the alcohol takes hold and stress levels reach boiling point*" (www.bbc.co.uk). It's no

coincidence that the majority of assaults take place between young men after closing time at pubs and discos.

John Waters has an alternative opinion on why alcohol consumption has increased. Drinking was long socialised with Irish emigrants abroad, who drank because they were lonely, in his opinion many Irish people are *"just as lonely today"* (J. Waters, 2001). Waters comments, *"our increased alcohol consumption, when contemplated at all, was seen as the enjoyment of affluence. But closer examination suggests it might be regarded more accurately as indicating endurance of affluence"* (J. Waters, 2001). Its not just well off youngsters in Ireland today who are drinking more, but an increased number of young men and women who have not benefited from the economic boom, are becoming increasingly addicted to alcohol. As Kathryn Holmquist remarks *"a competitive society like the one we have become breeds isolation and feelings of worthlessness for those who fail in the race for success"* (K. Holmquist, 1998). In this instance these young people turn to alcohol as an escape from their life situations and worries.

Whatever reason is motivating young people to drink, they are increasingly drinking more in Irish society and this is having an adverse effect on alcohol related crime rates in Ireland. Increased alcohol consumption has led to a rise in public order offences and alcohol related assaults. But as Dr. Ian O'Donnell remarked *"the most serious sort of violence can't be explained simply by the mix of youth and alcohol. These are usually accompanied by what experts call 'additional stressers', things like long term unemployment and poverty"* (A. Harvey, 2001). Along with alcohol these

additional stressers are significant factors in influencing the young male or female perpetrator to react in a violent way.

Crass materialism and Laddish competitiveness

The ideals of a 'rat race' have become synonymous with Irish society in the age of the Celtic Tiger and consumer culture. People are caught up in a cycle of endless consumption and competitiveness in an attempt to better themselves of their current situations. Crass materialism and laddish competitiveness have become central to what Dr. Paul O'Mahony terms the *"rampant tiger culture"* (P. O'Mahony, 2000). But the down side of this culture for those who don't succeed in society is that they are made to feel like failures and they can become alienated from everyone else. Dr. Paul O'Mahony has identified these values and aspects of the tiger culture as having a significant effect on the rise of assaults in Irish society.

In the current economic boom signs of Ireland's prosperity is everywhere to be seen. At the same time, Capitalist values of money, power and success has had a significant effect on Irish people, who are in continuous competition with their compatriots for jobs, promotions and the wealth, which comes from this success. People have moved from 'communal values' to what Labour leader Ruairi Quinn describes as a more greedy *"me feminism"* (K. Bielenberg, 2001), in the selfish pursuit of what's best for themselves. Kathryn Holmquist reiterates these values well, when describing the situation in modern Ireland, she states *"in the Celtic Tiger its everyman for himself and nobody really cares"* (K. Holmquist, 1998). When it comes to attaining wealth and success, greed has had a strong influence on people and as a

result it's made them more competitive in society. The impact of competitiveness does not end in the market place but it also has an increasing influence on all aspects of modern society from people competing for houses and land to build the houses, and especially in relation to Irelands consumer culture.

Susan Faludi deems in a *"consumer culture what was 'needed' was the ability to buy"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 531), an individuals worth and status is projected by their ability to consume material objects. Susan Faludi believes modern consumer society is *"ruled by commercial values that revolve around who has the most, the best, the biggest, the fastest"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 599). The idea that the clothes make the man, rather than the man making the clothes is essential to consumer society. Crass materialism has been very influential in Irish society among young Irish people, who are involved in an infinite pursuit of attaining new objects such as 'bigger', and 'better' cars, houses, etc. This consumerism also leads to a rise in competitiveness among young people especially young men, who compete with other men in society for status through their buying power. In a society where people are identified by their possessions young men are categorised among other things, by the clothes they wear, car they drive etc. While materialism and buying power can make the person, for young men who haven't the wealth or the material goods to succeed in a consumer society, consumerism can have an adverse effect on them. A point reiterated by Kieran Allen in his discussion of the relative deprivation of society's less well off, which he believes has increased *"in response to the more conspicuous consumption of wealth in some quarters"* (K. Allen, 1999: 52).

In modern Irish society the crass materialism and competitiveness, of the tiger economy as Holmquist states *"breeds isolation and feelings of worthlessness for those who fail in the race for success"* (K. Holmquist, 1998). In a consumer society young men from less well off backgrounds, are also influenced by consumer expectations and the values of materialism. But due to their lack of financial wealth and marginalisation from the rest of society, they have become increasingly alienated. This alienation has an undesirable affect on them, and their deprivation is heightened, by seeing other young people succeeding and enjoying the benefits of the tiger economy, whose lives seem to revolve around the fast cars, designer clothes and seemingly endless partying. This marginalisation like the financial inequality experienced by many less well off youths can impel many of these young men to jealousy and under certain circumstances, such as intoxication or increased frustration these marginalised youths may react in a violent manner, and they may assault another person.

Role of men in Modern Ireland

The 'Crisis of Masculinity' is a theory, which has become increasingly fashionable to describe men's anxieties and fears that they have become redundant in modern society. The dominant characteristic of masculinity as Susan Faludi remarked, *"is the desire to be in charge"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 7). But the recent occurrence of a number of incidences has eroded men's dominance over women, and this dominant characteristic is becoming increasingly insignificant in modern Ireland. The increased insecurity and anxiety which accompanies this realisation has been accredited by Susan Faludi as a major cause of the rise in male distress in American society which

has manifested itself as *"anxiety and depressive disorders, suicides and attempted suicides...certain criminal behaviours"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 6). This increased insecurity amongst Irish men in the 1990s has been suggested as a motive for the recent rise in assaults carried out by young men. I will use Susan Faludi's book 'stiffed; the betrayal of modern man' as my main source to evaluate the importance of increased insecurity as a factor in the rise of assaults.

As I discussed in my literature review Irish society traditionally was (and to a certain degree still is) a patriarchal society, in which women were dominated and subordinated by men who controlled the positions of power. This status-quo situation in society remained largely untouched until the 1970s and 1980s which saw a rise in prominence of women's issues and initial patriarchal challenges, but the 1990s has especially seen an increased challenge to the power of men and the patriarchal society in Ireland. As Kieran Allen emphasizes, there has been a major influx of women into the Irish work place, *"more women have joined the work force in the five years between 1991 and 1996 than in the twenty previous years"* (K. Allen 1999: 31), and the patriarchal dominance of men has also been eroded by a *"global movement for the emancipation of women"* (R.W. Connell, 1995: 85) which has been supported by both women and men. These factors have increasingly dismantled 'man's perceived role as the 'breadwinner' and dominant sex. Women are now earning their own wages and incomes, which is by and large on the same level as men and they are increasingly taking control of their own destiny. In this environment man's traditional role as the 'sole' provider is needed less and less. Man's patriarchal dominance is also being challenged in the public, as well as the private sphere, with an increased number of

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female Solicitors, Judges etc. challenging a hitherto male dominated field (S. Faludi, 2000: 9).

The all-pervasive culture of consumerism, which is so influential in modern society, increases men's insecurities even further. As Faludi comments in a society where your consumption distinguishes your character from other people, one of this society's distinguishing features is "*the ever prying, ever invasive beam reducing men to objects*" (S. Faludi, 2000: 599), has led to men being valued in terms of their looks, appearance, clothes etc. The values of crass materialism which I discussed in the previous section, have driven men to a stage of endless consumption of more expensive and better clothes, cars etc. and this has heightened their feelings of worthlessness, as they will never satisfy their insatiable desires.

The Hegemonic (dominant) masculinity in Irish society, similar to Kathleen Trigiani's interpretation of American Hegemonic masculinity is "*defined by physical strength and bravado, exclusive heterosexuality, suppression of 'vulnerable' emotions such as remorse and uncertainty, economic independence, authority over women and other men, and intense interest in sexual conquest*" (K. Trigiani, 1998). In Irish society in recent years as a result of the increased emancipation of women, the influence of consumer culture and economic prosperity, these characteristics no longer maintain men's dominance and many men especially young men are increasingly uncertain about their roles and what it means to be a man in Modern society. Theories about men becoming redundant are disputed by commentators and journalists like Fintan O'Toole, who contends "*the current fashionable notion that men have become redundant might be a lot more pervasive if there were not also*

strong evidence of a rise in violent assaults perpetrated by young women" (F. O'Toole, 2000). There has been an increase in particular of reports of females assaulting other women as well as men, but while in agreement with O'Toole, I believe there is no single reason for the rise in assaults by young men or women. As a result while this uncertainty and anxiety, manifests itself in the form of minor anxieties and worries for the majority of people, there are certain categories of men who will react in a violent way to this anxiety.

Dr. James Gilligan, who carried out a study on the 'Origins of violent male behaviour in America' concluded that the *"emotion of shame is the primary or ultimate cause of all violence"* (S. Faludi, 2000:143). His study found that the major sources of shame for American men were *"downward social mobility and unemployment, circumstances that reveal a helpless core, showcasing an emasculating dependency"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 143). And these factors of helplessness and shame instill the man to react in a manner so as to disguise the shame and protect himself from ridicule (S. Faludi, 2000: 144). This insecurity and downward social mobility has become a characteristic of low skilled and low paid workers in modern Irish society and its Celtic Tiger economy. While it may be more influential for older adults then younger men, the feeling of helplessness that arises from poverty and unemployment has a stigmatising effect on the 'powerless' male who's customary role was to be the main 'breadwinner'.

The changing social and economic situation in Ireland has contributed to increased uncertainty amongst men about their roles in society. While the majority suffer minor anxieties are worries, some men as a result of their shame and increased

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uncertainty about their lives will react in a violent manner, such as assault when intoxicated or under pressure from 'additional stressors'. While I believe men are not redundant in modern society, the 'crisis of masculinity' has compelled men to look for a new purpose in society beyond their traditional role to be *"the master of your own universe"* (S. Faludi, 2000: 14).

Society becoming increasingly impersonal

Another factor in the rise of assaults, especially unprovoked assaults is the increased impersonality of modern society and the anonymity that urban centres seem to foster. As Fintan O'Toole highlighted in his article <u>Macho thugs in losers' war with winning wimps,</u> modern society has changed radically from Ireland of the past. The increased impersonality of modern society in his opinion has led to more opportunity for 'thugs' and deviant youths to carry out random acts of violence and assaults.

Traditional Irish society before urbanisation was characterised by informality and intimacy, as people spent most of their lives in the same area, with the same people and in general everybody in the area knew each other to talk to or to see. In O'Toole's opinion this informality and intimacy acted as a deterrent to would be attackers, since he believed in this environment *"there would be a good chance if someone attacked you, you would know who they were and where they lived"* (F. O'Toole, 2001). If someone attacked and assaulted another person, there would be a major likelihood that the victim would know who they were. As a result, the perpetrator ran the risk of the victim getting a family member or friend to retaliate on

their behalf. So the intimacy of society kept random unprovoked assaults to a minimum.

But the rapid social and economic changes that occurred as result of urbanisation and the Celtic Tiger economy, has increased impersonality and anonymity in Modern Ireland. While rural areas and small towns are still very much in the traditional mode of familiarity. Urban centres such as Dublin, Cork and Limerick, as well as most large towns are less intimate due to their size and large populations of inhabitants and people are interacting less and less with their neighbours. This impersonality allows an individual to remain reasonably anonymous in modern society. Fintan O'Toole believes one of the main reasons why unprovoked assaults are becoming more common is that the *"attackers have good reason to believe they will get away with it. They have in the far less intimate Ireland today, a much better chance of being anonymous"* (F. O'Toole, 2001).

The likelihood of perpetrators getting caught and receiving retribution for the attack in traditional society was very high. But in Modern Ireland, the anonymity and impersonality of urban centres such as Dublin, with a population of approximately 1million people living in its boundaries, increases the attackers chances of getting away with the attack and they are less inhibited now from assaulting a person. The weakening in inhibitions and restraint, of possible attackers has also been linked to the declining influence of the Catholic Church and the family and I will discuss this in detail in the next section.

Declining influence of the Catholic Church and Family

While firstly acknowledging that families and kin-group still play a pivotal role in the socialisation of Irelands youth, the 1990s has seen a decline in their influence and control of young people, as a result of fundamental economic and social changes in Ireland. This has also been accompanied by a significant decrease in the power and influence of the Catholic Church, especially amongst an increasing number of young people who are attending mass less and less. Compared to previous generations, religion is playing a less influential role in their lives.

These two institutions have traditionally played a fundamental role in teaching people morals and values, as well as the inherent difference between right and wrong. As Father Harry Bohan commented, _"they were the elements of human organization around which everything revolved"_ (K. Holmquist, 1999). But the 1990s has seen an increased number of women entering into the workforce in response to economic forces. Kieran Allen states, _"more women have joined the workforce between 1991 and 1996 than in the twenty previous years"_ (K. Allen, 1999: 31). Ireland's increasingly prosperous economy has attracted women into the workforce and with both parents working outside the home, a common characteristic of the Celtic tiger economy, the traditional family, as we knew it is becoming less and less. Parents are spending less and less time with their children, and Holmquist (1999) believes _"the demands of the economy are shattering families, by making families like airports, where people meet coming and going"_ (K. Holmquist, 1999). Father Bohan stated at the 'Conference'99: Our society in the New Millennium', that he estimates _"today, parents are spending 40 percent less time with their children"_ (K. Holmquist, 1999).

In this age of consumerism and the mass media, external forces are also undermining parent's authority and their influence on children. As Kathryn Holmquist pointed out *"parenting itself is under threat as parents finds their influence undermined by the media, the Internet, the education system and economic demands"* (K. Holmquist, 1999). Young people are spending increased amounts of time watching TV and the mass media is playing an increasingly prominent role in socialising and teaching young people new value and morals. The state has also become increasingly involved in the affairs of the family, with the state taking increased responsibility for the provision of children through social workers and placing restrictions and guidelines on parents on how they should raise their children. Parents feel external forces such as the market, the media, consumerism and the intervention from the state are increasingly disempowering them. Roisin Shorthall comments that these factors have a significant effect on parents, who as she states *"are no longer able to control their children because they no longer feel they have this right and responsibility"* (K. Holmquist, 1999). As a result many parents have adopted a 'laissez faire' attitude towards their children, and this is a significant factor in the rise of delinquent youths in Ireland.

The power and influence of the Catholic Church, which has been the high moral order in Ireland for centuries has been eroded in the 1990s by numerous scandals and the all-pervasive consumer culture. The child sex abuse scandals in the 1990s has impaired the authority of the Church as the high moral order, when it comes to teaching people morals and values. In addition to this, as Kathryn Holmquist discussed in her article From God to Mammon, *"In the new, consumer-driven Ireland, we've gone from spiritual inspiration to material aspiration"* (K. Holmquist, 1998).

Young people have been inspired by the values of consumerism, and acquiring material possessions, such as cars, and clothes which give them instant satisfaction. They are living in a society, where no body want's to wait and as a result consumerism offers the opportunity to satisfy their desires. While Ireland has prospered in the past decade and people have more money to spend then they ever had, at the same time as Holmquist (1998) states, *"church attendance has fallen by at least 14 percent, seminaries have closed and both priests and lay people have recoiled with disillusionment from the church"* (K. Holmquist, 1998). This situation has been brought about as result of the crisis and scandals within the church, but also as a result of consumerism undermining the values of religion, which are based on the belief of patience and piety that things will be better in heaven. Consumerism offers people the opportunity to satisfy their demands in the present, so people are no longer prepared to wait for their rewards. As a result, young people who are most influenced by consumerism are attending mass less and they are influence less and less by the teachings of the church.

Patricia Redlich, remarks how young peoples *"respect and standards have gone out the window"* (P. Redlich, 2001), in recent years. In contrast to humanist thinkers Redlich believes *"it's a philosophical fallacy to presume human beings are innately good and all we have to do is give them the freedom to express them selves. Innately we are selfish and self centred, unmindful of others and drawn by our desires"* (P. Redlich, 2001). The decline in influence of the family and Catholic Church on young people, as well as young people's morals and values has had a significant effect on young people's inhibition and restraint. In the past when people were marginalised or disempowered, their faith gave them hope that they would be

rewarded in heaven. In modern Ireland young men are less passive when they experience the same frustration, they will react in a violent manner. The rise of assaults in recent years by young men is related to a certain extent to the decline in influence of the Church and the family on young people and the weakening of restraint and inhibition on young men.

Chapter 4

Statement of the Research Problem

Statement of the Research Problem

The statement of the research problem is as follows:

There has been a significant rise in assaults on young men in Irish Society in recent years, but recent studies have shown that the majority of these attacks are not been reported or recorded in the Garda Annual Crime figures.

Statement of the Sub-Problems

The following is a statement of the four sub-problems:

1. _It is anticipated that there is a substantial difference between the reality projected by Garda Crime figures on assault, and the true extent of the problem in Irish society._

2. _It is hypothesised that the majority of male victims of assaults, don't report their attacks to the Gardai._

3. _It is anticipated that although women and the elderly are most fearful of being a victim of crime, it's young men in their early twenties, who are most at risk of being assaulted._

4. _It is hypothesised that the increased popularity of 'Pub Culture' and the simultaneous rise in alcohol consumption among young people, has had a significant influence on the rise in assaults on young men in Ireland._

Chapter5

Methodology

Introduction

In this section, I will discuss the research methods which I used to carry out my study. I will discuss the research method I used to collect the data for my research problem. I will also examine the sources I used to collect data and the methods of coding and data analysis. I will also analyse the scope and limitations of my study and assess their significance. Finally I will present and analyse some of my main findings and conclusions to my study.

Methods of Data Collection

The research method I used to collect my data was a 'self-administered' structured questionnaire. I attained my data by distributing these questionnaires to students attending Sociology lectures at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Assaults are a very sensitive issue in Irish society and it's my experience that men feel uncomfortable talking about very personal issues. By using a self-administered structured questionnaire I believe it allowed the respondent the freedom to be more honest and truthful about their experiences of assaults. The self administered structured questionnaire was designed with open and closed questions to attain specific data from the respondents (*see appendix 1*). By distributing the questionnaires randomly in lectures, it allowed respondents anonymity and by offering them feed back from the overall results of the study via e-mail, it put the respondents more at

ease. Despite its' limitations I believe this method attained the most accurate results for my study.

The sources of data

The research problem and premise of my study was assaults on young men in Irish society. So I targeted male respondents who were under the age of 25 years. My study had a gender bias, because the vast majority of assault victims in Ireland are male. I collected my data from a sample of 50 male Sociology students, at N.U.I Maynooth. In the absence of the resources to accomplish a national study of male assault victims, similar to the British Crime Survey, I targeted a non-probability sample of male students. I hypothesised that this sample would incorporate people from a wide range of social backgrounds, with diverse life experience and lifestyles. By utilising a 'judgmental sample' which I believe would be reasonably representative of the total population, I attended a number of Sociology lectures, where I distributed the questionnaires randomly amongst students until I had the collected the total sample. The purpose of my study was to discover and analyse general trends on how much are the lives of young men and their male family members and friends affected by assaults, and to gain an overall picture of the extent and nature of assaults on young men by concentrating on such factors as where and when they commonly occur. There was no bias in the choosing of the sample as every male student under the age of 25 attending the lectures was give a questionnaire to fill out. There were questionnaires given out to undergraduate as well as postgraduate students. While my findings may not be the conclusive story for all assault victims, they are representative of the majority of assault related victims in Ireland. The

response rate of the respondents who answered the questionnaires was remarkably high for all the questions apart from the opinion and attitude questions at the end. There where respondents failed to answer some questions, but this did not adversely affect my overall findings.

Methods of Coding and Data Analysis

When I had completed the 50 questionnaires, I set about coding the data I had collected. The purpose of coding the data was to convert the written answers in the questionnaires into numerical values, which would allow all the data to be analysed. There were two stages to coding the data; firstly I had to design a coding guide with codes to all the possible answers for each of the questions. The precoded questions (eg. Age) were very easy to code and all they needed was to be assigned a numerical code. The open questions were much more difficult to code, and they required a lot of time and concentration. Secondly, once I had completed the coding guide, I had to code the answers for each question from all the questionnaires and I transferred them on to transfer sheets. Each questionnaire had a separate transfer sheet, which allowed me to enter the data from the individual questionnaires into the SPSS computer package, (statistical package for the Social Sciences). Once all the data was entered, the computer correlated all the results for each of the questions and I designed tables and charts to display them. I also used a number of statistical tests such as cross-tabulations, to assess the relationship between the variables. Once I had a full print out of all the results, I designed graphs and charts on the Excel spreadsheet package, which offered a superior range of chart and graph designs than the SPSS package, for the final presentation of the data.

Scope of the Study/ Limitations of the Study

I never set out to uncover groundbreaking research but this study has highlighted a number of issues which I believe gives an honest and interesting sociological understanding of assaults on young men. The scope of my study is among other things, an attempt to discover and analyse general trends, on how much are the lives of young men and their male family members and friends affected by assaults, and to gain an overall picture of the extent and nature of assaults on young men in Ireland. The positives of my study are that it involves both victims and non-victims, as well as the experiences of their male kin group and peers of assault. Due to my lack of resources, especially time and financial restraints, I believe the self administered structured questionnaire, despite all of the alternative research methods, gave me the most reliable and informative data for my study. There are a number of limitations to my study, especially the unstructured nature of my sample, which is dominated by people from middle class backgrounds and has only a minor representation from working class students. Also there were a number of interesting opinions and answers from the questionnaires, which I would have wished to analyse further but due to the self administering of the questionnaire, I was unable to do so. But overall my study is a minor thesis and was constrained by a number of factors and resources, but its main strengths are that it attempts an insightful and honest understanding of the problem of assaults on young men in Irish society.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Background information

In this section I will present and analyse the data from my research, which I carried out on male Sociology students at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Co. Kildare in April and May 2001.For my study I took a random sample of 50 male respondents under the age of 25, from undergraduate (1st year, 2nd year, 3rd years,) and postgraduate (M.A and PHD) students; surveying both victims and non-victims of assault through the use of filtered questions, to assess the extent and nature of assaults on young men in Irish society. The respondents came from a wide rage of social backgrounds as can be seen from their Fathers (*see appendix, Fig 2b*) and Mothers occupations (*see appendix, Fig. 2c*). Of the 50 respondents (1 missing code, *see appendix 2a*), 13 (**26%**) were from a working class background and 36 (**72%**) of the respondents were from a middleclass background. I collected my data from the respondents, through the use of self-administered structured questionnaires and the following themed illustrations and analysis, demonstrate the main findings of my study.

1. The Extent of assaults in the lives of respondents

Illustration 1 shows the results to the question, had the respondents ever been the victim of an assault. From the 50 respondents who participated in the study, 28 (**56%**) of the respondents had been the victim of an assault, which I defined in my questionnaire as a "physical attack" and 22 (**44%**) of the respondents had never been assaulted. This was a filter question to determine which questions were suited to the respondent. Of the 28 respondents who had been assaulted, 14 (**50%**) of them had

been assaulted more then once *(see appendix, Fig. 4a)* and of those 14 respondents who had been assaulted more then once. 8 were assaulted two times, five respondents had been assaulted three times and 1 other *(see appendix, Fig. 4b)*.

Illustration 1

Have you ever been the victim of an asault?

To examine the extent, which assault played in their lives I also asked the respondents, had any male member of their family or friends been the victim of an assault. Of the total sample, 34 (**68%**) of the respondents had a male family member or a friend, who had been assaulted and 16 (**32%**) of the respondents had no male member of his family or friends who had been the victim of an assault *(see appendix, Fig. 15a)*. Of the 34 respondents, the vast majority of the respondents (**61%**) had one male associate who had been assaulted, 5 (**15%**) respondents had two male associates who were assaulted, and of the other respondents, 5 had three male family members and friends who had been a victim of an assault, and 3 had four or more (**see appendix, Fig. 15b**). These statistics illustrate the extent to which assaults affected the respondents, both directly and indirectly. As a result of these figures, it can be inferred that by and large most of the respondents had some experience of assault in

their lives, as 58% of respondents had been affected personally and 68% of the respondents had some indirect experience of assaults.

