

A photograph of a street corner in Europe, bathed in warm, golden light. The wall on the left is covered in graffiti, including the word 'EXIT' written vertically. A 'One way' sign with a left-pointing arrow is visible on the right. The street is paved with cobblestones, and the overall atmosphere is one of urban decay and social issues.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACROSS EUROPE

An overview of research commissioned by ADT Europe

Foreword

Anti-social behaviour has received considerable public attention in recent years. We all have a personal perspective, influenced by how it affects the communities in which we live, but also the way in which anti-social behaviour is reported by the media.

This issue has emerged against a backdrop of social and economic change in Europe over recent decades. The European Union has welcomed new member states, extending cultural diversity and fuelling increased migration across the region. Demographics have shifted, with many countries facing the future with an older population. Traditional economic challenges, such as unemployment and tackling poverty, remain a concern for countries of all sizes. Particularly in the last few years, security has become of greater political and social relevance than ever before.

ADT's business is about helping people feel safer and more secure in this changing world. From our experience around Europe, whilst tackling crime remains a priority in all countries, the relative importance of anti-social behaviour has been growing. The electronic security solutions we provide help people to detect, monitor and deter problems such as anti-social behaviour. However, the application of technology in isolation is rarely a complete solution. It plays an important role, but broader strategies involving the public, business and authorities working together are usually required.

Understanding the way in which people perceive a problem like anti-social behaviour helps to develop more successful strategies to deal with the issue and that is why we have commissioned this research. Our business reaches across Europe, encouraging us to take a view that crosses national boundaries. The results clearly show strong national opinions, but also trends and views

shared by a number of countries.

For ADT, this research provides fresh insights that will help improve understanding of an important challenge for Europe. We are sharing the results with policy makers at various levels and plan to undertake further work to explore some of the issues that have been highlighted. We also believe this research offers a benchmark on European attitudes and therefore plan to follow up over the next three years to determine how perceptions are changing.

I would like to thank all of those who took part in this research across Europe and the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science at University College London for providing us with their advice and commentary. I hope you find the research thought provoking. If you have any views or feedback you would like to share, you will find contact details for ADT at the end of this report.



Adrian Casey
*Managing Director,
 ADT Europe & South Africa*



Executive summary

This report presents an overview of omnibus research commissioned by ADT Europe in January 2006, examining views on anti-social behaviour in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

Key highlights from the research include:

Anti-social behaviour is perceived as a growing problem in France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Spain. People in Italy perceive anti-social behaviour to be a significant problem, but it is not thought to be growing in the same way as other countries.

Great Britain and France are perceived as having the biggest anti-social behaviour problem, whilst Spain and the Netherlands are perceived as having the smallest problem.

When asked about the scale of the problem in their own country, people believe it is worse than those from other countries believe it to be. For example, the Spanish perceive anti-social behaviour to be a bigger problem in their country than anywhere else in Europe. In contrast, people in other countries perceived Spain to have much less of a problem than Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy.

Vandalism, rowdiness (e.g. shouting, fighting in public) and disrespectful behaviour are believed to be the most concerning behaviours.

The locations perceived to be at greatest risk of anti-social behaviour differ significantly between the countries. People in France and Italy choose residential housing estates as their areas of greatest concern. Bars or nightclubs are believed to be the places of greatest concern in Great Britain and Spain. For Germans, transport termini (bus stations etc) are perceived to be of greatest concern, whilst for the Dutch it is shopping areas.

The research reveals that Europeans feel people who are 25 and under are most associated with anti-social behaviour. However, in all countries at least 19 per cent of respondents think that no particular age is associated with anti-social behaviour.

Overwhelmingly, all countries feel that parents are responsible for controlling anti-social behaviour. After parents, each country showed marked differences in who they feel is responsible.

Lack of discipline and an absence of positive role models are perceived to be significant factors in all countries. In Germany, unemployment was chosen as a significant contributing factor, whilst social or cultural tensions were highlighted in France and the Netherlands.

The majority view increasing the severity of sentencing as the most effective way of reducing anti-social behaviour. Great Britain had the largest percentage feeling that banning alcohol consumption in public places would be an effective deterrent. All other countries feel that working to enhance cultural and ethnic tolerance would be most beneficial after sentencing.

Forty eight per cent of respondents say they would not challenge a group of 14 year old boys vandalising a bus shelter. Only 14 per cent say they would feel very confident about challenging them. The Germans are the most confident, whilst the British are least confident.

This report also contains an expert commentary on the research results and related issues by Professor Gloria Laycock, Director of the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science at University College London.

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1.0 Introduction to the research

This report presents an overview of omnibus research commissioned by ADT Europe in January 2006 examining views on anti-social behaviour in six European countries.

An online survey questioned more than 7,000 people in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain on their attitudes towards anti-social behaviour in their respective countries and across Europe.

This is the first European cross-country research on anti-social behaviour. The results provide evidence of issues previously discussed within the media of some countries and give new insights into how the problem is perceived. Further information on the research scope can be found in Section 5 of this report. Detailed findings are available on request from ADT Europe.

What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is any activity that impacts on other people in a negative way. A precise definition is difficult to provide, however types of anti-social behaviour fall into four main areas:

- **Misuse of public space**
(e.g. street drinking, inappropriate use of vehicles)
- **Disregard for community well-being**
(e.g. swearing, drunken behaviour, uncontrolled animals)
- **Acts directed at people**
(e.g. bullying, verbal abuse, intimidating behaviour)
- **Environmental damage**
(e.g. graffiti, vandalism, dropping litter).

Some anti-social behaviours are also considered criminal activity (e.g. vandalism). However, there are also anti-social behaviours regarded as a nuisance to communities or individuals which are not governed by specific legislation (e.g. bullying). The extent to which anti-social behaviours are governed by law varies on a national and regional basis.

For the purposes of this research, anti-social behaviour was defined as minor criminal activity such as vandalism and graffiti and unpleasant or inappropriate behaviour (e.g. street drinking, bullying and noisy neighbours). The definition did not include significant criminal activity (e.g. theft).

2.0 Research results

2.1 A growing concern for Europe

The ADT research reveals that whilst causes and locations vary from country to country, anti-social behaviour is perceived as a growing problem in France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Spain.

Eighty-four per cent of Germans believe anti-social behaviour is a growing problem in their country, closely followed by Great Britain (83 per cent), the Netherlands (81 per cent), Spain (80 per cent) and France (78 per cent).

Italy's results show a marked difference from other countries, with less than half of those questioned (46 per cent) feeling anti-social behaviour is a growing problem in Italy. However, this is still the majority response, with just over a third (38 per cent) thinking that anti-social behaviour is a static problem.

All of the 7,000 plus people who took part in the survey across Europe were asked about their perception of anti-social behaviour in each of the six countries. When asked about the severity of the problem in each country, the percentage of respondents classifying it as a big or moderate problem was as follows:

Each country perceives its anti-social behaviour problems to be greater than other countries believe them to be. For example, when asked about the issue in Spain, 90 per cent of Spanish respondents said anti-social behaviour in their country is a big or moderate problem. This compares with 57 per cent of Dutch respondents, 53 per cent of Italians, 51 per cent of French, 34 per cent of Germans and 33 per cent of British.

