

7. Safety¹

The safety of citizens is a key dimension in the construction of individual and collective well-being. The population's sense of insecurity and the fear of being the victim of criminal acts can greatly influence each individual's personal freedom, quality of life and the development of territories.

The objective and subjective indicators measuring the evolution of safety in Italy show a general tendency towards improvement both in the long term and in the two years of the pandemic.

Despite this, deep territorial inequalities persist: homicides are more widespread in Southern Italy, although they have declined sharply over time, while burglary, pick-pocketing and robbery prevail in the Centre-North; the level of safety perceived by the population is higher in small towns than in large urban areas.

In 2020 and 2021, the trend of improvement in perceived safety in the area in which one lives continued, with the perception of safety when walking alone in the dark increasing and the perception of degradation and crime risk decreasing.

In the first year of the pandemic, the restrictive measures imposed by the health emergency led to a sharp reduction in predatory crimes (burglary, pick-pocketing and robbery). These crimes, which in 2020 reached the lowest values since 2004, in 2021, with the loosening of the restrictive measures on mobility and social contacts, returned to grow slightly but remained far below the values recorded in the pre-pandemic period.

In 2020, the downward trend in the homicide rate of men was confirmed, while that of women remained stable. Provisional data confirmed also for 2021 the stable trend in the homicide rate of women.

In 2020, 92.2% of female homicides were committed by a known person and, in particular, about 6 out of 10 women were killed by their current or former partner. Among men, by contrast, only 39.4% were killed by a known person and only 2.9% by their partner or ex-partner.

Subjective perception of safety keeps improving

An analysis of the population's perceptions revealed an overall positive trend both compared to the two-year period of the pandemic and when analysing long-term data.

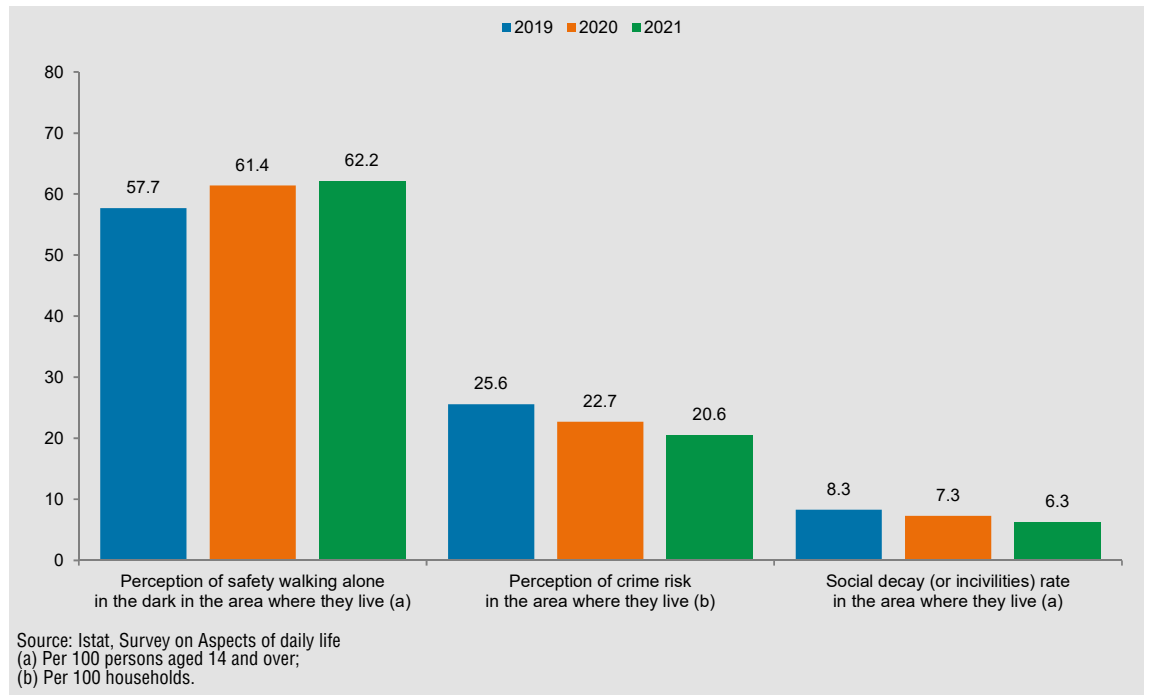
The proportion of people who said they felt very or quite safe walking alone when it is dark in the area where they live stood at 62.2% (it was 57.7% in 2019). This is the highest value recorded since 2010.

The decrease in the perception of degradation in the area where people live was among the positive signs: in 2021, 6.3% of the population said they had seen people who take or sell drugs, vandalism against the public goods, prostitutes looking for clients in the area where they live (it was 8.3% in 2019), which was the lowest value since 2009.

The proportion of households declaring a very high or quite high risk of crime in the area where they live continued to fall, standing at 20.6% (it was 25.6% in 2019). This indicator reached again the lowest value in the whole time series (Figure 1).

¹ This chapter was edited by Miria Savioli, with contributions from Isabella Corazziari, Maria Giuseppina Muratore and Franco Turetta.

Figure 1. Perception of safety in the area where people live: people aged 14 and over feeling very or quite safe walking alone when it is dark, people aged 14 and over who often see elements of social and environmental decay, households declaring a very high or quite high risk of crime. Years 2019, 2020 and 2021. Percentages



Significant differences emerged in the level of safety perceived by the population with respect to the size of their town of residence: people living in towns with up to 2,000 inhabitants and in towns with 2,000 to 10,000 inhabitants felt safer, perceived a lower risk of crime and reported less social and environmental degradation than those living in large urban areas.

In towns with 2,000 to 10,000 inhabitants, the proportion of people aged 14 years and over who declared that they felt very or quite safe walking alone when it is dark in the area in which they live was 19 percentage points higher than in large urban areas (71.3% versus 52.2%).

