

# Victimisation in Swedish higher education institutions

A study of harassment, threats and violence against researchers and teachers



SWEDISH  
SECRETARIAT FOR  
GENDER RESEARCH



SUHF

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Cover: Photo by Nathan Dumla/Unsplash

Publisher: Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research  
University of Gothenburg

[www.gu.se/en/nsfg](http://www.gu.se/en/nsfg)

ISBN: 978-91-531-2736-9

Gothenburg 2024

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## Foreword

Hatred, threats and harassment towards researchers and teachers in the Swedish higher education sector is completely unacceptable. It jeopardises the health and safety of individuals, restricts the academic freedom of researchers and teachers, affects the quality of teaching and research and ultimately risks undermining democratic values. This final report presents the first major survey of the incidence of hatred, threats and harassment against researchers and teachers. The study was conducted by the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg, in collaboration with the Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers (SULF) and the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF). The results indicate that threats and harassment were relatively common, and victimisation was spread across all subject areas. However, the results showed that researchers and teachers in subjects debated in the media, or those who had previously experienced hatred, threats or harassment, reported higher levels of victimisation. Women reported greater exposure to threats, hatred and harassment as well as greater concerns of victimisation. Students and colleagues were the main perpetrators indicated by respondents, showing that hate, threats and harassment are largely an internal problem within higher education institutions as organisations.

The results showed that 39 per cent of higher education researchers and teachers had been subjected to some form of threat or harassment, which is important to follow up. This finding gives cause for reflection and action at several levels. Our hope is that this knowledge about threats, hatred and harassment will form the basis for a joint effort to counteract the victimisation of researchers and teachers, safeguard free democratic dialogue in higher education and strengthen academic freedom in practice within our higher education institutions.

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## Summary

This report describes the occurrence of harassment, threats and violence directed at researchers and teachers in the Swedish higher education sector. The report is based on a survey initiated by the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg and conducted in collaboration with the Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers (SULF) and the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF).

The purpose of mapping researchers' and teachers' exposure to harassment, threats and violence is to provide a picture of how widespread the problem is, and to show how exposure is distributed and the consequences of both exposure and the risk or concern about exposure. The data collection was carried out in January 2022 through a survey sent to SULF members. The survey questions related to respondents' exposure over their entire careers as well as the previous year.

### Summary of the main survey results

While incidents of exposure to violence, theft and vandalism in the capacity of researcher or teacher were reported, they were relatively uncommon in the data. Six per cent of respondents in the survey reported ever being exposed to any such types of incidents. Experiences of exposure to some form of threat or harassment were considerably more common. Among all respondents, 39 per cent stated that they had been exposed to some form of threat or harassment. These incidents were reported across all subject areas, with over 30 per cent of respondents in each subject area reporting experiencing victimisation in some form. However, such experiences were most common in the humanities and social sciences, within which almost 50 per cent reported experiences of being threatened or harassed.

Women were found to be more exposed than men to most types of incidents and reported concerns about being exposed to a greater extent. This is particularly true for victimisation that occurs in the context of teaching and supervision. Victimisation was higher among those who were more active both on social media and in traditional media, although this was a relatively small group. Slightly higher levels of exposure was also reported by those who said they worked in subject areas that had featured in previous incident reports and which had been subject to debate and could be perceived as politically charged. The over-representation of these subjects is higher when it comes to victimisation linked to

external perpetrators. Students were the most common group of perpetrators for most categories of victimisation and most reported cases were related to teaching or tutoring. Colleagues of the victim were the second largest category of perpetrators and the most common perpetrators in situations related to ongoing research or publication of research findings. Incidents associated with appearances in social and traditional media and opinion pieces were most commonly perpetrated by outside parties.

The consequences of actual victimisation and perceived risk or fear of victimisation included various forms of self-censorship. Eight per cent of those victimised said they had changed their routines or behaviour due to being victimised. Almost twice as many women as men reported such consequences. One third of respondents stated that they did not know where to turn if they experienced victimisation. Two thirds stated that they did not know if there was an action plan in place at their institution or institute of higher education (HEI) on how to deal with victimisation and the risk of victimisation or stated that there was no such action plan.



## Introduction

No major survey of the extent of exposure to threats and hate in higher education has previously been conducted in Sweden. There have long been reports of threats and harassment directed at researchers and teachers at Swedish higher education institutions, but these have usually been individual cases. In some instances, this has led to discussions about the extent of the problem and its consequences in more general terms. There is a lack of knowledge about prevalence and consequences, which groups are most at risk, who perpetrates hate and threats, whether certain subject areas present a greater risk than others and so on. Internationally, there is growing interest in the issue of how the quality of research and education risks being undermined by both external and internal threats and harassment (see, for example, UNESCO 2024). Various aspects of the work environment, job security and, not least, academic freedom seem to be at stake. In-depth knowledge of the prevalence and consequences of hate and threats is crucial to increase understanding of the nature of exposure, strengthen prevention efforts and develop support for staff.

It is against this background that the National Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg, in collaboration with SULF (Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers) and SUHF (Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions), initiated the current study to map the problem.

The aim of the survey was to *map researchers' and teachers' exposure to violence, threats and harassment, the distribution of exposure and the consequences, risk and concern of exposure.*

An interim report with the overall findings was published in July 2022. This final report is a supplement to the findings presented in the interim report. It provides more detailed data on the distribution of victimisation and consequences, as well as a selection of combined tables. The report also includes an in-depth description of studies and research on hate and threats within the higher education sector, as well as similar studies of neighbouring sectors, both in Sweden and internationally.

The report was written by David Brax, an investigator at the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg. Anna-Carin Fagerlindh Ståhl, Work Environment Researcher, PhD Medical Science, and Erik Berglund, researcher at the Department of Public Health and Health Care Sciences, Uppsala

University, assisted with statistical processing. Lotta Kamm, at SULF, coded the questionnaire and Anna Lundgren, at SULF, conducted a non-response analysis. The report has been reviewed by Anna Gavell Frenzel, an investigator at the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), with special responsibility for the Politicians' Safety Survey (PTU).

## Background

This section provides a background to the study, placing the findings and analyses in a knowledge context. It first describes how incidents of threats and harassment directed towards researchers have been reported in Sweden, both in the media and in the form of surveys and policy documents. This is followed by a summary of the overall findings of a number of surveys of researchers' exposure conducted in comparable countries in recent years (Finland, Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands). These studies primarily address researchers' exposure in relation to social and traditional media activity; exposure in relation to teaching and research is less frequently addressed. Studies conducted within neighbouring fields in Sweden are also described in more detail. Finally, themes and other observations are presented based on the background material.

## Media reporting

Reports of cases involving threats, attacks and harassment in the higher education sector have been documented for many years. Several staff magazines published by Sweden's HEIs have dealt with the topic in themed issues, and the media have reported on individual incidents (LUM 2019, Universitetsnytt 2017). The incidents covered in these reports often occur in connection with subject areas that deal with politically charged issues or apply methods seen as controversial. Threats are usually seen as external and affect researchers mainly in connection with the dissemination of research findings or public debate. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were a number of reports that addressed the exposure of researchers who spoke out on public health issues. This reporting also addressed the increase in attacks *within* the research community (see Universitetsläraren 25/2 2021). In recent years, incidents involving various forms of attacks by students on university teachers have been highlighted, but these have been dealt with to a lesser extent in the context of threats and harassment (see Universitetsläraren on

the ‘Karlstad case’ 28 September 2023; see also Minister for Education Mats Persson’s article in *Expressen* 9 November 2023, which preceded the government’s assignment to UKÄ to investigate threats to academic freedom in Sweden).

## Hate and threats in academia – Sweden

### Reports from authorities and other organisations

**The Swedish National Audit Office’s** survey of preventive measures and management at government agencies (RiR 2022:26) highlights incidents of harassment, threats and violence at the government level under the category ‘Grading and examination’ in its compilation, which is relevant to this report. Within this category, for the 2019-2021 period, 79 per cent of authorities stated that incidents occurred regularly, 17 per cent that they occurred occasionally and four per cent that they did not occur at all. The respective figures for threats were 41 per cent regularly, 21 per cent occasionally and 38 per cent not at all. With regard to violence, zero per cent reported that it occurred regularly, 17 per cent occasionally and 83 per cent not at all.

**Brå**, (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention) in its report *Hot och våld – Om utsatthet i yrkesgrupper som är viktiga för det demokratiska samhället* (Threats and violence – On exposure in professions that are important for democratic society; 2015), notes the critical need to continue monitoring exposure to threats and violence for occupational groups that are important to democratic society. With reference to this report, the government presented the action plan *Till det fria ordets försvar, för yrkesgrupper av särskild betydelse för demokratin* (In defence of free speech, for occupational groups of particular importance to democracy; 2017), which concerns specific studied occupational groups, namely elected representatives, journalists, writers and artists (see below). The action plan thus does not cover researchers and teachers. The report on self-censorship and online hate (2021) by the Swedish Crime Victim Authority highlights that people engaged in public debate are more often affected and mentions researchers as an example in this context.

**In the bill *Forskning, Frihet, Framtid – kunskap och innovation för Sverige* (Research, Freedom, Future – Knowledge and Innovation for Sweden; 2020/21:60)**, the then government highlighted that the free search for and dissemination of knowledge can entail a risk of exposure to hate and threats, especially when controversial issues are addressed. The bill refers to reports on victimisation within the higher education sector, as well as studies of similar groups, such as journalists, elected officials, artists, opinion leaders and representatives of civil society, where it has been shown that participation in public discourse and engagement in social issues entail an increased risk. Research and higher education fulfil an important function in society, and it is important that concerns about exposure do not influence the topics covered in research and teaching, or how or to what extent collaboration and research communication take place. Such influence is a threat to freedom of expression, to democracy and to sustainable societal development.

The government further highlighted that the responsibilities of HEIs to manage their working environments include countering hate, threats, violence and harassment, working preventively and taking necessary measures. In the bill, the government proposed amendments to the Higher Education Act to promote and safeguard academic freedom, partly for this purpose. In addition to the measures included in the action plan ‘In defence of free speech’ (Ku2017/01675), which concerns measures against exposure to threats and hate among, for example, journalists, elected representatives, artists and moulders of opinion, the bill recognises the importance of establishing a clearer picture of the situation in the higher education sector.

**The Swedish government official report *En skärpt syn på brott mot journalister och utövare av vissa samhällsnyttiga funktioner*** (A tougher approach to offences against journalists and performers of certain functions of benefit to society; SOU 2022:2) proposed that criminal provisions on violence, threats or assault against public officials should also protect those who carry out ‘certain socially useful functions’. This includes health care professionals, social services staff, emergency services staff and education staff in schools and university colleges. The inquiry found that staff in the higher education sector were particularly exposed. The Government therefore considered that, in addition to the previously identified categories, staff in the higher education sector should also be covered by enhanced protections under criminal law. In connection with the legislative proposal (9 March 2023),

the Government noted that offences committed against a person on the grounds of their journalistic activity, or who performs a socially useful function in their official capacity, constitute an attack not only on the victim but also, by extension, on democracy and society, and that these offences should therefore be regarded as particularly serious.

**Public & Science Sweden (VA)**, together with the Swedish Research Council, published the report *Jag vill, men jag binner inte* (I want to, but I don't have time) in 2021 on researchers' propensity to engage in communication. The most common obstacle researchers cited to engaging in communication was having too many other tasks with higher priority (64 per cent of researchers), followed by a lack of dedicated resources for communication work (37 per cent) and difficulties finding suitable opportunities or audiences (28 per cent). Five per cent cited risks or concerns about threats and harassment as a barrier. This barrier was cited to a greater extent by women up to the age of 29 (12 per cent) and among women in the humanities and arts (10 per cent).

**The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ)** published the report *Akademisk frihet i Sverige – Regeringsuppdrag om lärosätenas arbete med att främja och värna akademisk frihet* (Academic freedom in Sweden – Government assignment on the work of HEIs to promote and safeguard academic freedom) in spring 2024, which describes various threats to academic freedom. Two sections of the report deal with the issue of hate and threats explicitly, but several sections touch on the problem indirectly, including with reference to the culture of silence as an aspect of the academic work environment.

In the report, about 3,800 people responded to the question of whether they considered academic freedom to be under threat in Sweden today. The 53 per cent of respondents who answered 'yes' were asked in what way academic freedom is under threat. An analysis of the free text responses identified that most respondents cited external factors such as political control and the research funding system. Three per cent of respondents cited hate, threats or harassment in some form as such a challenge. The examples highlighted in the report mainly describe external threats, such as social media trolling. An equal proportion referred to 'students and criticism from students', with some respondents indicating that their teaching was sabotaged or disrupted.

