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## ARMED ROBBERIES OF LEGAL PUBLIC BODIES IN THE TRADE SECTOR WHICH WERE RECORDED BY THE NATIONAL POLICE AND *GENDARMERIE*<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN 2006 AND 2011

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**K**nowledge of delinquency of which legal individuals were victims underwent a definitive change in France in the year 2000 and from then on, thanks to the emergence of the annual “*Cadre de vie et sécurité*” victimisation studies, which are the fruit of a partnership between the National Supervisory Body on Crime and Punishment (ONDRP) and INSEE<sup>2</sup>.

The central idea behind the victimisation study, which involves the direct questioning of a sample of the population regarding incidents which took place during the recent past, may also be used with companies, civil services and associations, all of which are referred to as legal public bodies.

At the first international conference regarding delinquency statistics which was held in Mexico in May 2012<sup>3</sup>, there was a session which covered criminality targeting the private sector (“*Crimen contra el Sector Privado en América Latina*”). One of the central issues in this session surrounded the development of victimisation studies among companies<sup>4</sup> in Latin America and Europe.

In terms of incidents of which legal individuals were victims, in the absence of victimisation data, knowledge of delinquency phenomena targeting companies is generally limited to incidents which were recorded by police or *gendarmeries*, provided these incidents were counted separately.

In some cases, there may also be a process of statistics collection which was developed by companies themselves, as is the case with “*La Poste*”, the SNCF<sup>5</sup> or professional organisations (see relevant pages in the ONDRP’s November 2012 annual report<sup>6</sup>).

- (1) The “*Gendarmes*” are the second police force in France in addition to the National Police. *Gendarmes* are similar to military police, and usually operate outside cities.
- (2) National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies.
- (3) [http://www.inegi.org.mx/eventos/2011/unodc\\_evento/presentacion.aspx](http://www.inegi.org.mx/eventos/2011/unodc_evento/presentacion.aspx)
- (4) [http://www.inegi.org.mx/eventos/2011/unodc\\_evento/doc/2.%20Crime%20against%20the%20private%20sector\\_Mugellini.pdf](http://www.inegi.org.mx/eventos/2011/unodc_evento/doc/2.%20Crime%20against%20the%20private%20sector_Mugellini.pdf)
- (5) French government owned railway company.
- (6) <http://www.inhesj.fr/ondrp/les-publications/rapports-annuels/8>

Among offences targeting companies, armed robberies (involving a firearm) are definitely in a category of their own, and we can assume that the police or *gendarmerie* almost automatically record statistics surrounding these robberies. This is mostly due to the fact that police and *gendarmerie* services travel to the scene of the crime.

Having said that, recent variations in the number of recorded incidents of “armed robberies of industrial or commercial establishments” persuaded the National Supervisory Body on Crime and Punishment (ONDRP) to take an interest in this topic by including all armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector.

Despite the level of detail provided by the terminology in the tool for recording non road-related crimes and offences, “*état 4001*”, use of this terminology is extremely restrictive, as the index pertaining to armed robberies of industrial or commercial establishments covers a significant percentage of armed robberies, yet it is impossible to accurately determine the nature of the offences which are causing the changes. Furthermore, “*état 4001*” is a database for monitoring the recordings made by the police and *gendarmerie* services and has no qualitative information regarding counted incidents.

For the purposes of the present article, the Supervisory Body has endeavoured to overcome these restrictions by seeking the assistance of the *Office Central de Lutte contre le Crime Organisé* (Central Office for the Fight against Organised Crime, OCLCO). One of the duties of this Office involves the consolidation of messages communicated by the police and *gendarmerie* services in order to improve knowledge of certain kinds of crimes, including armed robberies.

The OCLCO sent the Supervisory Body tables of data regarding all armed robberies of legal public bodies which were recorded by the Office between 2008 and 2011. This made it possible to study this kind of armed robbery in more detail than is provided in “*état 4001*”.

In addition to providing the number of armed robberies recorded from 2008 to 2011 in accordance with the specific kind of establishment, the Supervisory Body had the opportunity, based on telegrams which were archived by the OCLCO, to collect additional data on the features of certain recorded incidents of armed robbery which were committed or attempted in 2009.

The ONDRP, based on telegrams which were archived by the OCLCO, recorded armed robberies which, in 2009, targeted bank branches (including branches in the “*La Poste*”<sup>7</sup> group), jewellery shops (including jeweller’s, watchmaker’s shops and silversmith’s shops), small food shops, large supermarkets and cash-in-transit companies.

This is how the ONDRP created a sample of armed robberies which were committed or attempted in 2009. Recording the incidents based on telegrams archived by the OCLCO provided, for each incident, information regarding the extent to which the armed robbery (committed/attempted) was completed, the kind and the quantity of objects which were stolen (referred to as “stolen goods”), the number and gender of perpetrators described in the procedures and circumstances, such as the kind of weapon used.