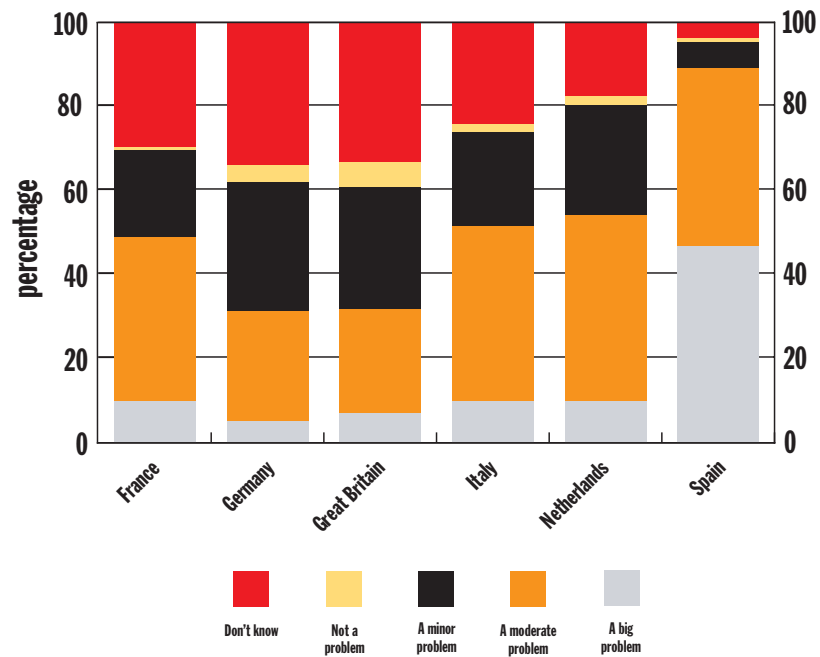


Figure 1. The scale of Spain's anti-social behaviour problem

1	Great Britain	76%
2	France	75%
3	Germany	61%
4	Italy	52%
5	Spain	51%
6	The Netherlands	44%

2.0 Research results

2.2 Behaviours of concern

Whilst the majority of survey respondents agree that anti-social behaviour is a growing problem, the behaviours that cause most concern vary across the countries.

Vandalism and rowdy behaviour are, for many, the most concerning behaviours. Across Europe, 70 per cent believe vandalism is a big problem. This is most marked in the Netherlands (88 per cent). Overall, all countries, except Great Britain, pinpointed vandalism as their primary anti-social behaviour concern.

Rowdy behaviour is also of considerable concern. For the purpose of the research this was defined as 'shouting, loutish behaviour and fighting in public'. Seventy one per cent of French and Germans feel it is a big problem in their own country, whilst 62 per cent of Britons and 63 per cent of Dutch share this belief for their own country.

Disrespectful behaviour (e.g. bad language and rudeness) also features in the top three concerns of many countries. Over three fifths of respondents in France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Spain think this is one of their key problems.

All of the people who took part in the survey across Europe were asked what the most concerning behaviours were. The percentage of respondents choosing the following behaviours as one of the top three concerns was as follows:

1	Vandalism	70%
2	Rowdy behaviour	59%
3	Disrespectful behaviour	58%
4	Bullying	36%
5	Street drinking	24%
6	Noisy neighbours	17%
7	Graffiti	17%

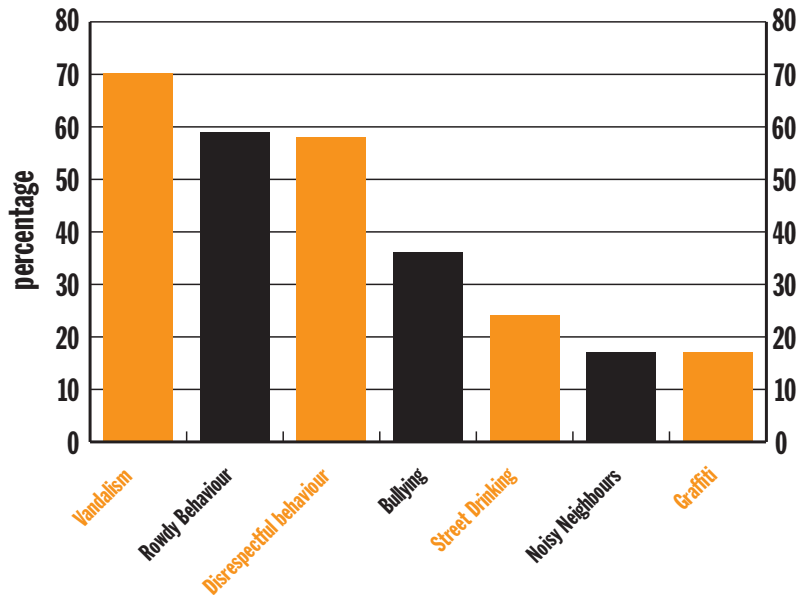


Figure 2. Behaviours of concern across Europe

2.3 Hotspots for anti-social behaviour

The locations identified as being at greatest risk of anti-social behaviour differ significantly between the countries. The location of greatest risk for each country is:

- 1 **France**
On residential housing estates/suburbs 80%
- 2 **Germany**
At transport termini (bus stations etc) 83%
- 3 **Great Britain**
In and around bars, nightclubs, pubs 80%
- 4 **Italy**
On residential housing estates/suburbs 64%
- 5 **The Netherlands**
In shopping areas 72%
- 6 **Spain**
In and around bars, nightclubs, pubs 81%

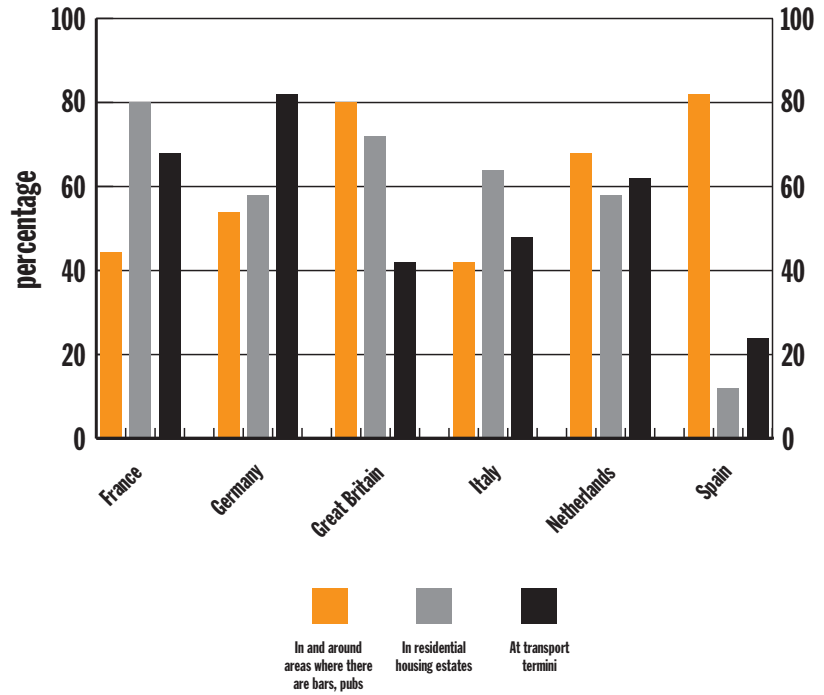


Figure 3. The perceived scale of the anti-social behaviour problem around bars, nightclubs and pubs, on residential housing estates and in the suburbs and at transport termini

2.0 Research results

2.4 Who is responsible?

The research reveals that Europeans feel those who are 25 and under are most associated with anti-social behaviour.

In every European country over half of those questioned associated 14-17 year olds and 18-25 year olds with anti-social behaviour. This opinion is most marked in Great Britain and France where 76 per cent and 70 per cent respectively of those questioned pinpointed these age groups. Overall, 41 per cent of those questioned in the survey think 14-17 year olds are associated with anti-social behaviour and 27 per cent, 18-25 year olds.

However, in all countries at least 19 per cent of respondents think that no particular age is associated with anti-social behaviour. In Germany this figure was 38 per cent, higher than the individual percentage they gave to the 14-17 and 18-25 year old age groups (33 and 25 per cent respectively).

Overwhelmingly, survey respondents feel that parents are most responsible for controlling anti-social behaviour.

After parents, each country showed marked differences in who they feel is responsible for anti-social behaviour. These are discussed in further detail in the individual country pages.