One set of questions in the report deals with academic culture and relates to situations that respondents may have experienced in their everyday academic life. If the respondents had answered in the affirmative, they were asked if the situation had challenged their academic freedom. Of the options given, the most common response by far, cited by 46 per cent of respondents, was that research and academic discussion in the workplace had become homogeneous due to informal networks and friendships. This was followed by ‘colleagues at your workplace do not make room for ideas and perspectives that challenge the consensus of the research community’, cited by 29 per cent of respondents. Seven per cent reported threats and/or hate related to their research, directed in person, by letter, email, phone or social media, and eight per cent reported such incidents related to their teaching. About half of the former and 40 per cent of the latter group indicated that the experience threatened their academic freedom to some extent.

### **Surveys of HEIs**

Two Swedish HEIs have conducted local surveys of hate and threats directed against staff. The overall findings are summarised below.

#### **MALMÖ UNIVERSITY**

An internal audit was conducted at Malmö University in 2021 based on a sample of six departments, all related to subjects within the humanities and social sciences, and the university library. The survey was sent to 451 respondents, with a response rate of 47 per cent. The audit also relied on interviews with university management, operational support, deans and heads of department from a selection of faculties, as well as representatives of employee organisations. The survey was delimited to exclude threats and violence between staff members, as well as between students.

Among all respondents, 20 per cent indicated that they had experienced threats in their workplace. Most of these respondents stated that it had only occurred a few times. Reports of violence were rare. The interview responses show that threats were against teachers in educational contexts, for example during examinations and digitally in connection with distance learning. The interview responses also indicate that certain research areas are particularly exposed, but the review does not state which areas these are.

The incidents were mainly investigated by the immediate superior and the security manager or HR. Only 25 per cent of respondents felt that there were clear procedures for how to act in the event of threats or violence.

The interview responses show that work is underway to develop a systematic process for managing risks within the work environment. Normally, however, the risk of threats and violence is not considered sufficiently acute for special action plans to be drawn up, nor is it included in the university's annual risk analysis work. In the survey, nine per cent of respondents stated that they had received training in how to deal with threats in their workplace.

#### UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

In 2022, Umeå University conducted an internal audit of its preventive work against threats and violence. The key observation was that issues related to threats and violence had not been integrated into the systematic process for managing the working environment in the same way as other work environment risks (except for individual activities). The audit also included a survey to identify the prevalence of threats and violence and how employees are affected by the risk or concerns of being exposed to threats and violence. The survey was sent out in March 2022 to all employees of the University (approximately 4,300 persons) and received 2,361 responses (a response rate of 55 per cent).

*Distribution:* Of those who responded to the survey, 18 per cent stated that they had at some point been exposed to some type of threat or violence linked to their professional practice at Umeå University. A further 12 per cent stated that they had been exposed to violence in the past five years (2017-2022), and 21 per cent of women and 13 per cent of men stated that they had been exposed to violence at some point. Exposure was unevenly distributed across the faculties/organisations: the Faculty of Humanities was most exposed, with 24 per cent stating that they had been exposed to threats or violence at some point, followed by the Faculty of Social Sciences, 20 per cent, the University Library, 19 per cent, the University Administration, 18 per cent, the Faculty of Medicine, 17 per cent, and the Faculty of Science and Technology, 14 per cent. The most common response was that the victim had received threatening digital or physical messages (eight per cent), followed by threatening statements face to face (seven per cent). Reports of physical violence were rare (one per cent).

*Perpetrators:* The most commonly reported perpetrators in the material were ‘students or family members of students’ (about 40 per cent of victims), followed by ‘person working at Umeå University’ (about 30 per cent), external person not working in academia (about 21 per cent), while a smaller proportion stated that they did not know who the perpetrator was or that the person was working at another HEI.

Exposure was greater for respondents who had been more widely publicised or written about in the media, however the group of respondents that had not been widely publicised or written about in the media was considerably larger, and this group suffered a greater proportion of the total incidents (this data relates to exposure in the last five years). Of those who had been victimised in the last five years, 32 per cent stated that they had not reported the incident.

*Consequences:* Among respondents, 23 per cent reported some negative consequence due to risk or concern about being exposed to threats or violence. About one per cent of respondents indicated in the survey that they had left a particular field of research or teaching and three per cent that they had considered leaving. Just over two per cent said they had changed jobs and seven per cent said they had considered changing jobs because of the risk or concern of being exposed to threats or violence. About six per cent said they had refrained from speaking to the media because of the risk or fear of being exposed to threats and violence. Two per cent said that the risk or fear of being exposed to threats or violence influenced them to change a previous decision, and nine per cent that they had hesitated before making a decision.

## Hate and threats in academia – International

Below are four examples of international studies that provide relevant comparisons for the present study: two studies from Norway and the Netherlands and two scientific articles related to Belgium and Finland. Note that these represent selected examples relating to the problem area and are not the result of a systematic review of research/reports. In *Hate and harassment in academia: the rising concern of the online environment* (2022), Oksanen et al. point out that research on threats and harassment in academia is very limited. Significantly more research has been conducted, particularly in the US context, on the prevalence of *bullying* in academic culture. This research provides an interesting context and the overlap



between incidents categorised as harassment and those categorised as bullying is likely to be significant. This interpretive framework is something that needs to be explored further in the future but falls outside the scope of this study.

### Norway

In 2020-2022, as part of the project *Status for ytringsfriheten i Norge* (Status of Freedom of Expression in Norway), the Norwegian Fritt Ord Foundation carried out a survey titled *Kunnskapens rom i en ny offentlighet* (Knowledge Space in a New Public Sphere; KunOFF). This survey was presented in the report *Forskerne og offentligheten – om ytringsfrihet i akademien* (Researchers and the public – freedom of expression in academia; 20-21) and focussed on exposure in relation to media activity, primarily addressing the factors that determine and limit the dissemination of scientific information in the public sphere.

The starting point was that, despite the presence of freedom of expression in a purely legal/formal sense, there may be obstacles to researchers' willingness to communicate knowledge and research findings. The focus of the survey was on three areas that are often addressed in public debate: climate research, gender science/equality and immigration and integration. The survey was targeted at members of Forskerforbundet (Norwegian Association of Researchers), the Norwegian Civil Service Union (NTL) and three sub-groups of the Norwegian Medical Association, only including members whose roles comprised at least 20 per cent research, thus excluding pure teaching positions. In total, 1,856 respondents answered all the questions in the survey.

About 40 per cent of respondents felt that participation in public debate enhances the quality of research, but about a third were concerned that their participation might lead them to be perceived as political actors, which rose to about 50 per cent for those involved in research on immigration and gender/equality. About half of the respondents indicated that they do not limit themselves at all when it comes to communicating research findings in the media. Among those who did restrict themselves, the main reasons were that the topics were too complex for a general audience or dissatisfaction with the perceived 'tabloidisation' of the media. The controversial nature of their findings and concern over negative reactions were also key factors. Of the respondents, 14 per cent said they refrain from communicating about research because of the risk that they might portray clients/employers in a bad light or create conflict with colleagues, 12 per cent

stated that they avoided communicating findings for fear of incitement, threats or public criticism and a further 12 per cent stated that they were concerned about their career prospects, because research communication is not meritorious or could even be detrimental to their career. Additionally, 11 per cent stated that their research includes politically controversial content, which may offend minority groups or be abused for political purposes.

From the findings, social scientists were slightly more likely to limit themselves from speaking out than those in other fields. Researchers working in the fields of climate, gender and immigration were more likely to report limiting their research communication. The risk of being subjected to incitement, threats and criticism in a restrictive manner was cited by 25 per cent of researchers working on immigration, and by 27 per cent of those working on gender and equality. Climate scientists reported this to a significantly lesser extent, on par with the average for all respondents.

*Experiences of unpleasant comments and threats:* Of the surveyed researchers, 15 per cent said they had received unpleasant comments because of their research. Among researchers working on gender and gender equality and those working on immigration and integration, 37 per cent said they had received unpleasant comments, and of those working on climate/environmental research, the corresponding figure was 23 per cent. The social sciences stand out in the findings among subjects overall, with 23 per cent of respondents in the field stating that they had been exposed to unpleasant comments.

*Perpetrators:* The report states that, 'surprisingly', it was most often other researchers and colleagues who were behind unpleasant comments. However, it is worth noting that the category 'students' was not included in the survey and that the survey separated the categories 'strangers' and 'anonymous', which together comprise almost as large a group as 'other researchers/colleagues'.

*The consequences* of unpleasant comments varied. About half reported feeling angry or upset, while a quarter reported feeling unsafe or withdrawing from public life. A third, however, said that their victimisation had made them more engaged. There were no significant gender differences in the overall impact of unpleasant comments, but a higher proportion of women reported feeling unsafe.

## The Netherlands

In 2021, the vice-chancellors of Dutch HEIs developed a guide to address what they perceived as an increase in threats and harassment against researchers in connection with their media presence and other forms of publication. They pointed out that universities encourage staff to publicise their research but that this entails risks, such as being subjected to threats and harassment. They state that uncertainty and fear make researchers reluctant to engage in public debate. Staff need to be confident in their safety and in their employer's protection.

Staff at all universities in the Netherlands reported having received threats following media appearances or because they work in a particular field.

There are examples of researchers in need of constant protection, due to tangible threats. There are also examples of employees working on the subject of diversity, for example, who were met with hate when their assignments were presented, and others who received hundreds of attacks as soon as they were mentioned on Twitter (now X). It is not known how often threats and harassment against researchers and other university staff occur.

The guide also highlights that cases that reach the media are only the tip of the iceberg. Many people the authors spoke to said that threats had become more frequent, more varied and more serious in recent years, particularly those made via social media. However, they note that no systematic data is kept on the extent or trends.

According to a 2021 survey of 372 Dutch scientists by the Dutch higher education website Science Guide, 43 per cent had been threatened, 'verbally abused' or otherwise intimidated after public appearances in the past five years. More than half of those surveyed had at some point refrained from making public appearances for fear of negative consequences.

Of the participating researchers, 43 per cent stated that they had received intimidating/unpleasant comments one or more times after participating in some form of public debate. Of these, the majority had been victimised several times following public appearances.

Of those who had experienced unpleasant reactions, 79 per cent stated that the threats came from individuals outside the scientific community. At the same time,

39 per cent stated that the reactions came from within their own institution (the overlap between groups explains the response rate >100 per cent).

*Consequences:* Researchers refrain from participating in public debate, raising concerns about their own career prospects or research funding. The fear that participation would have a negative impact on their own career was a reason given for not engaging in public debate by 30 per cent of respondents, while 17 per cent said they refrained for fear of consequences for research funding.

*Forms of victimisation* ranged from comments and accusations to physical threats. Some researchers reported receiving death threats via social media or being subjected to ‘Twitter storms’ that ridiculed and questioned their positions as researchers and teachers. The attacks were not always directed at the researcher personally but sometimes occurred in the form of complaints addressed to the employer.

*Distribution:* There was a tendency for researchers who spoke out on racism in particular to suffer unpleasant reactions. Otherwise, the topics that generated reactions varied, and the distribution was relatively even across fields. The identity of the person speaking out appeared to be more decisive than the topic. Two thirds of respondents who had experienced harassment said that unpleasant reactions were related to their personal characteristics. For example, a third said that reactions were intended to disqualify them on the basis of political preferences – even when they had not expressed themselves politically.

The survey also shows that women were more often harassed because of their gender. Of those who had been harassed, 85 per cent were women, and of those attacked because of their age 82 per cent were women. Female researchers felt threatened more often than their male colleagues. Additionally, 39 per cent of women perceived the situations to be threatening or very threatening, compared to 25 per cent of men.

*Consequences:* Of the researchers who had experienced threats or unpleasant reactions in some form, 86 per cent said they had become more cautious in their statements. Furthermore, 46 per cent said they had become more worried after participating in public debate.

A third of the researchers who had been victimised said that as a result they appeared in public less often or wanted to do so less often, and some said they had stopped altogether. Of the researchers who had been intimidated, 31 per cent said they no longer felt free to speak in public. Women who had experienced harassment felt less free than their male and non-binary colleagues. Threats against researchers fostered feelings of insecurity in the wider research community. More than half of the researchers surveyed (61 per cent) sometimes avoided public debate, even if they had never experienced any threats themselves.

A follow-up analysis in 2021 showed that internal threats largely came from other colleagues, but managers and students were also mentioned as perpetrators. Most of those who said they had been attacked by others in the same faculty worked in the social sciences and humanities (however it should be noted that this also concerns victimisation in connection with media statements). It was also more common for younger researchers to be exposed to internal threats following public appearances. It was common for the attacks to be directed at the researcher's alleged political affiliation. Among the women who perceived an internal threat, 73 per cent said it was related to their gender (compared to nine per cent of men).

More than a third of researchers reported that they had been ostracised after contributing to public debate. Accusations, insults and threats were also common forms of victimisation in knowledge institutions. Almost half of researchers who had been exposed to internal harassment said they had become more cautious in their public statements and more than a third had become more anxious about public appearances. Additionally, 83 per cent stated having at some point avoided public debate due to concerns about possible reactions from their own research community. The most common fear was of negative reactions from managers and colleagues and the associated career risks.