2. The circumstances under which assaults took place
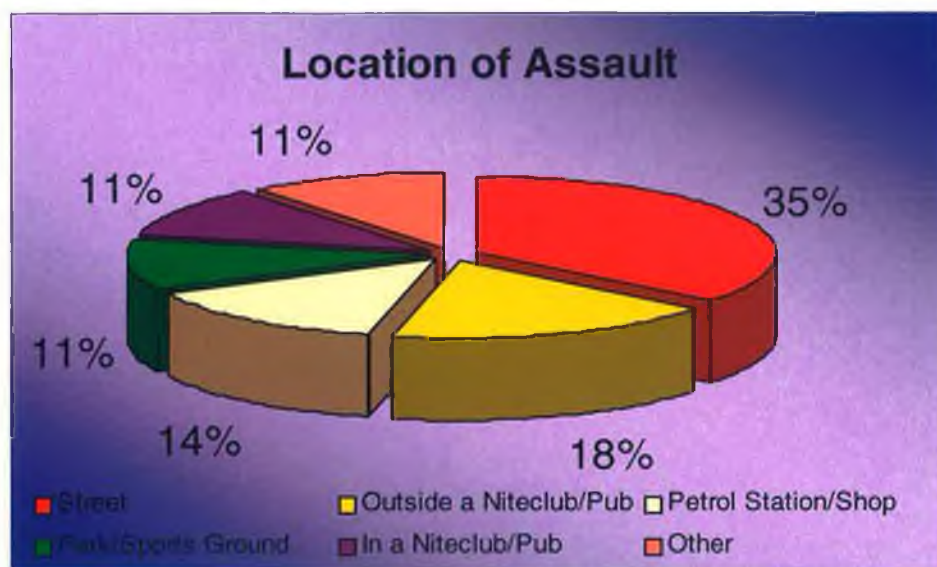
Illustration 2

There are a number of general trends in the circumstances, i.e. location, area and times, under which the assaults took place. Illustration 2 shows the locations where the assaults on the respondents took place. Of the 28 respondents who were assaulted, 10 (**35%**) of them were assaulted on a street, 8 (**29%**) of the respondents were assaulted in the vicinity of a pub/nightclub, four (**14%**) assaults, took place at a petrol station/shop. Three (**11%**) respondents were attacked in a park/sportsground and the rest were included in the 'other' category, which included a bus, in a house and in school. Nearly all these assaults occurred in a public place (**96%**). 21 (**75%**) of them took place in an urban area and 7 (**25%**) of the assaults occurred in a rural area (*see appendix, Fig. 5b*). The evening/night time was the most common time for assaults. Of the 28 assaults, 4 (**14%**) took place before 6pm, another 4 (**14%**)

occurred between 6pm and 10pm. 5 (**18%**) assaults took place between 10pm and midnight, but after midnight the number of assaults seem to escalate, 7(**26%**) occurred between midnight and 2am, and 6 (**21%**) took place between 2am and 4am (*see appendix, Fig. 6*). The rest (**7%**) occurred after 4am. The majority (**65%**) of assaults took place between 10pm and 4am, which largely coincides with the night-time socialising at pubs and discos.

3. The General characteristics of the perpetrators

Illustration 3
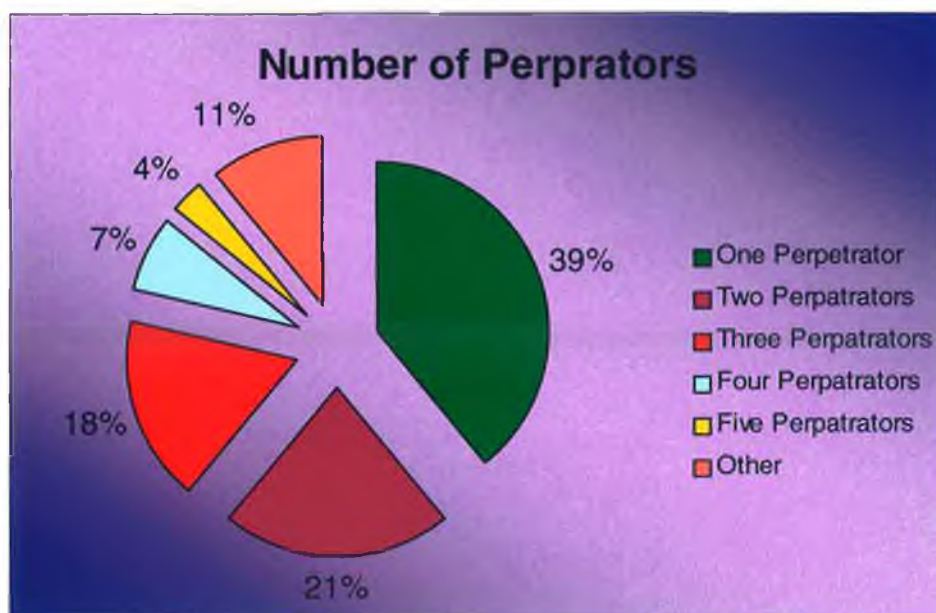
In my analysis of the general characteristics of perpetrators of assaults on young men, I have drawn attention to the numbers, gender and approximate age of the perpetrators, as well as their relationship to the victim. Illustration 3 displays the number of perpetrators, who were involved in the assaults of the 28 respondents. The most common form of assault was carried out by a single perpetrator, which was the case for11 (**39%**) of the 28 respondents. 6 (**21%**) of the assaults, were carried out by two perpetrators and 5 (**18%**) of the respondents were assaulted by three perpetrators.

There are also a high percentage of 'mob' attacks with 6 (**22%**) incidences of assaults involving four perpetrators or more. Of the 28 respondents, 27 (**98%**) of them were attacked by male perpetrators and 1 case was unknown (*see appendix, Fig 7b*). None of the respondents said they were attacked by a woman. The majority (**78%**) of perpetrators were under the age of 22 years, 9 (**33%**) of them were aged 18 years and under, 12 (**45%**)of the perpetrators were aged between 19-22 years and the other six respondents (**22%**) were aged 23 years and over, and 1 case was missing (*see appendix, Fig. 7c*).

Illustration 4
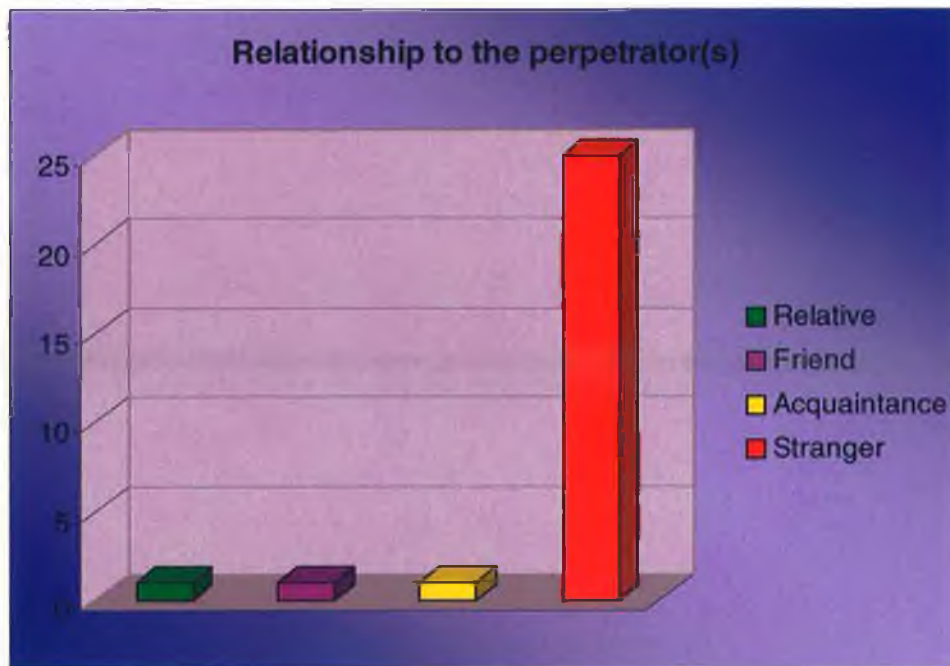
Illustration 4 shows the victims relationship to the perpetrator. Probably the most interesting characteristic of the perpetrator as shown by this illustration was that 25 (**89%**) of the respondents did not know the attacker who assaulted them. Of the remaining three respondents, 1 respondent was related to the perpetrator, 1 was a friend and 1 respondent was acquainted with the perpetrator. The typical characteristics of the perpetrator(s) of assaults on young men, which can be inferred

from the results is that, the respondents were more often than not, assaulted by a unknown young male, or group of young men.

4. The effect of the assault on the victim

Illustration 5
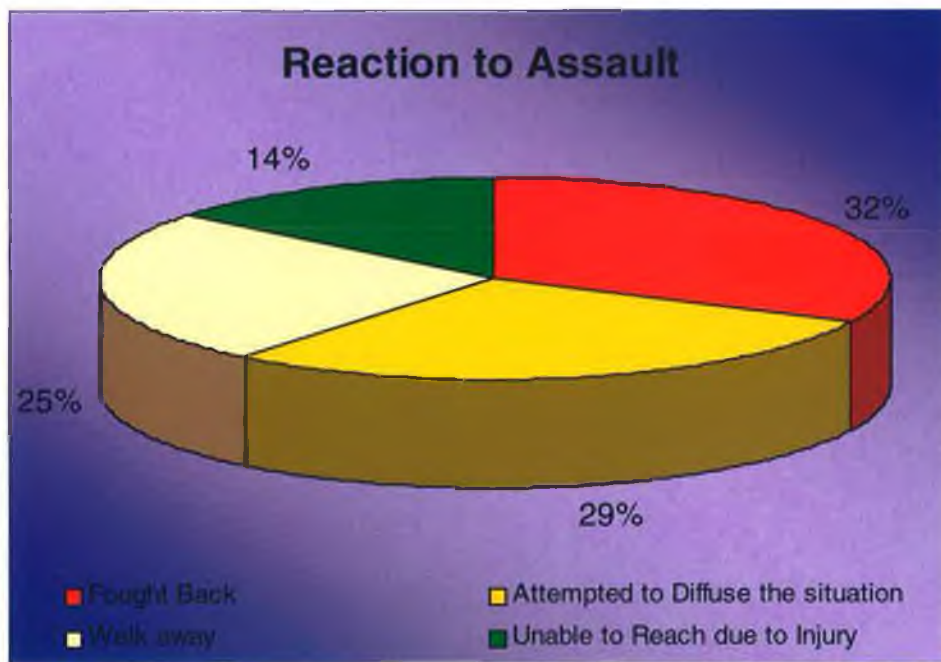
One of the primary aims of my study is to analyse the effects and consequences, which an assault has on a male victim. I have examined a series of effects in my study including the victim's immediate reaction, emotional reaction, long-term effects and behavioural changes as a result of the assault. Illustration 5 shows the respondents immediate reaction to the assault. The respondents reacted in a number of different ways, 9 (**32%**) of the 28 respondents fought back, 8 (**29%**) of the respondents attempted to diffuse the situation, 7 (**14%**) of the respondents walked away and 4 (**14%**) of the respondents were unable to react due to the seriousness of the injuries. The respondents also experienced an assortment of emotional reactions to the assault.

Anger and shock were the most common emotional reactions; with anger being experienced by 14 (**50%**) of the respondents and shock being the emotional reaction of 11 (**39%**) of the respondents. 2 (**7%**) of the respondents experienced fear and 1 respondent experienced another emotion (*see appendix, Fig 11a*). Of the 13 respondents who gave 2nd answers, anger was still the most common emotion with 7 of the respondents experiencing the emotion. 6 of the respondents experienced fear and 1 experienced shock (*see appendix, Fig 11b*).

7 (**25%**) of the 28 respondents admitted that the attack had left long term physical and/or emotional effects on them (*see appendix, Fig 12a(i)*). The most long-term effects which the respondents reported were, 4 (**57%**) of the respondents said they were "more fearful when they where in town", 2 (**29%**) of the respondents revealed they were more fearful of crowds and 1 other (*see appendix, Fig 12a(ii)*). Most interestingly 14 (**50%**) of the 28 respondents stated they had changed their behaviour as a result of the assault, while 13 (**46%**) admitted no behavioural changes and their was 1 missing answer (*see appendix, Fig 12b(i)*). Of the 14 respondents, who revealed they had changed their behaviour as a result of the assault, 9 (**65%**)of the respondents said they were more careful/vigilant now, 2 (14%) of the respondents said they tend to keep to themselves and 1 (**7%**) respondent said they don't go out as much anymore. While 2 (**14%**) of the respondents believed they had become more aggressive as a result of the assault and they will now fight back (*see appendix, Fig. 12b(ii)*).

The respondents reacted in a number of ways to their assault. While most respondents (**54%**) attempted to diffuse the situation and walk away, a large

percentage of respondents (**32%**) fought back when assaulted. The most common emotional reactions of the respondents to their assaults were of anger and shock. Most interestingly, while most respondents (**75%**) said they had experienced no long-term physical/emotional reaction to the assault, half (**50%**) of the 28 respondents who were assaulted, said they had changed their behaviour as a result of the assault. The most prevalent behavioural change among respondents is that they are now more careful/vigilant when they are out. These results are conclusive with the latest 'Victim Support' studies, which I will discuss in chapter 7.

5. The reporting and nonreporting of assaults

Illustration 6
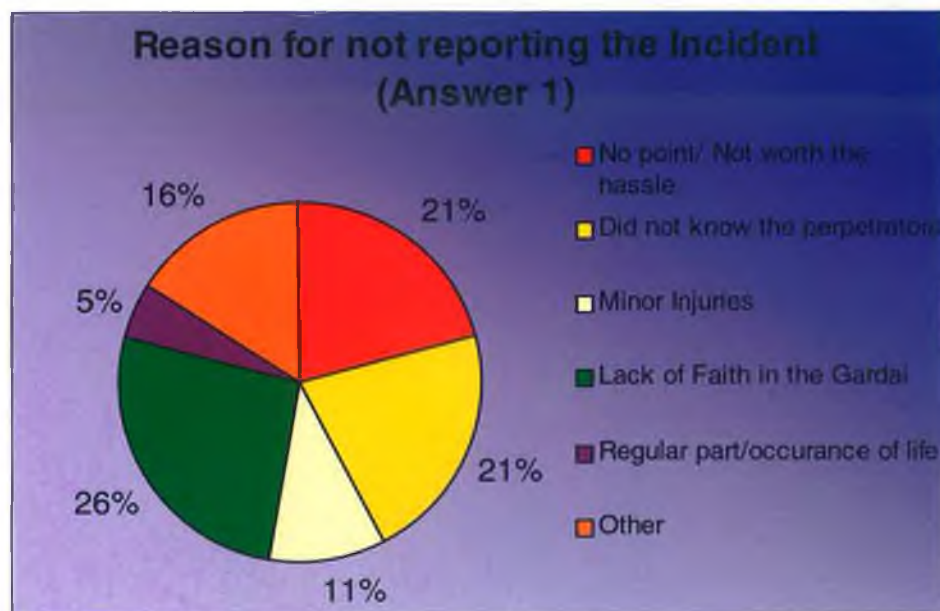
As can been seen from the results of my study, the victims of assault deal with the attack in a number of different ways. Of the 28 respondents who were assaulted, only 9 (**32%**) of the respondents reported the incidence to the Gardai, while 19 (**68%**) of the respondents declined from reporting the incident (*see appendix, Fig 14a*). The

respondents didn't report the assault for a number of different reasons. Illustration 6 shows the variety of reasons given by respondents. The most popular reason respondents gave for not reporting the assault, as given by 5 (**26%**) of the 19 respondents was that, they had a 'lack of faith in the Gardai', because they believed the Gardai would do nothing about it. 4 (**21%**) respondents believed there was 'No point /not worth the hassle' in reporting the assault and an equal number of respondents (**21%**) didn't report the assault to the Gardai as they didn't know the perpetrators. The rest of the reasons respondents gave for not reporting the assault were, 2 respondents believed the injuries weren't serious, 1 respondent felt assaults were a 'regular occurrence/part of life' and 3 respondents gave other reasons. 2 respondents gave second answers, with 1 respondent not reporting the assault, as he had a 'lack of faith in the Gardai' and another respondent accepted assaults as a 'regular occurrence/part of life' (*see appendix, Fig 14d(ii)*).

Illustration 7
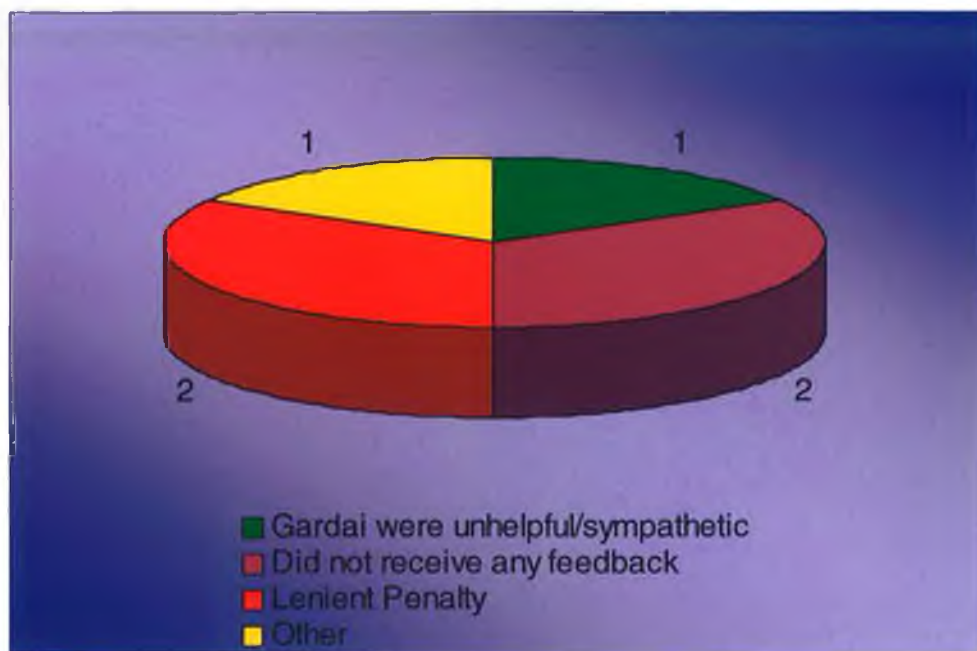
When asked whether they had taken any alternative action, 3 (**16%**) of the respondents said they had taken a number of alternative actions, which included (*see*

appendix, Fig. 14e) 1 respondent trying to find the perpetrator, 1 respondent restrained him and 1 fought back (see appendix, Fig 14f). The other 16 respondents, who hadn't reported the assault didn't take any alternative action either **(84%)** *(see appendix, Fig 14f).* Of the 9 respondents who did report the incident to the Gardai, 3 **(33%)** were satisfied with the outcome of reporting the incident but 6 **(67%)** respondents were unsatisfied with the outcome *(see appendix, Fig 14b).*

Illustration 7 shows the reasons why the respondents were unsatisfied with the outcome of reporting the assault. The most popular reasons given by the respondents were, 2 **(33%)** of the 6 respondents felt the 'Gardai were unhelpful/unsympathetic' towards them, 2 respondents **(33%)** were unsatisfied because they received 'no feedback' (follow up information) on the assault from the Gardai. 1 **(17%)** respondent felt the perpetrator received too lenient a penalty and 1 other. The general trends from the results of my study show that the majority of the respondents **(68%)** did not report their assaults to the Gardai, due to a number of reasons. The main reasons they did not report the incident to the Gardai, were a) because they had little faith in the justice system **(26%)** b) they felt it was not worth the hassle **(21%)**, and C) that they didn't know the perpetrators **(21%)**. Only 3 of the 19 respondents, who didn't report the incident to the Gardai, took alternative action. Of the 9 respondents who did report the incident to the Gardai only 3 were satisfied with the outcome with lack of help/sympathy and feedback from the Gardai, being the main source of grievance for the respondents.

6. Intervention in assaults

One of the most interesting findings of my study is the issue of 'third party' intervention in assaults, or more precisely the general reaction of bystanders to the assault. Of the 28 respondents who were assaulted, 15 **(54%)** respondents stated that someone came to their aid and intervened in the assault; while 13 **(46%)** of the respondents said that no one came to their aid *(see appendix, Fig. 13a)*. Illustration 8 shows the categories of people whom 'intervened/came to the aid' of the respondents during the assault. Of the 15 respondents who had someone come to their aid, 11 **(73%)** of the respondents were friends with the person(s) who intervened, 2 **(13%)** of the respondents received help from a by-passer/stranger, 1 **(14%)** respondent received help from a Garda and 1 **(14%)** received help from a bouncer/security. The intervention of a 'good Samaritan' was very rare and in the majority of cases where someone intervened, it was a friend of the respondent came to their aid during the assault.

Illustration 8

Legend: Friend/Companion — Bypasser/stranger — Garda — Bouncer/Security
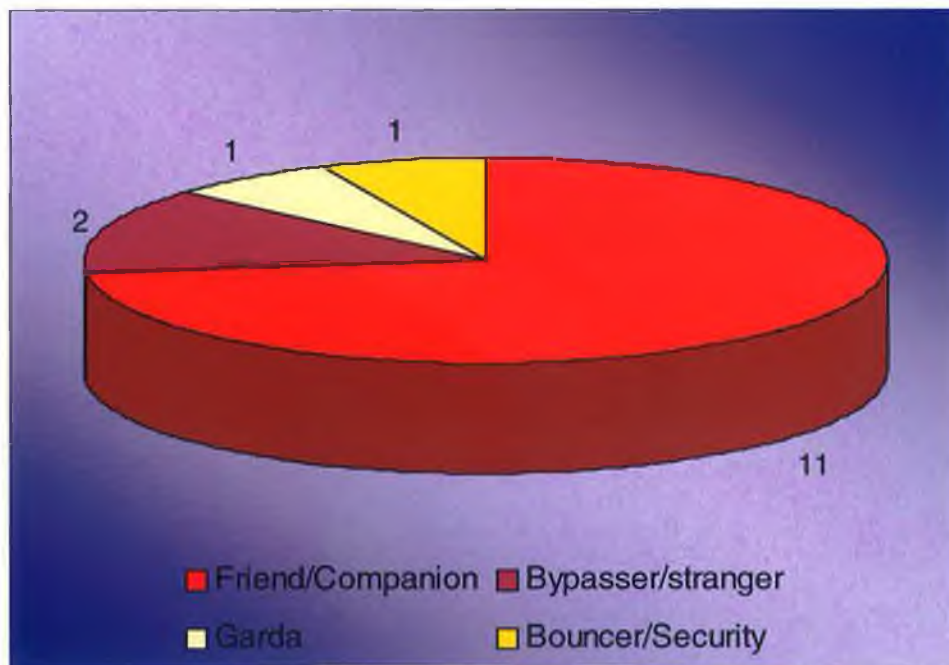
When asked whether they had ever witnessed an assault, 39 (**78%**) of the 50 respondents said they had witnessed one, while 11 (**22%**) of the respondents said they had never witnessed an assault (*see appendix, Fig. 17a*). Of the 39 respondents who had witnessed an assault, 19 (**49%**) of the respondents said they attempted to intervene while 20 (**51%**) of the respondents did not get involved in the incident (*see appendix, Fig. 17b*).

Illustration 9
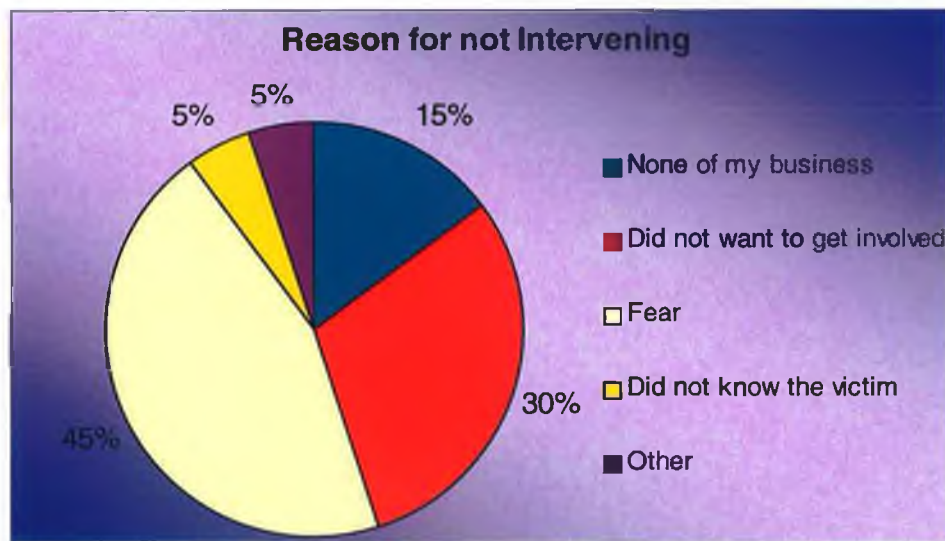
As shown by illustration 9 the foremost reason the respondents gave for not intervening in the assault was 'Fear' of being attacked, which was stated as a reason by 9 (**45%**) of the 20 respondents who did not intervene. 6 (**30%**) of the 20 respondents 'Didn't want to get involved' and 3 (**15%**) of the respondents felt it was 'none of their business'. 1 (**5%**) respondent didn't intervene because he didn't know the victim and 1 respondent had another reason. Of the 19 respondents who did intervene, 6 (**32%**) respondents 'tried to stop it', 5 (**26%**) respondents 'called the Gardai/emergency services'. 4 (**21%**) became 'physically involved', 3 (**16%**) respondents scared them off and 1 respondent had another form of intervention (*see appendix, Fig 17c*). Fear of being attacked (**45%**) was the single utmost reason why most respondents didn't intervene in an assault, but many of the respondents didn't

get involved because they felt it had nothing personally (**50%**) to do with them. In the instances where some one intervened in an assault as I discussed above, in general they tended to be friends of the victim, and a personal interest seems to be a major reason in the increasingly impersonal Modern Ireland, for someone to intervene in an incident of assault.