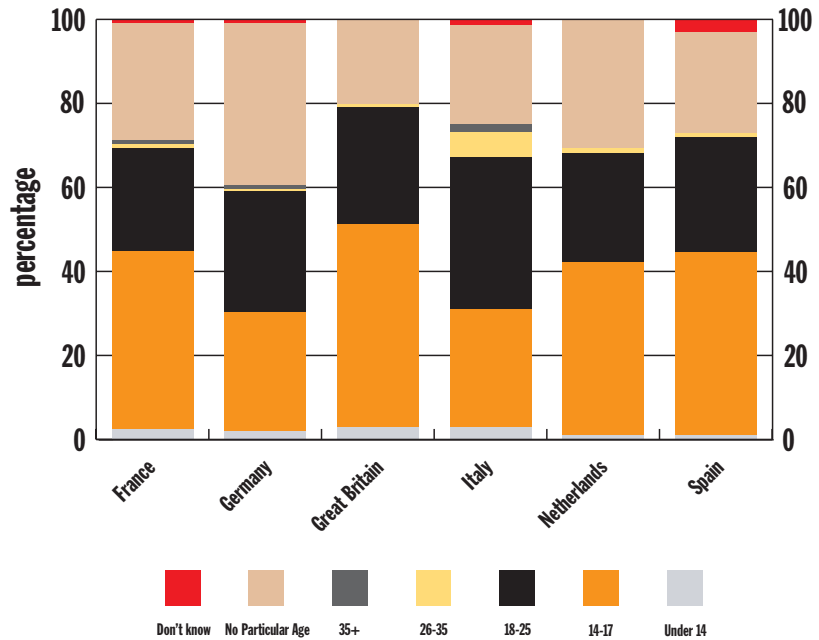


Figure 4. Age group most associated with anti-social behaviour

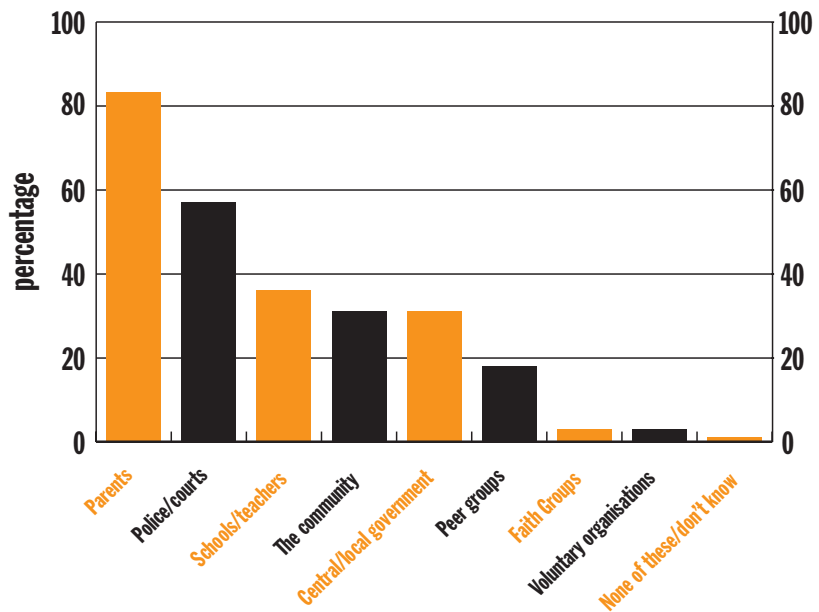


Figure 5. Where does responsibility for controlling anti-social behaviour lie?

2.5 What contributes to the problem?

Young people are clearly associated with anti-social behaviour. Unsurprisingly, the contributing factors to this type of behaviour directly influence that group.

Lack of discipline at home and school are perceived to be the main contributing factor in all countries, except in Germany. Eighty three per cent chose this option in the Netherlands, 80 per cent in France, 79 per cent in Great Britain, 69 per cent in Spain and 61 per cent in Italy. Unemployment is seen as the main contributing factor in Germany (63 per cent).

Over one third of respondents in all countries (with the exception of Germany) feel that a lack of positive role models is also a contributing factor - this figure rose to half of respondents in Italy (50 per cent).

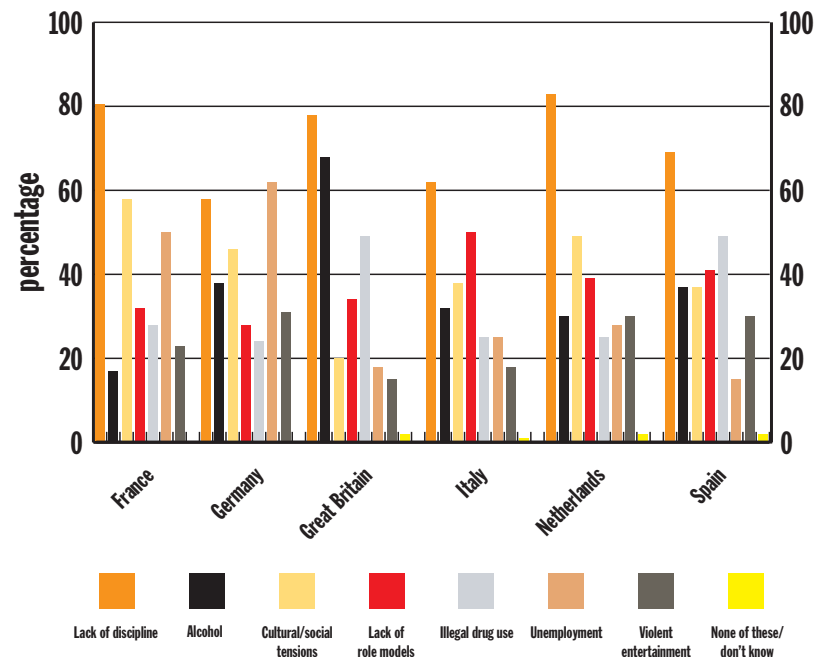


Figure 6. Contributing factors to anti-social behaviour

2.0 Research results

2.6 How do we stop the problem?

The majority view across Europe about effective ways of reducing anti-social behaviour is to increase the severity of sentencing for this type of activity. Great Britain and the Netherlands (both 49 per cent) hold this view most strongly, closely followed by France (45 per cent) and Spain (43 per cent). Less than two fifths hold this view in Italy (37 per cent) and Germany (36 per cent).

It should be noted that Great Britain had the largest percentage of respondents feeling that banning alcoholic drinking in public places (17 per cent) would be an effective deterrent. All other countries feel that working to enhance cultural/ethnic tolerance would be most beneficial after sentencing.

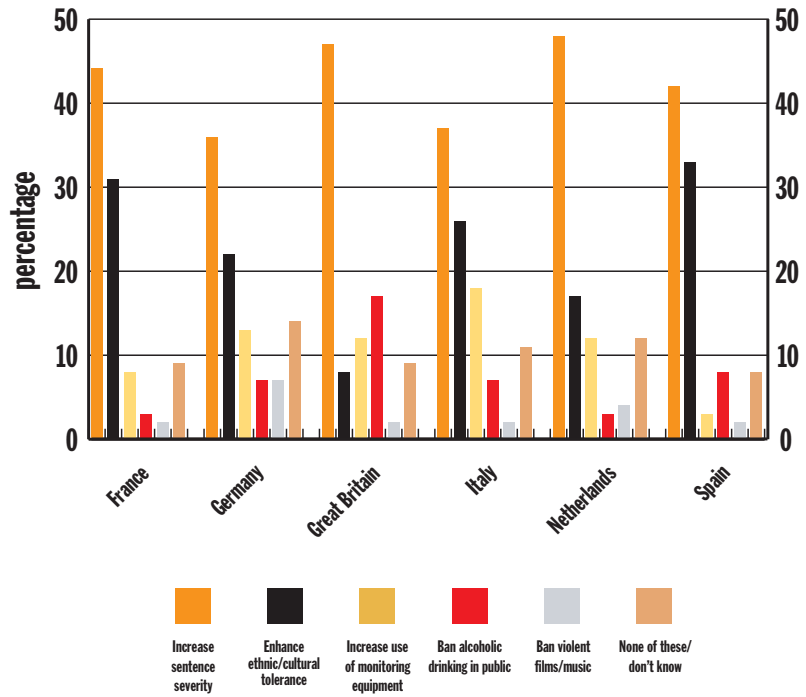


Figure 7. Effective ways of reducing anti-social behaviour

2.7 How willing are we to act?

All respondents were also asked about how they would handle anti-social behaviour face-to-face. Forty eight per cent of respondents say they would definitely not or probably not challenge a group of 14 year old boys vandalising a bus shelter. Only 14 per cent of all respondents say they would feel very confident about challenging them.