The same applies to the perception of the risk of crime (8.4% versus 39.3%) and social and environmental degradation (3.2% versus 13.0% - Figure 2).

The perception of safety was not evenly distributed in the population but varied according to gender, age and level of education.

Almost three-quarters of men felt safe walking alone when it is dark in the area where they live compared to just over half of women (51.2%). The situation also differed in relation to different age groups: the least safe were the elderly aged 75 and over (41.6%) and particularly women (33.8%), whereas young people and adults perceived a higher level of safety (Figure 3).

The perception of safety was highest among university graduates (67.3%), especially males (78.9% compared to 58.1% of female graduates) and lowest among those with no more than a lower secondary qualification (58%), especially females (46.8%).

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Figure 2. Perception of safety in the area where people live: people aged 14 and over feeling very or quite safe walking alone when it is dark, people aged 14 and over who often see elements of social and environmental decay, households declaring a very high or quite high risk of crime by municipality size. Year 2021. Percentages

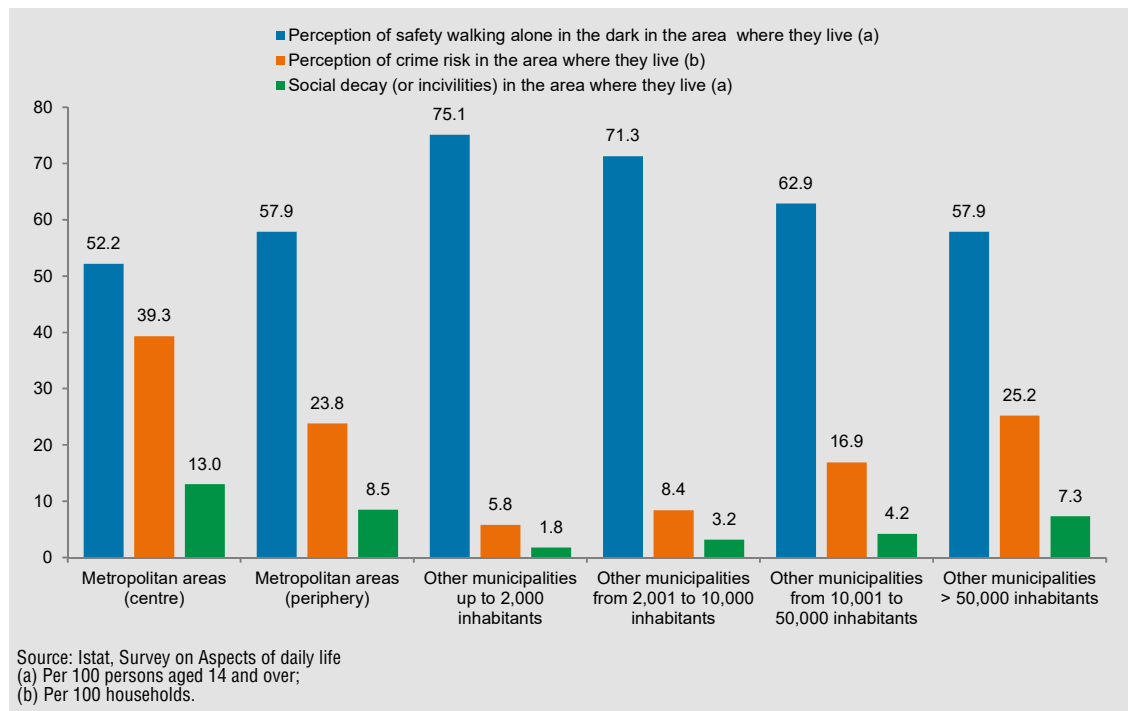
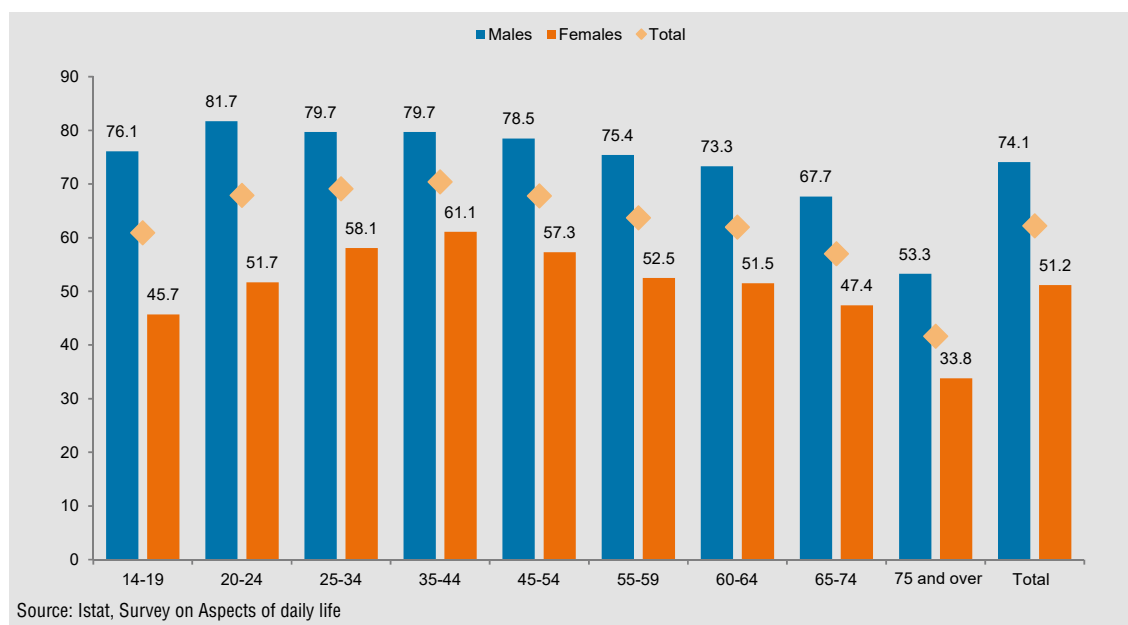