*Reporting:* Most incidents were not reported. This was particularly true for internal threats. A majority of those who did not report an incident of victimisation considered it not worth reporting, while 44 per cent said they were afraid that reporting would be used against them in some way.

## Belgium

In *The academic intimidation and harassment of scientists at Flemish universities in Belgium* (2022), sociologist Pieter-Paul Verhaeghe points out that previous studies have focussed on external threats, largely ignoring what happens ‘on the floor’ of the academic environment. He therefore takes a broader approach, using a survey that asks to what extent researchers at Flemish universities are subjected to threats and harassment, which groups are predominantly involved, where and when it occurs, what the consequences are both academically and in terms of the well-being of the victims and what support is available. The survey was sent to all academic/research staff at Flemish universities.

*Findings:* The survey found that 45 per cent of responding academics had been threatened or harassed at some point during their career. Of those, about 15 per cent said they had been victimised often or somewhat often. The most common forms of victimisation were provocative or angry reactions, insulting or derogatory messages and questioning of the victim’s scientific credibility in the form of messages to managers or research funders. Between 20 and 30 per cent of respondents reported having experienced this at least once, while between five and ten per cent experienced this sporadically or frequently.

Less common (and perceived as less serious) were statements that researchers should leave their jobs, attacks on their credibility directed at a general audience, messages sent by persons who the researcher had asked to stop contacting them or receiving unwanted sexual messages (words and pictures). Verhaeghe points out that the most serious forms of attacks were also less common. About six per cent reported having been blackmailed or threatened at some point during their career. Three per cent had been threatened with physical violence, and one per cent with sexual violence. Less than one per cent had been subjected to physical or sexual violence at some point during their career.

*Distribution:* Professors and lecturers reported victimisation to a greater extent than postdocs, PhD students and more junior staff. The longer the respondent’s academic career, the more likely that they had been victimised. Researchers in the fields of biology, medical science, humanities and social sciences were more at risk than those in other natural sciences and engineering.

People with physical disabilities or chronic illnesses were most at risk. Female researchers reported higher levels of victimisation, but the gender distribution varied widely across different forms of victimisation. Sexual harassment and derogatory or insulting comments affected women particularly badly. In the findings, those from ethnic minorities also faced more threats than academics with a Belgian background. Researchers who described themselves as belonging to politically radical movements reported more victimisation than those who stated belonging to the political centre. However, the study found no significant effect of belonging to a religion or identifying as LGBTQ.

*Perpetrators* belonged to three categories: colleagues/other researchers, outsiders and students. The majority of victimisation took place either on campus or via email. About 24 per cent of respondents said they had been exposed to either mild or severe threats from colleagues or other academics at least once. About nine per cent of respondents said they had been victimised by people they did not know or only knew of. These included public figures, organised groups, parties or organisations outside academia. Researchers in the humanities, social sciences and life sciences were more likely to be victimised by outsiders, often in connection with public appearances or other forms of research communication. About five per cent of respondents said they had been victimised by students from their own or other HEI. This often took the form of derogatory comments in student evaluations and verbal aggression or legal action in relation to study findings.

Verhaeghe points out that threats and harassment have major consequences for academic freedom, the dissemination of research and the well-being of researchers. The most common consequences in the survey were that researchers hesitated to express their views on certain topics, communicate research findings and, where applicable, to stay in academia at all. Threats from outsiders and from colleagues had a particular impact on academic freedom and research communication. Victims also reported lower levels of well-being on average. In particular, threats and harassment from colleagues had a negative impact on well-being. The equivalent from students also had an effect, but to a lesser extent. In conclusion, the survey found widespread support for all forms of policy to address the problem. Most support was shown for providing information and training for managers on how to help exposed employees.

## Finland

In a Finnish study from 2022, 2,492 researchers from the five major national universities participated in a survey on experiences of online harassment related to their work. Those who reported victimisation in the past six months were asked follow-up questions about where the incident occurred, whether they knew the perpetrator, whether they reported the incident, and the consequences. The survey also included background factors as well as measures of personality and level of well-being.

The context of the study is characterised by a discussion about higher education, ‘public engagement’ and the extent to which academic staff should use social media as a channel for research communication.

The first part of the study examined risk and protective factors. The hypothesis was that presence in both traditional and social media is associated with online harassment, based on empirical research showing that increased visibility increases the risk of victimisation. The analysis examines additional risk factors, such as background and personality traits. The second part focussed on the impact of harassment on well-being and professional life. The survey used 20 different types of victimisation ranging from insults to threats of violence.

*Forms of victimisation* in the last six months: About 17 per cent of respondents reported a researcher’s competence being questioned beyond what is reasonable in normal criticism, 16 per cent reported receiving abusive and angry messages via social media and 14 per cent reported personal attacks on their person, values or lifestyle. Ten per cent reported being underestimated or criticised because of their gender. Eight per cent said that false rumours about them had been spread on social media, and the same proportion said that their statements had been taken out of context to give a false image. Furthermore, 30 per cent reported being exposed to some form of online harassment at least once in the last six months and 5 per cent reported that this happened every month. Victims were most often senior researchers, and/or belonged to minorities, and victimisation was highest in the social sciences and humanities. In over half of cases, the perpetrator was unknown. Only 16 per cent reported a case to a superior and three per cent to the police. Those who were active in media (social and traditional) were significantly more likely to be victimised, consistent with previous research on online activity and victimisation. The survey also found that those who had been victimised



reported lower well-being, trust and perceptions of social support than those who had not. Those victimised by colleagues reported PTSD symptoms and other consequences of online harassment at higher rates than those victimised by others.

## Hate and threats in other professions, Sweden

Surveys of the prevalence and consequences of violence, threats and harassment have been carried out in occupational groups that in some respects can be considered comparable to groups of researchers and teachers in the higher education sector. A number of themes emerge from the results of the surveys conducted in connected areas. These themes are drawn from the questions on the extent, forms, distribution, perpetrators, context and consequences of victimisation or concerns about victimisation.

### Politicians' safety survey

*The Politicians' Safety Survey* (PTU) is conducted by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) every two years, detailing elected representatives' exposure to harassment, threats and violence. The analysis below is taken from the survey on victimisation during the 2022 election year.

*Scope:* In the survey, nearly 30 per cent of respondents reported being victimised at least once in the past year (2022). The most common form of victimisation was threats and attacks via social media, and the second most common was threatening face-to-face statements, which according to the surveys were more typical during election years. In the intervening years, the second most common form of victimisation was exposed on the internet. Women experienced a slightly higher level of exposure. In 2022, exposure was spread evenly between elected representatives with or without foreign backgrounds, whereas in the previous survey those with a foreign background were found to experience greater levels of exposure by a couple of percentage points. Among the parties, exposure varied between 48 per cent (Green Party) and 24 per cent (Christian Democrats).

*Perpetrators and incidents:* In most incidents in 2022, the perpetrator was unknown or anonymous. In cases where the victim had an idea of the perpetrator's identity, it was most often a man, estimated to be 45-64 years old, acting alone and described as an angry citizen. In about half of the incidents, the perpetrator was

associated with a particular group, most often a right-wing extremist or racist group. The incidents were most often associated with a statement or opinion expressed by the elected official. In most cases, the victim stated that the perpetrator's main motive was to humiliate or insult.

*Consequences:* A quarter of respondents reported that in 2022 they were prevailed upon based on their position of authority either to act or to consider acting because of victimisation or fear of victimisation. There was a larger gender difference in this case: 30.4 per cent of women reported this, while the corresponding figure for men was 20.7 per cent. The most common consequences were limiting social media activity, avoiding engaging with or speaking out on a specific issue, considering leaving a specific job or hesitating before making an action or decision.

### **Threatened culture**

In the study *Hotad kultur* (Threatened Culture; 2016), the Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis examined the exposure of artists and writers. The survey was based on PTU and aimed at members of the Swedish Writers' Union and KRO/KIF.

*Scope:* One in three writers and artists said that they had experienced threats, harassment, theft, violence or vandalism at some point in connection with their work. One in six said they had been victimised at least once in the past 12 months.

*Distribution:* Among writers, 35 per cent said they had been exposed to some form of threat or harassment, and 19 per cent reported this happening in the last 12 months (i.e. 2015). A smaller group was very exposed. For the authors, there was a clear correlation between a desire to engage in social criticism and increased victimisation. In percentage terms, there were relatively small differences in terms of exposure by gender.

*Perpetrators* were often unknown, but many victims had an idea of what characterised perpetrators and their motives. Attacks on writers were often thought to be directed at their opinions. Artists were most often victimised by 'a generally angry and disgruntled person'. In response to follow-up questions about the type of political organisations the perpetrators were perceived to belong to

and the type of political motives they were perceived to have, the response ‘right-wing extremist/racist’ was given significantly more often than other response options.

*Consequences:* Of those who had either been victimised or were worried about being victimised, 14 per cent said that they had left or decided not to take on specific jobs or topics for this reason. About a third of those who had been victimised and/or were worried about victimisation said they had withdrawn from public life to some extent. About one-sixth said that their artistic freedom had been restricted. Conversely, many said that their commitment was strengthened.

*Support/measures:* Among those who had been victimised, 80 per cent did not report the incident, mainly because they did not believe that reporting it would lead to anything. Many in the target group had no employer with responsibility for their work environment, demonstrating a difference in needs compared to other occupational groups. Most wished there was more organised support from colleagues.

### **Journalists’ safety survey**

Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg has on several occasions investigated journalists’ exposure to violence, threats and harassment. The survey uses roughly the same structure as the PTU and is aimed at a random sample of members of the Swedish Union of Journalists.

*Scope:* Among respondents, 58 per cent indicated that they had been exposed to harassment, threats or violence in the course of their work. In the year prior to the 2016 survey, 26.5 per cent said they had been victimised. The most common types of victimisation were threatening phone calls (27 per cent), threatening emails (26 per cent) and threats/attacks via social media (21 per cent).

*Distribution:* In the survey, men were more victimised than women (63 per cent and 52 per cent respectively said they had been victimised at some point, and 28 per cent and 24 per cent respectively said they were victimised in 2016). Those writing about politics/society/foreign policy were most at risk (41 per cent), followed by those writing about criminality/crimes (37 per cent) and those writing more general journalism (31 per cent). Editorial writers were by far the most at

risk category (about 60 per cent), with presenters, managers and reporters about 30 per cent.

*Perpetrators/motives:* The perpetrators were usually anonymous, and it was generally believed that they acted alone. Men accounted for the vast majority of threats and harassment (83 per cent). Two thirds of victims perceived the perpetrators to belong to a particular group, with most (43 per cent) linking them to a right-wing extremist or racist group, while two per cent reported left-wing extremism. The groups ‘anti-feminist’ and ‘criminal network’ both received a response rate of seven per cent. The most common context for victimisation was in connection with coverage of a particular topic/issue (49 per cent) or coverage of an individual or group (26 per cent). Among the topics that generated responses of violence, threats and harassment, about half of cases involved coverage of refugees/immigration/asylum seekers. Additionally, 11 per cent cited coverage of crime, followed by anti-racism and football (both 4 per cent). The most commonly perceived motives were to influence journalistic behaviour (36 per cent), indicate displeasure (27 per cent) and humiliate or insult (24 per cent).

*Consequences:* Most victims had not taken any action to protect themselves from further victimisation. The most common action was to become more restrictive on social media. Of exposed journalists, 26 per cent had avoided covering a particular topic or issue, and 22 per cent had at some point avoided covering a particular individual or group. For the majority of respondents, self-censorship of this kind had occurred on an occasional basis. More than half said they had experienced fear after being victimised, 25 per cent had at some point considered leaving journalism and 20 per cent said that their private life had been affected.

*Support/reporting:* One tenth of incidents were reported to the police, with the most common reason for not reporting being that incidents were seen as minor, even when perceived as threatening. Another common reason was a lack of belief that reporting would lead anywhere or that such incidents were seen as part of the job, something to be expected and dealt with.

### **Surveys from trade unions**

In its report *Hatad och hotad i demokratins tjänst – så kan hot, våld och trakasserier mot tjänstemän påverka demokratin* (Hated and threatened in the service of democracy – how threats, violence and harassment against civil servants can affect democracy;

TCO 2022), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) found that hate, threats, violence and harassment occurred in most industries in both the private and public sectors, which can damage democracy by affecting people's trust in the rule of law and democratic institutions. The report summarises a series of studies on threats, violence and harassment against public officials.

Almost one in five members of the TCO union had been exposed to hate, threats or violence in the last five years, equivalent to more than 200,000 people in the civil service. Three out of ten members reported that a close colleague had been the victim of hate, threats or violence. Two thirds of the victims had received direct threats at work, about one in four had received threats or hatred via email and one in five had experienced physical violence in the form of pushing, hitting or similar. More women than men had been victims. Civil servants in the public sector were much more likely to be victims, with a response rate of three out of ten. Nine out of ten TCO union members believed threats, violence and harassment against civil servants to be a threat to democracy.