It is important to bear in mind that this kind of procedure is not unprecedented for the Supervisory Body, as similar procedures were implemented for the first time in 2006 for recorded incidents of blows and physical violence which did not involve robbery<sup>8</sup> or, more recently, in 2011, for the profile of people who were questioned for robbery<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to this analysis, which focused firstly on trends, secondly on features which are inherent to armed robberies of the trade sector, the Supervisory Body wished to study disparities in the number of armed robberies, in order to determine whether some kinds of businesses

••••(7) French postal service.

(8) Please see Grand Angle 13, May 2008 by following this link: [http://www.inhesj.fr/sites/default/files/ga\\_13.pdf](http://www.inhesj.fr/sites/default/files/ga_13.pdf)

(9) Please see Grand Angle 29, February 2012 by following this link: [http://www.inhesj.fr/sites/default/files/ga\\_29.pdf](http://www.inhesj.fr/sites/default/files/ga_29.pdf)

were targeted more frequently than others, but also to see if, bearing in mind the number of establishments located in a region, some departments or geographical areas were more frequently the target of these incidents.

Contrasting different kinds of establishments with one another necessarily involves comparing the number of armed robberies to the number of corresponding establishments. While the number of armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector, which are presented using a more detailed terminology for victim establishments than the terminology in “état 4001”, was determined using the police and *gendarmerie*'s operational databases, the number of active establishments in the metropolitan area was determined using INSEE's SIRENE directory of establishments.

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## MAIN LESSONS LEARNED

In 2011, 5 726 armed robberies (robberies which were committed or attempted with a genuine or false firearm) were recorded by the police and *gendarmerie* in metropolitan France, based on annual data sent to the National Supervisory Body on Crime and Punishment (ONDRP) by the Central Directorate of the Criminal Police (DCPJ). A little over 3 505 of these incidents targeted what the ONDRP calls “legal public bodies in the trade sector”, equivalent to 61.2% of all armed robberies recorded in 2011<sup>10</sup>.

*The term “legal public bodies in the trade sector” denotes privately-owned profit-making legal public bodies, in other words, establishments which aim to make a profit. For the purposes of the present article, this expression mainly denotes local businesses<sup>11</sup>, and*

*large supermarkets, bank branches, jewellery shops, jeweller's, watchmaker's shops, silversmith's shops and cash-in-transit companies.*

In 2006, around 3 500 armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector were recorded, and almost 2 900 targeted industrial or commercial establishments. This number fell by 3.7% in 2007 (equivalent to -130 recorded incidents), before experiencing two years of sharp increases (+17.6% between 2007 and 2008, equivalent to +593 recorded incidents, and +17.4% between 2008 and 2009, equivalent to +691 recorded incidents). These sharp increases were followed by two years of sharp decreases (-13.8% between 2009 and 2010, equivalent to +641 recorded incidents, and

-12.6% between 2010 and 2011, equivalent to -506 recorded incidents).

In 2011, the number of recorded incidents of armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector, which was 3 505, returned to the level observed in 2006, after having reached more than 4 650 incidents in 2009.

These variations are mainly caused by variations in the number of recorded incidents of armed robberies of industrial or commercial establishments, as this figure increased from 2 907 in 2007 to more than 4 200 in 2009, equivalent to +45.4% (+1 319 recorded incidents) and dropped by 24.1% between 2009 and 2011 (equivalent to -1 020 recorded incidents).

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••••(10) The other armed robbery incidents which were recorded targeted individuals (either at their home or outside of their home) as well as social welfare establishments, civil services and associations. These incidents are not covered in the present study.

(11) The term “local businesses” refers to small retail businesses. Small and medium-sized retailers, restaurants, drinking places, tobacconists, hotels, perfume shops etc. are included in this term (please see table A2.1).

## Detailed changes in armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector which were counted between 2008 and 2011 by the Office Central de Lutte contre le Crime Organisé (OCLCO)

In order to more accurately analyse variations in recorded incidents which were measured using the tool for recording non road-related crimes and offences, "état 4001", the Supervisory Body sought the assistance of the Office Central de Lutte contre le Crime Organisé (OCLCO). The Office sent the Supervisory Body data regarding armed robbery incidents which were committed or attempted from 2008 to 2011, in accordance with the specific kind of business or establishment. The ONDRP ensured that this data was sufficiently similar, in terms of quantity and trend, to the data extracted from "état 4001" to allow for the analyses desired (please see "Développements sur", or "Focus on").