Figure 3. People aged 14 and over feeling very or quite safe walking alone when it is dark in the area where they live by gender and age group. Year 2021. Percentages

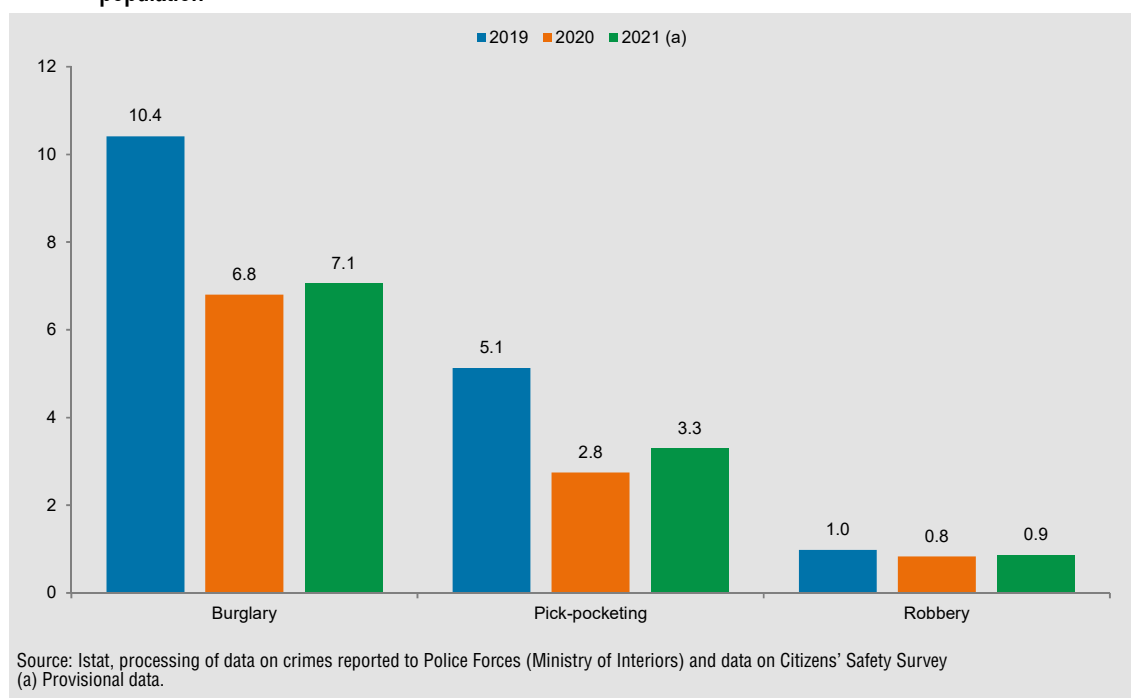


Predatory crimes decreased during the pandemic

In the first year of the pandemic, the restrictive measures imposed by the health emergency had led to a sharp reduction in predatory crimes (burglary, pick-pocketing and robbery). In 2020, these crimes reached the lowest values ever recorded since 2004 after peaking in 2013 for robbery and in 2014 for burglary and pick-pocketing. Then in 2021, with the loosening of restrictive measures on mobility and social contacts, crime rose slightly again compared to 2020 but remained far below the values recorded in 2019.

In 2021, the rate of victims of burglary stood at 7.1 per 1,000 households (compared to 6.8 in 2020 and 10.4 in 2019), the rate of victims of pick-pocketing was 3.3 victims per 1,000 inhabitants (compared to 2.8 in 2020 and 5.1 in 2019) and the rate of victims of robbery was 0.9 victims per 1,000 inhabitants (it was 0.8 in 2020 and 1.0 in 2019 - Figure 4).

Figure 4. Households that were victims of burglaries and persons that were victims of robberies and pick-pocketing. Years 2019, 2020 and 2021. Burglaries per 1,000 households, and robberies and pick-pocketing per 1,000 population



Predatory crimes are distributed differently across the territory. The highest rate of victims of pick-pocketing was found in the Centre and the North-west with respectively 4.9 victims and 4.8 victims per 1,000 inhabitants compared to 1.4 victims per 1,000 inhabitants in the South and Islands (1.6 victims per 1,000 inhabitants in the South and 1 victim per 1,000 inhabitants in the Islands).

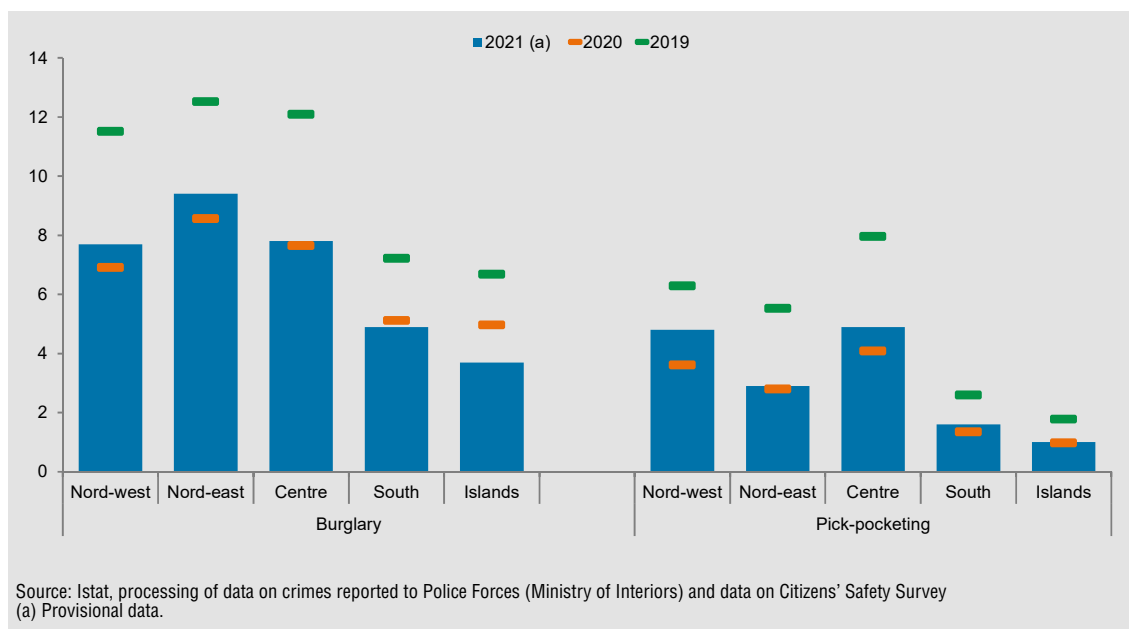
Burglary was more widespread in the Centre-North and in particular in the North-east, where there were 9.4 victims per 1,000 households, whereas in the South and the Islands the figure was 4.9 and 3.7 victims per 1,000 households, respectively.