The Germans were the most confident - sixty four per cent say they would definitely or probably challenge them. Conversely, British respondents were least confident, 62 per cent would probably not or definitely not challenge the group. In France, Germany and Italy respondents from the 16-24 age groups were least likely to challenge the boys.

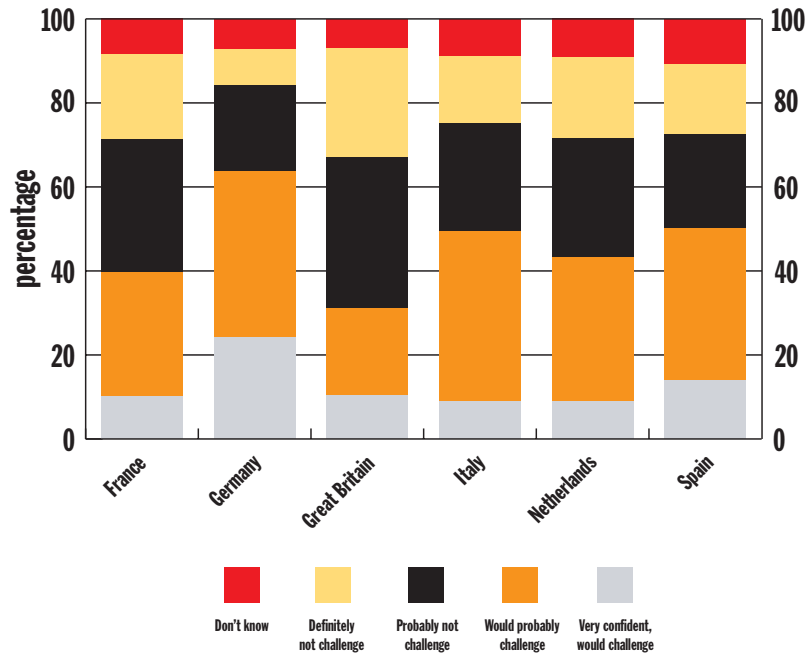


Figure 8. Respondents views on challenging a group of 14 year old boys vandalising a bus shelter

3.0 Country highlights

3.1 France

Seventy eight per cent of French think anti-social behaviour is a growing problem in their country.

How the French see themselves in Europe

The French think they have the biggest problem with anti-social behaviour in Europe. When asked how they viewed the scale of anti-social behaviour in each country, the proportions identifying it as a big or moderate problem were as follows for each country:

1	France	95%
2	Great Britain	68%
3	Germany	57%
4	Italy	55%
5	Spain	51%
6	The Netherlands	37%

The overall European view places France in second position with 75 per cent.

What is it?

As with most other European countries, vandalism (73 per cent) is the biggest perceived anti-social behaviour in France.

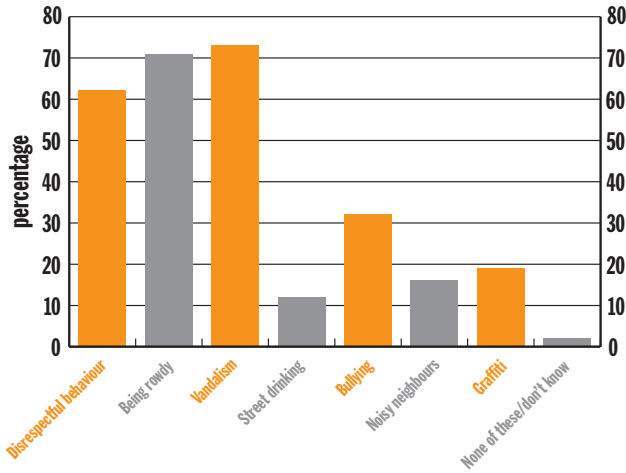


Figure 9. France: Anti-social behaviours

Where is it?

France chose residential housing estates and suburbs as the main flashpoint of anti-social behaviour.

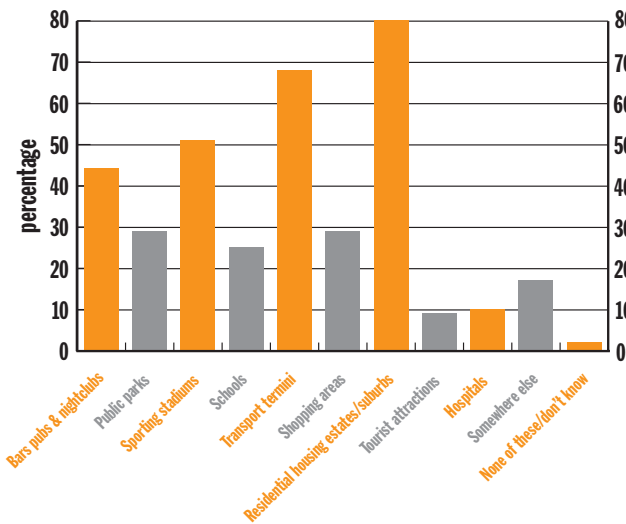


Figure 10. France: Locations of anti-social behaviour

Who is to blame?

Just under half of those questioned (44 per cent) think 14-17 year olds are most associated with anti-social behaviour. An overwhelming majority also feels that parents are predominately responsible for control of this type of behaviour (84 per cent). Forty five per cent feel that the police are also responsible.

What contributes to the problem?

As with all other countries, lack of discipline was perceived a key factor. Cultural tensions (58 per cent) are viewed as a key contribution to anti-social behaviour in France - more so than in other European countries. France was also one of the few countries that cited unemployment (50 per cent) as a contributing area to anti-social behaviour. The older age group (55-64) feel that illegal drug use (36 per cent) and aggressive entertainment (31 per cent) are also significant contributing factors.

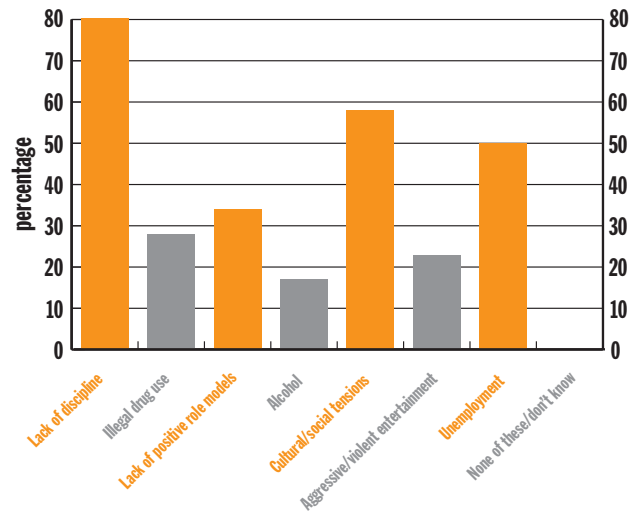


Figure 11. France: Contributory factors to anti-social behaviour

3.0 Country highlights

3.2 Germany

Eighty four per cent of Germans think anti-social behaviour is a growing problem in Germany. Those aged 35 and over think it is a greater problem than those under 35.

How the Germans see themselves in Europe

The Germans think they have the biggest problem with anti-social behaviour in Europe. When asked how they viewed the scale of anti-social behaviour in each country, the proportions identifying it as a big or moderate problem were as follows for each country:

1	Germany	90%
2	France	72%
3	Great Britain	67%
4	The Netherlands	44%
5	Italy	39%
6	Spain	34%

The overall European view places Germany in third position with 62 per cent.

What is it?

One of the key differences between the German results and the overall results is the choice of bullying as one of the three most worrying anti-social behaviours (52 per cent). More females (57 per cent) think this is a worrying behaviour than males (48 per cent). The other noticeable finding is that disrespectful behaviour is chosen by more 16-24 year olds (49 per cent) than any other age group.