7 *Effect of alcohol consumption on the incidences of assault*

As I have discussed in 'the circumstances under which assaults take place', there seems to be a strong relationship between assaults on young men and the nighttime socialising at pubs and discos. This belief was strengthened by the results shown in illustration 10. Of the 28 respondents who were assaulted, 20 (**71%**) of the respondents, from their contact with the attacker(s), believed that the perpetrator was under the influence of a stimulant. 6 (**21%**) respondents did not think the perpetrator(s) was under the influence of a stimulant and 2 (**8%**) of the respondents weren't certain either way (*see appendix, Fig 9a*).

Illustration 10
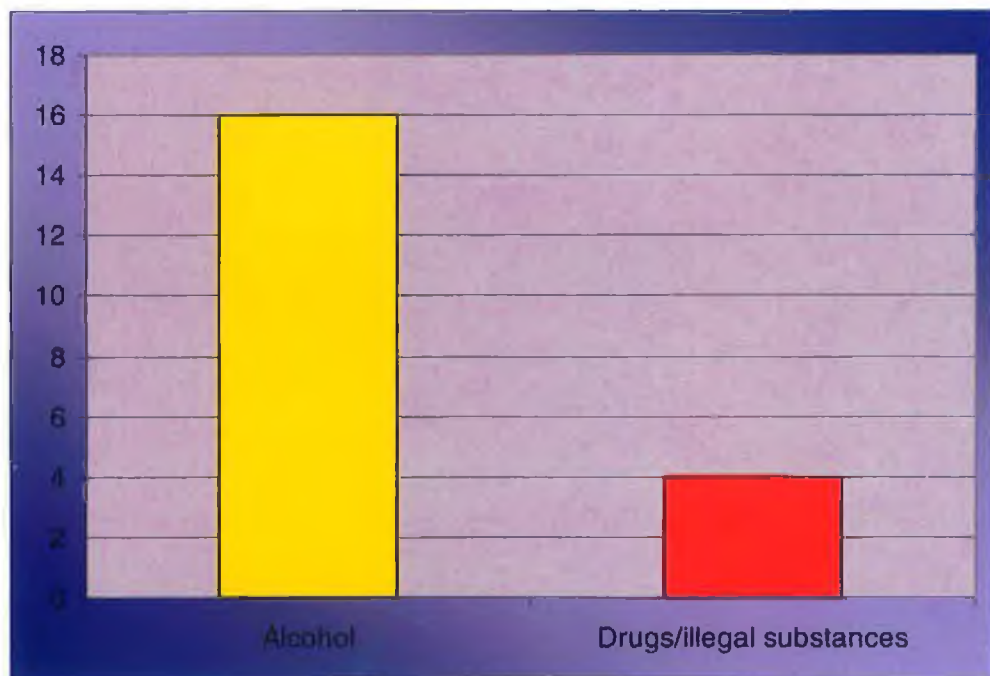
Illustration 10 shows the stimulants, which the respondents believed the perpetrators were under the influence of, at the time of the assault. 16 **(80%)** of the 20 respondents felt that the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol, and 4 **(20%)** of the respondents felt the perpetrators were under the influence of a 'drug/illegal substance'. Alcohol is shown to be a primary factor in the assaults of 16 **(57%)** of the 28 respondents.

In addition to this, 38 **(76%)** of the 50 respondents believe there has been an increase in the level of alcohol consumption among young people in Ireland, in the last decade. 6 **(12%)** respondents believe there hasn't been an increase and 6 **(12%)** don't know *(see appendix, Fig 18a)*. Of the 38 respondents who believe there has been an increase in alcohol consumption among young people, 23 **(69%)** of them have attributed the increase to 'young people having more money then ever before'. 7 **(18%)** of the respondents believe that 'increased promotion of alcohol towards young people' has caused the rise in alcohol consumption among Irelands youth. 3 **(8%)** of the respondents believes that its 'easier to get access to alcohol in modern Ireland', 2 **(5%)** respondents attribute the rise to 'Irish pub culture/socially acceptable to drink' and the other three respondents gave a number of different reasons *(see appendix, Fig 18b(i))*. Of The 16 respondents who gave a second reason, 5 respondents listed 'Irish pub culture' and 3 deemed 'easier access to drink' as being the main reasons for the rise in alcohol consumption among young people, and the other 8 respondents gave an array of different reasons *(see appendix 18b(i))*.

Illustration 11
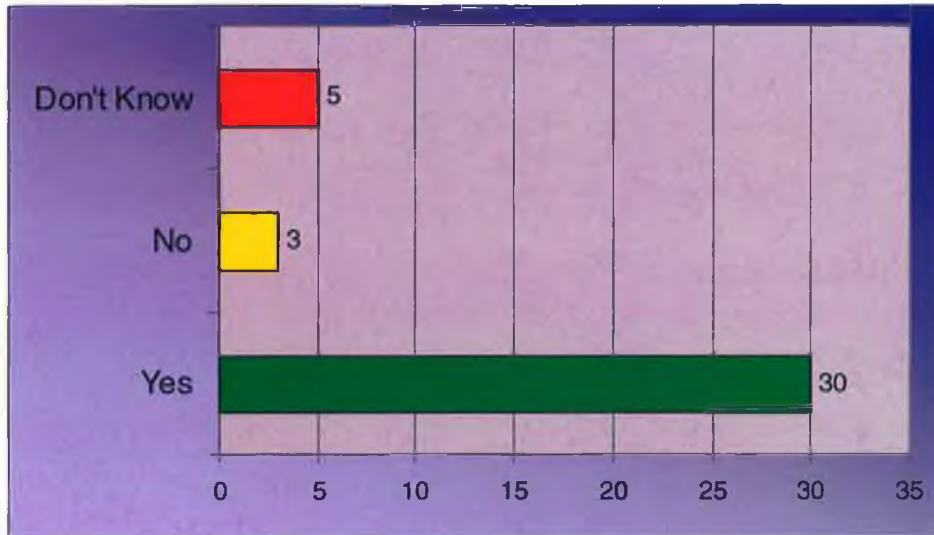
Illustration 11 shows the respondents opinion, on the question of whether there is a relationship between the increase in alcohol consumption and a rise in the number of assaults on young males in Irish society. Of the 38 respondents, who believes there has been a rise in alcohol consumption among young people, 30 (**79%**) of them believe there is a relationship between the two, 3 (**8%**) of the respondents doesn't believe there is a relationship and 5 (**13%**) respondents said they don't know (*see appendix, Fig. 18c(i)*). Unfortunately 20 of the respondents didn't give a reason for their opinion, but of the 10 respondents who did give a reason, why they believed there is a relationship between the two. 4 of the respondents said 'some people get aggressive when drunk', 4 said you 'always see assaults when out at the weekend' and 2 respondents gave other reasons (*see appendix, Fig 18c(ii)*). There is a general consensus among the respondents, that there has been an increase in alcohol consumption among young people in Ireland in the past decade and that this increase has attributed to the rise in the number of assaults in Irish society.

8. Rise in Violence in Ireland

Illustration 12

Has there been an increase in Violence in Irish Society In the Past decade

Illustration 12 shows the respondents opinions, on whether there has been a rise in violence in Irish society in the past decade. The majority, 29 **(58%)** of the respondent's, thinks that there has been an increase in violence, 7 **(14%)** of the respondents don't think there has been a rise in violence and 14 **(28%)** of the respondents, said that they don't know. The 29 respondents, who think there has been a rise in violence, gave an array of reasons for the increase. The most frequent reasons given by these respondents are, 6 **(21%)** of the respondents believes there has been a rise in violence because of 'more reports of violence then ever before', 5 **(17%)** attribute the increase to the 'rise in the consumption of alcohol' and 4 **(14%)** respondents said it's a result of the 'decline in morals/inhibitions in Ireland'. 3 respondents believe drugs are responsible for the rise and 2 respondents deem the 'stress/boredom of modern society' as being responsible. Of the other respondents, there were five missing answers and a number of varied other reasons (*see appendix, 19b*). Of the 7 respondents who don't think there has been a rise in violence in Irish society, 3 of the respondents believe there has always been violence in Irish society,

and the other respondents have given a number of individual answers such as the role of the media and an increased Garda presence which has reduced the risk of violent attacks, plus 1 missing answer (*see appendix, Fig 19c*). The most common reason given by the 14 respondents who don't know if there has been an increase in violence in Irish society is that 'there will always be troublemakers in society' (4 respondents). 2 respondents said that, there are currently 'conflicting reports/lack of comparison with the past'. There are also a number of alternative reasons given for their confusion and there were 5 missing answers.

But despite the majority of respondents (**58%**) believing that violence has increased in Ireland in the past decade, as illustration 13 shows the vast majority of respondents still feel safe living in modern Ireland. 35 (**70%**) of the respondents said they feel safe living in Ireland, 8 (**16%**) stated they don't feel safe and 7 (**14%**) respondents, said they don't know if its safe. The four most popular reasons given by the respondents who feel safe living in Ireland are, a) 9 (**25%**) respondents said they use 'vigilance/avoid situations that may arise, b) 7 (**20%**) respondents said they 'don't feel at risk at all', c) 5 (**14%**) respondents said 'Ireland is safer than other countries' and d) 4 (**11%**) respondents said it 'depends on where/when you are in a place' (other/missing-29%) (*see appendix, Fig. 20b*). Of the 8 respondents who don't feel safe, the three most popular reasons given by them are a) 3 respondents said they 'have to be vigilant when socialising', b) 2 respondents said they feel unsafe at night and c) 2 respondents said they were uncertain because they never know when they could be a victim and 1 other (*see appendix, Fig. 20c*). Of the 7 respondents who don't know if it's safe living in Ireland, 3 said they have 'to be vigilant when out socialising', 2 respondents said they 'don't feel safe at night' and the other 2

respondents stated 'uncertainty/never know when could be a victim' (*see appendix,*
Fig. 20d). Despite most of the respondents believing there has been a rise in violence
in Ireland in the past decade, the vast majority of respondents still feel safe living in
Ireland. I will discuss this and the rest of the results of my research in terms of my
overall study, in the chapter 7.

Illustration 13

Do you feel safe in Ireland

Chapter 6

Definition of Concepts or Terms

Indictable Offence: "An offence, which the accused is entitled as of right to a trial by a jury. An accused charged with an indictable offence before the district court must be sent forward to the trial court where the prosecutor consents and where the accused has been served with the book of evidence, unless the case is being summarily, or the accused is unfit to plead" (*Criminal Procedure Act 1967 S.4A inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1999 S.9*).

Summary Offence: "An offence heard by the District Court, without a jury and for which the maximum punishment is generally six months imprisonment and/or a fine. An accused is not entitled to trial by jury in such cases either because the offence is minor or because the accused has waived his right to a jury trial, which he can do in certain cases" (*Legal and Policing, Garda Training College, Templemore, Co. Tipperary*).

Chapter 7

Discussion

Introduction

In this section I will discuss the findings of my study on the extent and nature of assaults in the lives of 50 male Sociology students, at N.U.I Maynooth, in relation to my overall hypothesis and sub problems of my thesis. Through the use of contemporary National and International studies and an array of sources of literature, I aim to interpret some of the main data, which I presented and analysed in Chapter5 and to highlight the most significant trends which I discovered from my analysis. I will discuss my findings under the headings of: 1) The Extent of assaults in the lives of respondents; 2) The Circumstances under which assaults took place; 3) The General characteristics of the perpetrators; 4) The effect of the assault on the victim; 5) The reporting and nonreporting of assaults; 6) Intervention in assaults; 7) Rise of violence in Ireland.

1. The Extent of assaults in the lives of respondents

When I decided to undertake a study of assaults on young men in Irish society, I selected a random sample of 50 male sociology students under the age of 25, to carry out my research on. I selected this sample because firstly, being fellow Sociology students I hoped they would be more honest in their answers, but most essentially, I believed it would give me a cross sectional representation of the experiences of assault from a variety of young males perspectives. I came to this conclusion, as a result of reading Nuala Haugheys article on Dr. Dorothy Watson's report on the 'Profiles of victims of recorded crime', in which Dr. Watson concluded

that the *"typical victim of an assault is a young man, probably aged twenty or younger"* (N. Haughey, 2000), and the pilot interviews I carried out on my friends, also reinforced my belief in Dr. Watson's hypothesis. In my opinion, I believe my results prove this. As can be seem from Figure 3a *(see appendix, Fig 3a)*, 56% of the respondents had been assaulted on at least one occasion. And of these 28 respondents 14 had been assaulted more then once *(see appendix, Fig. 4a)*, with the majority (**57%**) of these 14 respondents being assaulted twice in their lives *(see appendix, Fig. 4b)*. In addition to this, Figure 15 shows that 34 (**68%**) of the respondents had a male family member or a friend, who had been the victim of an assault, with 21 of the respondents having one male family member or a friend who was a victim and 13 respondents having 2 or more *(see appendix, Fig 15b)*.

Most studies have shown that women and the elderly tend to be most fearful of crime (F. Heidensohn, 1989: 171), but it's men who are most at risk of being a victim of crime, and especially assaults. The Garda Annual Crime figures for indictable assaults which had proceedings taken against the perpetrator by the state, has continually reiterated this viewpoint with males accounting for (**82%**) of the 353 victims in 1999 (The Garda Annual Review, 1999). Dr. Dorothy Watson's findings reiterated this point, highlighting that *"victims are not necessarily society's most vulnerable…3/5 of the victims of recorded crime were male, as were four out of the five victims of assault"* (N. Haughey, 2000). Men are more at risk then women, of being a victim of assault, and young males are most at risk of all men, I will discuss the reasons for this over the course of this chapter. In conclusion, assaults have had a considerable effect on the lives of most of the respondents, with 56% of respondents

being affected personally and 68% of respondents having some indirect experience of assaults.

2. The Circumstances under which assaults took place

There is a significant relationship between the socialising patterns of young men and the circumstances under which assaults take place. The circumstances, i.e. location, area and time, in which the respondents were assaulted, have shown similarities with previous studies carried out by the B.C.S and Dr. Dorothy Watson on the victims of crime. Figure 5a (*see appendix*) illustrates the locations where the respondents were assaulted. The majority of the 28 respondents who were assaulted, were attacked on a street (10 respondents). 8 of the respondents were assaulted in the vicinity of a pub/nightclub, 4 respondents were assaulted at a petrol station/shop, three respondents were attacked in a park/sportsground and the rest were assaulted in individual places. There was only one instance of assault in a private dwelling, with one of the respondents being assaulted in a house. The rest (**96%**) of the respondents were assaulted in the vicinity of pubs/nightclubs and public places of various natures. These findings are conclusive with the findings of Dr. Watson, whose results revealed *"most incidences of assault occurred in public places or in the vicinity of pubs and nightclubs"* (N. Haughey, 2000).

Figure 5b (*see appendix*) revealed that most of the respondents were assaulted in an urban environment, with 21 respondents being assaulted in an urban area and 7 respondents being assaulted in a rural area. But because I took a random sample, it's impossible to tell how representative these findings are for the general breakdown of assaults in urban and rural areas. Despite this, the results do reveal, like Dr. Watson's

report on victims of crime, that assaults and *"crime tend to be concentrated in urban areas, particularly in the Dublin region"* (N. Haughey, 2000). In recent years because of a number of factors, such as increased alcohol consumption among young people and the side effects of the Celtic Tiger, in the opinion of Eamonn Waters of the N.Y.C, *"this type of violence is becoming increasingly common, not only in Dublin but across the country"* (K. Bielenberg, 2000). Assaults are no longer isolated to Dublin. Every weekend in Ireland, towns across the country turn into anarchy's, as young men and women go on the rampage and it's seldom in any of the urban dwellings, such as Thurles or Kilkenny, that there isn't a fight at the local disco or chip shop. The majority of assaults take place at night time. As Figure 6 shows, 65% of respondents were assaulted between 10pm and 4am, and another 14% were assaulted between 6pm and 10pm. While I haven't definite days for the assaults, it can be inferred from the time and general location of the attacks that most attacks occurred on a weekend night, which has now become Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday since the introduction of the new pub opening hours. Similar to the British Crime Survey findings the *"weekends are the worst. Drinkers spill out of bars at closing time on Friday and Saturday evenings and take their bravado on the streets"* (www.bbc.co.uk).

There is a significant relationship between the socialising pattern of young people, which in recent years has become increasingly centred around the pub and the risk of being a victim of assault. As Smith (1986) states *"different lifestyles: the characteristic ways in which individuals allocate their time to leisure activities, are differently related to the probability of being in (or leaving accessible) particular places at particular time, and coming into contact with (or leaving an attractive*

opportunity for) other, who are potential criminals" (S.J. Smith, 1986: 90). Of the 28 respondents who were assaulted, 71% (20 respondents) of them believe their attacker was under the influence of a stimulant (*see appendix, Fig. 9a*), with 16 of these 20 respondents believing that the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol and 4 respondents believing their attacker were under the influence of a 'drug/illegal substance' at the time of the assault (*see appendix, Fig. 9b*). This shows in addition to the general circumstances under which assaults take place, being related to young men's socialising habits, that alcohol is a primary factor in the assaults of 16 of the 28 respondents. More frequent socialising in a drinking environment, where most people are generally under the influence of alcohol and many likely to be intoxicated, brings a young man into contact with potential attackers or opponents. Especially after a pub or nightclub closes, when large groups of possibly agitated drunk youths congregate outside 'chippers' and shops, and altercations often start for no reason. While most arguments involve minor scuffles or skirmishes at the most, sometimes they can end up with someone being seriously hurt as in the case of P.J Delaney or even worse, fatalities as with Brian Murphy. Most respondents, as the results have shown, have been assaulted once or twice and while pub culture lifestyles are conducive to assaults, it doesn't seem to affect its popularity among young Irish males

3. The General characteristics of the perpetrators

The perpetrators of assault, who are responsible for the rise of assaults in Ireland, have a number of general characteristics. Figure 7a shows the number of perpetrators who assaulted the respondents. A single perpetrator was responsible for 11 of the 28 respondents assaults, 6 of the attacks were carried out by two

perpetrators, 5 respondents were assaulted by three perpetrators but most interestingly 6 of respondents were assaulted by four perpetrators or more. There was a high incidence of mob or gang attacks on the respondents with 3 or more perpetrators involved in 40% of respondents assaults. In addition to this, as Figure 7b shows all the known perpetrators of the assaults on the respondents were male (**98%**) and 78% of the perpetrators were under the age of 22 years (*see appendix, Fig. 7c*). Figure 8 illustrates the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, 25 of the 28 respondents did not know their attacker.

This information infers that a single perpetrator or group of attackers who were male caused the majority of these assaults, and they tended to be in their early twenties and most of the attackers were strangers to the victim, which infers that many of these attacks were random acts of violence. As Garda Commissioner Pat Byrne stated in the 1998 'National Crime Forum Report', "*the teenage years are the peek period for offending*" (P. Byrne, 1998: 85). Similar to my findings the majority of the perpetrators of assault were in their late teens or early twenties. But as Kim Bielenberg states that "*many of these assaults seem to involve groups of men and women carrying out acts of violence as Eamonn waters puts it 'just for the hell of it as a form of entertainment*" (K. Bielenberg, 2000). While there is a high instance of mob related assaults reported by the respondents, all the respondents said men assaulted them. There was no mention of a female attacker even among the gang assaults, but the stigma of weakness, which is still attached to being assaulted by women, could be a reason why the respondents didn't admit to being assaulted by a female attacker. Alternatively these respondents might never have had, any interaction with a violent female attacker.

The increased informality of modern Ireland, as a result urbanisation and the booming economy, could explain the high instance of assaults on the respondents by strangers. As Fintan O'Toole highlighted in his article Macho Thugs in Losers' war with winning wimps, the reason unprovoked attacks *"are becoming more common is that the attackers have good reason to believe they will get away with it. They have in the far less intimate Ireland Today, a much better chance of being anonymous"* (F. O'Toole, 2001). The recent B.C.S found that violence by a stranger had jumped by 29% in Britain, which would include rape and other categories of personal attacks such as assault etc. While I believe there has been an increase in random attacks by strangers in urban centres, in rural areas people still generally know each other and the extremely high percentage of attacks by strangers is not representative of all assaults on young males. There are many motivating reasons which impel the perpetrator to attack a victim, such as increased stress and frustration in modern society as well as a decline in restraints. But in recent years an increased number of assaults are being carried out by young males or group of youths with a likelihood of being under the influence of alcohol, who tend predominantly to be male, with increased reports of women being involved in these assaults, where the perpetrators carry out a random attack on mostly male victims for no apparent reason, but as a form of entertainment and these assaults have been the basis of much media and public attention at the current time.

4. The effect of the assault on the victim

While its widely acknowledged that crimes have an effect on the victim, when it comes to a male victim society still has conflicting attitudes on this, especially when

it comes to assaults or violence, Fintan O'Toole states, *"there is a still a general assumption that a big young fellow should be able to take care of himself and that, if he gets a few digs, its at least partly his own fault"* (F. O'Toole, 2000). The general assumption is that a victim is someone who is vulnerable, such as an old person or child but a 'big young fellow' is regarded as being adequately able to mind himself and as a result receives little sympathy from people. It's with this premise in mind that I analysed the effects and consequences, which an assault has on a young male victim. By examining a number of effects such as the victim's immediate reaction, emotional reaction, long term effects and behavioural effects, I discovered a general trend. The respondents had two general immediate reactions to the assault, as is shown in Figure 10 (*see appendix*). 54% of respondents acted passively, by attempting to diffuse the situation or walk away, but 32% of respondents fought back when attacked. Over half the respondents tried to diffuse the situation or walked away, which are very characteristic of the type of victims which random perpetrators usually attack. This is a generally a quiet lad who is not roaring his head off or causing rows and who they generally expect will walk away. While 32% of respondents fought back when provoked.

The two most common emotional reactions, which were experienced by the respondents, were anger which was experienced by 14 (**50%**) respondents and shock, which was experienced by 11 (**39%**) respondents (*see appendix Fig 11a*). Only 7 of the 28 respondents admitted that the assault had left long term physical and/or emotional effects on them. With the most common after effect reported by 4 of the respondents as being more 'fearful when they go out as night' and 2 of the respondents said they were 'more fearful of crowds' (*see appendix, Fig. 12a(i)*). Of

the 7 respondents who reported a lasting effect from the attack, fear of some nature was the most common emotional consequence of the assault, while most respondents reported no lasting effects. These findings are similar to findings by 'Victim Support Ireland' who have found that victims suffer Emotional, Physical and Psychological reaction as a result of Crime. The Crime Impact Survey conducted by Victim Support Ireland in 1998/1999 revealed that Fear is a major effect of victimisation, with *"73.7% of victims said they feel 'very' or 'a little' unsafe walking alone after dark"* (www.victimsupport.ie). Fear seems to be experienced, by women more than men, but they stated, *"although fear, worry and general emotional effects tend to be reported more by female victims, male victims tend to report their effects behaviourally"* (www.victimsupport.ie). The study found that *"96% of respondents noted at least one change that they had made to their previous lifestyle as a result of victimisation"* (www.victimsupport.ie).