Between 2008 and 2009, the number of armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector which were brought to the attention of the OCLCO increased by 10.9% (equivalent to +417 counted robberies). This increase was most strongly felt among local businesses (+16.7% over one year, equivalent to +388 counted robberies). In percentage terms, the variation was particularly dramatic for "jewellery shops, jeweller's, watchmaker's shops,

silversmith's shops" (+55.9% between 2008 and 2009, equivalent to +80 counted robberies) and chemists (+36.9% over one year, equivalent to +31 counted robberies).

Between 2009 and 2011, we observed a 19.1% decrease in armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector which were brought to the attention of the OCLCO (equivalent to -812 counted robberies). Again, this trend can primarily be explained by the variation in the number of armed robberies of local businesses which were counted by the OCLCO (-21.4% between 2009 and 2011, equivalent to -581 counted robberies).

In the same way, decreases of around one third over two years were measured for counted armed robberies which targeted service stations (-30.6% between 2009 and 2011, equivalent to -108 counted robberies) and large supermarkets (-36.5% over two years, equivalent to -141 counted robberies).

On the other hand, the dramatic increase in the number of armed robberies which were counted by the OCLCO and which targeted "jewellery

shops, jeweller's, watchmaker's shops, silversmith's shops" continued in 2010 and 2011, as it grew by 61% over two years (equivalent to +136 counted robberies). In 2008, 143 armed robberies were counted. This number reached almost 360 in 2011, which is 2.5 times more over three years.

This upward variation continued between 2008 and 2011, contrasting with the steady decrease in the number of armed robberies of financial establishments which were counted by the OCLCO (-19.1% between 2008 and 2009, equivalent to -73 counted robberies, -17.8% over one year in 2010, equivalent to -55 counted robberies, and -21.7% between 2010 and 2011, equivalent to -55 counted robberies). Over three years, this figure fell by half.

In 2008, the OCLCO counted more than 380 armed robberies of financial establishments. This number was below 200 in 2011, equivalent to -52% compared with 2008 (-183 counted robberies).

## Features of armed robberies of bank branches<sup>12</sup>, jewellery shops<sup>13</sup>, small food shops, large supermarkets and cash-in-transit companies which were attempted or committed in 2009, determined based on a sample of procedures recorded from telegrams which were archived by the OCLCO

In addition to providing figures regarding the number of armed robberies (in accordance with the kind of establishment targeted) from 2008 to 2011, the Supervisory Body had the opportunity to collect qualitative data from telegrams which were archived by the Office Central de Lutte contre le Crime Organisé (OCLCO) over one year of observation, which was 2009.

This data made it possible to create a sample of 1245 telegrams covering armed robberies which were committed or attempted in 2009 against the following establishments: bank branches (including branches in the "La Poste" group), jewellery shops (including jeweller's, watchmaker's shops and silversmith's shops), small food shops, large supermarkets and cash-in-transit companies.

Based on the sample which was collected from the Office, in 2009 almost 15% of armed robberies which targeted small food shops, large supermarkets and "jewellery shops, jeweller's, watchmaker's shops and silversmith's shops", and which were described in the telegrams, were attempted armed robberies. This percentage reached

•••(12) Including those against the "La Poste" group.

(13) Including jewellery shops, watchmaker's shops and silversmith's shops.



almost 30% for bank branches and cash-in-transit companies.

All or some of the stolen goods from armed robberies which were committed, with the exception of “jewellery shops, jeweller’s, watchmaker’s shops and silversmith’s shops”, were cash. Telegrams regarding armed robberies of jewellery shops, jeweller’s, watchmaker’s shops and silversmith’s shops reported theft of jewellery in 58% of cases and theft of cash in 23% of cases.

In more than 70% of telegrams, the stolen goods from armed robberies of cash-in-transit companies were above 10000 euros. For thefts of small food shops and large supermarkets which were described, almost three quarters of the stolen goods were under 10000 euros and more than half of them were below 2000 euros.

The average number of perpetrators of armed robberies (*which was determined using telegrams from the sample*) is almost two for small food shops, large supermarkets and bank branches. This number is higher for “jewellery shops, watchmaker’s shops, jeweller’s and silversmith’s shops” (2.6 individuals) and cash-in-transit companies (3.3 individuals).

The perpetrators described in the telegrams are almost exclusively men.

More than 80% had their faces hidden at the time of the armed robbery.

76.1% of acts described were armed robberies which were committed or attempted without any individual who was present at the robbery, whether a client or a member of staff belonging to the establishment, being subjected to physical violence or unlawful confinement. 17.5% of acts described report physical violence exclusively, 4.6% report unlawful confinement and 1.8% report physical violence and unlawful confinement.