**Vision's** survey, *Har du familj...? En rapport om utsatthet för hot, personangrepp och våld i socialt arbete* (Do you have a family...? A report on exposure to threats, personal attacks and violence in social work; 2021), shows that almost half of those working in social services, 45 per cent, had been exposed to some form of threat, violence, personal attack or slander at some point in the past 12 months. Threats were the most common incident. Treatment staff and social workers were the professional groups most at risk.

In the **Swedish Association of Health Professionals'** Novus survey from 2020, 44 per cent of members responded that they had been exposed to threats, and 27 per cent that they had been exposed to violence at their workplace. Emergency care was most exposed, followed by psychiatry.

A survey of members of the **Union of Civil Servants** (ST) in 2018 showed increased incidence of threats and threats of violence. Among ST respondents, 16 per cent said they had been exposed to threats or violence at work. A third also stated that threats and violence were present in the workplace.

The Swedish Teachers' Union (then Lärarförbundet) pointed out that threats and violence against teachers present a risk of serious consequences not only for the person affected but for society as a whole, and that school leaders must receive

better support, sufficient resources and a strong mandate from principals to lead the work against threats and violence (Swedish Teachers' Union 2021). In the report, more than 1,000 teachers and representatives stated that threats and violence were present in their workplaces. The problem was wide-ranging – from physical violence by pupils, experienced by 16 per cent of secondary school teachers in 2020, to verbal violence by guardians, which affected ten per cent of upper secondary school teachers in the same year.

Almost half of secondary school teachers and more than one in five upper secondary school teachers had been exposed to a threatening situation by a student between 2019 and 2021. During this period, 28 per cent of secondary school teachers and ten per cent of upper secondary school teachers were exposed to threatening situations by students several times in the past two years.

The survey showed that most schools had procedures and policies regarding threats and violence, but that there were shortcomings in the preventive work and how incidents were handled. This applies, for example, to reports of serious incidents to the Swedish Work Environment Authority.

### **Statistics from the Swedish Work Environment Authority**

The **Swedish Work Environment Authority** identifies on its website a number of tasks and work environments that may involve increased risk of threats and violence:

- Working with people, such as in health care and social work
- Working in public settings, such as libraries or emergency rooms
- Working in government departments or non-profit organisations
- Handling money or goods

Among civil servants, those working in emergency services, such as police, rescue services and ambulance services, were particularly at risk. Civil servants in government agencies and other organisations, such as social services, were also particularly at risk. In addition to the nature of their work, other factors such as working alone, stress, lack of time and high workloads further increase the risk of victimisation.

The **Swedish Work Environment Authority's** most recent statistics on occupational injuries showed that about one in ten men and almost two in ten women were exposed to violence or threats of violence at work at least once during the last 12-month period. Threats, violence and harassment that resulted in accidents saw the greatest increase compared with the Swedish Work Environment Authority's base year 2003. Two thirds of those affected by hate, threats and violence were exposed to direct threats at work (according to the Swedish Association of Health Professionals' Novus survey of its members). Almost one in four had also received threats or hatred via e-mail. One in five had experienced physical violence in the form of pushing, hitting or similar. Exposure to hate and threats on social media affected one in eight civil servants.

#### **Swedish National Audit Office**

In 2022, the Swedish National Audit Office examined the work of government agencies and the government to prevent and deal with harassment, threats and violence against government employees. They noted that victimisation risks undermining democratic principles as a result of employees avoiding work tasks or being influenced to make poor decisions. Work to prevent and counteract harassment, threats and violence aims to create a safe and secure working environment and to ensure trust in government activities.

A questionnaire survey conducted by the Swedish National Audit Office and sent to all authorities showed that experiences of harassment are common, while experiences of violence are unusual. Three quarters of the responding authorities stated that employees had experienced some form of harassment during the period 2019-2021. Within authorities that reported that incidents of harassment occurred frequently, staff that had regular contact with citizens were the most exposed. Authorities that stated that harassment occurred at some time in a week were large ones that have frequent contact with citizens and that make decisions that can be highly consequential to the individual, such as the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, the Swedish Enforcement Authority, the Swedish Police Authority and the Swedish Tax Agency, but also smaller authorities such as the Equality Ombudsman and the Public Health Agency of Sweden. Harassment was very common in the criminal investigation/judicial authorities. County administrative boards also reported a very high rate of incidences. Harassment was also relatively common at HEIs (see

the category of grading and examination below) and authorities whose activities include payments, supervision and licences. The survey had similar results for these categories with regard to threats and violence. They further indicated that acts in the heat of the moment were the most commonly occurring incidents, but systematic harassment and threats were more serious.

The Swedish National Audit Office states that the work of authorities and the Government is effective in many respects and that the organisations that are most exposed have taken preventive and management measures. It also states that improved support is needed for authorities where harassment, threats and violence are less common, but where such phenomena may occur in connection with changes in the operating environment or in the organisation.

More than half of the authorities reported that employees had been exposed to harassment once a year or more. Certain authorities and activities were significantly more exposed, including courts, HEIs, county administrative boards and authorities that investigate crimes, exercise supervision or decide on licences, compensation or grants. Harassment and threats were common, mainly from those who exhibited litigious behaviour, were in a state of emotion or were in a desperate situation. Some organisations also experience more serious or systematic harassment and intimidation, from both individuals and those linked to extremist groups or criminal activities. This was less common but could be more difficult for authorities to deal with. In smaller authorities, this was sometimes less systematic. There were also challenges in ensuring that procedures were implemented and followed as intended. There was also under-reporting of incidents, particularly harassment in large, risk-exposed agencies. Police reports of incidents were often dropped, and there were few convictions.

The knowledge bases and support that do exist, such as handbooks and digital training programmes, focus mainly on authorities that have frequent contact with citizens. The review showed that there was a lack of knowledge and support for authorities that experienced a sudden increase in harassment and threats. This may, for example, be a result of specific cases or issues that attract attention, changes in the operating environment or changes in the authority's mission. A sudden increase in incidents puts a major strain on agency staff and operations, as resources have to be mobilised to deal with new unexpected situations.



The recommendations aim to complement the existing protection of public servants for all types of activities and incidents. Support is needed for those authorities that lack the resources to systematically prevent and manage potential incidents. This support needs to be practical and concrete, quickly accessible and should take into account all important perspectives, such as work environment, safety, governance and control. The National Audit Office recommended that the Government instruct the appropriate department to establish a function to support authorities with practical advice and tools for dealing with harassment, threats and violence. It also recommended instructing the appropriate department to produce a knowledge base documenting experiences and providing support to those authorities that lack preparedness and to consider changes to legislation that could reduce the exposure of individual decision-makers or administrators.

### **Summary background**

This report began with the observation that, although there have been stories about researchers' and teachers' exposure to threats and hate for many years, the higher education sector was largely absent from discussions on violence, threats and harassment directed at professions that serve an important role for democracy, for example in the then government's 2017 action plan. One reason for this omission was the lack of studies similar to those carried out for elected representatives, journalists and cultural workers. In this chapter, an overview of reports and policy documents relating to the victimisation of researchers in Sweden is provided, together with some international studies, as well as reports relating to sectors/occupational groups that share similarities with the higher education sector.

Based on the material, a few observations can be made:

- Several of the reports indicate that there are some gender differences in terms of victimisation and perpetrators. Perpetrators were significantly more likely to be men, and in several cases women were somewhat more exposed and more worried about being victimised.
- The reported consequences of victimisation and risk/fear of victimisation most often included various types of self-censorship, with respondents restricting themselves to some extent. These consequences were in many cases more common for women than men.

- Many were unsure of the support available to them, or were reluctant to seek it for various reasons.
- There is an increased risk of vulnerability in relation to contact with citizens and decision-making.
- There is an increased risk associated with social and traditional media activity.
- There is an increased risk associated with handling certain particularly charged subjects.
- The international studies on threats and hate against researchers that were reviewed focussed on risks associated with research communication and on external perpetrators.
- It seems possible to distinguish between organisations that mainly face external threats and those that mainly face internal threats.
- Incidents categorised as more serious occurred infrequently.
- Common incidents included encounters with angry/disgruntled people, either verbally or via email.

## Method

### Background

The present study used the Politicians' Safety Survey (PTU) as an overall template. The PTU is conducted regularly by Brå and provides a good picture of the aspects of violence, threats and harassment in relation to professional practice, and was deemed relevant to the higher education sector. The PTU is an established model that formed the basis for studies on journalists (JMG 2016) and the victimisation of cultural workers (Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis 2016). These surveys provide important points of comparison for understanding conditions in academia, and comparability in methodology is a significant advantage. The survey questions relate to the following:

- The extent of victimisation
- Areas that generate threats/hate
- Particularly exposed groups

- Forms of victimisation
- The consequences of victimisation or the fear/risk of victimisation
- Victims' access to support
- Perpetrators and motives

## Design

The design and content of the survey were discussed with representatives of the research community, as well as with representatives of authorities that have conducted similar surveys. The survey consists of background questions, questions about victimisation as a researcher/teacher across the respondent's career, victimisation during the past year, follow-up questions about the most recent incident and questions about consequences and support (see Appendix II: Survey, where the survey is reproduced in full). The survey was designed by investigators at the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg, coded and sent out by SULF, with a missive describing the purpose of the survey. The survey was piloted in October 2021 and further revised following comments from respondents.

## Implementation

The final version was sent out in February 2022, in electronic form only. The survey was translated into English. Two reminders were sent out before the survey was closed. The response period was three weeks. Anonymised data was used for analysis. The interpretation of the results needs to take into account that the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Participants

The study is based on a mailing to the SULF membership register (N=17,459). The response rate was 17.1 per cent (N=3,154), of which 128 respondents indicated that they were not researchers/teachers in the higher education sector. A total of 2,995 respondents completed the entire survey, which means that a further 31 respondents were not included.

SULF's membership register does not contain information on the proportion of members who were active as researchers and teachers in the Swedish higher

education sector at the time of the survey. The exact response rate is thus a minimum measure.

The social sciences and humanities/arts made up a majority of the respondents, fields which are thus over-represented in relation to the higher education sector as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the subject area of medicine was under-represented among the respondents. At the same time, this distribution of respondents is consistent with SULF's perception of the distribution of its members.

The SULF membership register is not open, so the risk that individuals can be identified is minimal. The reporting of results was also limited to responses indicated by more than 20 people.

## Non-response

### External and internal non-response

The survey was sent to all SULF members with an email address in the register of members, totalling 17,459 people. The first question in the survey was answered by 3,154 people. It asked whether the respondent was currently active as a researcher or teacher in the Swedish higher education sector, a condition for answering the rest of the survey. Of these, 128 people stated that they were not active, after which they were no longer able to answer the survey. The majority of respondents thus did not open the survey. As there is no information on how many of SULF's members are active in the sector, it is not known how many did not open the questionnaire due to not being included in the target group. This leads to some uncertainty in the results.

In total, 2,995 people completed the survey.

### Skewness of sample

There may be a greater incentive for victims to participate in a survey on violence, threats and harassment than for those who have not been victims. This cannot be avoided, although a message was included with the survey explaining the importance of participating, even for those who have not been victimised. The

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<sup>1</sup> UKÄ/SCB Personal vid Universitet och Högskolor 2021 (Staff at Universities and Higher Education)

questionnaire was much shorter for those who had not been exposed to any of the listed incidents, which lowers the threshold for participation. Additionally, experiences of victimisation can be difficult to share in surveys, which instead entails the risk of under-reporting experiences. Taken together, these considerations mean that the survey results should be interpreted with caution.

### **Subject affiliation**

Among the respondents, a higher proportion of those active in the social sciences (psychology, economics and business, education, sociology, law, political science, social and economic geography, media and communication studies) and humanities (history and archaeology, languages and literature, philosophy, ethics, religion and the arts) reported having been exposed to some form of threat or harassment. However, the respondent groups differed in size: humanities and social sciences together account for 51 per cent of respondents. This needs to be taken into account, as the results for other subject areas were less definitive, and the respondents represented a smaller proportion of those active in each area. The explanation for the distribution of responses in the survey is most likely found in the distribution of SULF's membership. SULF does not have a precise estimate of distribution by subject area among its members, but the above is consistent with its assessment of the distribution.