As Figure 12b(i) (*see appendix*) shows, 14 of the 28 respondents reported that they had changed their behaviour as a result of the assault. The most common behavioural change as reported by 9 of the 14 respondents, is that they are now 'more careful/ vigilant' when out, with the rest of the respondents revealing other behavioural changes, such as 'not going out as much anymore' and 'more aggressive' (*See appendix, Fig. 12b(ii)*). So despite most respondents (**75%**) stating that, they had suffered no long-term effects from the assault, 50% of them have changed their behaviour as result of the assault, with most of these, saying they are now more careful/vigilant. Similar to the findings of the 'Crime Impact Survey', I believe my study reinforces their beliefs, which have challenged *"traditional views that females are more adversely affected by crime than men"* (www.victimsupport.ie).

5. The reporting and nonreporting of assaults

As the 2000 British Crime Survey and 'The 1998 Quarterly National Household survey on Crime and Victimisation', by the CSO have shown there is a significant difference between the recorded and unrecorded figure of assaults in Ireland. The 1998 CSO report recorded 17,200 instances of assault for the previous 12 months. Where as *"the 1998 Garda report records a total of 8,793 instances of assault"* (J. Cusack, 1999). While blame can be laid at the way the Gardai detect, prosecute and categorise offences, one of the main reasons for the discrepancy between the figures is the seemingly wide scale nonreporting of assaults by victims. Figure 14a illustrates that only 32% (9 respondents) of the 28 respondents who were assaulted, reported the incident to the Gardai. The other 19 respondents didn't report the incident because of a variety of reasons. The most common reasons they gave for not reporting the incident were a) 5 of the respondents had 'little faith in the Gardai', b) 4 respondents felt it was not worth the hassle and c) 3 of the respondents didn't report the incidents because they didn't know the perpetrator. Lack of Faith in the Gardai and a general belief that nothing will be done or the perpetrator won't be caught, seem to be significant factors amongst young males in not reporting the assaults to the Gardai. Of the 19 respondents who did not report the incident to the Gardai, only 3 took alternative action *(see appendix, Fig. 14e)*. Because the victims, by and large did not know their attackers, it seems this had an effect on their actions, with most of the respondents just accepting the assault and getting on with their lives.

The 9 respondents who did report the incident were generally unsatisfied with the outcome. Only 3 of the 9 respondents were satisfied with it's outcome *(see appendix, Fig. 14b)*, the other 6 respondents were unsatisfied for a number of reasons,

their main sources of grievance for the respondents were finding the 'Gardai unhelpful/unsympathetic', 'lack of follow up information' and 'too lenient a penalty' (*see appendix, Fig. 14c*). Gardai sources have admitted that the actions of one Garda can damage the good work of 10 Gardai, if a victim goes to the station to report an assault and he leaves thinking that he wasn't taken seriously or sympathetically, he will tell his family and friends and this has a major effect on the Gardai's image especially amongst young people. For instance, on www.amen.ie, a site for battered husbands, there was a report of a male victim of domestic violence, going to the Garda station to report the incident, being told to "*go home and sort her out myself*" (www.amen.ie). These reports have an extremely negative impact on the Gardai's image.

The increased impersonality and anonymity of urban areas also effects people's tendency to report assaults. In addition to this many assaults occur, between people who know each other and within circles of families and friends, in these environments the Gardai have little power to do anything, unless they see the incident happen and even then the victim must consent to the prosecution. What needs to be done is to implement a national crime survey, as is the case in Britain, so as to discover the true extent of nonreporting of assaults and crime in general. As well as to discover the definitive reasons why many victims are not reporting their assaults, which would allow the Irish government and the Gardai to deal with the main social problems such as fear, which are associated with crime.

6. Intervention in Assaults

The increased impersonalisation of modern society, which Fintan O'Toole states is as a result of the rapid urbanisation and growth in Modern Ireland, has an effect on the general public's reaction to assaults and their willingness to intervene and come to the aid of a victim. Figure 13a shows, whether somebody came to the aid of the respondents during their assault, in 15 of the 28 cases somebody intervened in the assault. Of those who intervened, 11 of the respondents were friends with the person who came to their aid and the other 'helpers' included 2 bypassers, 1 garda, I bouncer/security (*see appendix, Fig. 13b*). The majority of the bystanders who intervened, had a personal relationship to the victim and this seems to be a major reason, in prompting a member of the general public to intervene. In addition to this, of the 39 respondents who had witnessed an assault, less than half of them (**49%**) intervened (*see appendix, Fig. 17a*). With 'Fear of being attacked' (8 respondents) and feeling 'it was none of their business' (9 respondents) being the major reasons for the respondents not getting involved in the assault (*see appendix, Fig. 17b*). The fear seems to come from the escalation in the violence of assaults, with an increased number of perpetrators carrying weapons such as syringes, knives and other instruments. This fear and the belief that it has nothing personally to do with the respondents has a significant effect on whether somebody will intervene.

The 'Good Samaritan' seems to be few and far between in Modern Ireland, while in the past people were more likely to help a stranger out, now in urban centres people will often turn away. A recent article in 'The Star' by Michael Doyle, No Help as Woman is Forced to take Cash from Bank describes how in Dublin City on July 25th 2000, Barbara Bullman was robbed by two heroin addicts. But when they found

she had no money, they brought her to ATM where Michael Doyle says, *"there was three people queuing at the machine but when Ms Bullman sought their assistance they ignored her"* (M. Doyle, 2001) Ms. Bullman was forced to take out the money while others just stood their and ignored her pleas. As the results of my study and the example of Barbara Bullman's ordeal show, many people have moved away from the friendliness and hospitality, which Ireland was traditionally renowned for, and it now seems Irish people are less likely to help out someone in need, unless they know them personally.

7. The rise of violence in Irish society

There is a major contrast between the majority of respondent's opinions on whether there has been a rise in violence in Irish society in the past decade, and whether they feel safe living in Ireland. 58% of the respondents believe that there has been a rise in violence in Irish society, 14% of respondents did not think that there has been a rise in violence and 28% weren't sure *(see appendix 2, Fig. 19a)*. The two most popular reasons respondents gave for the rise in violence in Irish society, were a) more reports of violence then ever before and b) rise in alcohol consumption *(see appendix 2, Fig. 19b)*. The respondents interpreted Q. 19 part 2, in different ways. There was ambiguity amongst respondents on the question, as some gave a reason why they believed violence had increased and others gave the reasons for this increase. Despite this confusion, the majority of respondents believed violence had increased in Ireland in the past decade.

The media have been singled out by many commentators for exaggerating the crime situation in Irish society, and increasing public fears. As Paul O'Mahony states, *"The fear mongering tone and selective emphasis of the media on crime issues, is undoubtedly influential"* (P. O'Mahony, 2000: 24), in raising public fears about crime in Ireland. The media has progressively concentrated on crime in the last number of decades, as crime has increased, but rather then reporting all crimes it tends to concentrate on the most sensationalised stories and undoubtedly murder and serious crimes attract the publics attention. While the media can stand accused of exaggerating the risk of serious crimes such as rape and murder, in contrast it has been very influential, in heightening public awareness of assaults on young men. Up until recently this was a social problem, which was largely ignored in Ireland, seemingly in the hope that it might go away, but the media and a number of commentators in particular such as Kim Bielenberg and Fintan O'Toole have highlighted the issue in the public domain. My biggest criticism of the media is that it will concentrate on a victim such as P.J Delaney (Kilkenny Hurler), while largely forgetting about the less prominent, less known victims; who often suffer injuries equally as horrific. The majority of victims of assault are only used by the media as statistics, but despite this the media has undoubtedly raised the profile of the deteriorating social problem.

In agreeing with, Fintan O'Toole the media have been accused of exaggerating the situation, but as he states *"skepticism goes only so far. In relation to attacks on young men, indeed, it may well be that the reality has been more underplayed than hyped"* (F.O'Toole, 2000). As the figures from the recent crime victimisation study in 1998 and from Dublin's casualty units in 2000, have shown there is a high level of

nonreporting of assaults by young men, and the problem is categorically more extensive then Garda recorded crime figures suggest. Because the media concentrates on high profile victims and more sensationalised cases, the majority of 'technical' assaults are ignored; this leaves an invisible level of assaults, which goes unnoticed by the Gardai and the media.

While it is impossible to tell whether violence is increasing in Irish society without a conclusive crime victimisation study, my research has shown that the majority of respondents think violence has increased. I have shown previously (Literature Review, Crime in Irish Society) that while women and the elderly are most fearful of crime, it is young males who are most at risk of assault. Despite the majority of respondents believing violence has increased, 70% of respondents still feel safe living in Ireland and only 16% felt unsafe living in modern Ireland with 14% unsure. This is conclusive with recent studies which show that the majority of men are generally unhindered by the fear of assaults and crime in general. Despite being most at risk, the recent rise in assaults does not seem to have made them more fearful in society, as can be seen from my research and the growing popularity of pub culture and drinking among Irelands male youth.

Conclusion

My study on the extent and nature of assaults in the lives of 50 male Sociology students has produced a number of interesting findings. The extent of assaults have shown that the majority of respondents have had some experience of assaults in their lives, with 28 respondents being affected personally and 34 respondents having some indirect experience of assaults, as a result of an attack on a male family member or friend. The circumstances under which assaults take place are strongly linked to the socialising habits and lifestyles of the respondents. With most victims being assaulted in a public place or in the vicinity of a pub/nightclub, in an urban area between the hours of 10pm and 4am. Alcohol is a major factor in their assaults with 16 of the 28 respondents, believing their attacker was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the assault. The assaults seem to occur in and around the closing time of pubs and discos, when large groups of youths hang around outside after and this often leads to conflict. The general characteristics of the perpetrators of assaults, were that they tended to be young males in their late teens or early twenties, there was a high incidence of mob related assaults, with 17 of the 28 respondents being attacked by two perpetrators or more. The vast majority of perpetrators were unknown to the respondents and as the circumstances of assault have shown, most of them were under the influence of a stimulant at the time.

The respondents seemed to be effected behaviourally rather then emotionally as a result of the assault. Only seven of the respondents said they had suffered emotional effects, with fear of various natures being the major effect. But half (14) of the respondents admitted that they had changed their behaviour following the assault, with increased vigilance being the most common behavioural change among the

respondents, which is consistent with the findings of the 1998/1999, 'Crime Impact Survey' conducted by Victim Support Ireland. The respondents tended not to report their assaults to the Gardai, with most respondents seeming to accept it either because they had little faith in the Gardai or that they felt it was not 'worth the hassle', and many didn't report their assault because they didn't know their attacker. For those who did report the assault, 6 of the 9 respondents were unsatisfied with its outcome, with lack of help/sympathy and follow-up information on the case from the Gardai, being the respondents main sources of grievances.

In an increasingly impersonal modern Ireland, people seem largely unwilling to get involved and help out victims of assaults or crimes unless they know them personally, and this finding was similar to those, which came from the experiences of the respondents. While the majority (**58%**) of respondents believed violence has increased in society, 70% of the respondents still felt safe living in Ireland. This indicates that they the majority of the respondents were generally unhindered by the fear of assaults and crime in general. While my findings are generally consistent with the current hypotheses and assumptions from the main writers and theorists on assaults and crime on young men, however from my research I concluded that there was a marked absence of involvement by female perpetrators in the assaults. Young women have also increasingly been caught up in the socialising and binge drinking, which has become commonplace among Irelands youth and there has been increased reports of female involvement in the rise in assaults and fights, in Irelands towns and cities. Judge Michael Connellan's comments in a recent case, where a young man was being prosecuted for hitting a woman who had attacked him first, brought this issue into the public arena. Judge Connellan stated, "*It seems to me that women are getting*

drunk and acting like alley cats. Then they are fighting like savages…I can't say I

blame the man for hitting her" (Fahy and Fitzgerald, 2001). The Judge highlighted a

public taboo that women were increasingly getting drunk and fighting in the same

ways men have done. This led to public outrage from Women's groups who said he

was condoning male violence against women. Its my view that while not totally

agreeing with his reasoning, it seems to have highlighted the crux of the problem,

which is that women are also involved in the new rise in the public disorder and

assaults in Irelands towns and cities. But like my findings, their involvement remains

an invisible phenomenon in Irish society. While this study is not large enough for my

results and conclusions to be totally representative for all male victims of assaults, it

has highlighted a number of trends which help to enlighten an area which up until

recently had been the subject of very little media or sociological attention in Ireland.

Chapter **8**

Summary

All is not well in the land of the 'Celtic Tiger'. In the absence of a national crime and victimization study, it is impossible to establish conclusively if Irish society is becoming more violent, but what is certain is that assaults and random attacks on young men are on the increase. While Dublin accounts for the majority of these attacks, assaults are no longer isolated to the city and they have become increasingly common in towns and urban centres across the country. 'The West Meath Examiner', in an Editorial on the week of the 2nd October 2000, labeled the streets of its main towns and urban centres, "Where the streets have no shame", in response to the rise in street violence and public order offences in the county and cross the country. We are becoming increasingly like our neighbours Britain, who also have a serious problem of assaults and alcohol related violence. While we may not have got to their level of hooliganism yet, this summer has seen a rise in incidents of violence at G.A.A matches and Dublin saw a running battle between intoxicated Celtic fans and the Gardai following a recent win over Glasgow rangers in a football match which they hadn't even been at, but watched on T.V.

While there has been a visible rise in attacks on young men in Ireland, assaults make up less then 2% of all Garda recorded Crime figures. There are approximately 8,500 assaults in Ireland each year, but as the 1998 Quarterly National Household survey on Crime and Victimisation has shown there is a significant difference between Garda crime figures and the true extent of the problem in Ireland. Jim Cusack highlighted that the "*1998 Garda report records a total of 8,793 instances of assault*" (J. Cusack, 1999), but for the same 12 months between January-December

1997, the 1998 CSO report on crime and victimisation recorded 17,200 instances of assault. The release of Dublin Hospital's 'Casualty-Unit' figures for treatment of assault related injuries in August 2,000, further questioned Garda statistics. What these two publications show, is that the majority of the incidences of assault on young men in Ireland, are not being reported or recorded in Garda Crime figures. The reality of a significant rise in assaults on young men in Ireland; but only a slight increase in Garda assault figures prompted me to undertake a sociological analysis of the rise in assaults on young men in Irish society. This topic in my has been seriously underdeveloped in Sociological and Criminological research, everybody knows its happening but very few analysts have given a definitive reason for the rise in assaults.

Through out my thesis I have examined the factors which I believe have contributed to the rise in assaults on young men in Ireland. In my theoretical framework I discussed the reasons why young men, who are the main perpetrators of assault have become increasingly violent in recent years. There are many motivating factors which impel the perpetrator to attack a victim, such as increased stress and frustration in modern society, as well as a decline in restraints. The social and economic changes as a result of Irelands economic boom has increasingly marginalised a minority of Irelands population who are becoming, increasingly financially and socially 'worse off', while they see symbols of Irelands new found wealth every where. The crass materialism and competitiveness of laddish culture, further marginalizes Irelands youth, who in today's society are made to feel like failures because of their inability to succeed in the 'rat race'. The changing roles of modern man and what is termed as the 'Crisis of Masculinity', has escalated the tension and sense of frustration experienced by these young men. In addition, the

increased impersonalisation of modern Ireland and the declining influence of the Catholic Church and the family, have also had a significant effect on young peoples inhibitions and restraints.

My research and previous studies have shown that the majority of these assaults on young men take place in a public place or in the vicinity of a pub or nightclub, between the hours of 10pm and 4am on a weekend night. Increased alcohol consumption is a primary factor in the rise in assaults, as young people have embraced Ireland's pub culture, they are now drinking more and because of the increased prosperity in Ireland, they now have the finances to go out to pubs and discos more often. Its no coincidence that the majority of these assaults involve young men, who are under the influence of alcohol and that they are increasingly taking place after the closure of pubs and discos, when groups of young males congregate around outside shops and chippers, and its leaving a person at a higher risk of being a victim of assault. These are the factors the main factors which I believe have contributed to the increased the number of assaults on young men in Ireland.

I have also evaluated my hypothesis which is that: *There has been a significant rise in assaults on young men in Irish Society in recent years, but recent studies have shown that the majority of these attacks are not been reported or recorded in the Garda Annual Crime figures.* As my study on male sociology students at N.U.I Maynooth has shown, the majority of respondents did not reporting their assaults for a number of reasons. The most common explanations given by the respondents included a lack of faith in the Gardai/ Criminal Justice system, and a general belief that it was not 'worth the hassle' or that nothing would be done. These

are just some of the many reasons why respondents are not reporting their assaults. Of the cases which are detected by the Gardai, the categorization of an assault as a summary or an indictable offence plays a central role in how society and the Gardai view the problem of assaults. Since most assaults are categorised as summary offences, which are the less serious offences, they are taken less seriously as a problem in society. All the recent studies have shown that the majority of assault victims are not reporting their attacks and the ones that do, as my analysis showed are generally unsatisfied with the outcome of their cases. This leads to increased dissatisfaction with the Gardai among young people, and one person's bad experience with the Gardai has a consequent effect on their family and peers opinions, which can further enhance young people's beliefs that it's not worth the hassle to report the attack.

I have discussed these sub-problems over the course of my thesis, and as a result of my analysis, 1) I believe there is a substantial difference between the reality projected by Garda Crime figure on assault and the true extent of the problem in Irish Society. 2) I believe I have also shown that the majority of male victims of assaults, for a number of reasons which I discussed above, do not report their attacks to the Gardai. 3) While studies, such as Heidensohn's have shown that women and the elderly are most fearful of being a victim of crime, I believe my research has shown that young men are most at risk of being a victim of assault. 4) There has been a rise in assaults on young men from all social classes, who have become increasingly embraced in Ireland's pub culture. The 2000 World Drinking Trends Survey and ESPAD studies have shown that young people are increasingly 'binge' drinking to get drunk and they are going out more frequently to pubs and clubs. When intoxicated

many of these young people can become increasingly frustrated and minor incidents can trigger violent exchanges. While young men are most at risk from these attacks, after the closing of pubs and clubs that has not dampened the popularity of Irelands pub culture among these young males.

In order to make Ireland's streets more safe and safer and particularly at night, the Gardai have increasingly turned to close circuit television (CCTV) and more patrols at night on the streets of Dublin and many of the urban centres. But as in the case of Dublin while the CCTV and increased Garda patrols have reduced assaults and trouble after pubs and nightclubs on O'Connell Street, Inspector Mick O'Connell, highlights *"we are seeing that there are more problems in the outlying areas of the city-particularly outside burger joints and discos"* (K. Bielenberg, 2000). There will always be people looking for trouble and in the absence of a 'big brother' type scenario in Ireland, where everyplace would be monitored; CCTV is only a short-term solution. What's needed is to tackle the current root of the problem, which is excess alcohol consumption among young people. Ireland's youth need to be thought that there is life outside the local pub and disco. The National Alcohol Awareness campaign, by The Minister for Health Michael Martin is a step in the right direction. Everybody, but especially young people need to be thought the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption. But no matter how much resources the government put into campaigns, parents and guardians must take increased responsibility for their siblings drinking habits. As Michael Martin points out we live in a culture where drink is looked upon as being harmless and he believes *"this manifests itself in many parents thinking its fine for teenagers to drink alcohol as long as they don't touch drugs"* (J. Morahan, 2001). Alcohol is currently a bigger problem then drugs ever was, we need

to tackle the problem of underage drinking and parents need to play a more influential role in socialising their kids to the dangers of alcohol abuse and be more responsible for their children's actions. Minister for Justice John O'Donoghue reiterated this fact, in a recent interview with 'The Irish Independent', when he stated the primary onus was on all parents for *"knowing where our children are, who they are with and what they are doing"* (T. Brady, 2001).

As Linda Hill states in her article on alcohol and violence, *"consistent (and well published) enforcement of laws against serving intoxicated people on licensed premises and selling take away liquor to underage people, and of disorderly behaviour near licensed premises can help reduce the incidence of violence"* (L. Hill, 2001). The Gardai and publicans need to take a more prominent and responsible role in tackling underage drinking as well as alcohol related violence. Through the use of existing and new legislation, the Gardai need to tackle this problem head on but unfortunately like British Home Office Minister Charles Clarke, I too believe *"alcohol related crimes is a significant problem in society, a problem which has no single cause and no magic solutions"* (www.bbc.co.uk). But we can't go on burying our heads in the sand and ignoring what's happening, from the home and through the education system this problem needs to be tackled. Victims need to be encouraged to report their assaults to the Gardai, but in the absence of youths wanting to go to the Gardai, Organizations like 'Victim Support' need to be given increased financial and administrative support to help victims of assault. Ireland also needs to implement a crime and victimisation study like the BCS, so as to gain a more realistic understanding of the problem of crime and especially assaults on young men. It is

only through these studies that the Irish Government and the Gardai will be able to fully comprehend the social problem of assaults and successfully deal with it.

So In conclusion, I believe the research and study I carried out has given a clearer understanding of the reasons for the rise in assaults on young men in Irish society. There are no easy solutions to this problem and while there will always be the danger of assaults in society, its only through gaining a clearer understanding of their true nature and extent, as well as closer cooperation between the Gardai, Vintage Federation and Victim Support groups, that we will have any chance of curbing this current escalating trend in Ireland.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

This questionnaire is an integral part of my survey for my M.A. degree in Sociology, in which I am carrying out a study on assaults on young male NUI Maynooth students under the age of 25 years. I would at this stage like to take the opportunity to thank you for taking the time to answer my questionnaire, and to reassure you that any information I receive will be kept totally confidential.

If you would like to be informed of the results of this questionnaire please include your e-mail address in the space provided: _____

1). Please state your age _____

2). In relation to your family status please select the most appropriate category from the following list, and please state your parents/guardians occupation

(i)   **Working class** i.e. a class of people who work for wages, especially manual and industrial workers. ☐

(ii)   **Middle class** i.e. Such professions as business people, professionals, office workers and the skilled workers. ☐

(iii)   **Upper class** i.e. the class of people above the middle class ☐

Fathers Occupation _____   Mothers Occupation _____

3). Have you ever been the victim of an assault?
For the purpose of this survey an assault is simply defined as "a physical attack".

Yes ☐   No ☐   (If answer is No Please go to Question 15)

If yes did the perpetrator have/use a weapon

Yes ☐   No ☐
Please Specify: _____
(Continue with Q.4 to 15(a))

4). Have you been assaulted on more then one occasion?
Yes ☐   No ☐
If yes, Please state how many times _____

5a). Where did the assault take place (e.g. Park, Bar, Street, etc.)
_____

5b). Did the assault take place in a:
(i)   Rural area (i.e. Country Setting) _____
(ii)   Urban area (i.e. City Setting)   _____

6). Approximately what time did the assault in question take place?
_____

7). What was: a) the number of perpetrator(s) _____

               b) the gender of perpetrator(s) _____

               c) the approximate age of perpetrator(s) _____

8). What was your relationship to the perpetrator?

Relative ☐ **Boy/Girlfriend** ☐ **Friend** ☐ **Acquaintance** ☐ **Stranger** ☐

9). From your contact with the perpetrator(s), do you believe that he/she/they were under the influence of a stimulant? (e.g. alcohol, drugs)

Yes ☐   **No** ☐   **Don't know** ☐

If Yes, which stimulant do you believe the perpetrator(s) was under the influence of ? _____

10). What was your immediate reaction to the assault?

Fought back ☐   **Attempted to diffuse the situation** ☐   **Walk away** ☐

If Other Please specify _____

11). What was your emotional reaction to the assault? (e.g. anger, fear shock, etc.)_____
_____

12a). Has the attack had any long-term physical and/or emotional effects on you? (Please specify) _____
_____

12b). Has your behaviour changed as a result of the assault?

Yes ☐   **No** ☐
(Please specify) _____

13). Did anybody intervene/come to your aid during the assault?

Yes ☐   **No** ☐

If Yes Please specify: Friend/companion ☐
                        Bypasser/stranger ☐
                        Garda ☐
                        Bouncer/security ☐
              Other _____

14). Did you report the incident to the Gardai?

Yes ☐   **No** ☐

If Yes:
Were you satisfied with the outcome of reporting the incident to the
Gardai? (please give a reason)

_____

_____

If No:
Why didn't you report the incident to the gardai?

_____

_____

Did you take any alternative action yourself?

_____

_____

15a). Has any male members of your family or friends, been the victim of
an assault?

Yes ☐   **No** ☐
(If the answer is No Please go to Question 17)

If your answer is yes please proceed with Q 15(b) to 17.

15b). If more then one member of your family or friends has been
assaulted, Please specify how many: _____

16). What was his/their relationship to the perpetrator?