For robbery, on the other hand, there were much smaller differences: the highest value was in the North-west with 1 victim per 1,000 inhabitants and the lowest in the Islands (0.4 victims per 1,000 inhabitants - Figure 5).

Between 2019 and 2020, the decrease in the rate of victims of burglary and pick-pocketing was steepest in the Centre-North where the values were highest. In 2021, victims of burglary per 1,000 households slightly increased again in the North and Central regions, while they continued to decrease in the South and particularly in the Islands, while victims of pick-pocketing increased in all geographic areas except the Islands, but more markedly in the North-west and in the Centre.

Between 2019 and 2020, robbery victims per 1,000 inhabitants decrease the most in the North-west and in the Centre-South regions, where the phenomenon was most widespread. In 2021, the victim rate increased again in the northern regions, remained stable in the Centre, and continued to decrease in the South and Islands.

Figure 5. Households that were victims of burglary and persons that were victims of pick-pocketing by geographic breakdown. Years 2019, 2020 and 2021. Burglaries per 1,000 households and pick-pocketing per 1,000 population



Source: Istat, processing of data on crimes reported to Police Forces (Ministry of Interiors) and data on Citizens' Safety Survey
(a) Provisional data.

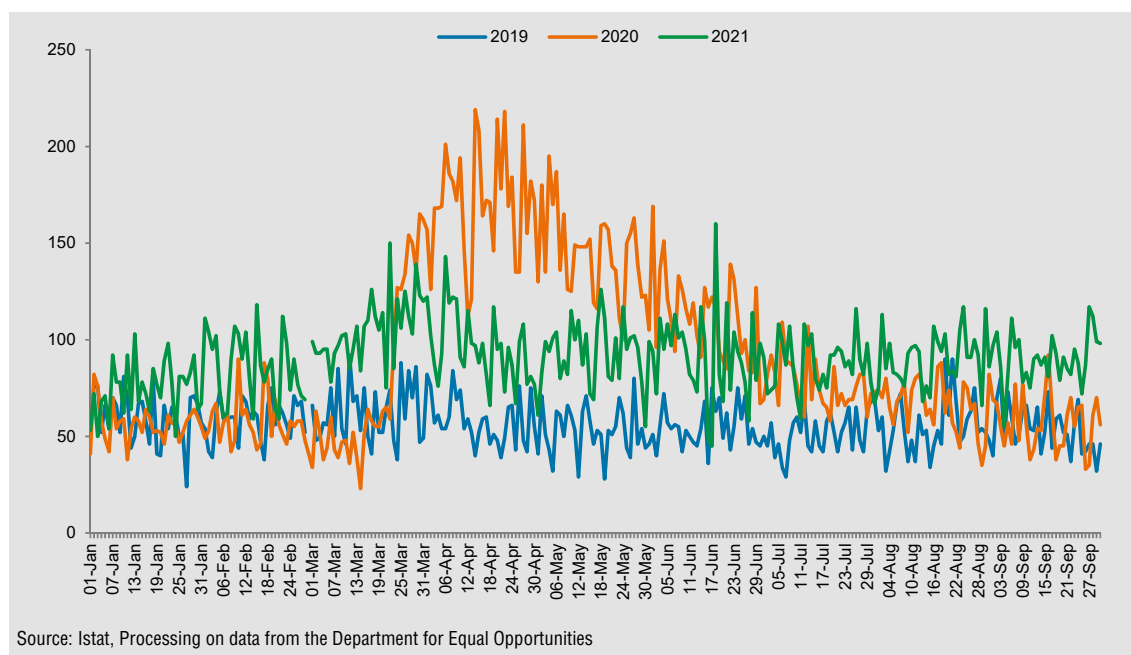
Calls to the 1522 helpline increased in the two years of the pandemic

The 1522 helpline² against violence and stalking, provided by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, is a very supportive tool for victims of violence.

The information and awareness-raising campaigns against violence and stalking, carried out by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and disseminated between March and April 2020, reinforced the message of the importance of seeking help to get out of violence.

The data collected by 1522 showed a sharp increase in valid calls³ during the lockdown; calls then decreased during Phase 2 of the pandemic and the gradual and progressive reopening from May onwards⁴. In 2021, the number of valid calls continued to remain higher than the same months of 2020, except for the lockdown months, and 2019 (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Number of valid calls to the 1522 number. January 1, 2019-September 30, 2021 (daily data). Absolute values



In the first three quarters of 2021, among the reasons for contacting the helpline, calls for "requests for help from victims of violence" and "reports of violence" continued to dominate, which together made up 45% (11,105) of valid calls. Compared to the same period of the

2 The 1522 number is active 24 hours a day, every day of the year, and can be reached toll-free throughout the nation on a land-line or cell phone. The helpline is available in Italian, English, French, Spanish and Arabic. The telephone operators working for the service provide a first response to the needs of victims of gender-based violence and stalking, offering useful information and an introduction to the anti-violence centres and public and private social/healthcare services available everywhere in Italy and listed on the DPO's official map.