## Findings

### Key findings from the survey

The following are the key descriptive findings from the survey:

- Exposure to violence, theft and vandalism in the capacity of researcher or teacher did occur but was relatively uncommon in the data. Six per cent of those surveyed had at some point been the victim of an incident of this kind.
- Experiences of some form of threat or harassment were common (39 per cent) and occurred across all subject areas. Just over 30 per cent of respondents in every subject area reported experiencing some form of victimisation.
- Experiences of victimisation were more common in the humanities and social sciences, where experiences of threats or harassment were close to 50 per cent.
- Women were more exposed than men to most types of incidents and were more worried about victimisation, both for themselves and for family members.
- Students were the most common group of perpetrators for all categories of victimisation, and most cases occurred in teaching/supervision contexts. Colleagues were the second largest category of perpetrators and more common in situations involving ongoing research or publication of research findings.
- External perpetrators were more common as perpetrators in relation to social and traditional media appearances and opinion pieces.
- Consequences of exposure or risk/fear of exposure included various forms of self-censorship.
- Eight per cent had changed their routines/behaviour due to exposure. Almost twice as many women as men reported this as a consequence.
- One third of respondents did not know where to turn if they were victimised. Two thirds did not know if their institution or HEI had an action plan on how to deal with victimisation and the risk of victimisation, or stated that there was no such action plan.

- Exposure was higher among those who were more active in social and traditional media.
- Slightly higher exposure was reported by those who indicated that they worked in subject areas that have featured in previous incident reports or have been the subject of debate related to politically charged issues.

## Detailed presentation of results

### Principles of results reporting

This section presents data from the survey ‘Hot och hat mot forskare och lärare i svensk högskolesektor’ (Threats and hate against researchers and teachers in the Swedish higher education sector). The survey was sent out in January 2022. The results section presents the overall data from the survey that appeared in the interim report (2022) but also contains supplementary tables that address combinations of multiple factors from the same survey.

A selection of tables is presented here with breakdowns by gender and subject area. A number of tables also show breakdown by job title. The choice of included distribution factors was guided by significant differences observed based on the variables used. It is important to be cautious when interpreting the data in the following tables, especially in categories with few respondents. It is also important to bear in mind that the survey responses were based on respondents’ perceptions, i.e. answers are influenced by subjective interpretations.

Due to the limited population and low response rate, the results are presented in numerical form, as percentages alone would give a misleading impression of their representativeness. The results are also presented in percentages, as the respondent categories do not correspond to the population as a whole, and the over-represented categories would misleadingly give the impression of being more exposed than the results support. The selection of data and the choice of combination tables were guided by which relationships provided sufficient evidence to be relevant. Follow-up questions were only directed to those affected in the past year, which resulted in a much smaller sample and unfortunately means that some questions could not be reported at all. This choice was motivated by the fact that questions concerning the past year generate more reliable answers.

To explore the question of whether certain research and teaching subjects were more exposed, a broadly worded question was included asking whether the respondent considered themselves to be working in a subject previously reported as being targeted. The options included subjects/methods on which such reports have been received, but there was also an option to answer ‘other’ and to indicate the subject using free text. However, as per the reporting principles mentioned, this meant that most individual topics provided very small numbers of results. Exposure was therefore reported here in relation to whether or not the respondent was associated with *one* of these subjects, without specifying *which* subject.

No precise definitions or measures of victimisation can be given, as these are subjective experiences. This is not a survey on crime victimisation but rather a survey on how respondents themselves experienced the events they were exposed to. This is also the relevant point from an impact perspective. A consequence of this is that we cannot rule out that an event perceived to be threatening by one person is not unlike an event that another respondent would not even report. When the survey mentions outcome in terms of ‘threats’ and ‘harassment’, these terms are operationalised, i.e. they pertain to one or more of the types of events presented in a list of examples (see below and the survey in Appendix II).

A high number of responses falling into the ‘other’ categories and a relatively even distribution across categories may indicate 1) that several different phenomena are involved and/or 2) that the relevant explanatory mechanisms/categories have not been identified.

### **Exposure to violence, vandalism and theft**

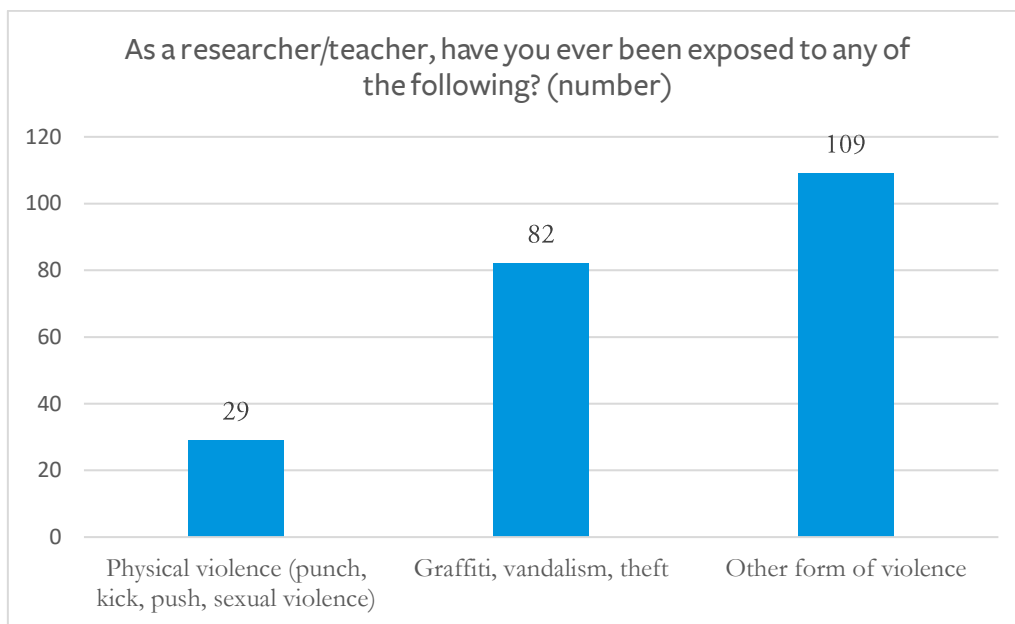
This section presents data for the main types of victimisation for the categories of violence, vandalism and theft and comments on the distribution. The result that stands out among these data is that respondents with a foreign background are to some extent over-represented among victims. This is therefore presented in a separate figure (see Figure 2 below).

Of the 2,884 respondents who answered the questions on exposure to violence, vandalism and theft in their capacity as researchers/teachers, 179 (six per cent) stated that they had been exposed to in some form (see Figure 1). Of these, 75 (42 per cent of victims) stated that such an incident had occurred in the previous 12



months. Respondents could indicate several options, so the sum of the three bars in Figure 1 exceeds 179, the number of respondents to the question.

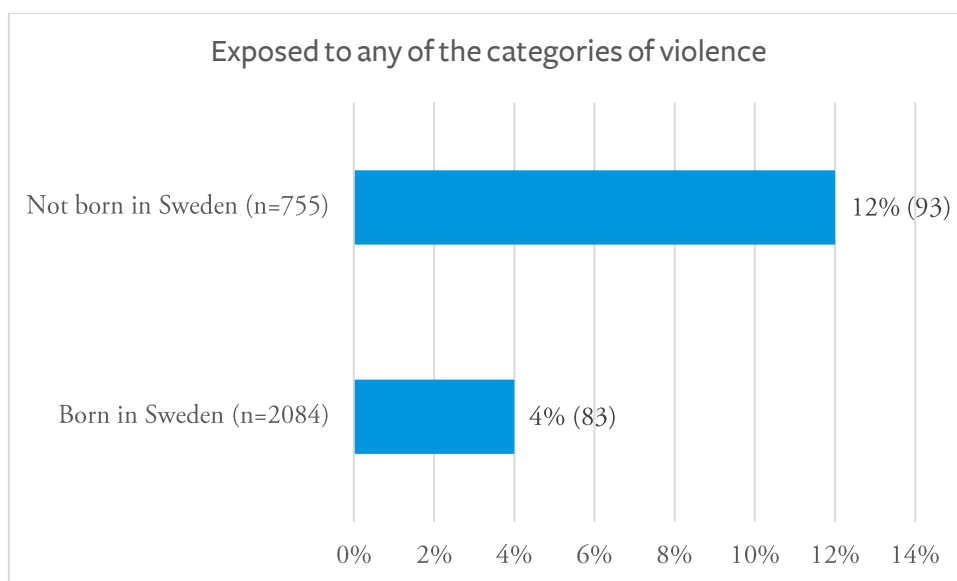
**Figure 1: Exposure to violence, theft and vandalism at any point (number)**



In Figure 1, the categories of punching, kicking, pushing or similar and sexual violence have been merged into the category 'physical violence'. None of the respondents indicated that they had been exposed to the categories 'violence with weapons' or 'arson/bombings'.

The largest category indicated by respondents was 'other forms of violence', i.e. events not captured by the options given. What these include is not clear from the survey.

**Figure 2: Exposure to any of the categories of violence born in Sweden/not born in Sweden (percentage, number in brackets)**



Twelve per cent of those not born in Sweden said they had been exposed to some form of violence, vandalism or theft, compared with four per cent of those born in Sweden. Women and men reported exposure to events of this kind in roughly equal proportions. The distribution of other background variables produced groups that were too small to be included in the report.

A majority of those who stated that they had been victimised in the past year (n=75) answered a number of follow-up questions. These are briefly described below, with the purpose of showing the types of events that occurred and what is most common in the material. However, it is important to remember that the data is very limited and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

- The most common situations in which violence, vandalism or theft occurred were in the context of teaching/supervising.
- Perpetrators were most commonly men (36 per cent, n=26) or a group of both women and men (33 per cent, n=24).
- Almost all victims perceived the situation as quite or very unpleasant (89 per cent).
- In almost half of cases (44 per cent), victims reported that they had previously been victimised by the same people.

- In more than half of the cases (53 per cent), victims reported that the perpetrators were known or well known to them.
- In a majority of cases (68 per cent), victims reported that the perpetrator(s) was/were a student or a colleague working in the same institution or unit.
- Most reported that they did not perceive or did not know whether the perpetrator belonged to a particular political or other group.
- The most common motive perceived by victims was that the perpetrator was trying to humiliate or insult them (69 per cent), affect their career prospects/opportunities to pursue research (51 per cent) or indicate displeasure (46 per cent).<sup>2</sup>

### **Exposure to threats and harassment**

This section presents victimisation under the category of threats and harassment, as well as data on the distribution of this victimisation among respondents. As experiences of this type of victimisation are much more common than experiences of violence, vandalism and theft, many more distribution tables are presented in this section.

This section includes the data presented in the interim report and is supplemented by tables describing distribution by gender and subject and, in some cases, job title. A selection of tables combining certain background factors is also included in this section.

Of the respondents, 39 per cent (1,097 persons) stated that they had been exposed to at least one of the above categories of victimisation in their capacity as researchers or teachers, the most common of which are shown in Figure 3 under the heading ‘threats and harassment’.

Of those exposed, 37 per cent (408 people) stated that they had been exposed in the past 12 months, representing 15 per cent of all respondents.

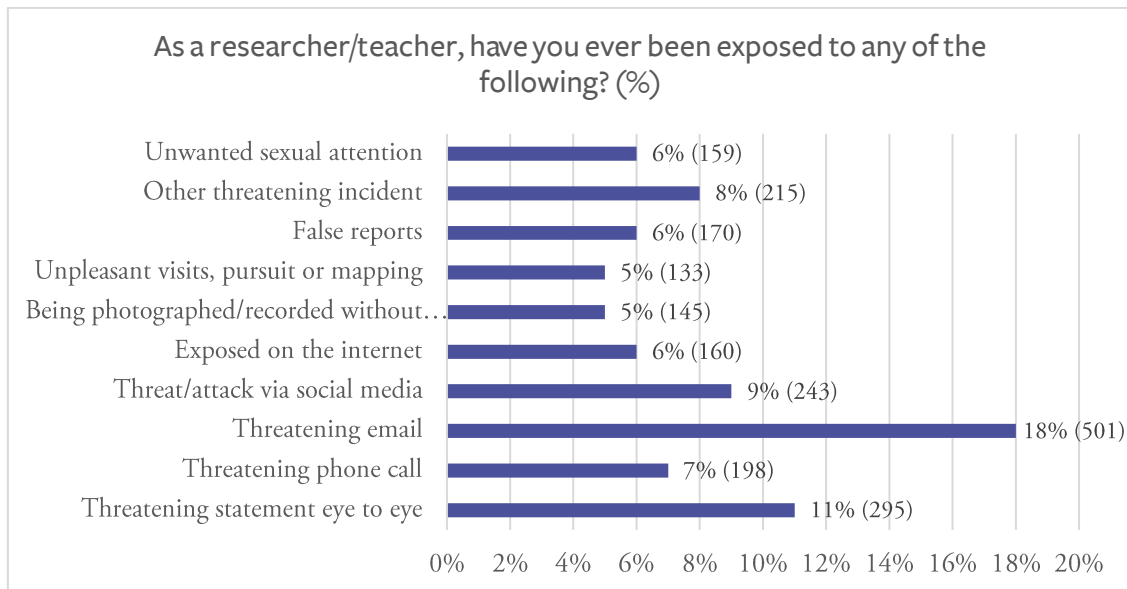
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<sup>2</sup> Multiple responses were allowed, resulting in a response rate >100%.