Relative ☐ **Boy/Girlfriend** ☐ **Friend** ☐ **Acquaintance** ☐ **Stranger** ☐

17). Have you ever witnessed an assault?

Yes ☐   **No** ☐   (If No Please go to Question 18a)

If Yes please continue

Did you attempt to intervene? (e.g. call for help etc.)

Yes ☐   **No** ☐

If Yes Please specify: _____

If you did not intervene:
Please state why? (e.g. fear etc.)

_____

18a) In your opinion, has there been an increase in the level of alcohol consumption among young people in Ireland in the past decade?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't Know ☐

(If the answer is no/don't know; please go to Q. 19)

If Yes
18b). Why do you believe this has happened?

_____

_____

18c). Do you believe there is a relationship between the increase in alcohol consumption among young people and a rise in the number of assaults on young males in Irish Society? _____

_____

19). Do you think there has been an increase in violence in Irish society in the past decade?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't Know ☐

Please give a reason: _____

_____

20). Do you feel safe living in Irish society at the current time?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Don't Know ☐

Please Give a Reason:_____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire

APPENDIX 2
Presentation of Data

Q1. Age of Respondents

Figure 1
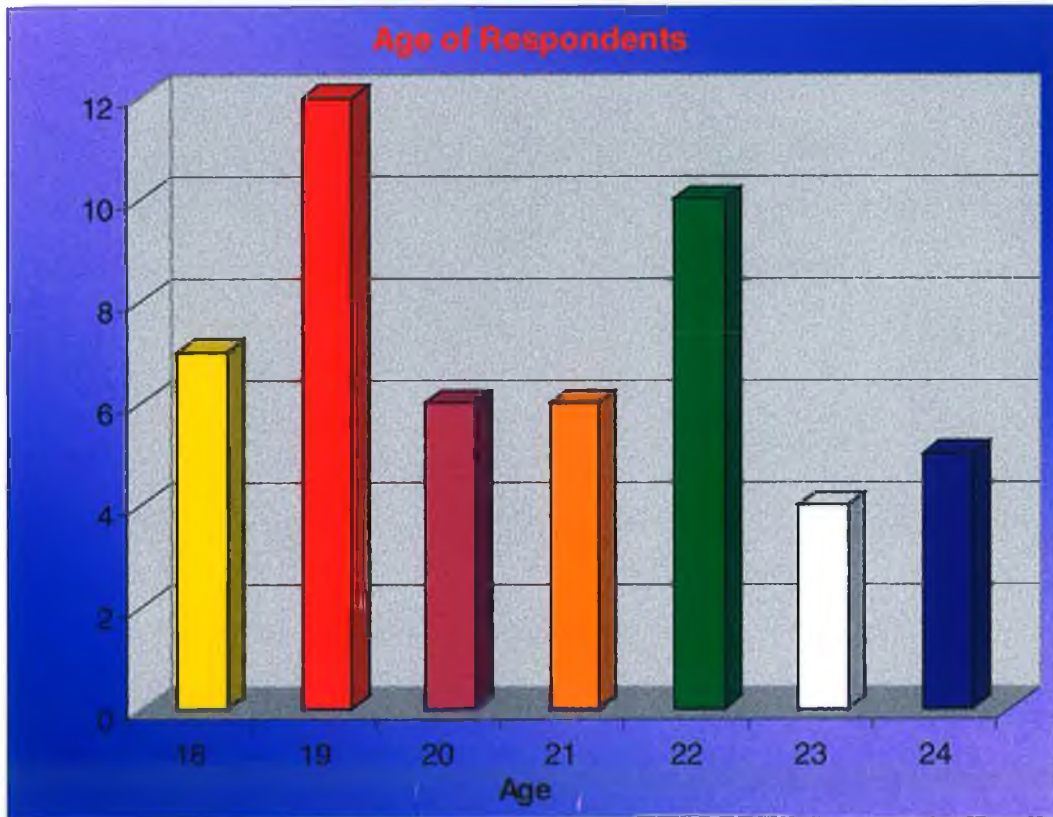
Q2a. Family Status

Figure 2a

Q2b. Father's Occupation

Farthers Occupation

- Trade/Construction
- Public Sector
- Sales/Finance
- Agriculture
- Retired/Unemployed
- Administrative/Support
- Others
- Unknown
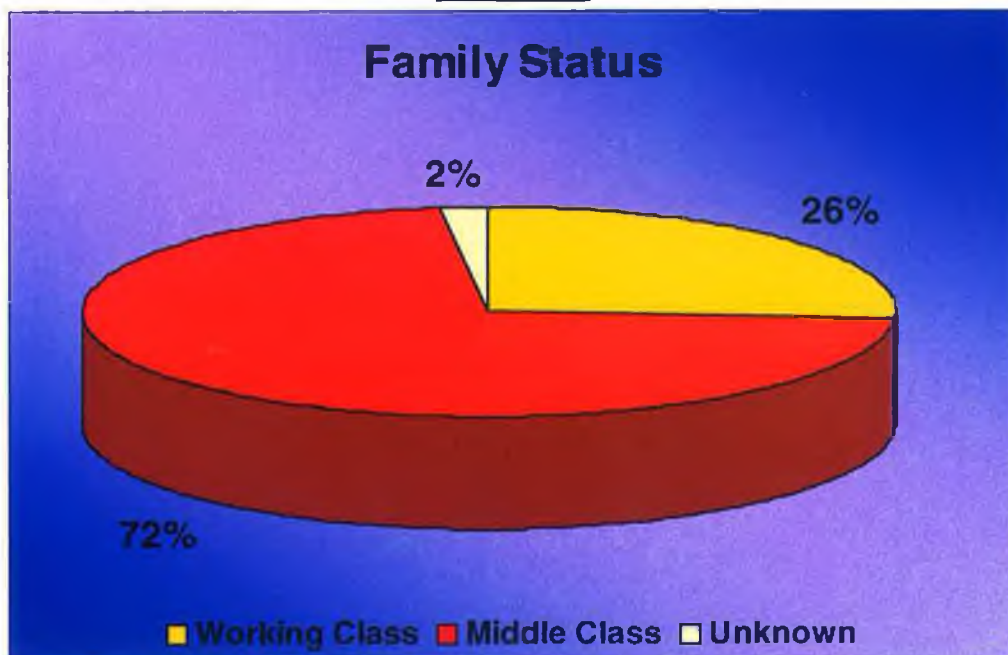
Q2c. Mother's Occupation

Figure 2c

Mothers Occupation

- Teacher
- Nurse
- House Wife
- Factory Operative
- Administrative/Support
- Other
- Unknown

Q3a. Have you ever been the victim of an assault?
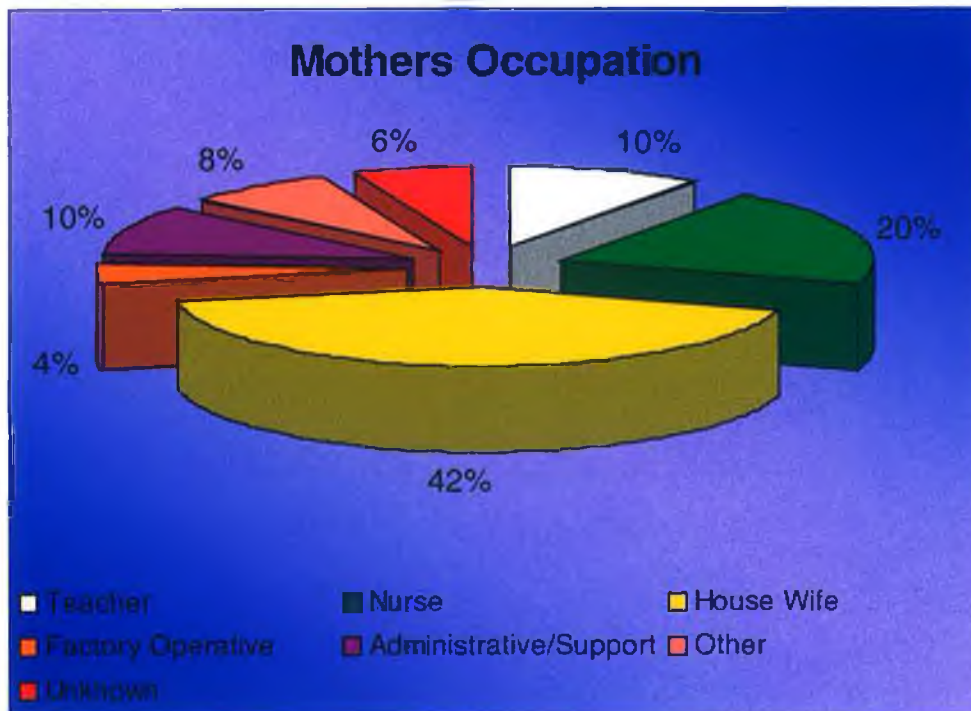
Figure 3a

Have you ever been the victim of an asault?

Q3b. Did the perpetrator have/Use a weapon?

Figure 3b
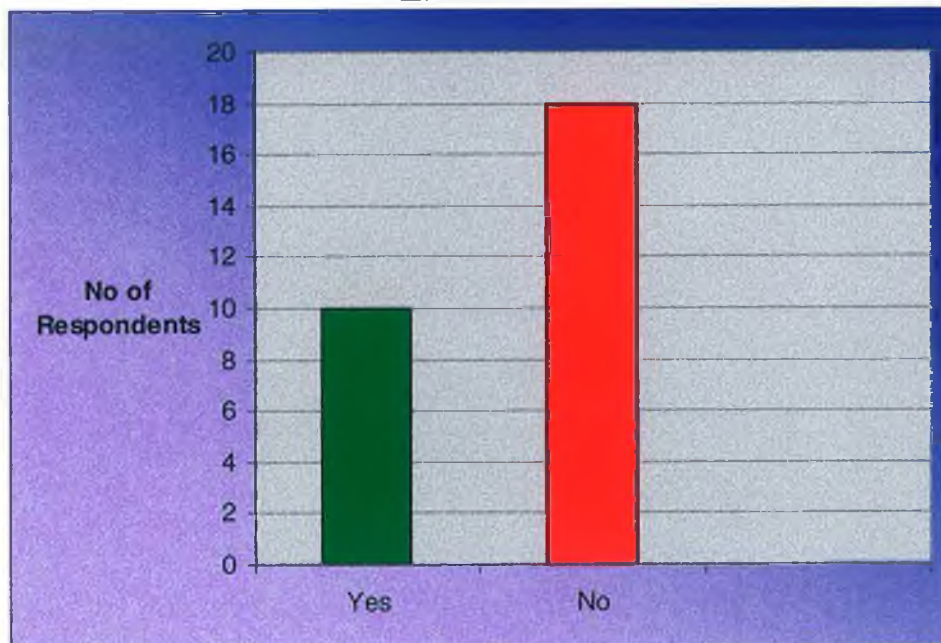
Q3c. Type of weapon

Figure 3c

Type of Weapon

2

1

2

Syringe
Iron Bar
Hammer
Knife
Other

1

4
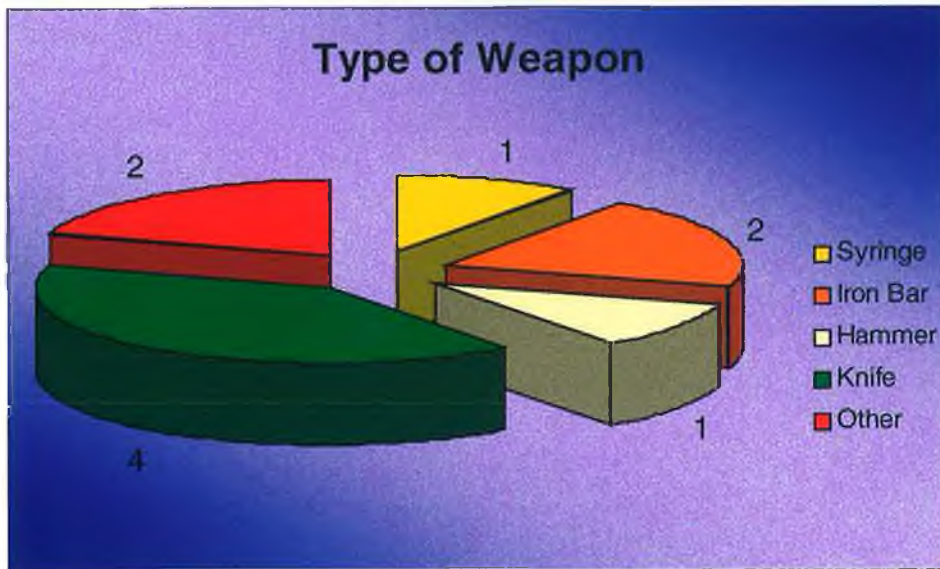
Q4a. Have you been assaulted on more than one occasion?

Figure 4a

Yes   No
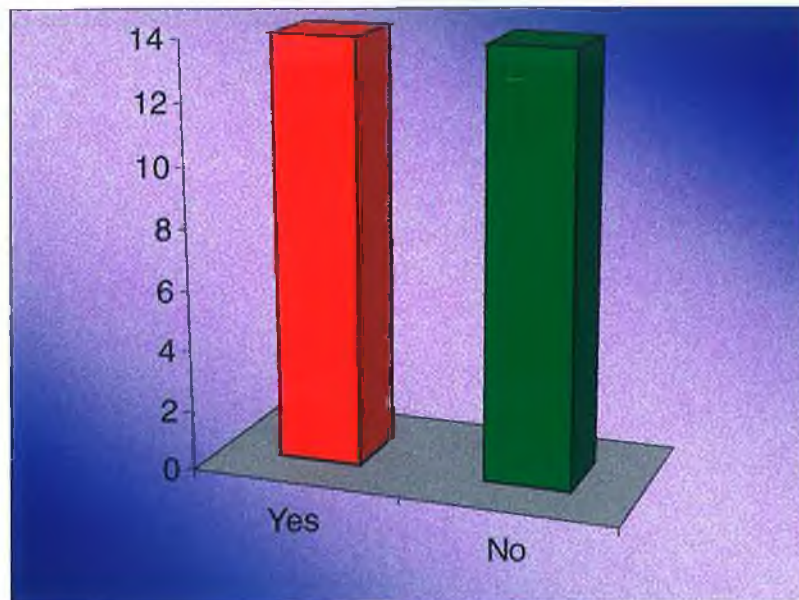
Q4b. If you were assaulted more than once, please state how many times?

Figure 4b

Frequency of Assaults

Q5a. Where did the assault take place?

Figure 5a

Location of Assault

- Street
- Outside a Niteclub/Pub
- Petrol Station/Shop
- Park/Sports Ground
- In a Niteclub/Pub
- Other
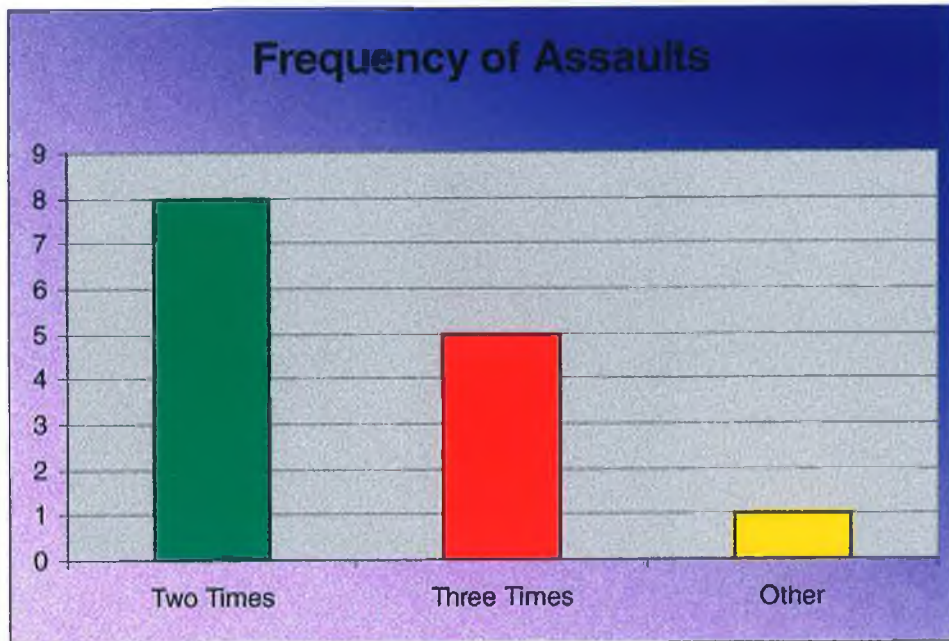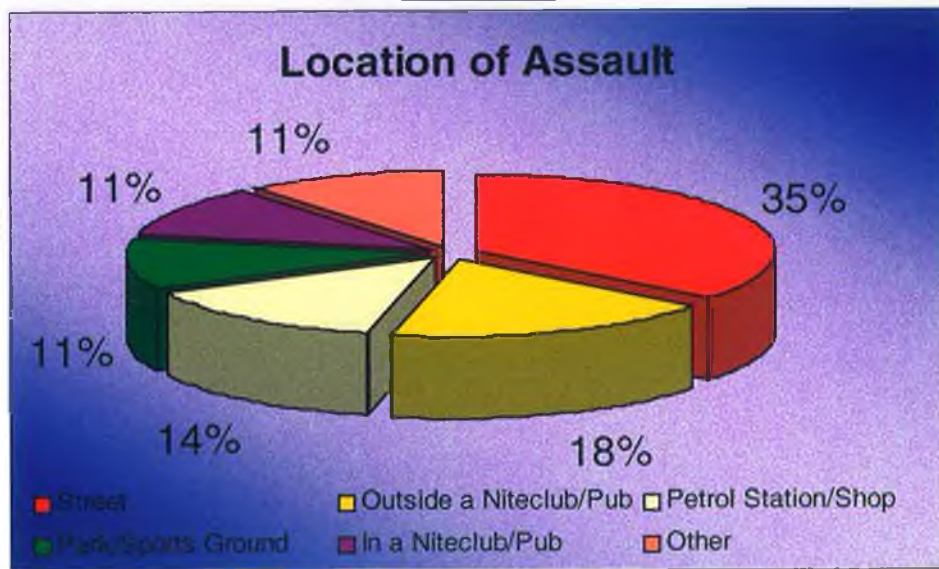
Q5b. Did the assault take place in a rural or urban area?

Figure 5b

Area where attack took place
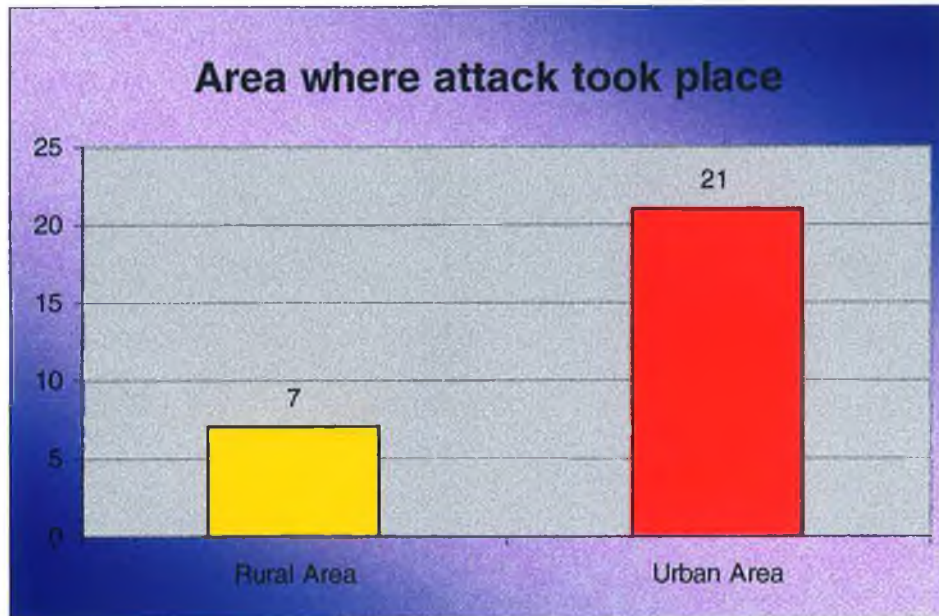
Q6. What time did the assault take place?

Figure 6

Time of Assault
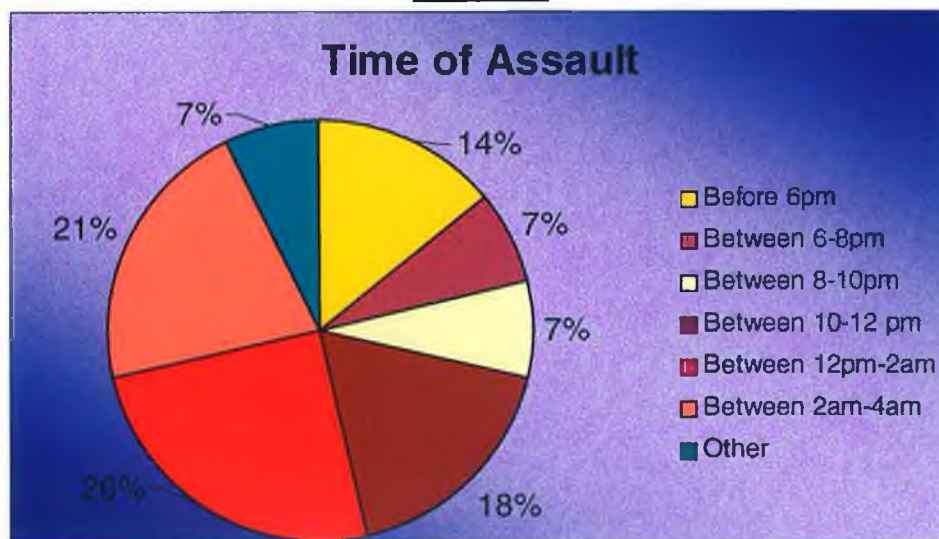
Q7a. The number of perpetrators

Figure 7a

Number of Perprators

- 39% One Perpetrator
- 21% Two Perpatrators
- 18% Three Perpatrators
- 7% Four Perpatrators
- 4% Five Perpatrators
- 11% Other
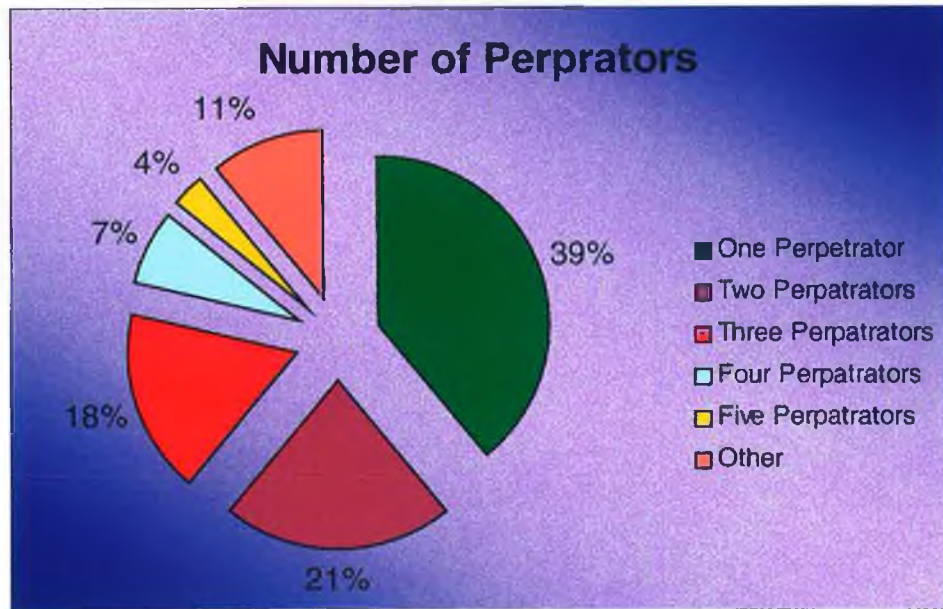
Q7b. Gender of the perpetrator(s)