3 Incorrect calls, pranks calls and calls from stalkers are excluded.

4 Sources: Istat, *Il numero verde 1522 durante la pandemia - Third quarter 2021, 25 November 2021* <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/250804>; Istat, *L'effetto della pandemia sulla violenza di genere 2020-2021, 25 November 2021*, <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/263847>.

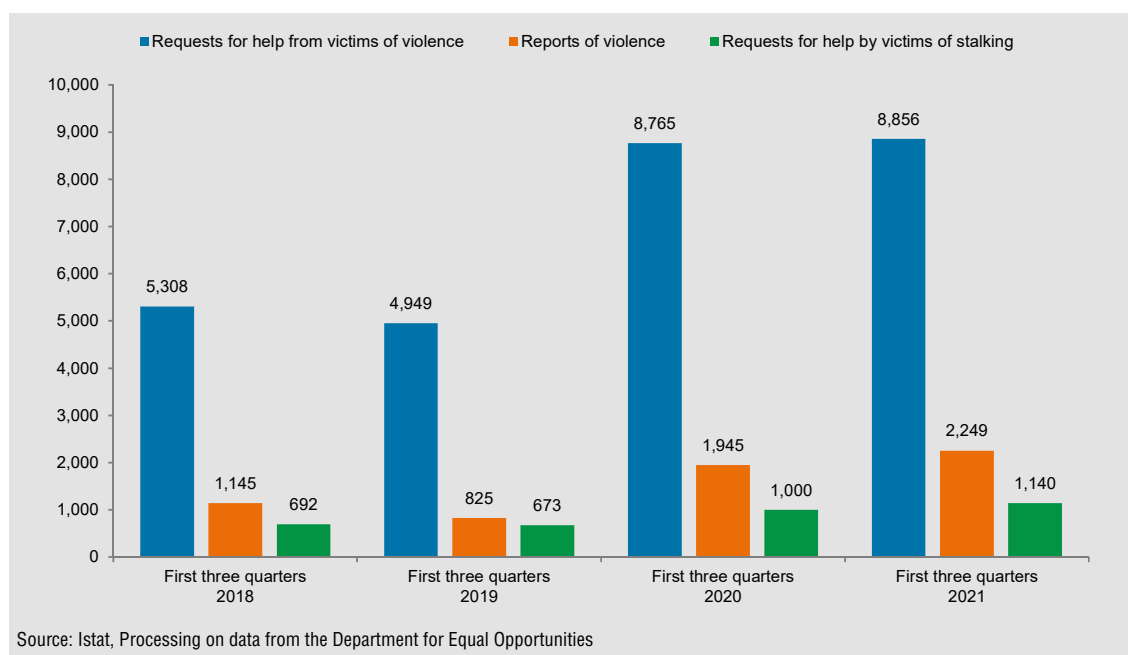
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previous year, they increased, as well as the number of calls for "requests for help by victims of stalking" (Figure 7).

Data from the first three quarters of 2021 confirmed that the place where violence most frequently occurred is the victim's home: 85.2% of the victims declared, in fact, that the violent act occurred in their home (86.2% in the first three quarters of 2020).

Figure 7. Valid calls to the 1522 number for some reasons for calling. Years 2018-2021 (first three quarters). Absolute values



The proportion of victims who reported the violence they experienced to the police continues to remain very low: in the first three quarters of 2021, only 17.2% declared that they had filed a complaint, which should be added to the 3.0% of victims who filed a complaint but then withdrew it.

ANTI-VIOLENCE CENTRE USERS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PANDEMIC

In 2020, more than 15,000 women started a customised pathway out of violence at the Anti-Violence Centres adhering to the State-Regions Agreement¹.

Over 90% of women (about 13,700) went to an Anti-Violence Centre for the first time in 2020. 5.6% of these started their path out of violence in March 2020 and 15% did so between April and May, overcoming the restrictions of the health emergency.

For 19.9% of the women (more than 3,000), it was an emergency intervention, which increased in March, April and May, when the highest percentages were registered.

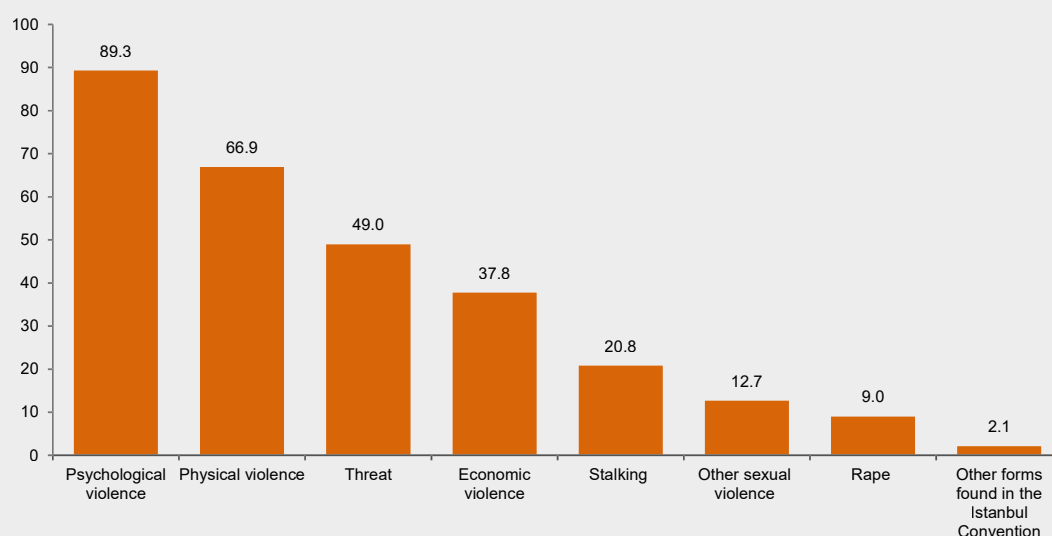
29.4% of the women who decided to undertake a pathway out of violence were between 40 and 49 years old, 26.9% between 30 and 39 years old, 18.8% were under 30, and 16.9% between 50 and 59 years old. 72% were Italian citizens and 59% were domiciled in the same province where the centre was located.