Nine times out of ten, the armed robberies described report the use of one kind of firearm only. For cash-in-transit companies, around 20% of armed robberies were described as involving several kinds of firearms.

More than nine armed robbery procedures out of ten, which were performed in small food shops, large supermarkets, bank branches and cash-in-transit companies, report the use of at least one handgun<sup>14</sup>. For jewellery shops, watchmaker’s shops, jeweller’s and silversmith’s shops, this percentage is slightly lower (86.3%).

More than 20% of telegrams regarding armed robberies of jewellery shops, watchmaker’s shops, jeweller’s,

silversmith’s shops and cash-in-transit companies report the use of at least one long gun. This percentage is almost 12% for small food shops, large supermarkets and bank branches.

There are fewer telegrams which report the use of an explosive (1.1%). The use of this kind of weapon was mainly concentrated among robberies of bank branches (4.6%) and cash-in-transit companies (2.9%).

According to the features of armed robberies in the sample recorded at the OCLCO, the majority of them take place during the establishment’s opening hours (55%), 32% take place when the establishment is opened and 14% take place when it is closed.

More than 90% of armed robberies targeting bank branches and “jewellery shops, watchmaker’s shops, jeweller’s and silversmith’s shops” occurred during the day. Around 80% of armed robberies of cash-in-transit companies occurred during the day.

Having said that, for armed robberies of small food shops and large supermarkets, the percentage of armed robberies which occurred during the day is similar to the percentage of armed robberies which occurred during the night: 54.8% compared with 44.4%.

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## **Study of the disparity in armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector in 2009 in accordance with the kind of business and the department where the robbery was committed, based on the police and *gendarmerie*’s operational databases**

*In addition to the previous analysis, which focused firstly on trends, secondly on features which are inherent to armed robberies of the trade sector, the Supervisory Body wished to study disparities in the number of armed robberies, in order to determine whether some kinds of businesses were targeted more frequently than others, and also to see if, bearing in mind the number of establishments located in a region, some departments or geographical areas were more frequently the target of these incidents.*

In 2009, the average rate of armed robberies, which was calculated by comparing the number of recorded armed robberies of legal public bodies in the trade sector in the police and *gendarmerie*’s operational information systems to the number of corresponding establishments (as counted by INSEE’s SIRENE directory), was 8.1 per 1000 in metropolitan France.

Having reached this rate, it was necessary to compare the 4406 armed robberies in the trade sector which were recorded in the police and *gendarmerie*’s operational information systems to the 542881 establishments in the trade sector which were counted using the SIRENE directory which was provided by INSEE.

By comparing the number of recorded armed robberies of legal public bodies

••••(14) By “handgun”, we mean a firearm which an individual can use with their hand. These are different to “long guns”, which need to be braced against the shoulder before firing.

in the trade sector (*depending on the specific kind of legal person*) to the number of corresponding establishments, the highest rates observed are for service stations, “jewellery shops-watchmaker’s shops-jeweller’s-silversmith’s shops” as well as small food shops and large supermarkets. Robberies of all three of these establishment kinds are above the 30 robberies recorded per 1000 legal public bodies in the trade sector<sup>15</sup>.

In 2009, Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-de-Marne recorded departmental rates of armed robbery of the trade sector which were above 43 per 1000 establishments. This is five times higher than the metropolitan average. With 36.3 per 1000 legal public bodies in the trade sector, the rate measured in Val-

d’Oise is more than four times higher than this average.

The rates are close to 20‰ (per 1000) in the departments of Seine-et-Marne, l’Essonne as well as Hauts-de-Seine. In Paris (8.7‰) and in the Yvelines (10.5‰), rates of armed robberies are below the rates measured in other departments in Île-de-France. In Paris, the rate is even fairly close to the rate for metropolitan France.

The rates measured in a given region are caused not only by the number of armed robberies recorded but also by the number of establishments which are counted. Yet, in Paris, the number of establishments counted is distinctly higher than those in the Île-de-France region. In Paris, the number of

establishments which are “legal public bodies” compared with the number of inhabitants reached 19.4‰ in 2009, contrasting with 8.7‰ in Île-de-France. This is due to a higher concentration of businesses and establishments in the City of Paris than in Île-de-France. This state of affairs must therefore be taken into account when interpreting these disparities.

With average rates of 21.8‰ and 15‰, the departments of Bouches-du-Rhône and Rhône also stand out because of their rates of armed robberies of the trade sector, which are distinctly higher than the metropolitan average. The rates for Isère (11.3 ‰) and Haute-Garonne (11.2 ‰) also stand out, but to a lesser extent.

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•••(15) The group of establishments from the SIRENE directory which were used by the Supervisory Body to obtain all the “legal public bodies from the trade sector” is presented in detail in the “*développement sur*” (focus on) part of this document.