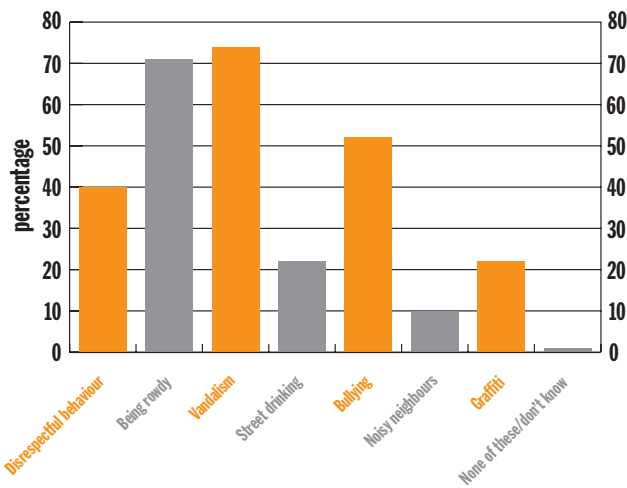


Figure 12. Germany: Anti-social behaviours

Where is it?

Germany identified schools as more of a hotspot than any other country in Europe. Similar to France and the Netherlands, Germans believe that transport termini a hotspot for anti-social behaviour in their country.

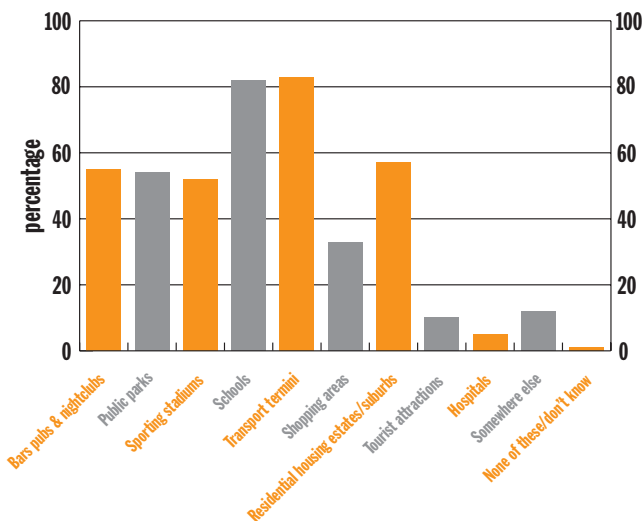


Figure 13. Germany: Locations of anti-social behaviour

Who is to blame?

The majority of respondents feel that no particular age is associated with anti-social behaviour (38 per cent). Of those who did choose an age, 33 per cent chose 14-17 year olds. Most 16-24 year olds (49 per cent) chose this option. Parents (81 per cent) and schools (54 per cent) are positioned as responsible for controlling anti-social behaviour.

The most noticeable differences from the German average are in the 16-24 year old age group. Police (59 per cent) and peer groups (25 per cent) are positioned higher than the survey average (44 and 16 per cent respectively) and the community was lower (38 per cent compared with a 51 per cent average).

What contributes to the problem?

The perception in Germany is that unemployment contributes significantly to anti-social behaviour (63 per cent). After this, the view of Germans reflects the pan-European opinion with 58 per cent citing lack of discipline as an issue. Cultural/social tensions are a greater issue for males (51 per cent) than females (42 per cent) and unemployment and aggressive entertainment were seen as greater problems by the older generations.

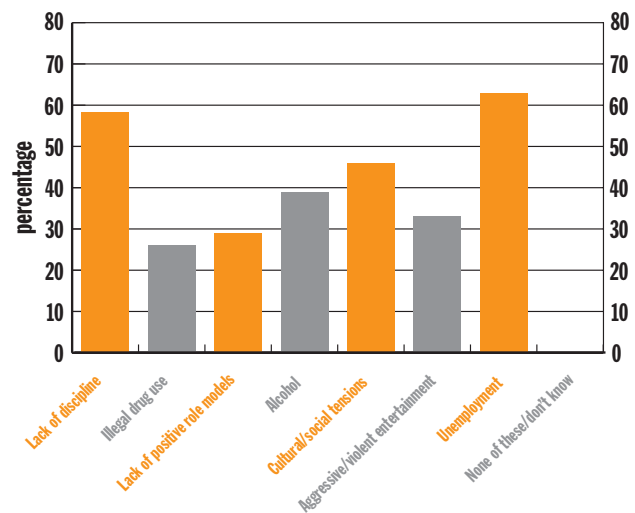


Figure 14. Germany: Contributory factors to anti-social behaviour

3.0 Country highlights

3.3 Great Britain

Eighty three per cent of Britons think anti-social behaviour is a growing problem in their country.

How the British see themselves in Europe

The British think they have the biggest problem with anti-social behaviour in Europe. When asked how they viewed the scale of anti-social behaviour in each country, the proportions identifying it as a big or moderate problem were as follows for each country:

1	Great Britain	95%
2	France	55%
3	Germany	42%
4	Spain	33%
5	Italy	30%
6	The Netherlands	24%

This British view reflected the overall European view that Great Britain has the biggest problem with anti-social behaviour.

What is it?

Great Britain is one of the few countries that bucked the European trend. Although vandalism is cited as one of the biggest problems of anti-social behaviour (61 per cent), disrespectful behaviour and being rowdy are seen as slightly more significant (63 and 62 per cent respectively).

Being rowdy is perceived by 16-24 year olds as the biggest problem (62 per cent), while vandalism is the greatest concern for the 55-64 age groups (71 per cent). Bullying is also a bigger issue for the 16-24 age group (43 per cent) than for any other. This problem area is also identified by more women than men (34 per cent compared with 26 per cent).

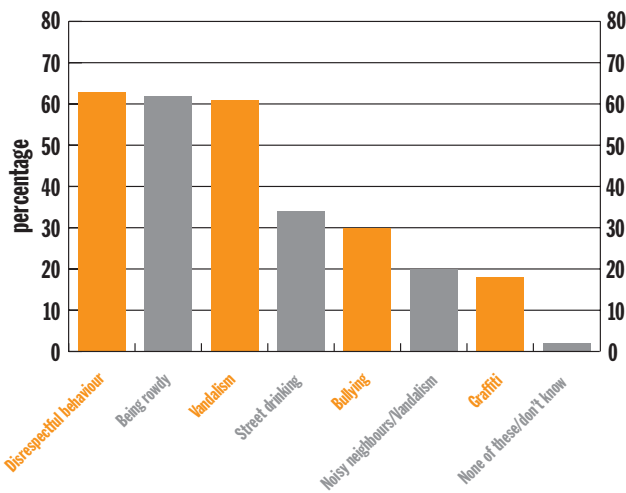


Figure 15. Great Britain: Anti-social behaviours

Where is it?

Great Britain identified bars, pubs and nightclubs as the main locations for anti-social behaviour, followed by residential housing estates and suburbs.

Sixteen to 24 year olds think that shopping areas (35 per cent) and residential housing estates/suburbs (63 per cent) are less associated with anti-social behaviour than the research average (56 and 74 per cent).

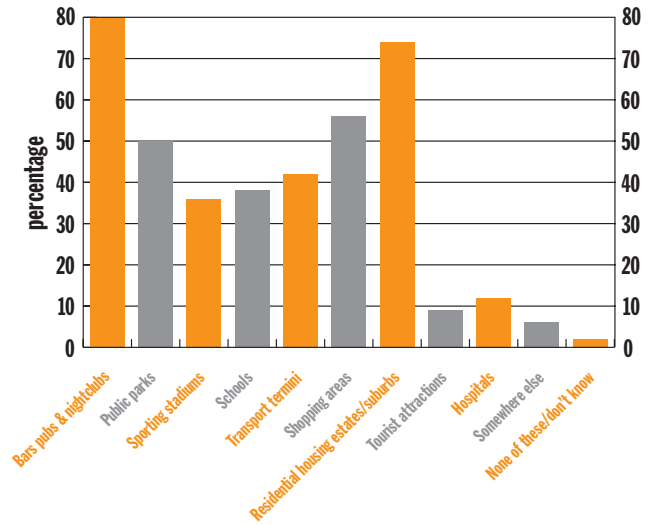


Figure 16. Great Britain: Locations of anti-social behaviour

Who is to blame?

Half of all those questioned feel that 14-17 year olds are most associated with anti-social behaviour. As with all other countries, parents are deemed responsible for controlling anti-social behaviour (87 per cent). The police are also key with 76 per cent choosing them.