Figure 7b
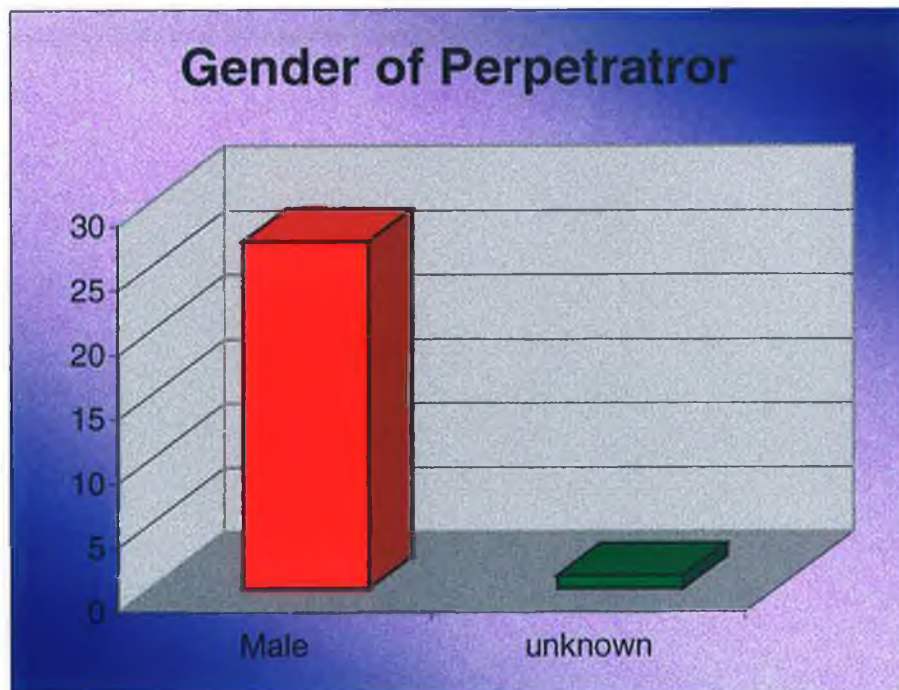
Gender of Perpetratror

(Male, unknown)

Q7c. Approximate age of the perpetrator(s)

Figure 7c

Age of Perpetrators

Other	
25-26 Years	
23-24 Years	
21-22 Years	
19-20 Years	
17-18 Years	
16 Years and under	

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Q8. Victims relationship to the perpetrator(s)

Figure 8

Relationship to the perpetrator(s)
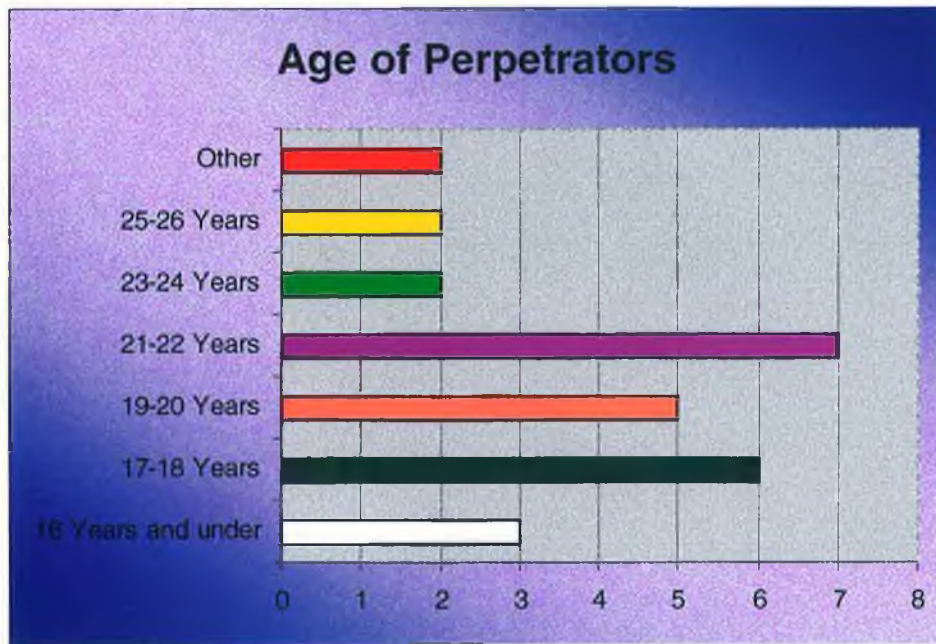
■ Relative
■ Friend
■ Acquaintance
■ Stranger
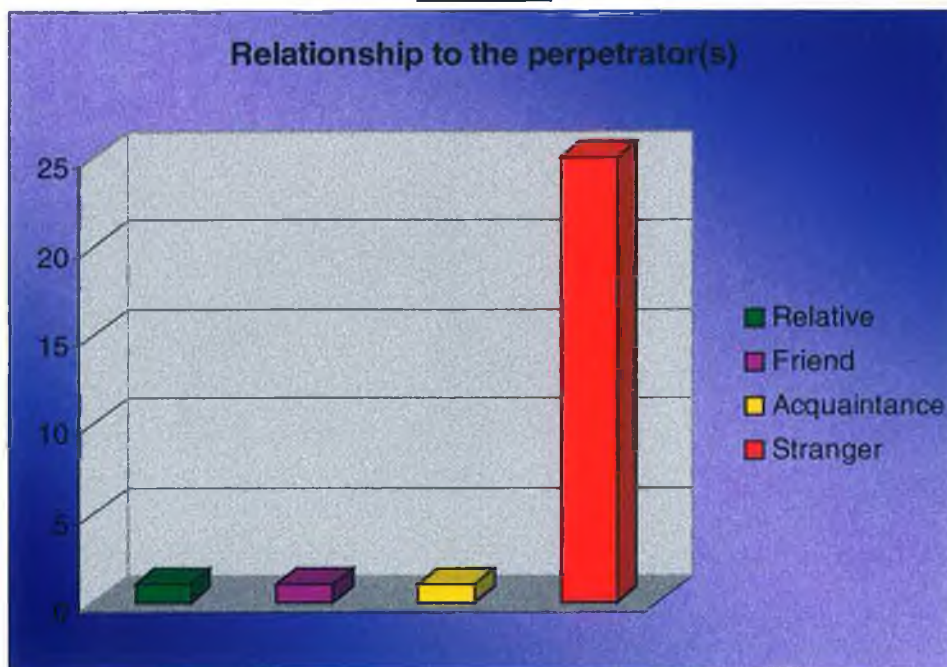
Q9a. Do you believe that the perpetrator was under the influence of a stimulant?

Figure 9a
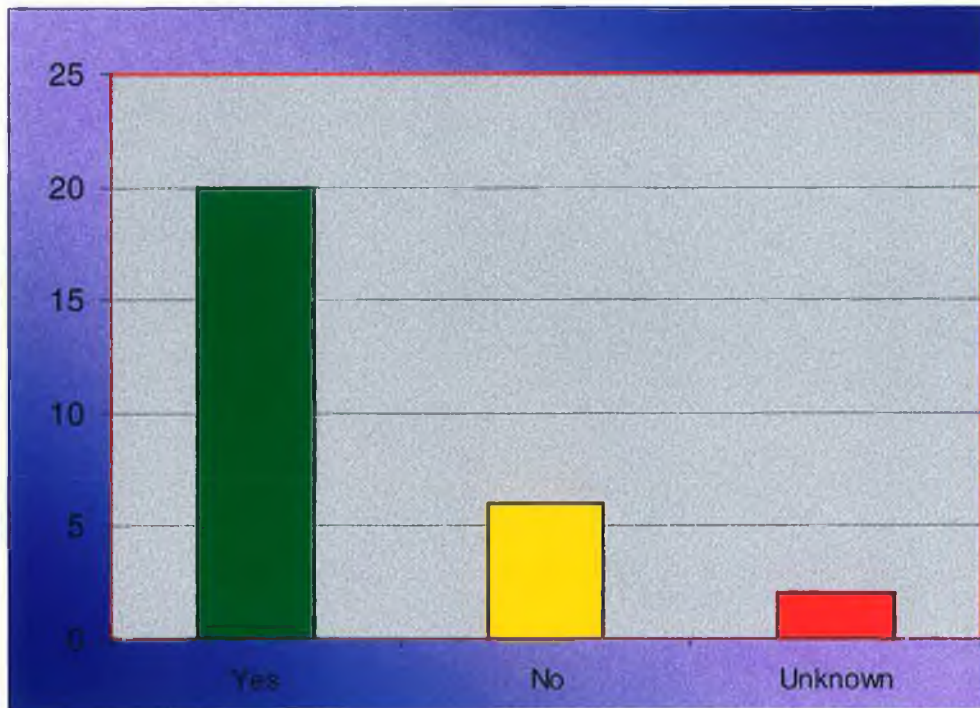
Q9b. Which stimulants do you believe he/they were under the influence of?

Figure 9b

Q10. What was your immediate reaction to the assault?

Figure 10

Reaction to Assault

14%
32%
25%
29%

- Fought Back
- Walk away
- Attempted to Diffuse the situation
- Unable to Reach due to Injury
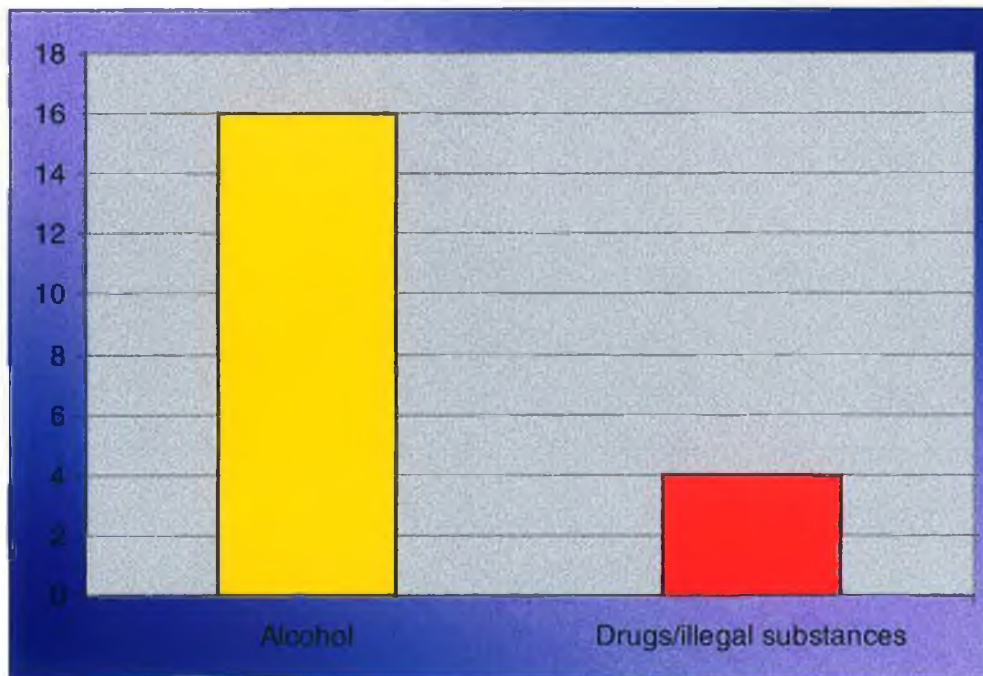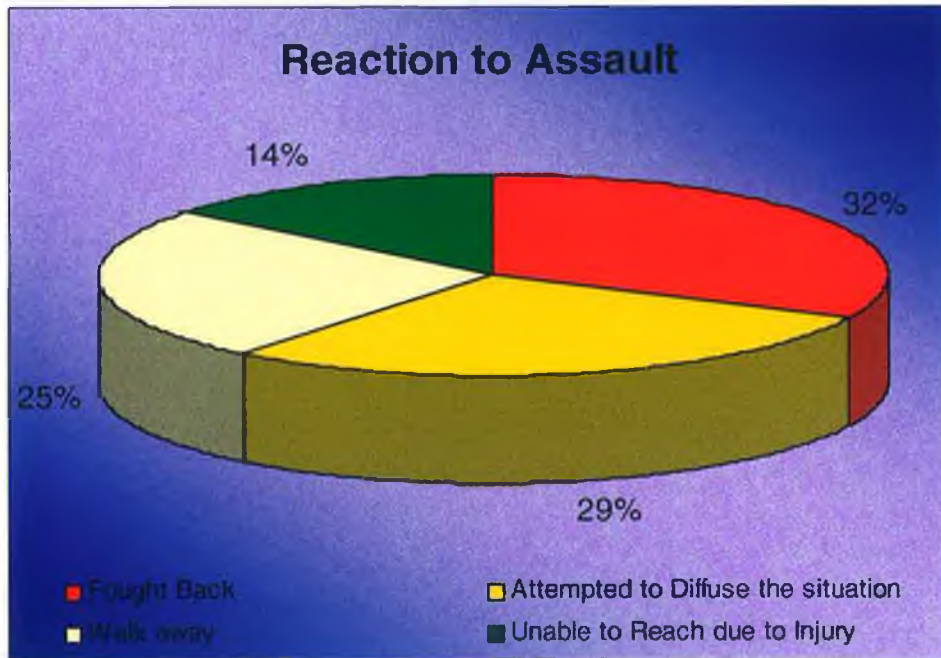
Q11a. What was your emotional reaction to the assault?

Figure 11a

Emotional Reaction to the Assault
(1st Answer)

Other
Fear
Anger
Shock

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14

Figure 11b

Emotion reaction to assault (2nd Answer)
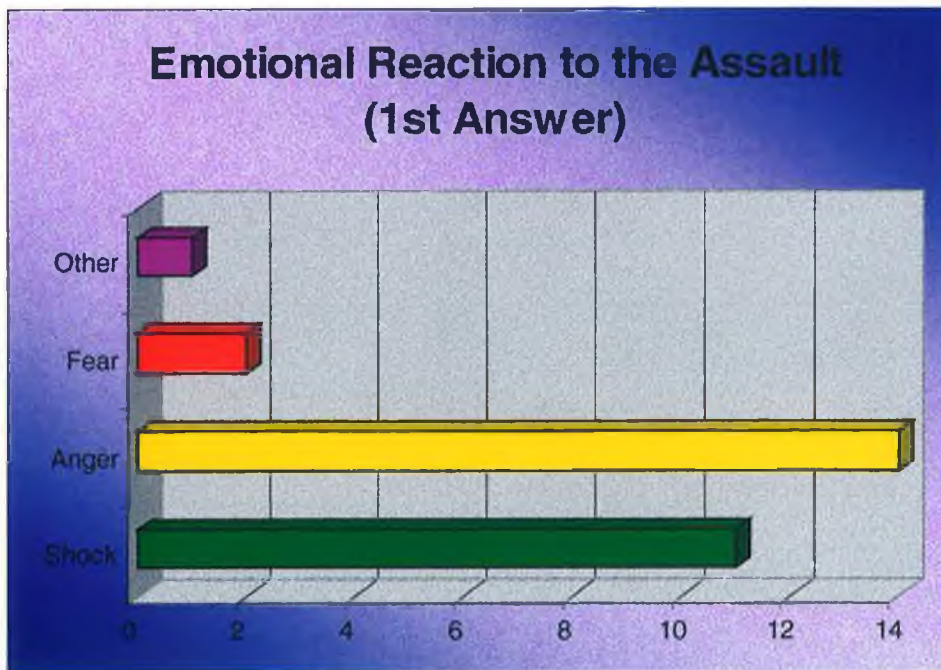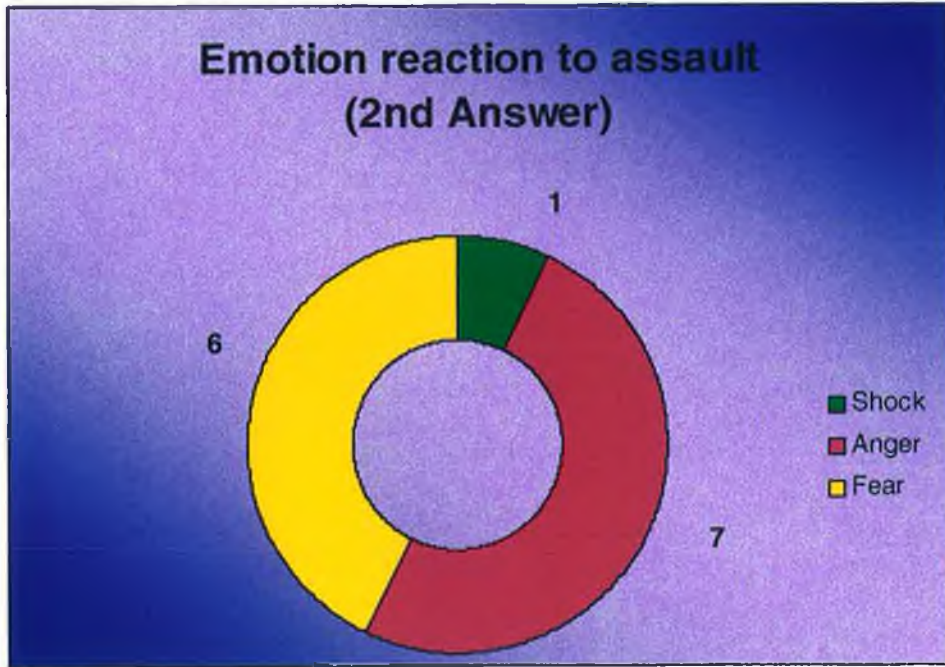
Q12a(i). Has the attack left any long-term physical and/or emotional effects on you?

Figure 12a(i)

Physical and/or emotional effects of assault
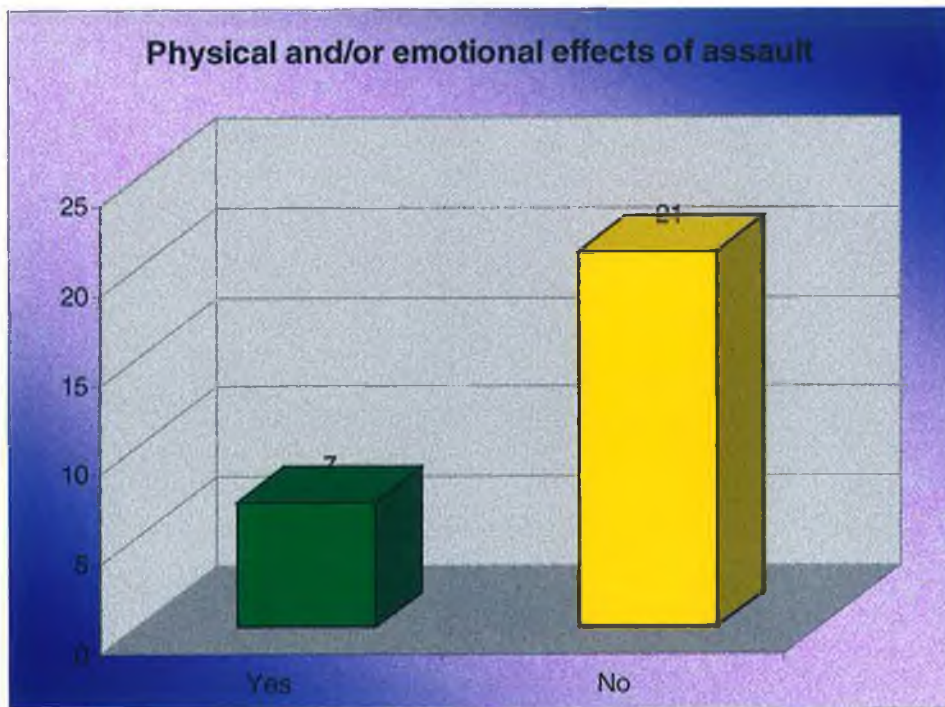
Q12a(ii) Long term Physical/Emotional effects of assault

Figure 12a(ii)

Long Term physical/emotional effects of the assault

1

- More fearful when in town
- Aprehensive of crowds
- Other

2

4
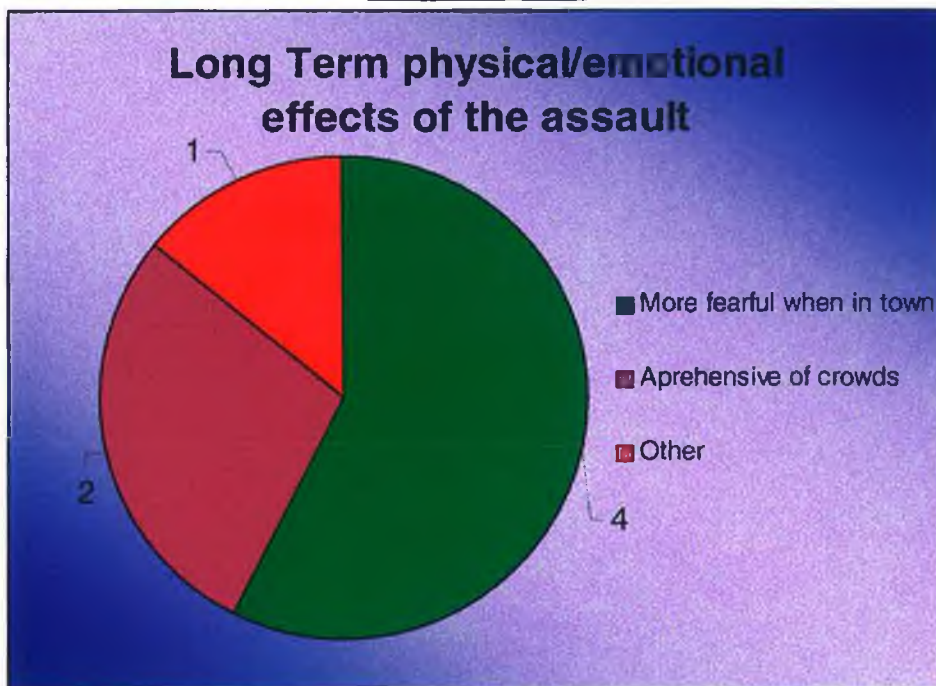
Q12b(i). Has your behaviour changed as a result of the assault?

Figure 12b(i)

Behaviour change as a result of assault

1

13

14

- Yes
- No
- Unknown
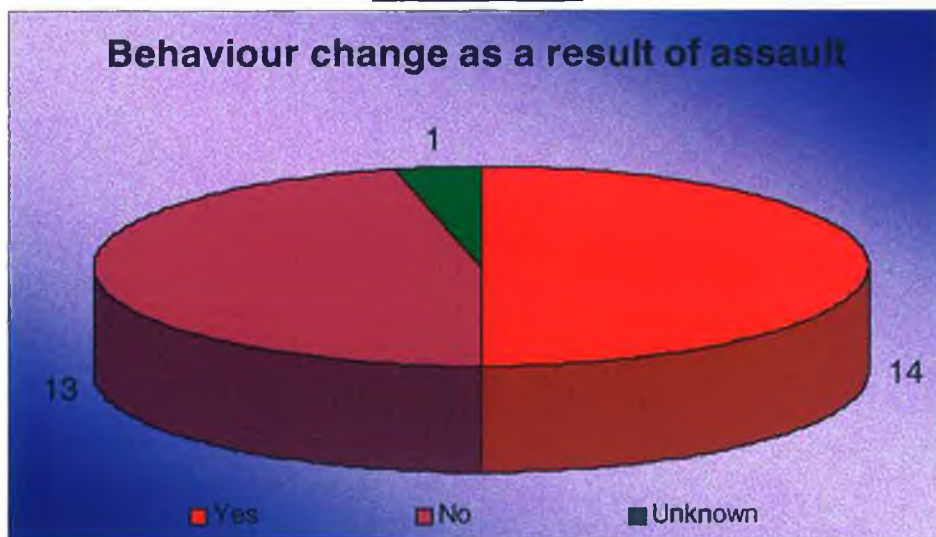
Q12b(ii). How has your behaviour change?

Figure 12b(ii)

Behavioural Changes

- Tend to keep top themselves
- More careful/vigilant
- Do not go out as much any more
- Aggressive/Fightback
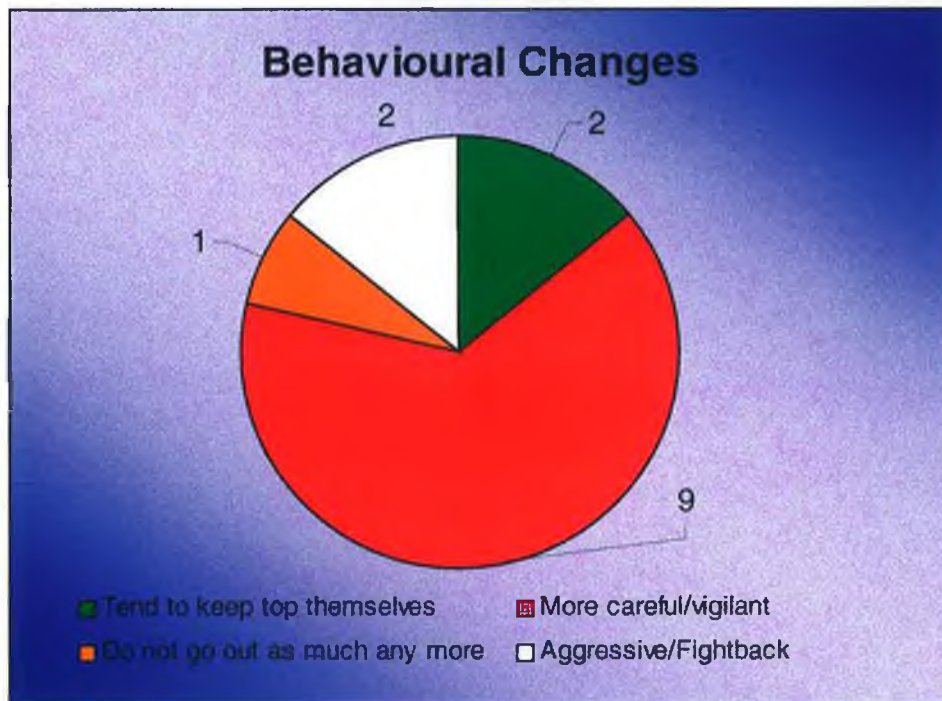
Q13a. Did anybody intervene/come to your aid during the assault?