### FORMS OF EXPOSURE

Among those who indicated that they had been victimised at some point, the most common types of victimisation were in the form of a ‘threatening email’, indicated by 17 per cent of respondents, followed by ‘threatening face-to-face statements’ (10 per cent) and ‘threats/attacks via social media’ (8 per cent). The results are shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Exposure to threats and harassment at any point (percentage, number in brackets)<sup>3</sup>**



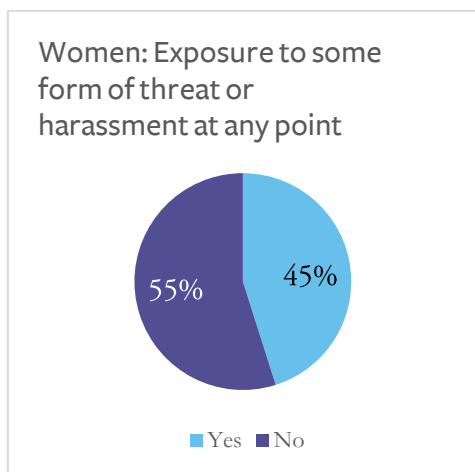
### Victimisation at any point by gender

Exposure to threats and harassment in the capacity of researcher/teacher differed depending on the gender of the respondent. Forty-five per cent of women (668 out of 1,480) said they had been victimised at some point, while 32 per cent of men (429 out of 1,324) had been victimised. In other words, 61 per cent of those who had been victimised were women, while 38 per cent were men. The groups

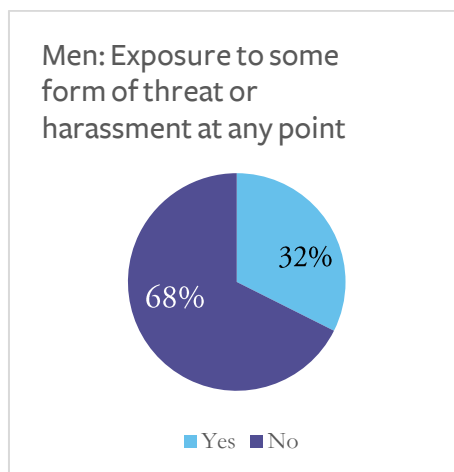
<sup>3</sup> In the figure, the categories ‘threatening SMS/MMS’, ‘hijacked internet account’, ‘threatening letter/postcard’, ‘displayed on poster/flyer’ and ‘threatening gift’ have been excluded due to the small numbers of respondents (N<50). These types of events occurred, but less frequently.

‘other’, ‘non-binary’ and ‘prefer not to say’ were too small to be included in the report (n<50).

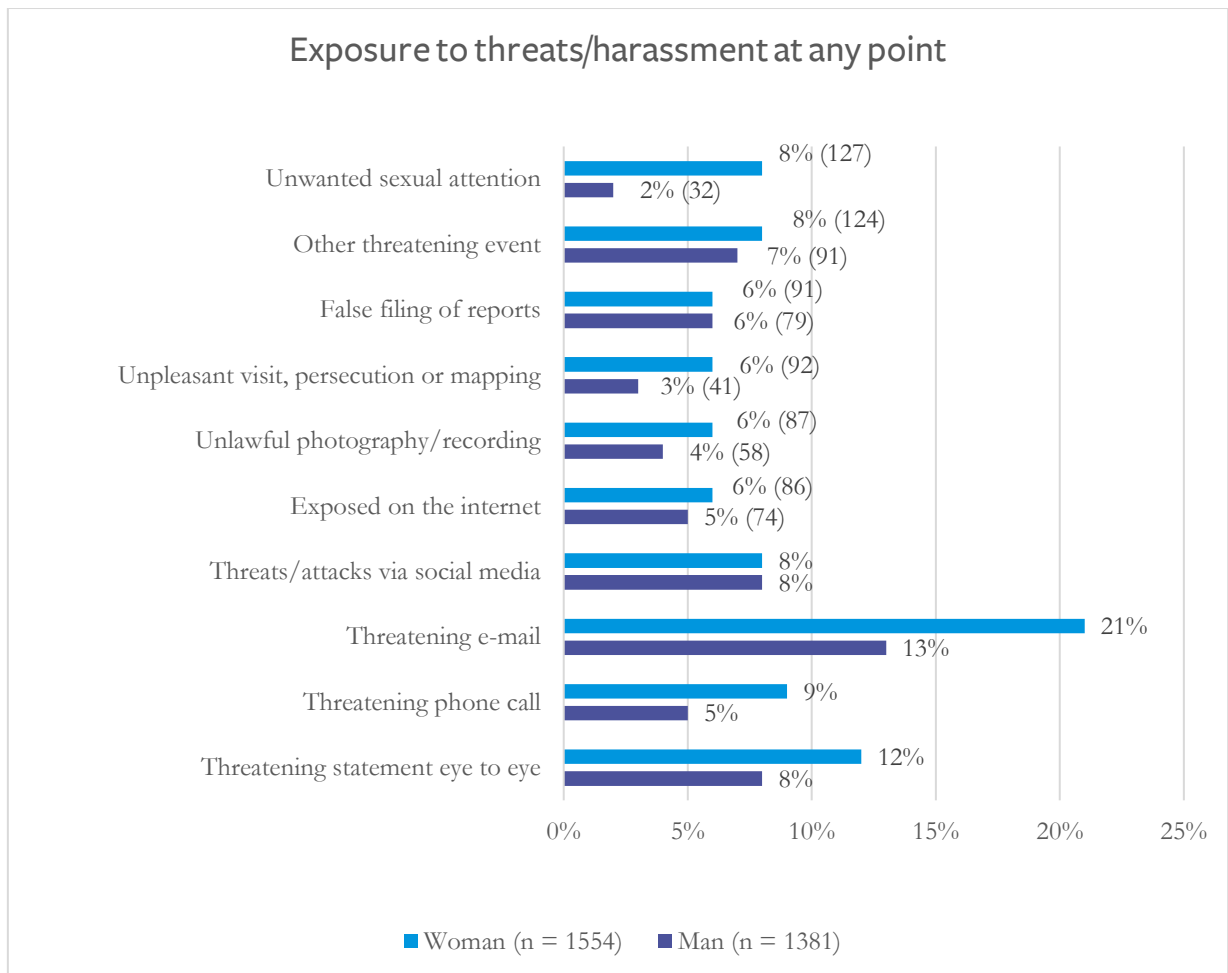
**Figure 4: Exposure to threats or harassment at any point, women (percentage)**



**Figure 5: Exposure to threats or harassment at any point, men (percentage)**



**Figure 1:**  
**Victimised at any point, categories by gender (percentage, number in brackets)**

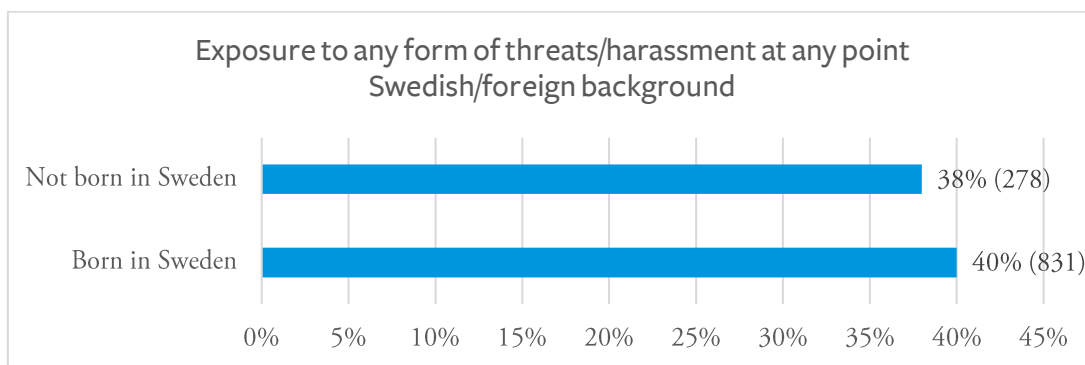


Women are over-represented in almost all categories of victimisation, but particularly in the categories of ‘threatening phone call’ (nine per cent compared to five per cent for men), threatening email (21 per cent and 13 per cent respectively), unpleasant visit, stalking or mapping (six per cent and three per cent respectively) and unwanted sexual attention (eight per cent and two per cent respectively). victimisation is more evenly distributed in the categories of ‘social media attacks’ and ‘false reports’.

#### EXPOSURE AT ANY POINT IN RELATION TO ETHNIC BACKGROUND

In percentage terms, there was little difference in terms of exposure to threats and harassment between respondents born in Sweden and those not born in Sweden.

Figure 2: Exposure to threats/harassment at any point (percentage, number in brackets)



#### EXPOSURE AT ANY POINT IN RELATION TO SUBJECT AREA

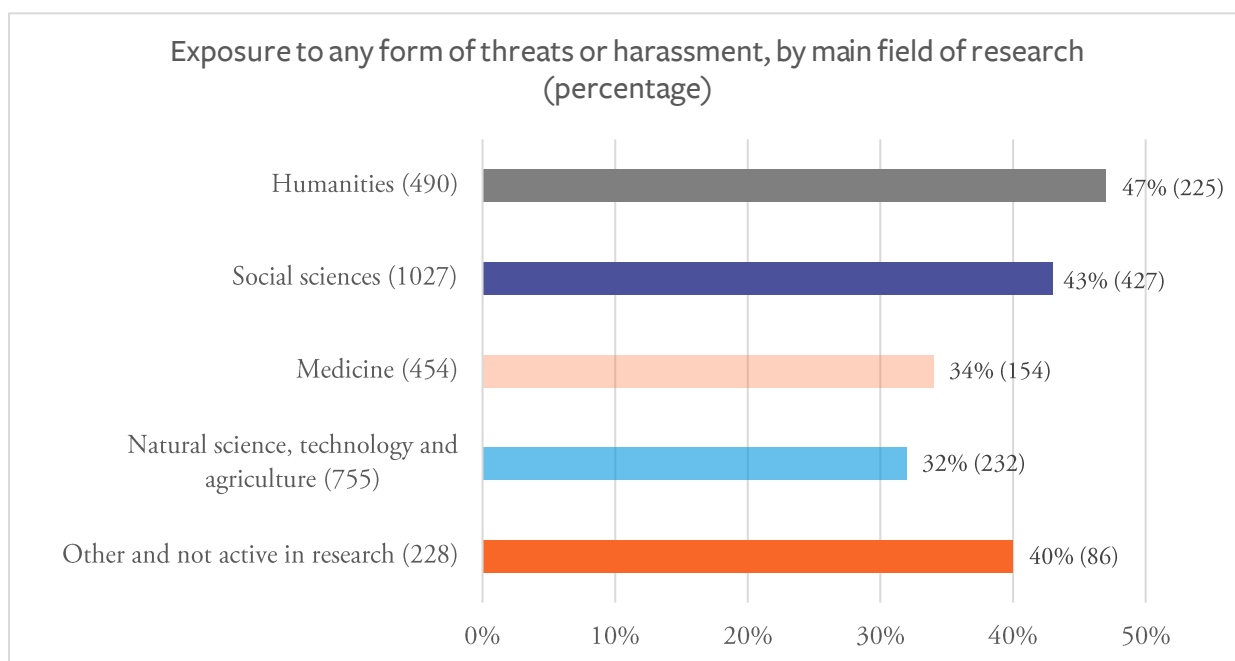
Among respondents, a significantly higher proportion of those active in the social sciences and humanities reported that they had been exposed to a form of threat or harassment at some point. Over 30 per cent of respondents across all subject areas reported experiencing victimisation. It is worth recalling at this point that the respondent groups are of different sizes; subject areas within the humanities and social sciences comprise 51 per cent of the respondents in the survey. This needs to be taken into account as the results for other subject areas are less certain and the respondents represent a smaller proportion of those active in each area.

The figures below refer to the following subject areas:

- ‘Science, technology and agriculture’: mathematics, computer and information sciences, physics, chemistry, earth and environmental sciences, biology. Agricultural sciences, forestry and fisheries, animal sciences, veterinary medicine, biotechnology with applications to plants and animals. Civil engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, materials engineering, medical engineering, natural resources engineering, environmental biotechnology, industrial biotechnology and nanotechnology.
- ‘Medicine’: basic medical and pharmaceutical sciences, clinical medicine, health sciences, medical biotechnology.