Considering the cases in which information on the duration of violence was present (about 10,400), it emerges that for 74.2% of the women, about 7,700, the violence did not originate with the pandemic but existed before: 40.6% of the women had suffered violence for more than 5 years, 33.6% from 1 to 5 years.

The history of violence saw 9 out of 10 women having suffered psychological violence, 66.9% physical violence and 49.0% threats, 37.8% economic violence (Figure A). The stories described the perpetration of more than one type of violence: only 16.3% experienced only one type of violence while 10.5% experienced more than four.

In 59.8% of the cases, the offender of the violence was the cohabiting partner, 23% an ex-partner, and 9.5% another family member or relative; violence suffered outside the family and the couple constituted only the remaining 7.7%.

Figure A. Women who started the personalised path out of violence by type of violence experienced before contacting the Anti-Violence Center (CAV), Year 2020. Percentages



Source: Istat, Survey of Anti-Violence Center Users

¹ According to the State, Regions and Autonomous Provinces Agreement of 2014, Anti-Violence Centres are "facilities that welcome women of all ages and their minor children - free of charge - who have suffered violence, regardless of their place of residence". In 2020, 270 out of 365 Anti-Violence Centres participated in the survey, with a response rate of 74%.

In 2020, the first year of the pandemic, homicides continued to decrease among men, while they remained stable among women

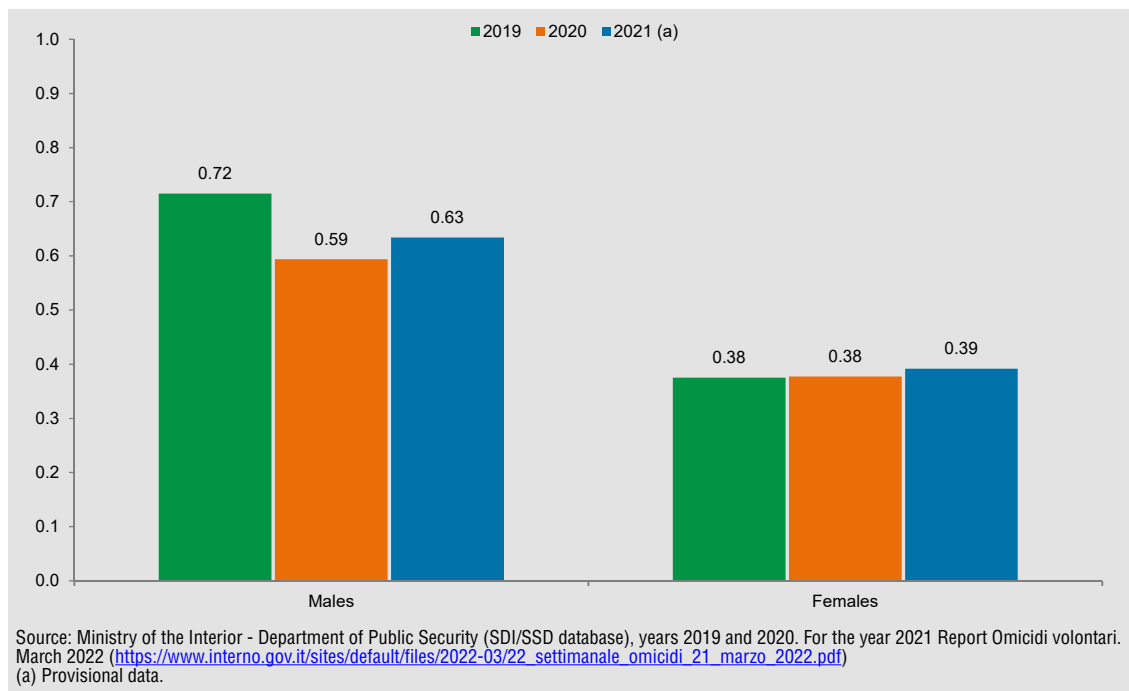
In 2020, 289 homicides were committed in Italy, 0.49 per 100,000 inhabitants. The homicide rate decreased further compared to 2019 when it stood at 0.53 per 100 thousand inhabitants (for a total of 318 homicides), confirming the long-term downward trend. Provisional data for 2021 showed a slight increase in the homicide rate (0.51)⁵.

In 2020, there were 172 male and 115 female homicide victims⁶ (0.59 and 0.38 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants of the same gender, respectively). Between 2019 and 2020, the downward trend in the homicide rate for men was confirmed (it was 0.72 in 2019); the provisional data for 2021, on the other hand, showed a slight increase (0.63), although it remained below the 2019 value.

In contrast, the homicide rate of women showed overall stability over the three years (0.39 in 2021 - Figure 8).

In 2020, the decrease in the homicide rate was mainly due to the regions of the South and

Figure 8. Homicide rate by gender. Years 2019-2021. Per 100,000 inhabitants of the same gender



Islands, where the rate went from 0.71 to 0.60 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Despite the fact that, in the long run, the largest decrease was observed in the South and Islands, this area continues to record the highest homicide rate (0.60 against 0.42 in the North and 0.43 per 100 thousand inhabitants in the Centre).

Italy ranked among the countries with the lowest incidence of homicides, being second to last in the ranking (0.53 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2019). Among the EU

5 Source: Ministry of the Interior, *Report Omicidi volontari. March 2022*, https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/2022-03/22_settimanale_omicidi_21_marzo_2022.pdf.

6 The number of homicide victims (males + females) may differ slightly from the number of homicide crimes due to data extractions made at different times.

countries, only Slovenia had a better situation than Italy, with a homicide rate of 0.48 per 100,000 inhabitants.