Figure 13a

Anybody come to their aid
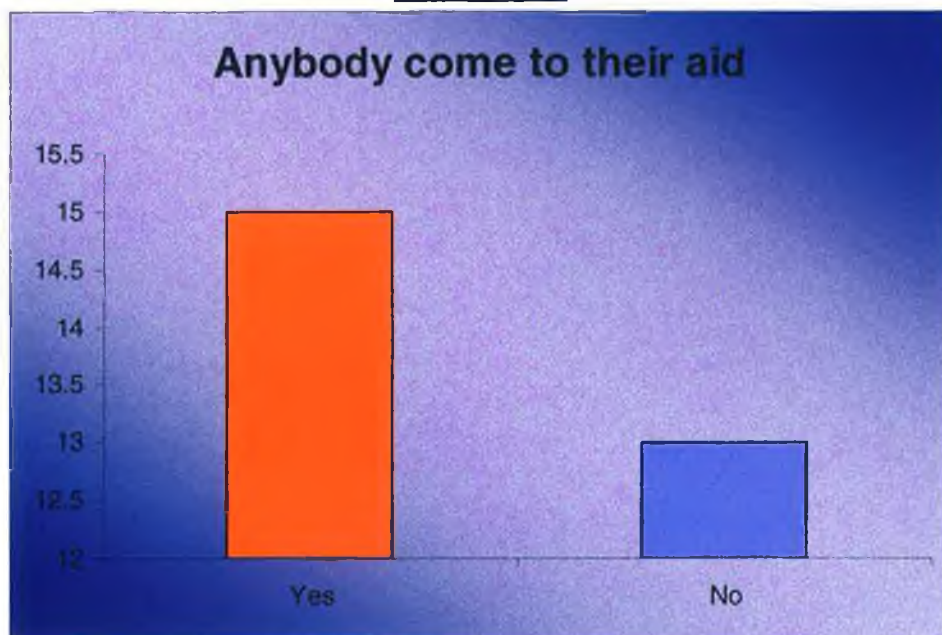
Q13b. Who came to your aid?

Figure 13b

Legend:
- Friend/Companion
- Bypasser/stranger
- Garda
- Bouncer/Security

Values shown on pie chart: 11, 2, 1, 1

Q14a. Did you report the incident to the Gardai?

Figure 14a

Bar chart with categories: Yes, No
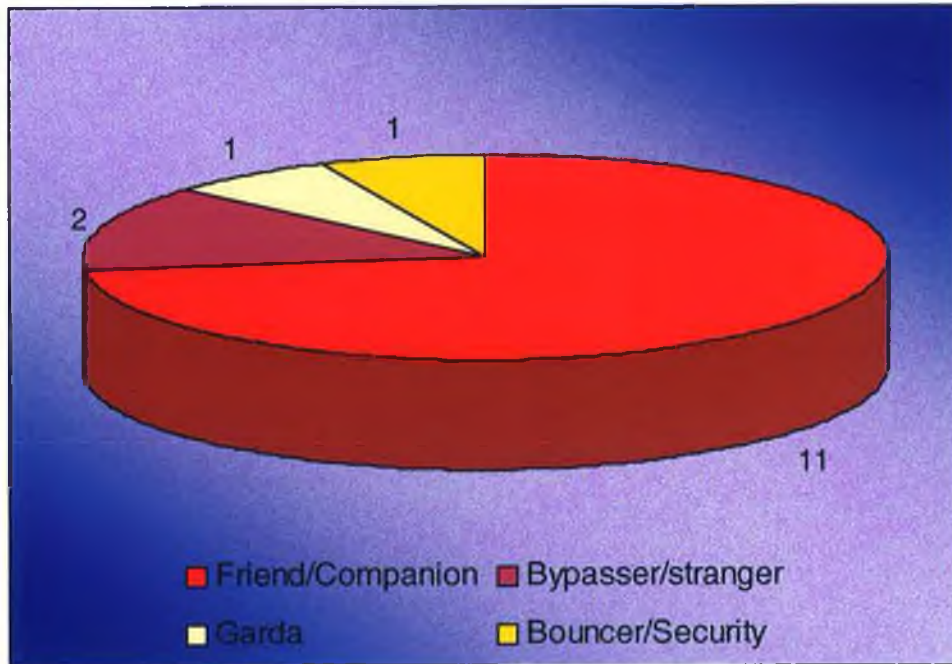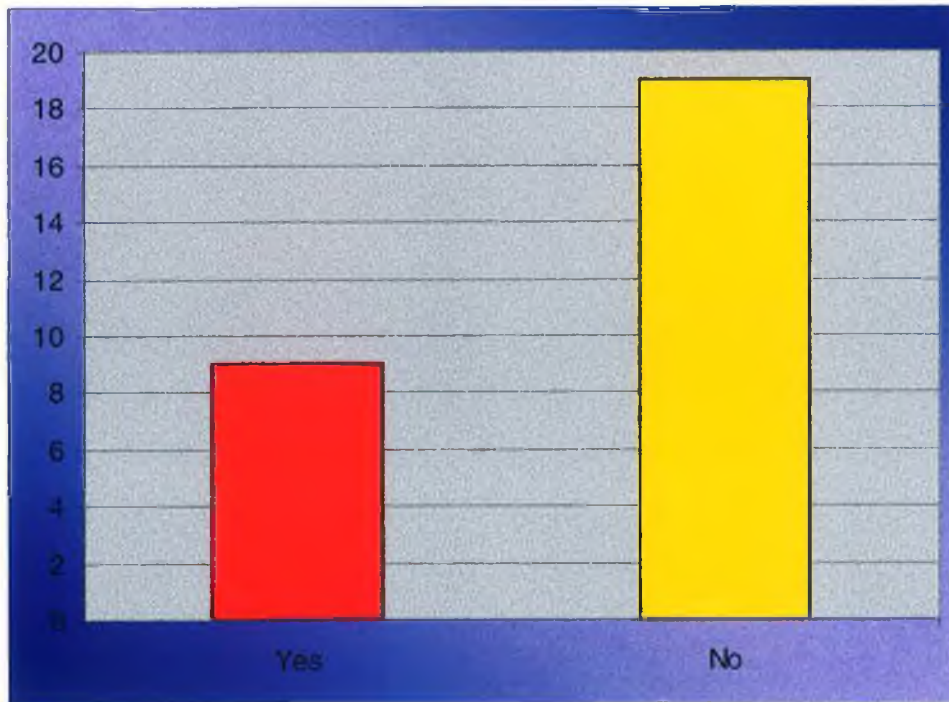
Q14b. Were you satisfied with the outcome of reporting the incident to the Gardai?
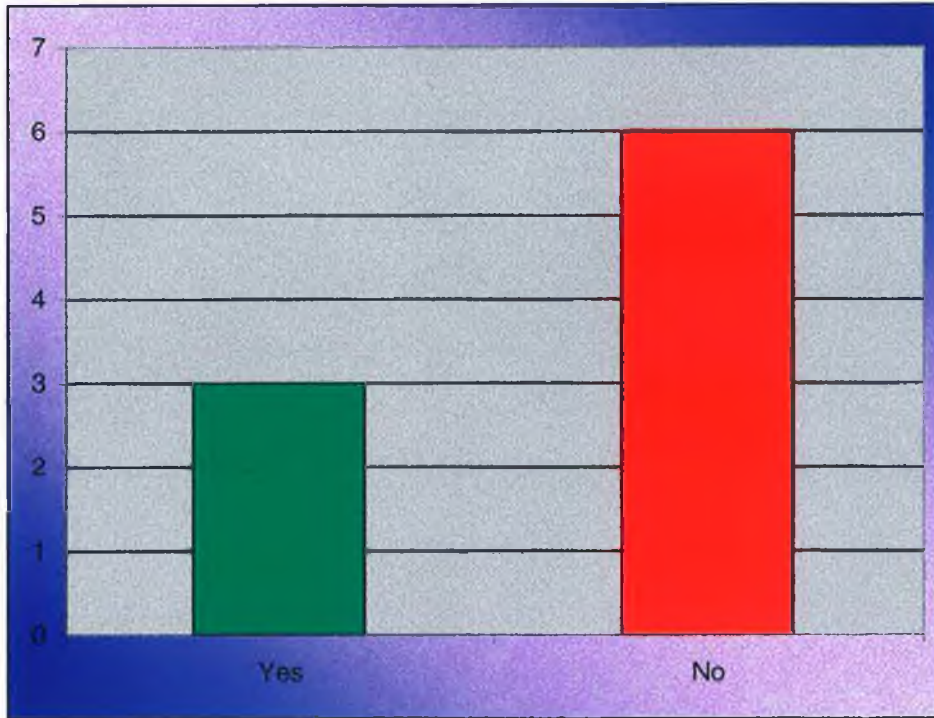
Figure 14b

Q14c. Why were you unsatisfied with the outcome of reporting the incident to the Gardai?

Figure 14c
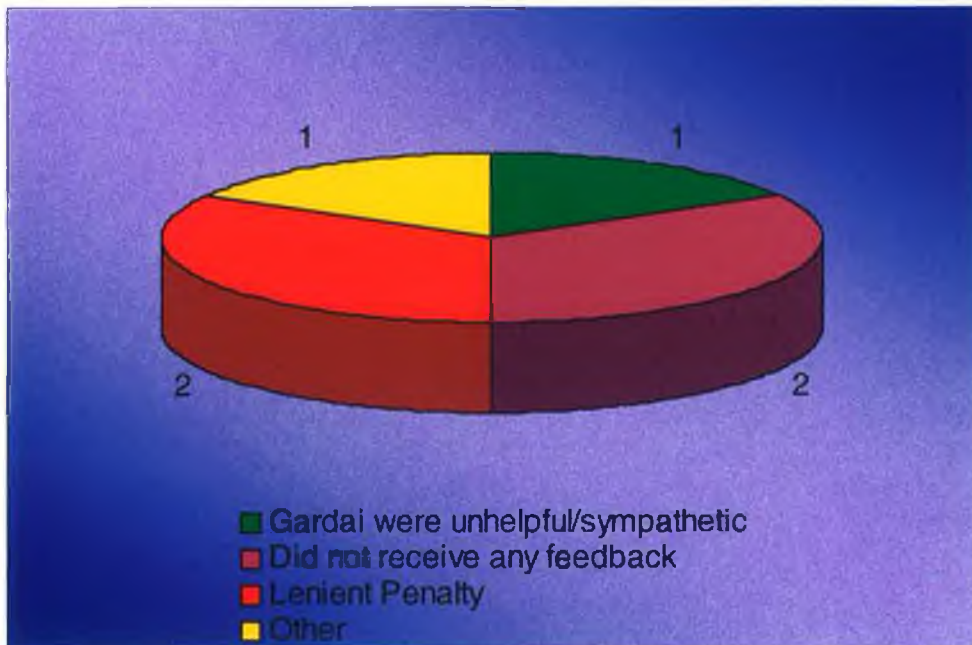
Q14d.Why didn't you report the incident to the Gardai?

Figure 14d(1)
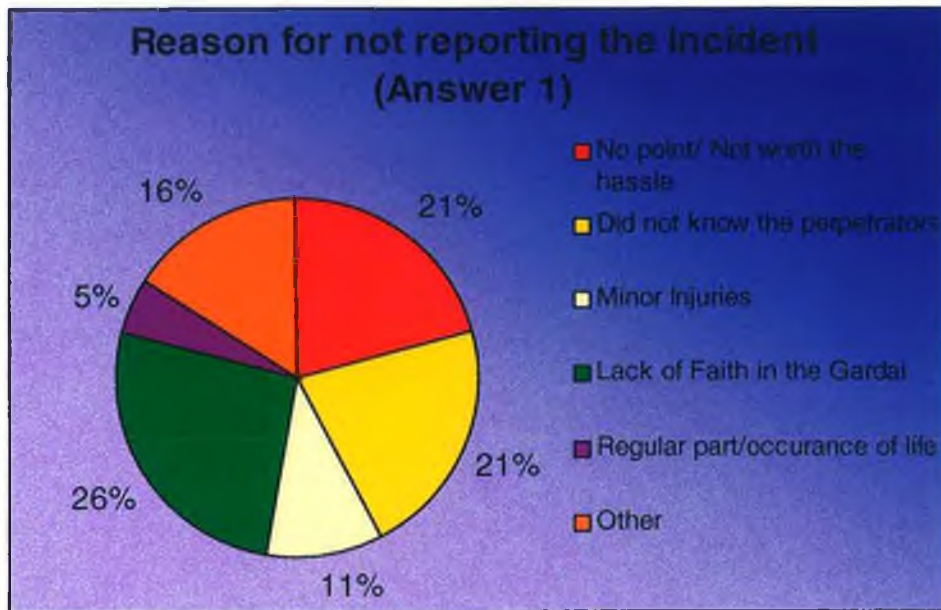
Figure 14d(2)

Q14e. If you did not report the incident to the Gardai, did you take any alternative action?

Figure 14e

Did the victim take alternative action?
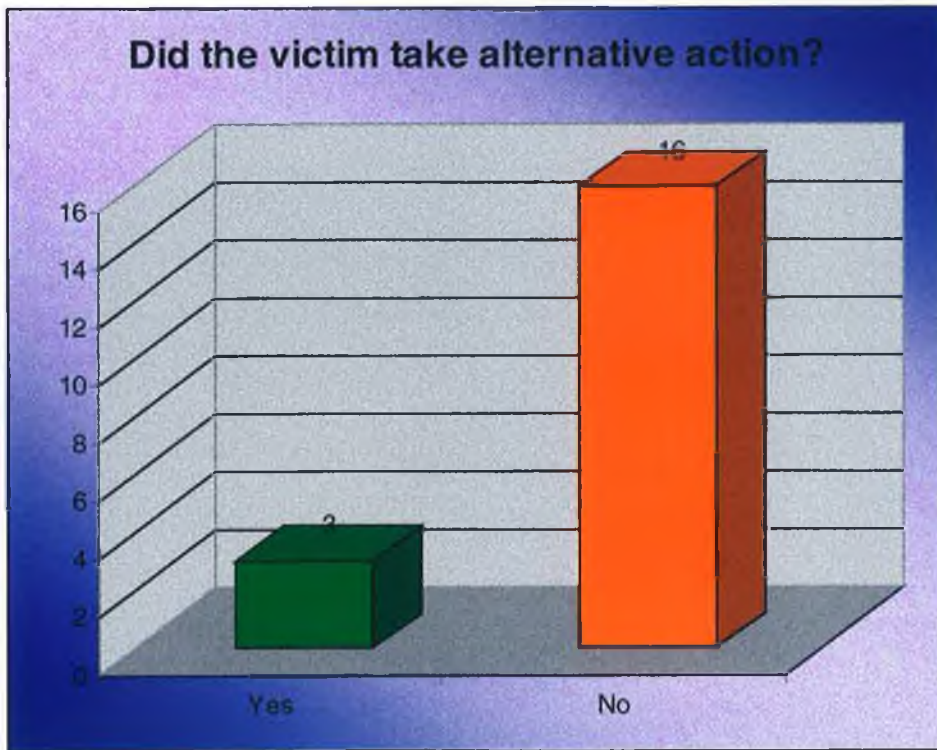
Q14f. What alternative action did the victim take?

Figure 14f

What action did the victim take?

■ Tried to find the perpetrator

■ Restrained Perpetrator

■ Fought back

15a. Has any male member of your family or friends been the victim of an assault?

Figure 15a
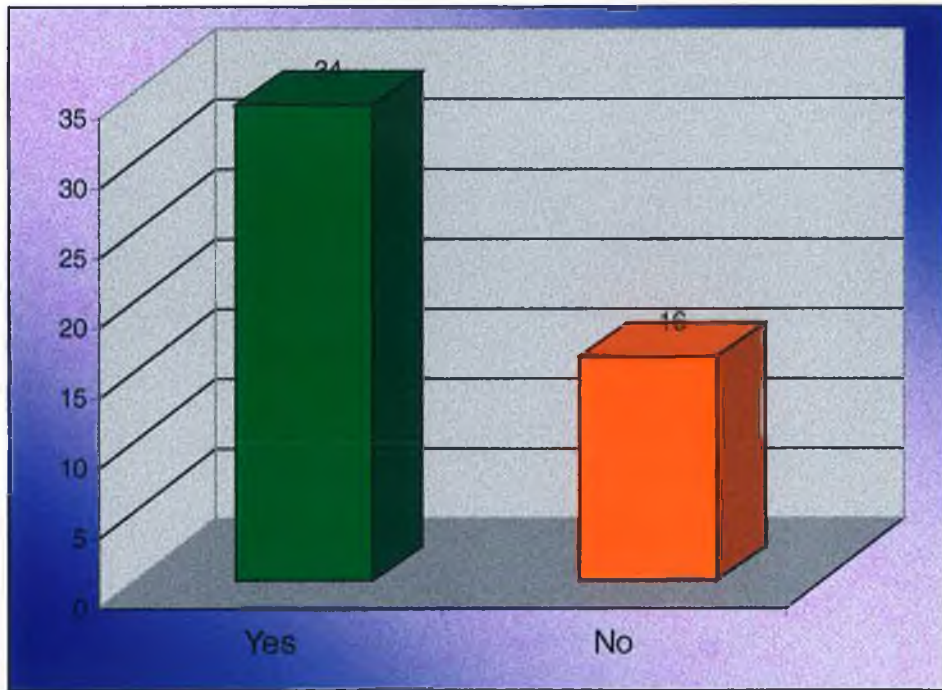
15b. How many male members of your family or friends have been the victims of an assault?

Figure 15b
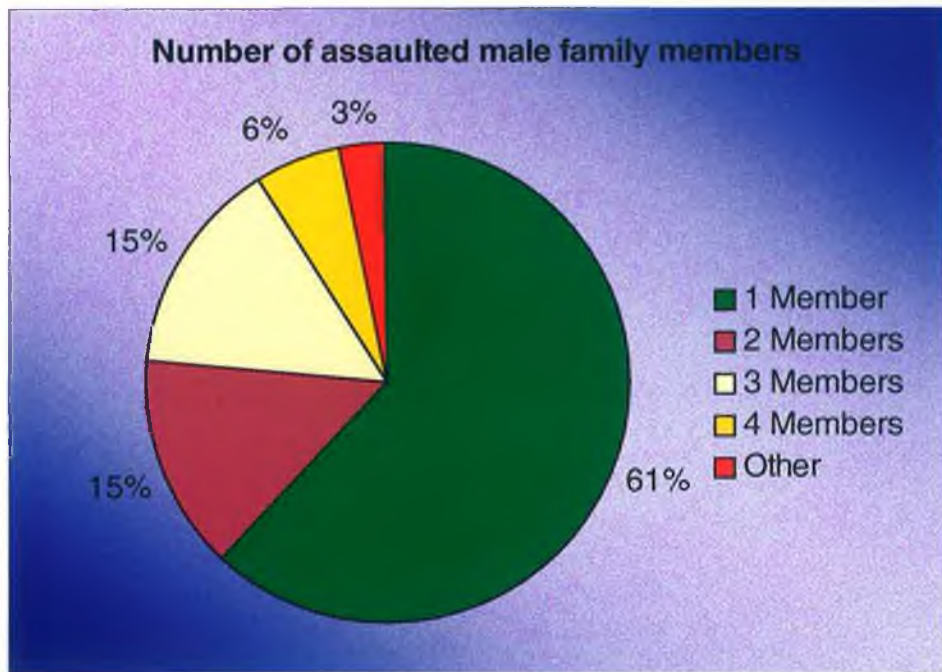
Q16. What was his/their relationship to the perpetrator?

Figure 16
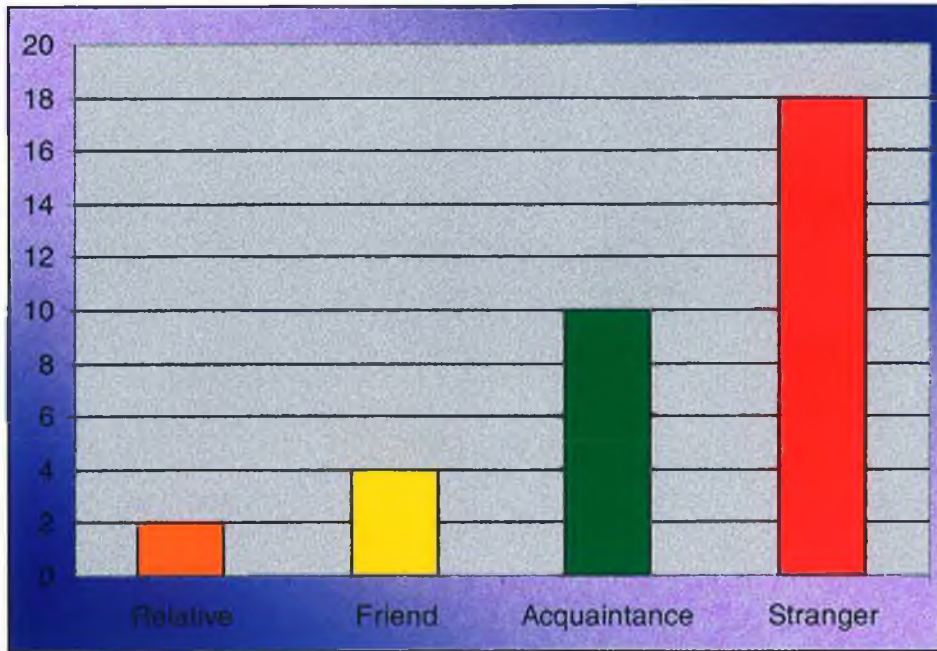
Q17a. Have you ever witnessed an assault?

Figure 17a
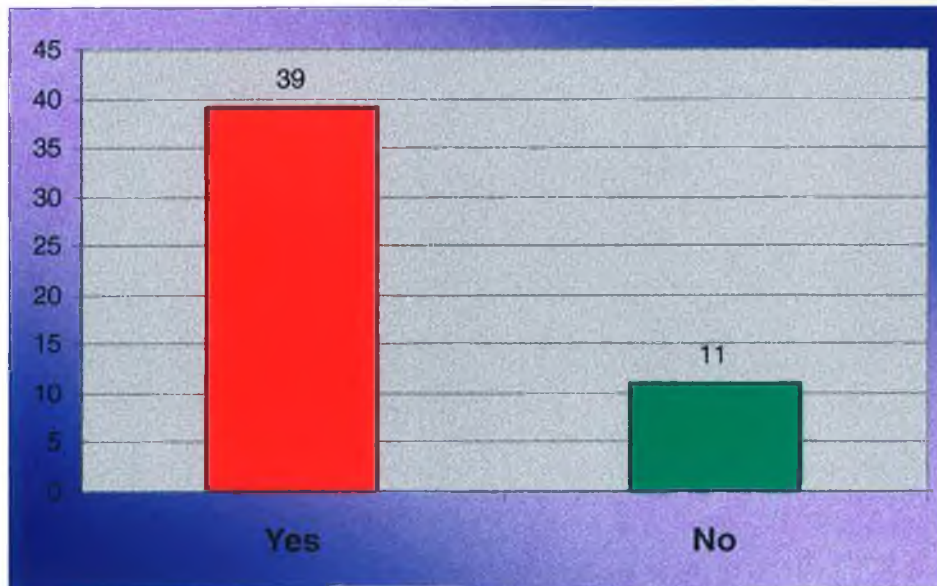
Q17b. Did you attempt to intervene?