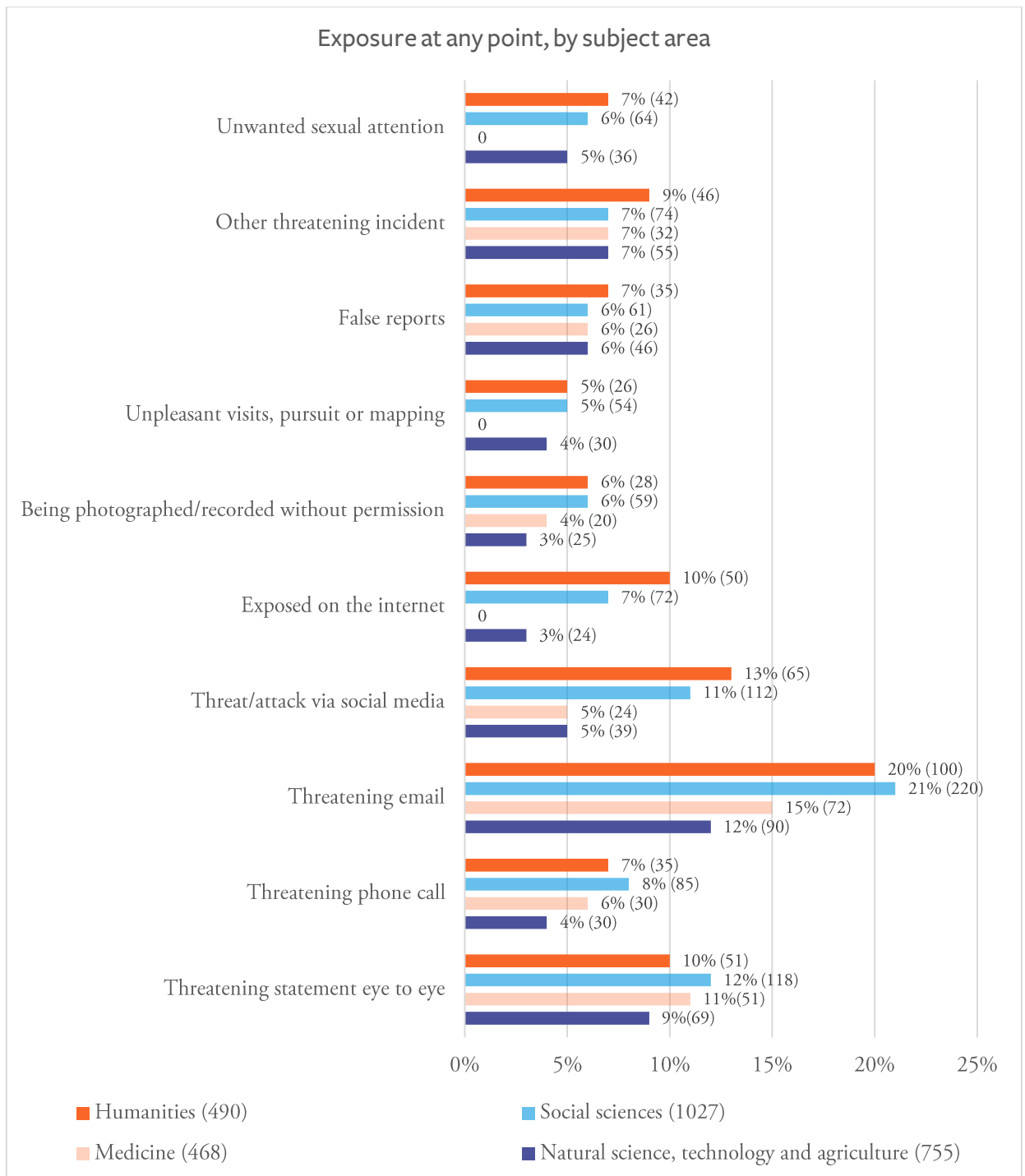
- ‘Social sciences’: psychology, economics and business, educational sciences, sociology, law, political science, social and economic geography, media and communication sciences.
- ‘Humanities’: history and archaeology, languages and literature, philosophy, ethics and religion, arts.
- Other and not active in research

**Figure 3: Exposure to any form of threats or harassment, by main subject area**





**Figure 9: Exposure to various forms of threats/harassment at any point, by subject area (percentage, number in brackets)**



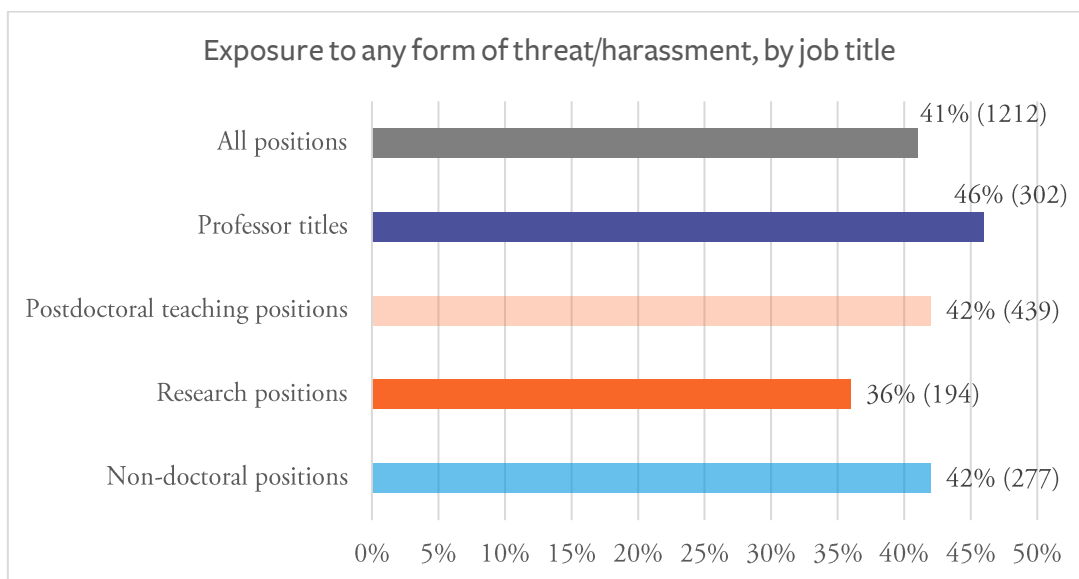
In the humanities and social sciences, experiences of receiving ‘threatening email’ were slightly more common and ‘threats and attacks on social media’ and ‘being exposed on the Internet’ were significantly more common than in other subject areas. Responses were more similar across other categories. For the category ‘other/not active in research’, the response rate in most cases was <20 and is therefore omitted from the figure. In cases where the response rate for the category ‘medicine’ are below 20, this is recorded as a value of 0 in the figure.

#### EXPOSURE AT ANY POINT IN RELATION TO JOB TITLE

The figure below uses the following job titles:

- *Professorial* titles include Full Professor and Associate Professor.
- *Postdoctoral teaching positions* include lecturer and assistant lecturer.
- *Research positions* include researchers, postdoctoral fellows and other staff with a doctoral degree.
- *Non-doctoral positions* include assistant professor, doctoral student and other staff without a doctoral degree.

**Figure 10: Exposure to any of the above, at any point, by title (percentage, number in brackets)**



The distribution of victimisation across professional titles is relatively even. It is worth remembering that professors tend to have had longer careers during which

the reported experiences may have occurred, especially compared to non-doctoral staff, who are nevertheless the second most at risk group in the data.

**Figure 11: Exposure to threats or harassment, at any point, by job title (percentage, number in brackets)**

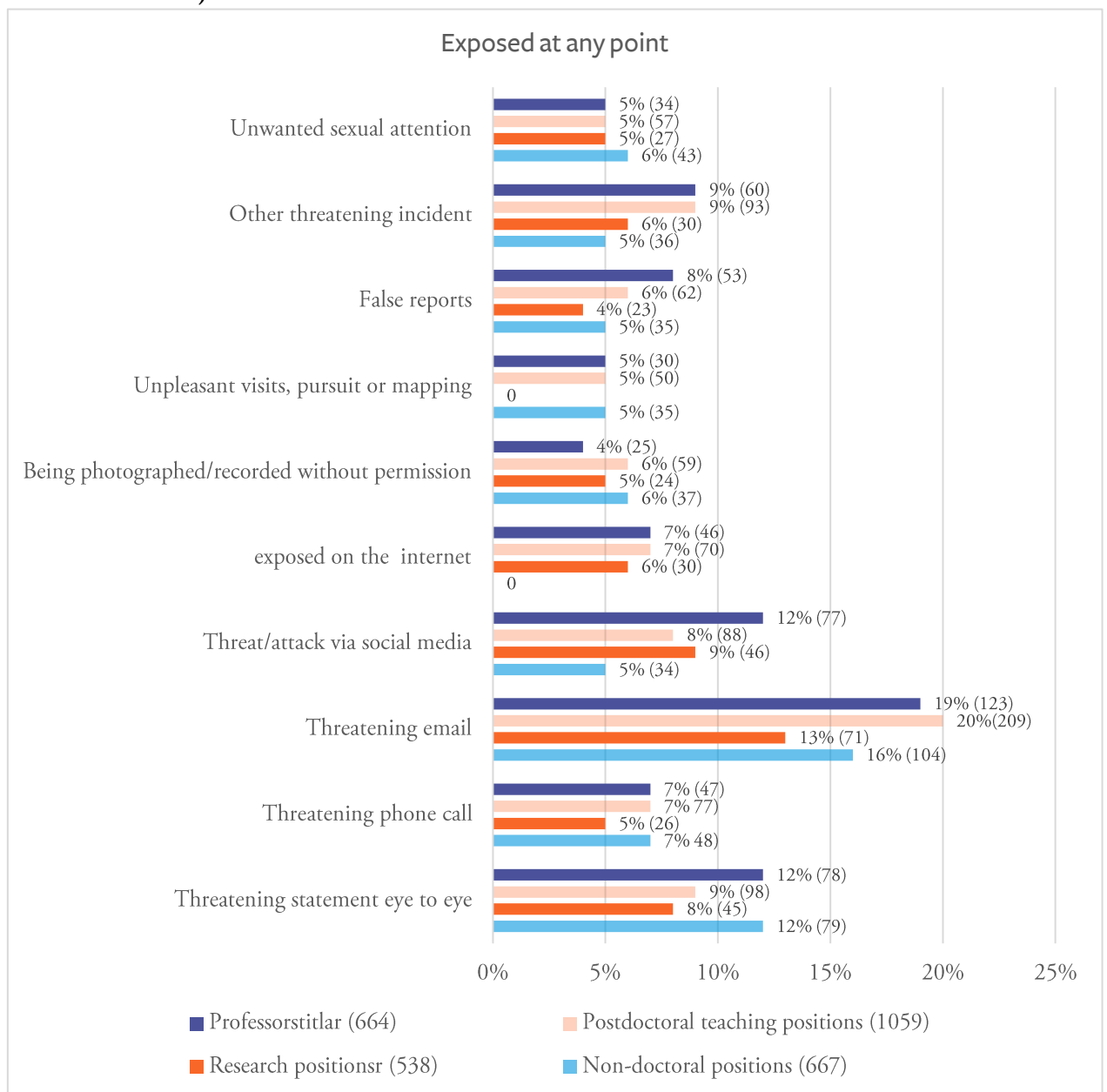


Figure 11 shows a relatively even distribution between job categories. Professors were slightly more exposed on social media, especially compared to the non-doctoral group. Professors are also over-represented in percentage terms among those exposed to ‘false reports’ but are not numerically the largest group there.

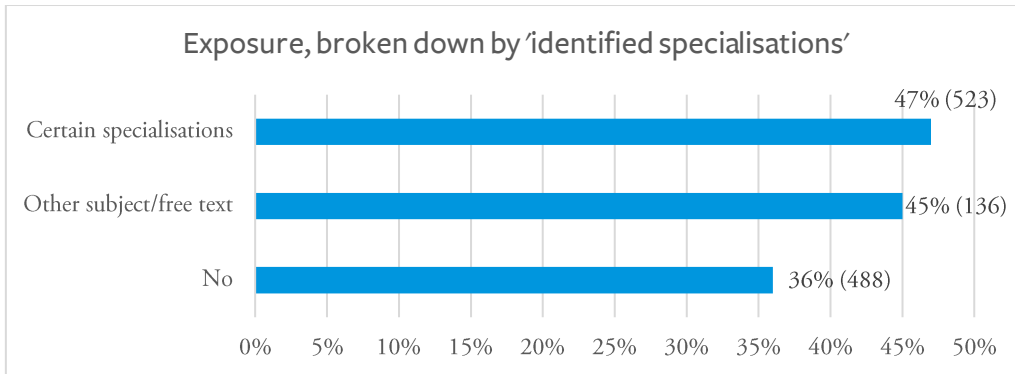
#### **EXPOSURE IN RELATION TO CERTAIN RESEARCH SPECIALISATIONS AND METHODS**

The survey asked whether the respondents conducted research in a subject or used methods about which threats and/or hate had been reported in the media in recent years. Possible topics/methods included:

- Public health
- Research using animal testing
- Gender studies
- Domestic policy
- International policy
- Climate change research
- Criminology
- Critical studies
- Migration research
- Stem cell research

These categories have been grouped together under the heading ‘identified subject specialisations’ below, as the individual categories are very small. In addition, the options ‘other subject’ and ‘no’ were included. The option ‘other’ was included to capture possible trends in topics that have not been widely reported in the past. A relatively large group responded under ‘other’, but the free text responses showed evidence of wide variation rather than undetected trends.