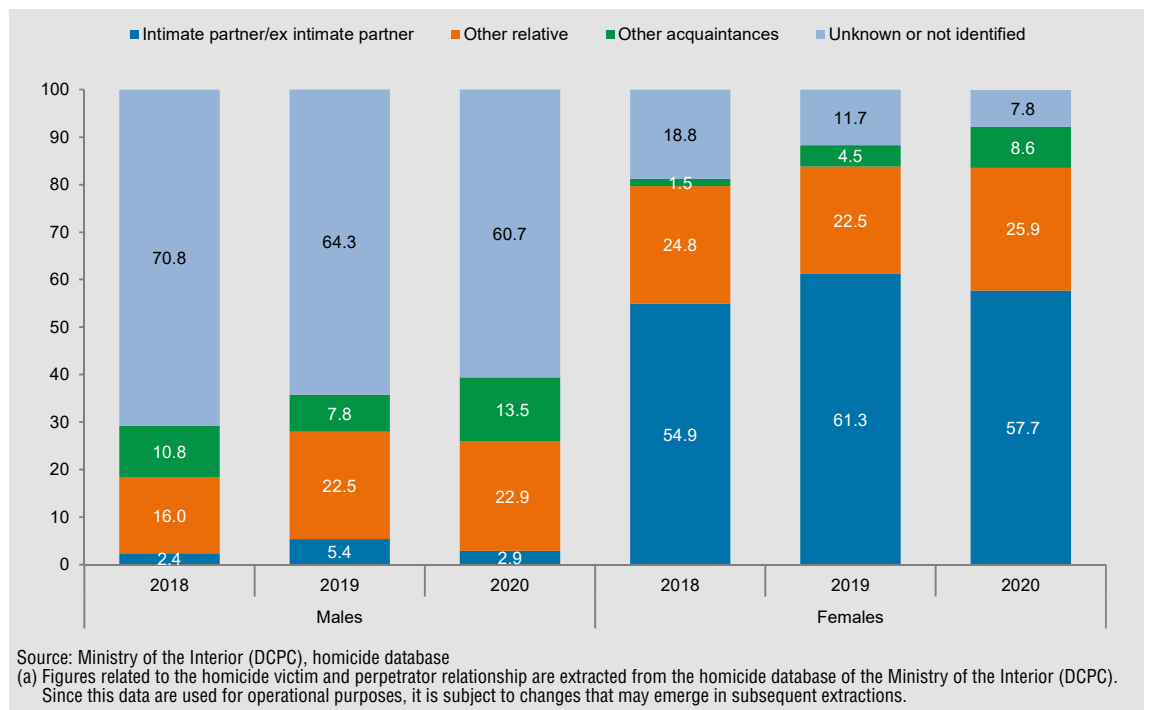
Even considering female victims, Italy was one of the EU countries where the incidence of homicides was lower. In 2019, the rate was 0.36 homicide victims per 100 thousand women, which is higher only than Greece (0.34) and Ireland (0.32).

Although the homicide rate for men is still significantly higher than for women, progress over time has been considerable. On the other hand, for women, that started from a more favourable situation, the decrease over time has followed a much slower pace (occasionally registering slight increases) and can be attributed to a decrease in the number of victims by unknown or unidentified offenders, rather than to a decrease of victims within the family. When examining the relationship between offender and victim of the homicide, strong differences remain between women and men: while women are mainly killed in the couple and within the family, men in most cases are victims of an offender who is unknown or unidentified by the police.

In 2020, 92.2% of female homicides were committed by a known person. This figure was up from 2018 when it stood at 81.2%. Specifically, approximately 6 out of 10 women were killed by their current or former partner, 25.9% by a family member (including children and parents) and 8.6% by another person the woman knew (friends, colleagues, etc.).

The situation is very different for men: in 2020, only 39.4 per cent were killed by a known person and only 2.9 per cent by a partner or ex-partner, while 60.7 per cent were killed by a stranger or offender not identified by the police (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Victims of homicide by relationship with the murderer and gender. Years 2018, 2019 and 2020 (a). Per 100 victims of the same gender



Indicators

1. **Intentional homicide rate:** Number of intentional homicide on total population per 100,000.
Source: Ministry of the Interior - Department of Public Security (SDI/SSD database).
2. **Burglary:** Victims of burglaries per 1,000 households. The number of victims is calculated using data on victims who reported burglary to the police, adjusted by the number of non-reporting victims from the Citizens' Safety Survey, using a specific correction factor by geographical area.
Source: Istat - Processing of data from crimes reported to Police Forces (Ministry of Interiors) and data on Citizens' Safety Survey.
3. **Pick-pocketing:** Victims of pick-pocketing on total population per 1,000. The number of victims is calculated using data on victims who reported pick-pocketing to the police, adjusted by the number of non-reporting victims from the Citizens' Safety Survey, using a specific correction factor by geographical area and by sex and age group.
Source: Istat - Processing of data from crimes reported to Police Forces (Ministry of Interiors) and data on Citizens' Safety Survey.
4. **Robbery:** Victims of robberies on total population per 1,000. The number of victims is calculated using data on victims who reported robbery to the police, adjusted by the number of non-reporting victims from the Citizens' Safety Survey, using a specific correction factor by geographical area and by sex and age group.
Source: Istat - Processing of data from crimes reported to Police Forces (Ministry of Interiors) and data on Citizens' Safety Survey.
5. **Physical violence on women:** Percentage of women aged 16-70 victim of physical violence in the last 5 years before the interview on total women aged 16-70.
Source: Istat - Women Safety Survey.
6. **Sexual violence on women:** Percentage of women aged 16-70 victim of sexual violence, including physical sexual harassment, in the last 5 years before the interview on total women aged 16-70.
Source: Istat - Women Safety Survey.
7. **Intimate partnership violence:** Percentage of women aged 16-70 victim of physical or sexual violence by the partner or ex-partner during the 5 years before the interview on total women aged 16-70 who have or had a partner.
Source: Istat - Women Safety Survey.
8. **Worries of being victim of a sexual violence:** Percentage of people aged 14 years and over who are very or quite worried of being victim of a sexual violence for yourself or for someone in your family.
Source: Istat - Citizens' Safety Survey.
9. **Perception of safety walking alone in the dark:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over feeling very or quite safe walking alone when it is dark in the area where they live.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
10. **Concrete fear:** Percentage of people aged 14 and over who are afraid of becoming concretely a victim of crime in the last 3 months.
Source: Istat - Citizens' Safety Survey.
11. **Social decay (or incivilities):** Percentage of people aged 14 and over who often see elements of social and environmental decay in the area where they live. They often see at least one element of decay among the following: people who take drugs, people who sell drugs, vandalism against the public good, prostitutes looking for clients.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.
12. **Perception of crime risk:** Percentage of households declaring a very high or quite high risk of crime in the area where they live on the total number of households.
Source: Istat - Survey on Aspects of daily life.