What contributes to the problem?

Great Britain is one of the few European countries that feels alcohol is a key contributory factor to the growth in anti-social behaviour (68 per cent). Cultural and social tensions are only cited by 21 per cent of the respondents.

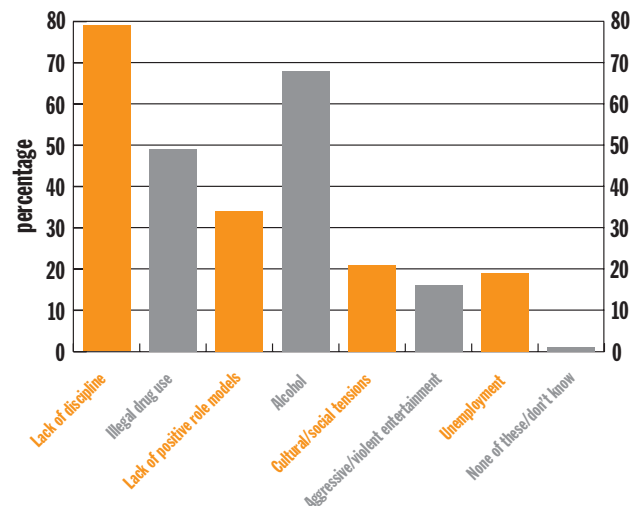


Figure 17. Great Britain: Contributory factors to anti-social behaviour

3.0 Country highlights

3.4 Italy

Forty six per cent of Italians think anti-social behaviour is a growing problem in Italy. Although this is the survey majority, in the 16 to 24 year old age group 44 per cent feel it is a static problem. Overall, more females (50 per cent) think it is a growing problem than males (42 per cent).

How the Italians see themselves in Europe

The Italians think they have the biggest problem with anti-social behaviour in Europe. When asked how they viewed the scale of the anti-social behaviour in each country, the proportions identifying it as a big or moderate problem were as follows for each country:

1	Italy	88%
2	France	76%
3	Great Britain	69%
4	Germany	61%
5	Spain	53%
6	The Netherlands	45%

The overall European view places Italy in fourth position with 53 per cent.

What is it?

Italy closely mirrors the main views on anti-social behaviour at a European level. Over half (55 per cent) identify vandalism as a concern, followed by disrespectful and rowdy behaviour (52 and 48 per cent respectively). Bullying is a bigger issue for the 16-24 age group than any other - 42 per cent compared with the overall Italian average of 31 per cent.

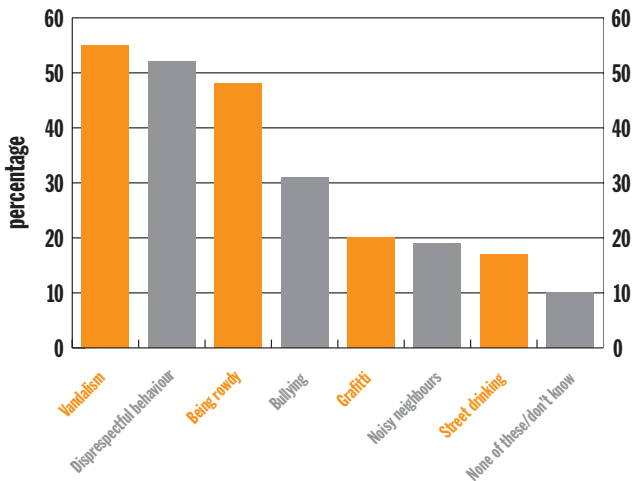


Figure 18. Italy: Anti-social behaviours

Where is it?

The perceptions of anti-social behaviour hotspots in Italy are universal among all age groups. However, for the 16-24 age group, public parks and around schools are seen as greater areas of concern than the national average (42 and 38 per cent respectively).

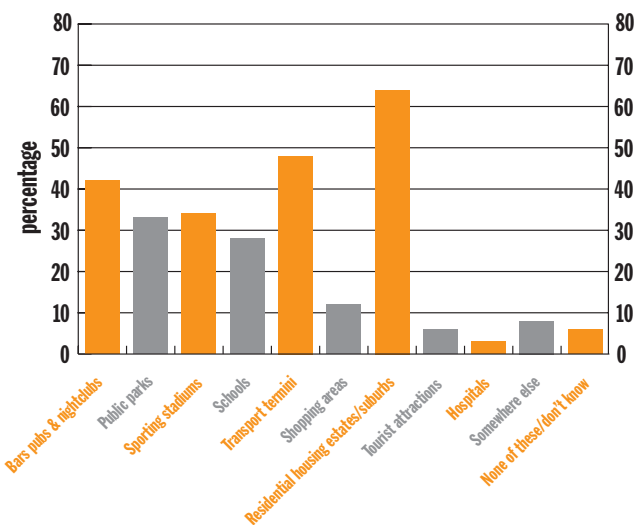


Figure 19. Italy: Locations of anti-social behaviour

Who is to blame?

Italians, like the rest of Europe, feel that youth is most associated with anti-social behaviour (63 per cent chose 14-25 year olds). Parents (73 per cent) are seen as most responsible for controlling anti-social behaviours, followed by police with 65 per cent. Other key groups for the Italians are schools and teachers (40 per cent), the community (34 per cent) and central/local government (30 per cent). The 16-24 age group think the community is more responsible for controlling anti-social behaviour (39 per cent) than schools (33 per cent).

What contributes to the problem?

After lack of discipline, the absence of positive role models and cultural/social tensions are perceived as contributors to increased anti-social behaviour. More females (54 per cent) than males (46 per cent) are concerned by lack of positive role models.

Forty five per cent of all 16-24 year olds chose cultural/social tensions compared with a 38 per cent Italian average and unemployment is a significant issue for 45-54 year olds (41 per cent compared to a national average of 35 per cent).

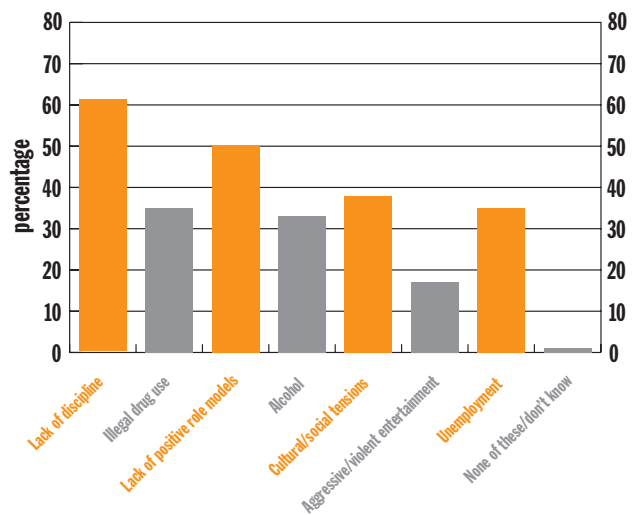


Figure 20. Italy: Contributory factors to anti-social behaviour

3.0 Country highlights



3.5 The Netherlands

The overwhelming majority of Dutch think anti-social behaviour is a growing problem (81 per cent) - this figure rises to 90 per cent of all 55-64 year olds.

How the Dutch see themselves in Europe

The Dutch think they have the biggest problem with anti-social behaviour in Europe. When asked how they viewed the scale of anti-social behaviour in each country, the proportions identifying it as a big or moderate problem were as follows for each country:

1	The Netherlands	94%
2	France	85%
3	Great Britain	81%
4	Germany	78%
5	Italy	59%
6	Spain	57%

At a European level, the Netherlands is ranked as the country perceived to have the least problem with anti-social behaviour.

What is it?

The view of typical types of Dutch anti-social behaviour reflected the European norm - a significant majority (88 per cent) picked vandalism as the biggest concern.