Figure 17b
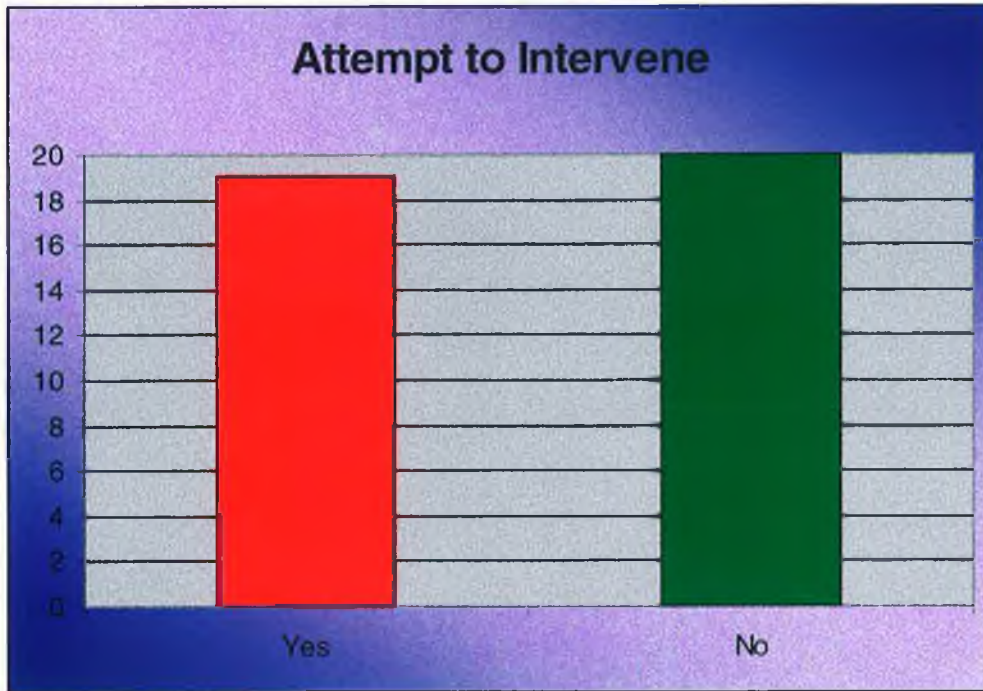
Q17c How did you intervene?

Figure 17c
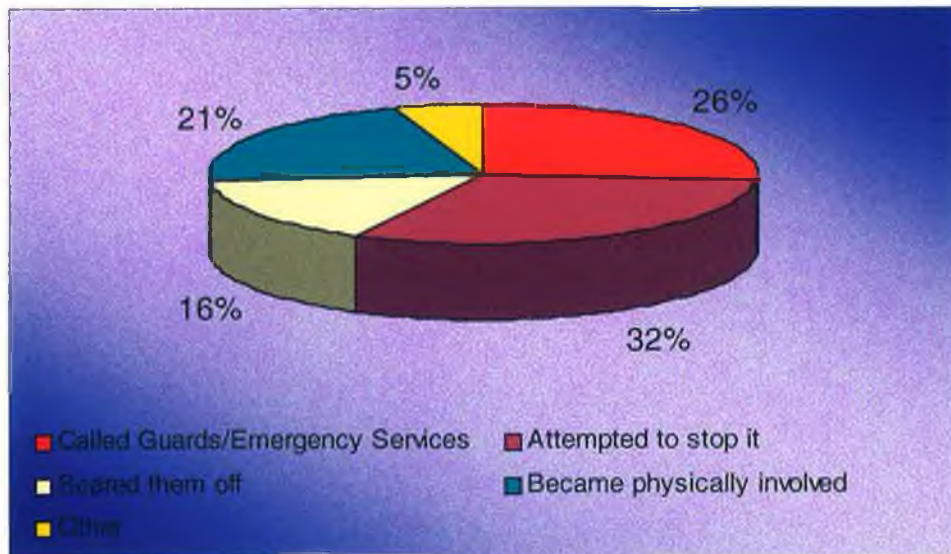
Q17d. Why didn't you intervene?

Figure 17d

Reason for not Intervening

- None of my business — 15%
- Did not want to get involved — 30%
- Fear — 45%
- Did not know the victim — 5%
- Other — 5%
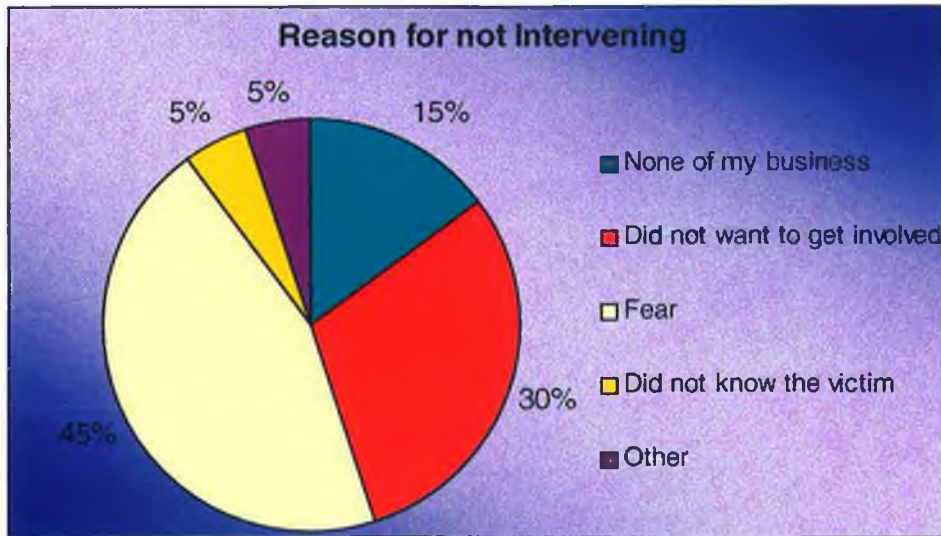
Q18a. In your opinion, has there been an increase in the level of alcohol consumption among young people in Ireland in the past decade?
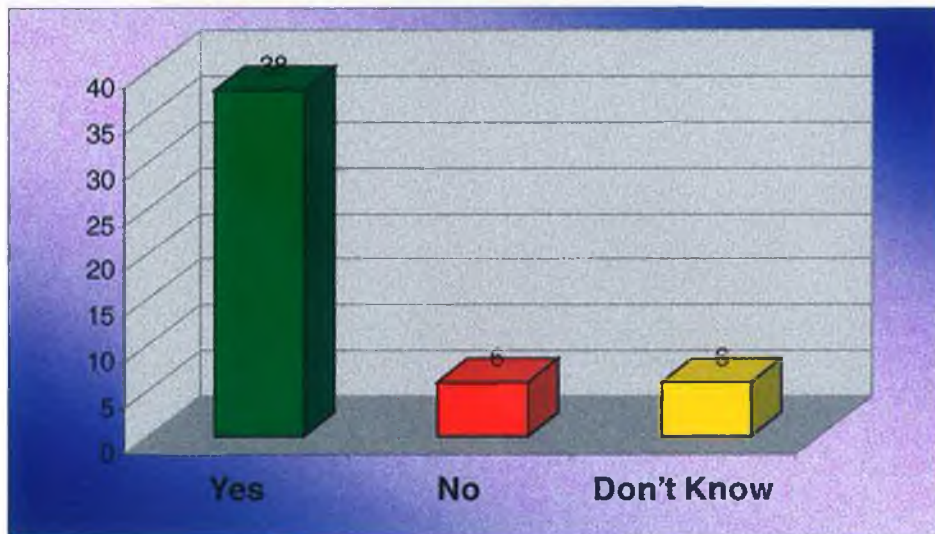
Figure 18a

Q18b. Why do you believe this has happened?

Figure 18b(i)
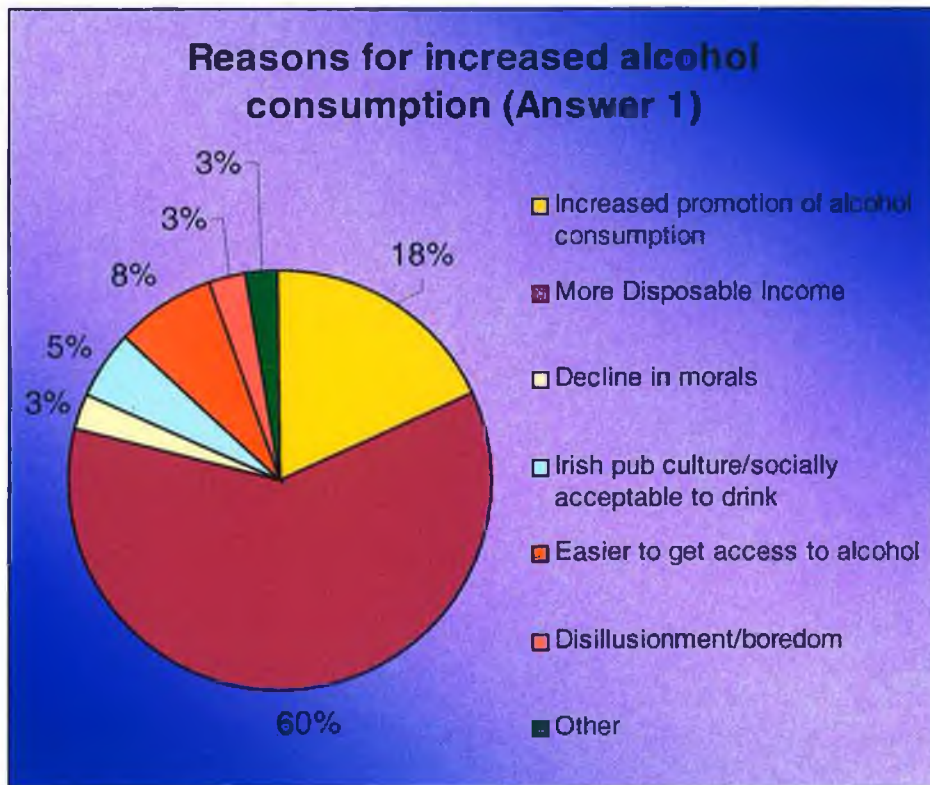
Figure 18b(ii)
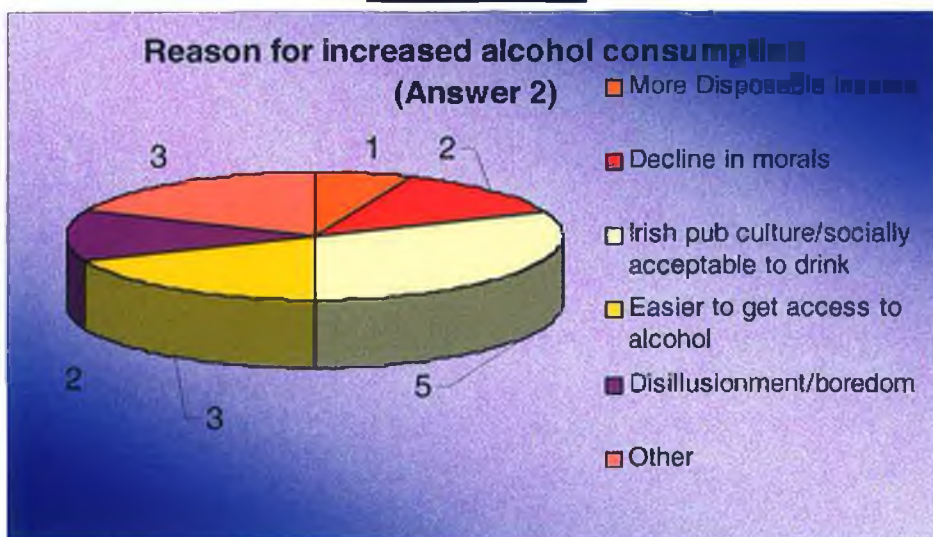
Q18c(i). Do you believe there is a relationship between the increase in alcohol consumption among young people and a rise in the number of assaults on young males in Irish Society?
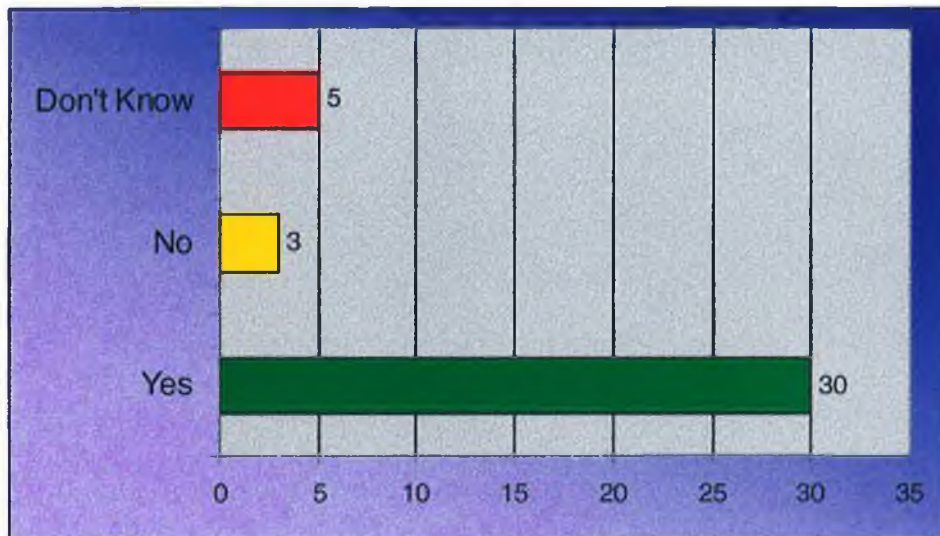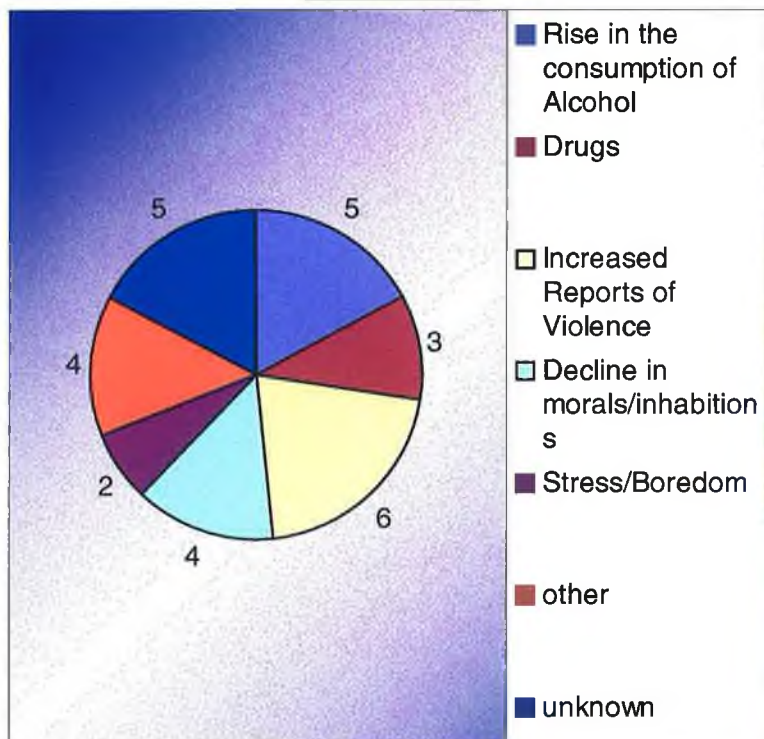
Figure 18c(i)

Q18c(ii). Why do you believe there is a relationship between the increase in alcohol consumption among young people and a rise in the number of assaults on young males in Irish Society?

Figure 18c(ii)
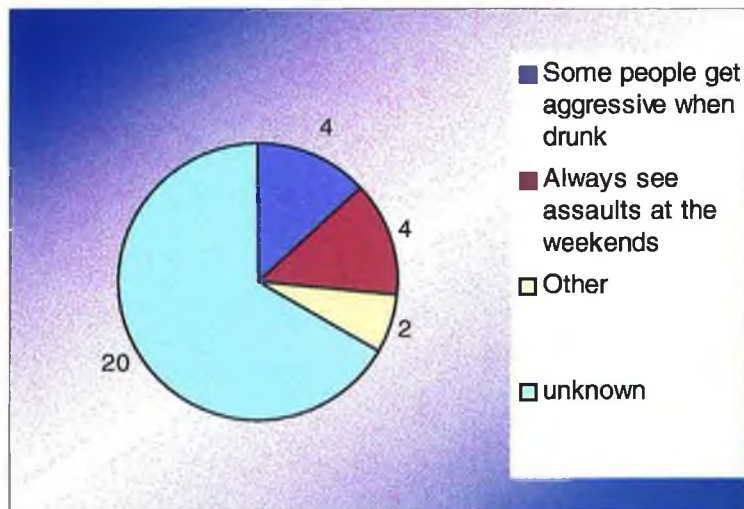
*Q19a. Do you think there has been an increase in violence in Irish society in the past decade?*

Figure 19a

Has there been an increase in Violence in Irish Society in the Past decade

Q19b. Why do you believe there has been an increase in violence in Irish Society in the past decade?

Figure 19b

- Rise in the consumption of Alcohol
- Drugs
- Increased Reports of Violence
- Decline in morals/inhabitions
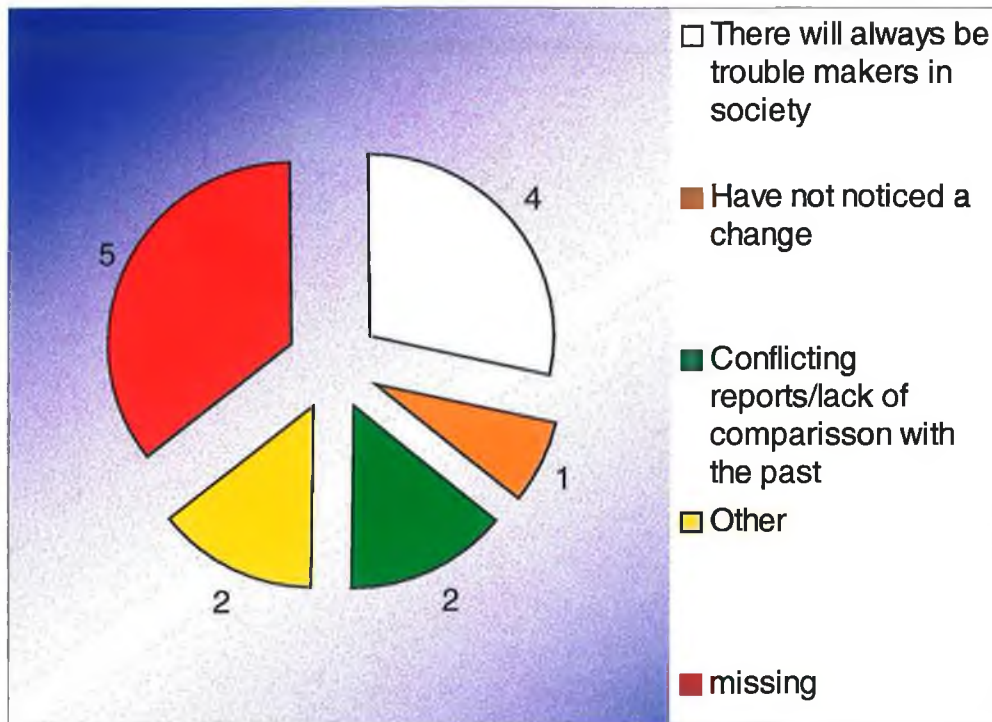- Stress/Boredom
- other
- unknown

Q19c. Why do you believe there hasn't been an increase in violence in Irish society in the past decade?

Figure 19c
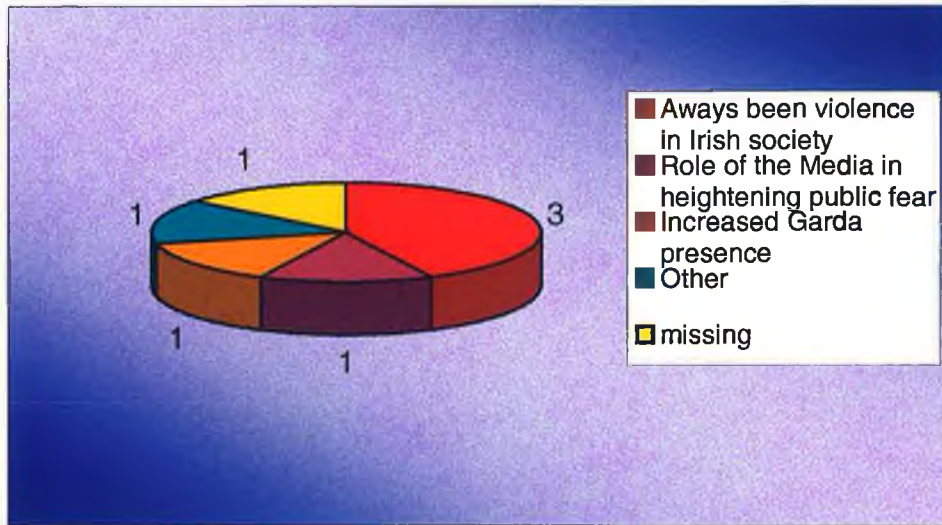
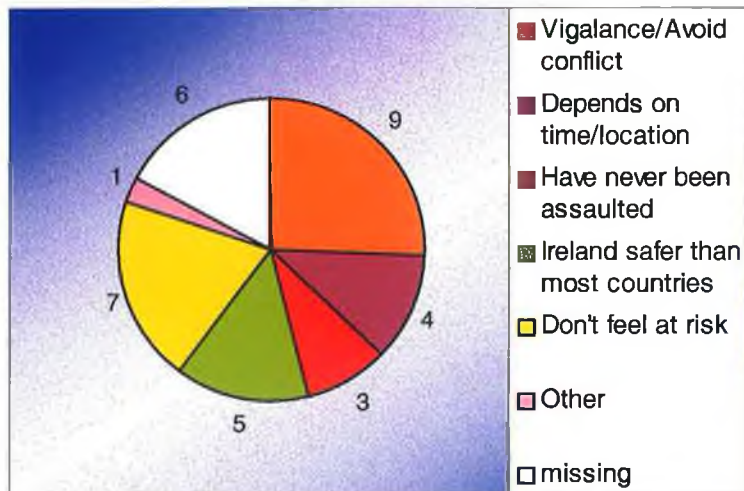*Q19d. Don't know if violence has increased in Ireland in the last decade*

Figure 19d

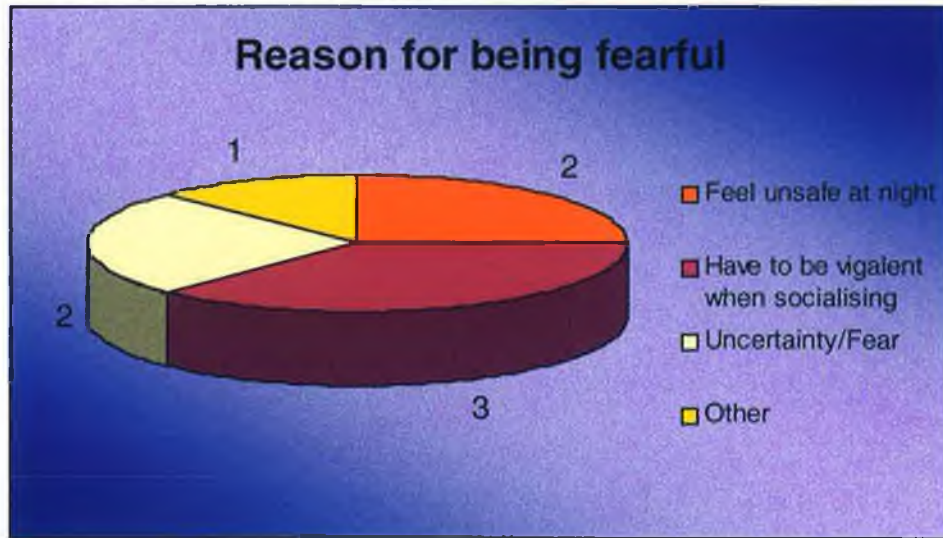*Q20a. Do you feel safe living in Irish society at the current time?*

Figure 20a

Do you feel safe in Ireland

Q20b. Feel safe living in Irish society at the current time

Figure 20b

Q20c. Don't feel safe living in Irish society at the current time

Figure 20c

Q20d. Don't know if it's safe living in Ireland at the current time

Figure 20d