Indicators by region and geographic area

REGIONS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS	Intentional homicide rate (a)	Burglary (b)	Pick-pock- eting (c)	Robbery (c)	Physical violence on women (d)	Sexual violence on women (d)
	2020	2021 (*)	2021 (*)	2021 (*)	2014	2014
Piemonte	0.7	7.9	4.8	0.9	6.3	6.2
Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	0.0	2.0	0.2	0.3	7.0	3.9
Liguria	0.6	5.7	3.7	1.0	7.8	7.6
Lombardia	0.4	8.1	5.1	1.1	6.1	6.6
Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol	0.4	3.8	1.7	0.6	6.8	5.1
<i>Bolzano/Bozen</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>6.9</i>	<i>5.9</i>
<i>Trento</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>6.7</i>	<i>4.3</i>
Veneto	0.3	11.2	2.5	0.6	5.0	6.2
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	0.2	5.3	0.7	0.3	5.9	5.9
Emilia-Romagna	0.3	10.0	4.3	1.3	8.2	6.7
Toscana	0.4	10.1	3.5	0.9	8.9	4.5
Umbria	0.1	9.2	1.4	0.5	8.0	6.9
Marche	0.6	5.0	1.1	0.4	7.8	5.0
Lazio	0.5	6.8	7.3	1.1	9.1	6.8
Abruzzo	0.2	6.5	0.9	0.4	9.3	9.1
Molise	0.0	5.1	0.6	0.2	7.7	7.1
Campania	0.7	5.0	2.6	1.4	8.4	8.8
Puglia	0.6	5.6	1.0	0.6	6.8	5.3
Basilicata	0.5	3.1	0.3	0.2	4.3	6.5
Calabria	0.7	2.6	0.4	0.2	4.6	4.7
Sicilia	0.7	4.0	1.1	0.5	5.7	5.2
Sardegna	0.6	2.7	0.7	0.3	6.6	5.2
North	0.4	8.4	4.0	1.0	6.4	6.4
North-west	0.5	7.7	4.8	1.0	6.3	6.6
North-east	0.3	9.4	2.9	0.9	6.5	6.3
Centre	0.4	7.8	4.9	0.9	8.8	5.9
South and Islands	0.6	4.5	1.4	0.7	6.9	6.5
South	0.6	4.9	1.6	0.8	7.3	7.2
Islands	0.7	3.7	1.0	0.4	5.9	5.2
Italy	0.5	7.1	3.3	0.9	7.0	6.4

(a) Per 100.000 inhabitants;

(b) Per 1.000 households;

(c) Per 1.000 inhabitants;

(d) Per 100 women aged 16-70;

(e) Per 100 women aged 16-70 who have or have had an intimate relationship with a partner;

(f) Per 100 persons aged 14 and over;

(g) Per 100 households;

(*) Provisional data.

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Intimate partnership violence (e)	Worries of being victim of a sexual violence (f)	Perception of safety walking alone in the dark (f)	Concrete fear (f)	Social decay (or incivilities) (f)	Perception of crime risk (g)
2014	2016	2021	2016	2021	2021
4.7	33.7	64.0	2.6	6.1	18.4
3.6	16.3	79.4	4.7	1.2	5.6
6.2	26.1	64.4	5.0	4.8	20.2
4.6	32.4	59.0	9.5	7.3	21.3
4.5	19.5	74.3	4.6	3.9	9.2
4.9	20.3	70.1	5.0	4.4	9.7
4.2	18.6	78.3	4.3	3.4	8.7
4.4	29.9	62.0	7.6	4.7	17.4
3.0	26.0	70.3	4.3	2.8	11.3
5.9	28.5	64.1	8.5	6.4	19.5
4.9	29.1	67.1	6.4	6.3	18.6
5.2	26.5	63.5	5.0	6.4	18.4
4.3	19.7	66.0	6.5	4.8	13.9
5.7	37.8	55.5	7.9	10.1	30.4
7.6	28.5	67.6	4.9	3.6	14.0
6.9	23.1	70.0	4.6	2.7	7.0
5.8	23.1	57.8	5.2	8.8	31.9
4.6	22.2	62.9	5.8	5.8	22.0
4.4	24.6	76.6	6.9	2.5	12.3
2.4	34.4	74.2	4.7	2.9	11.1
4.6	24.1	56.6	4.3	5.0	19.8
4.4	23.0	70.5	3.8	4.8	10.5
4.8	30.3	62.6	7.2	6.0	18.9
4.8	31.9	61.0	7.1	6.7	20.3
4.8	28.0	64.8	7.3	5.1	16.8
5.2	31.9	61.0	7.0	7.9	23.8
4.9	24.6	62.4	4.9	5.8	21.0
5.1	25.0	63.5	5.3	6.2	22.8
4.5	23.9	60.1	4.2	4.9	17.3
4.9	28.7	62.2	6.4	6.3	20.6