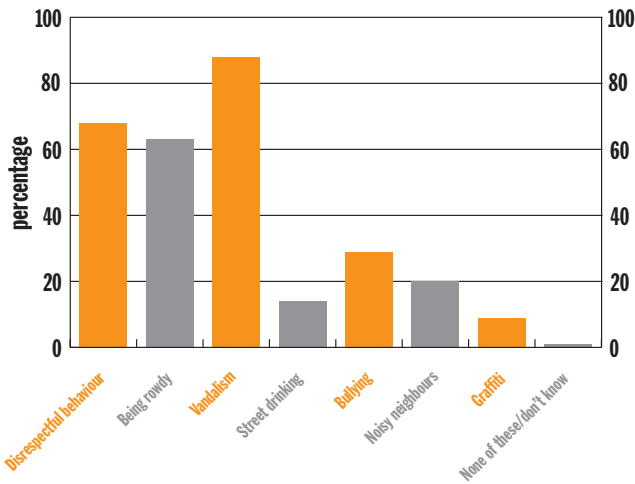


Figure 21. Netherlands: Anti-social behaviours

Where is it?

As with most other countries the Dutch identified a unique set of problem areas for anti-social behaviour. Seventy two per cent picked shopping areas as a hotspot. The only other country to identify this as a key area (with a similarly high percentage) is Great Britain, with 56 per cent.

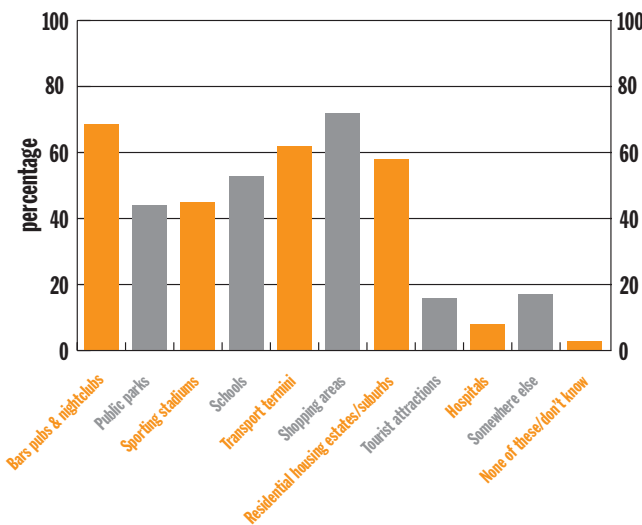


Figure 22. Netherlands: Locations of anti-social behaviour

Who is to blame?

Almost half of those questioned in the Netherlands feel that 14-17 year olds are most associated with anti-social behaviour (42 per cent). This figure increased to 48 per cent for 16-24 year olds surveyed. Thirty per cent of all those surveyed feel that no particular age is associated with this type of behaviour. As with all other countries, many believe parents are central to controlling anti-social behaviour (91 per cent). The police are next (46 per cent overall and 54 per cent in the 16-24 age group) with the community in third (39 per cent). More men (42 per cent) than women (35 per cent) feel the community is important.

What contributes to the problem?

Lack of discipline is considered to be one of the main contributing factors to this behaviour in the Netherlands.

Sixty three per cent of all 16-24 year olds feel that social and cultural tensions are a significant factor contributing to anti-social behaviour and the number citing aggressive entertainment increases with age (35 per cent for 55-64 year olds compared with 21 per cent for those aged 16-24).

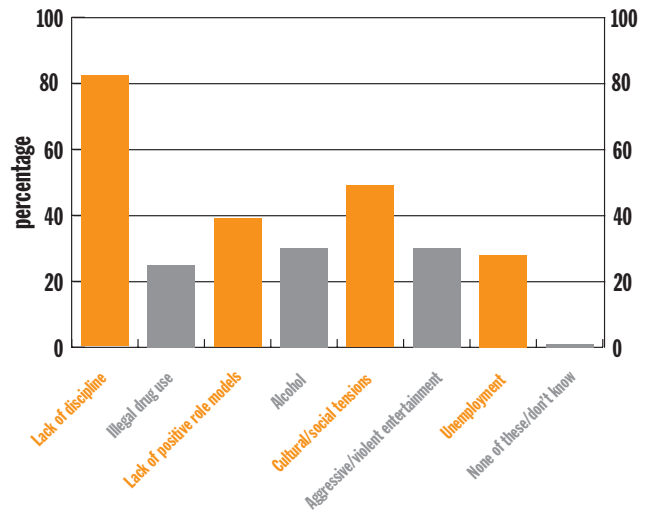


Figure 23. Netherlands: Contributory factors to anti-social behaviour

3.0 Country highlights

3.6 Spain

As with all other countries, the Spanish (90 per cent) feel anti-social behaviour is a growing problem in their country – this is a consistent view across all ages and sexes.

How the Spanish see themselves in Europe

The Spanish think they have the biggest problem with anti-social behaviour in Europe. When asked how they viewed the scale of anti-social behaviour in each country, the proportions identifying it as a big or moderate problem were as follows for each country:

1	Spain	90%
2	France	77%
3	Great Britain	65%
4	Italy	56%
5	Germany	52%
6	The Netherlands	35%

The overall European view places Spain in fifth position.

What is it?

In line with the pan-European view, the Spanish chose vandalism as one of the biggest problems of anti-social behaviour in their country.

There are, however, some notable differences between age groups. For example, 60 per cent of 16-24 year olds feel bullying is a 'big problem' in Spain (that age group's second biggest area of concern) and street drinking causes greatest concern for those over 45 (47 per cent compared with the country average of 37 per cent).

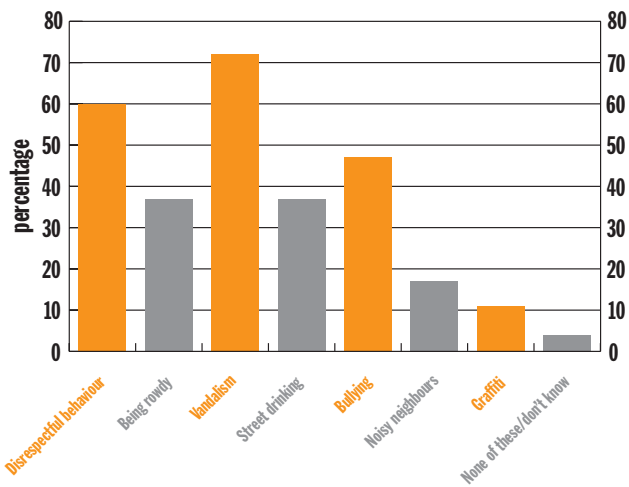


Figure 24. Spain: Anti-social behaviours

Where is it?

The perception of problem locations are consistent across all age groups although the 35-44 age group places schools before sporting stadiums.

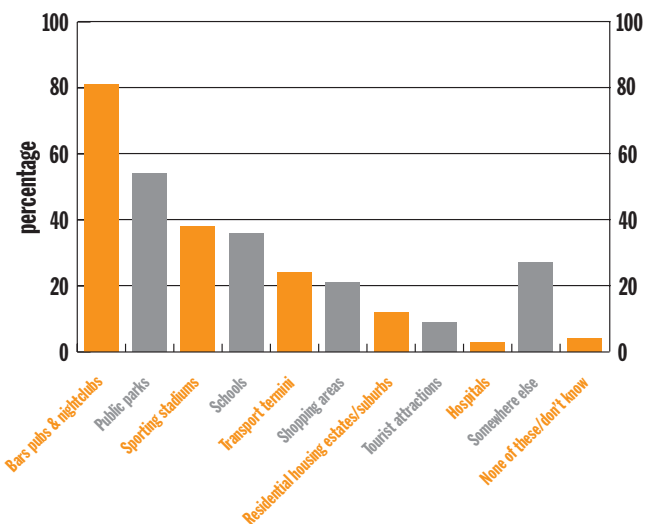


Figure 25. Spain: Locations of anti-social behaviour

Who is to blame?

The majority of Spanish feel that 14-17 year olds are associated with anti-social behaviour (43 per cent of those questioned). Of those aged between 16-24 this figure rises to 49 per cent. Similar to the European results, parents are held most responsible for controlling anti-social behaviour (82 per cent overall). Older respondents feel this more strongly than younger ones.

More females (44 per cent) than males (39 per cent) feel that schools and teachers are responsible. More males (45 per cent) than females (36 per cent) think local/central government should be controlling anti-social behaviour. A quarter (25 per cent) of all 16-24 year olds feel that peer groups are an important element in controlling anti-social behaviour.

What contributes to the problem?

After lack of discipline, the Spanish feel that illegal drug use and lack of positive role models contributes to anti-social behaviour.

Sixty per cent of all 16-24 year olds feel illegal drug use is a key influencing factor and the influence of aggressive entertainment is seen as a main contributor by 45-54 year olds (40 per cent).

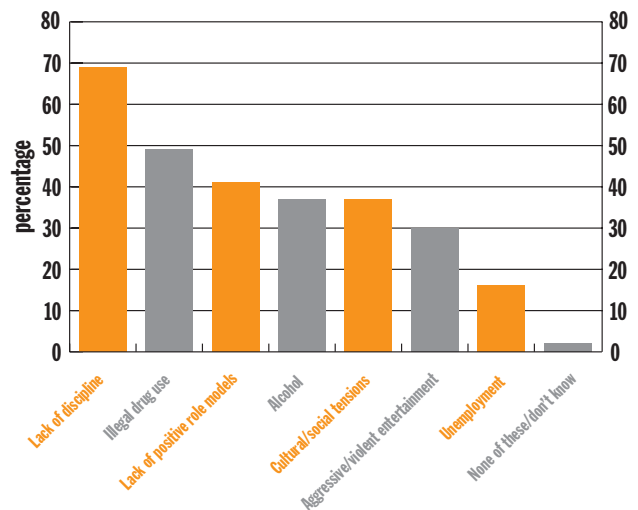


Figure 26. Spain: Contributory factors to anti-social behaviour

4.0 Commentary

This commentary has been compiled by Professor Gloria Laycock, Director of the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science at University College London.

4.1 Why research of this kind is important

This ADT research has shown anti-social behaviour to be an issue of concern across Europe; only the Italians see it as static or reducing. These perceptions are important because they can guide government policy in a way that satisfies people's anxieties without necessarily tackling the root of a problem. As well as providing a measure of public perceptions, this unique research allows for some fascinating cross-country comparisons, which illustrate common views but also some interesting differences. The country-specific issues reflect the concerns of local people, but sometimes in unexpected ways.

4.2 Opinion on the findings

Overall, concern about anti-social behaviour should come as no surprise to European governments or the European Union. Anti-social behaviour, in its various forms, is frequently reported by the media across the continent and these reports are picked up by the residents. Residents also, of course, draw on their own experience and it is this combination (publicity and experience) that leads to the perceptions we see.

In the order of 80 per cent of respondents across five of the six countries surveyed see anti-social behaviour as an issue for them, with the majority citing vandalism, being rowdy and disrespectful behaviour as the biggest problems. A general lack of respect for other people and their property seems to be a common concern. There is also a universal, but hardly surprising, attribution of the problem to young people (although a significant minority feel that all ages are involved). Although in surveys it is not possible to determine whether the perceptions are reflective of real and worrying increases in anti-social behaviour, or are driven by media reporting and frequently observed notions that the world was a better place 50 years ago, the extent of these perceptions both numerically and geographically across the continent, suggests that the issue might warrant more intense study.

All respondents feel that their country had a bigger problem than respondents in other countries felt they had, and are more confident in saying so. Great Britain saw itself as having a bigger problem than any other country, but the remaining countries feel that France had a

bigger problem than they all did. This may reflect the high levels of alcohol-related violence across Great Britain, which results in widespread belief that there is a persistent problem of anti-social behaviour but may also reflect the pan-european publicity associated with recent French disturbances, which at the time of the survey were linked to immigration issues and are currently associated with students.

Great Britain, Spain, the Netherlands, and to a lesser extent, Germany, perceive that anti-social behaviour is taking place around bars and pubs. The reasons for this are probably different. It is plausible that problems arising in Spain have their roots in the tourist areas and are therefore attributable to visitors. Respondents in Spain and Italy (where they were asked specifically) saw the English and Germans as particularly prone to causing anti-social behaviour problems in their countries. We can summarise that alcohol is likely to be a key contributing factor in these areas. Although the English are not unique in their excessive consumption of alcohol they are singled out as causing problems across Europe and see themselves in that light too. One of the major European challenges across Europe, particularly Northern Europe, is that of controlling alcohol consumption. This is a challenge to which Governments seem poorly able to respond.

Anti-social behaviour on housing estates is also seen as a serious problem in all areas except for Spain, where at just over ten per cent it is remarkably low. Perhaps, not surprisingly, given recent media reports, anti-social behaviour in housing areas is particularly

problematic in France. This result, rather reassuringly, provides some evidence for the validity of the survey process, reflecting what we know to be the reality on the ground. It is also notable that the French are most inclined to attribute the increases in anti-social behaviour to cultural/social tensions, as are the Germans and Dutch, with French and Germans also expressing concerns about unemployment. These powerful factors, which are perceived to be contributing to the problems of what, in extreme cases, has amounted to rioting, are arguably much more difficult to deal with than problems of alcohol abuse. The British were far less likely than any other country to express concern about cultural or social tensions.

In looking at questions about responsibility and response, there is remarkable agreement across the continent that parents are primarily responsible for controlling these problems, which are attributed to a lack of discipline. Thereafter, most people looked to the police to deal with the issue with the exception of Germany, which is alone in seeing the community, including schools, as the most significant influence after parents. We know, however, from a great deal of research, that peer groups are hugely influential in determining the behaviour of young people. Most respondents did not appreciate this. Consequently the perceived solutions to anti-social behaviour are not seen at the street level where young people interact, but rather in terms of increased sentencing severity.

A word of caution is appropriate in considering the response options; these were restricted by the questionnaire to a limited number and may not have properly reflected

respondents' views. So there were rather more 'none of these/don't know' responses than usual. Also, although the British respondents are least inclined to feel that enhancing ethnic/cultural tolerance might be effective, this should not be taken to mean that they did not think it a significant factor. Rather, there is some evidence from elsewhere in the study, that British respondents did not feel they had such cultural problems.

One of the most interesting, and perhaps worrying, results from this survey is that the majority of respondents lacked the confidence to personally challenge a small group of 14 year old boys vandalising a bus stop. Although in Germany the majority (60 per cent) feel that they would definitely or probably challenge this fell to 30 per cent in Great Britain, with 30 per cent saying they definitely would not challenge the young people. It cannot be determined from the questionnaire whether this lack of confidence stemmed from anxiety about the response of the boys (e.g. they may attack the complainant) or from a feeling that the broader community, including the authorities, might disapprove of such action. Given that there is general consensus that the better way to deal with crime and disorder is through methods of informal social control, rather than the criminal justice system, there is a pressing need for further work to follow up this result.

4.3 The research in the context of national and regional policy

This research sets a challenge to governments across Europe and to the EU itself. The first is to determine to what extent these perceptions are a reflection of a real and growing problem. This would require careful scrutiny of crime survey data and police records across Europe. It is a task for the EU.

If there is such a problem then the question is clearly, "What should be done about it?" Undoubtedly there is a belief amongst the population that young people (although it is not only young people) are less respectful of the person and property of others. In some countries this is seen as a reflection of cultural tensions rather than, for example, excessive alcohol consumption, but it is fairly universally seen as rooted in a lack of discipline, poor parenting and the exercise of authority. There is little appreciation of the role of peer pressure, the immediate situational factors or opportunity as a cause of much of the problematic behaviour that we see. And although there seems to be clear understanding of the key role played by alcohol consumption, at least in Northern Europe, this does not translate into pressure to deal with alcohol consumption per se.

This survey has provided some fascinating insights into the public perception of anti-social behaviour across Europe; it provides food for serious thought.

5.0 Research background

The research was undertaken by TNS (a global market information group) via its Ncompass Online Survey.

Fieldwork took place during January 2006 in the following countries: France (1,055 respondents), Germany (1,061), Great Britain (1,748), Italy (1,060), Netherlands (1,061), and Spain (1,062). Respondents were aged 16 to 64 in all countries except for Italy and Spain where they were 16-54. For further information on TNS visit www.tns-global.com



6.0 Contacts

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