**Figure 12: Exposure, ‘identified research specialisations’ (percentage, number in brackets)**



The responses show a difference of about ten per cent with regard to experiences of threats and harassment among respondents who stated an association with one of these specialisations compared to those who stated no association. Note, however, that just over half of the respondents indicated that they were associated with either one of the identified specialisations or ‘other subject’ of a similar nature. Other observations:

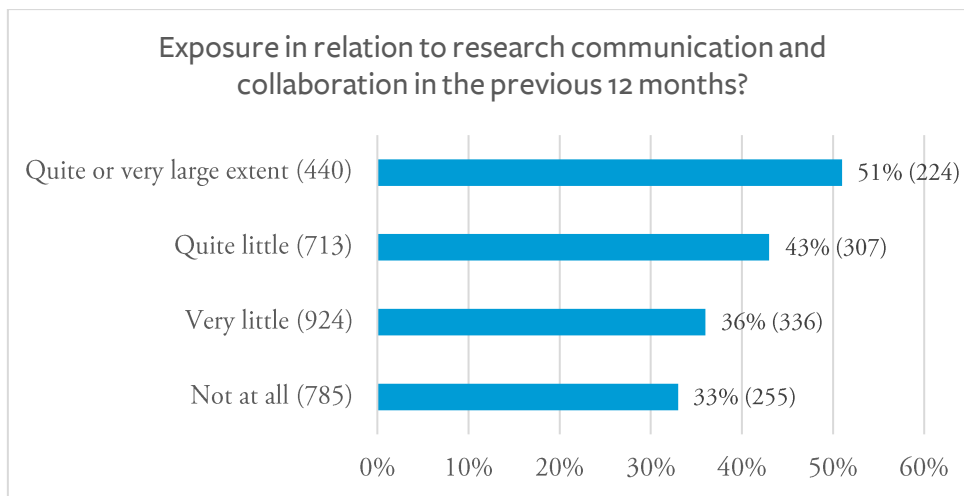
The main difference between those who were associated with one of the above research specialisations and those who were not was exposure to threatening emails (21 per cent and 15 per cent respectively) and threats/attacks via social media (14 per cent and six per cent respectively).

**Perpetrators (previous 12 months):** Those associated with ‘identified subject specialisations’ were more likely to say that they had been victimised by non-university staff (19 per cent of cases, compared to ten per cent among those who said they were not associated with any of these disciplines). They were less likely to report that the perpetrator in the most recent incident was a student (36 per cent, compared to 54 per cent for those who did not indicate that they were associated with one of these disciplines).

### EXPOSURE AND COMMUNICATION

Figure 13 shows that those who said they had engaged in research communication to a greater extent in the previous 12 months were more exposed.<sup>4</sup> Of this group, 51 per cent said that they had been exposed to some form of threat or harassment at some point. However, it should be noted that respondents that reported no or very little research communication in the past 12 months are a much larger group (1,709 of the 2,892 respondents). It is also worth noting that a majority of those exposed (53 per cent) had engaged in research communication or collaboration less frequently.

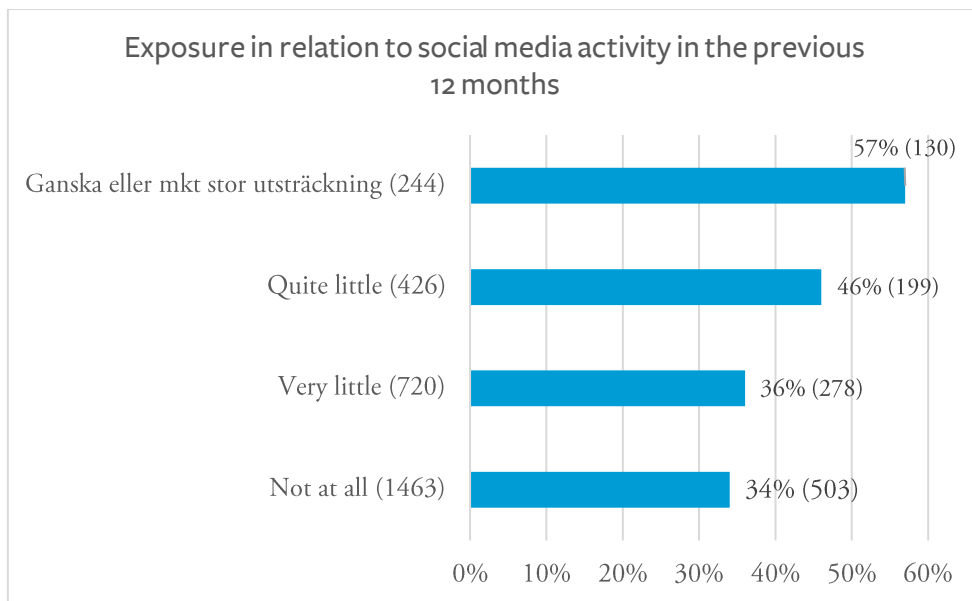
**Figure 13: Exposure in relation to research communication/collaboration in the previous 12 months (percentage, number in brackets)**



Of the respondents, those who had been more active on social media also stated that they had been exposed to some form of threat or harassment to a greater extent. Of those surveyed, 51 per cent stated that they had not been active on social media at all in their capacity as a researcher/teacher in the previous 12 months, and 26 per cent stated that they had been active to a very small extent. Together, these groups account for 77 per cent of respondents. A majority of those who said they had been exposed to threats or harassment at any point belonged to this group.

<sup>4</sup> In the survey, the response categories on research communication to a 'very large extent' and 'quite a large extent' have been combined.

**Figure 14: Exposure in relation to social media activity as a researcher/teacher in the previous 12 months (per cent, number in brackets)**



Note that data in Figures 13 and 14 link activity in the previous 12 months with exposure 'at some point' as opposed to the previous 12 months. In this case, activity in the previous 12 months represents a general tendency to engage in research communication in these forms.

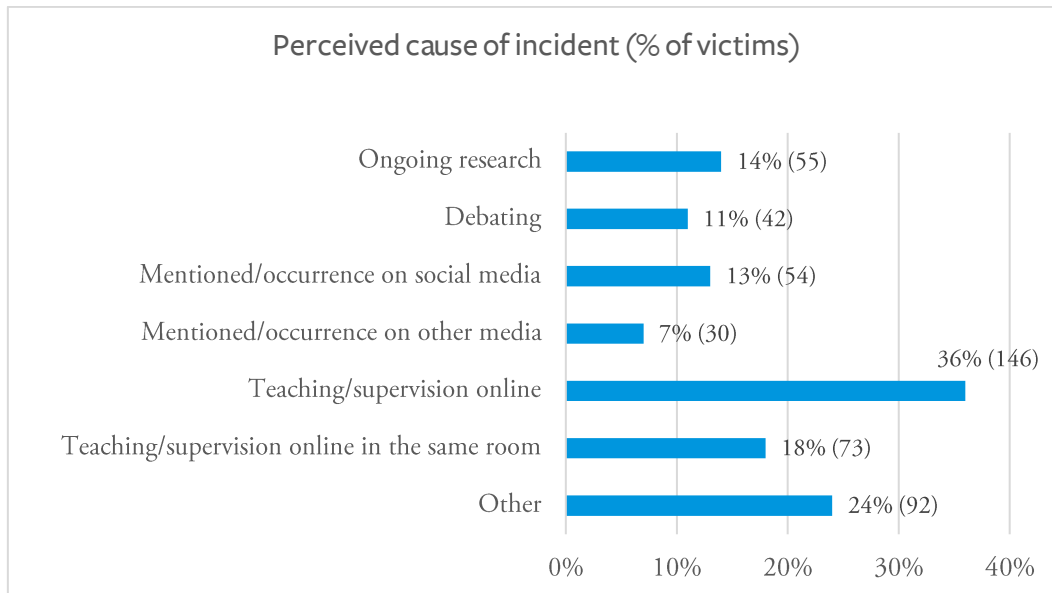
#### EXPOSURE IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

This section presents tables for a number of the follow-up questions asked in the survey. The follow-up questions related to victimisation in the previous 12 months, i.e. prior to the survey being sent out, and concerned the most recent incident. Focusing on the previous 12 months means that the respondent groups were often small, and as a result the representativeness of the responses should be considered with caution. It is worth noting that this time period coincided with pandemic measures, meaning it was not a typical year. A total of 408 persons indicated that they had been exposed to some form of threat or harassment in the previous 12 months. There was insufficient data on distributions of types of victimisation for those exposed in the previous 12 months to be included in this report.

### EXPOSURE AND RISK SITUATIONS

Respondents who indicated that they had been exposed to an incident of ‘threats or harassment’ in the previous 12 months were asked whether they believed the incident to be related to a particular event. The question referred to the most recent incident. Figure 15 excludes the response options ‘funding decision’ and ‘press release’ due to the small number of respondents in these categories (< 20).

**Figure 15: Assessment of the causes of incidents (percentage, number in brackets)<sup>5</sup>**



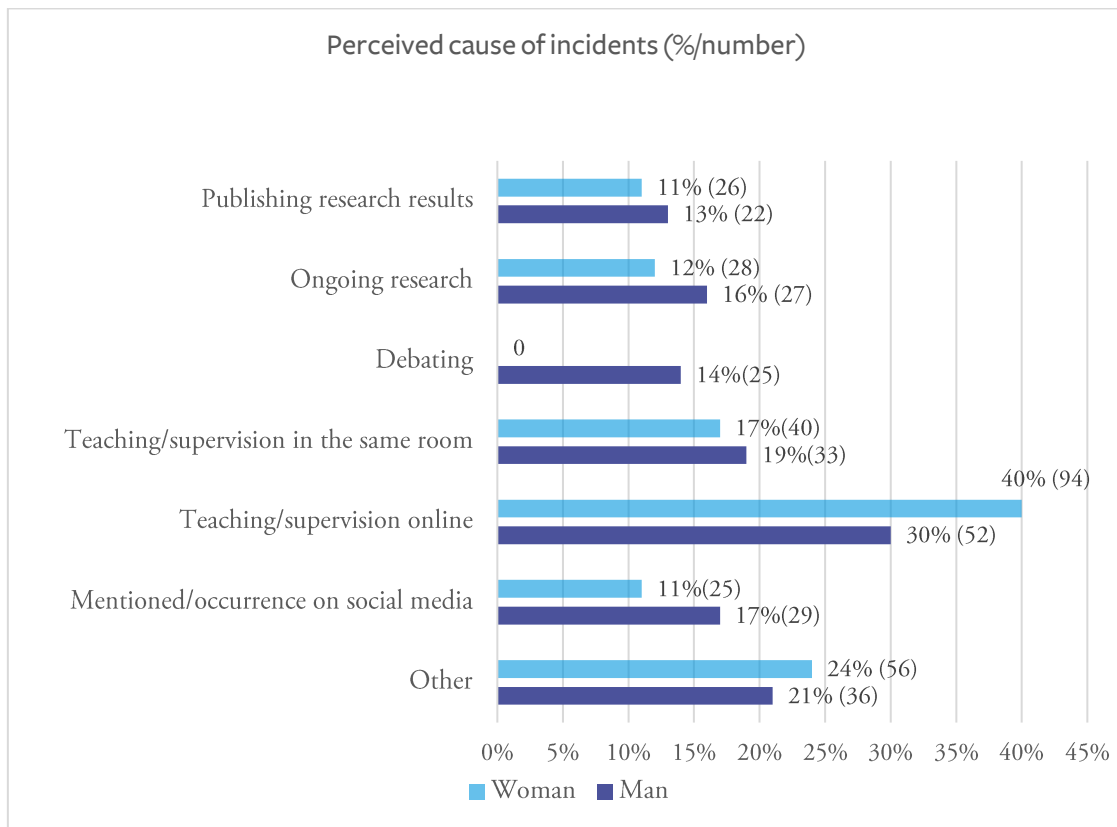
Of those exposed, 36 per cent stated that their exposure was a result of online teaching or supervision, and 18 per cent stated teaching or supervision in the same physical space. This should be understood in the context of the fact that a large proportion of all teaching/tutoring in the Swedish higher education sector during the period in question (February 2021–February 2022) took place online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>5</sup> Multiple responses were allowed, resulting in a response rate >100 per cent.



Figure 16 shows the breakdown by gender.

**Figure 16: Assessment of the causes of incidents, by gender (percentage, number in brackets)**

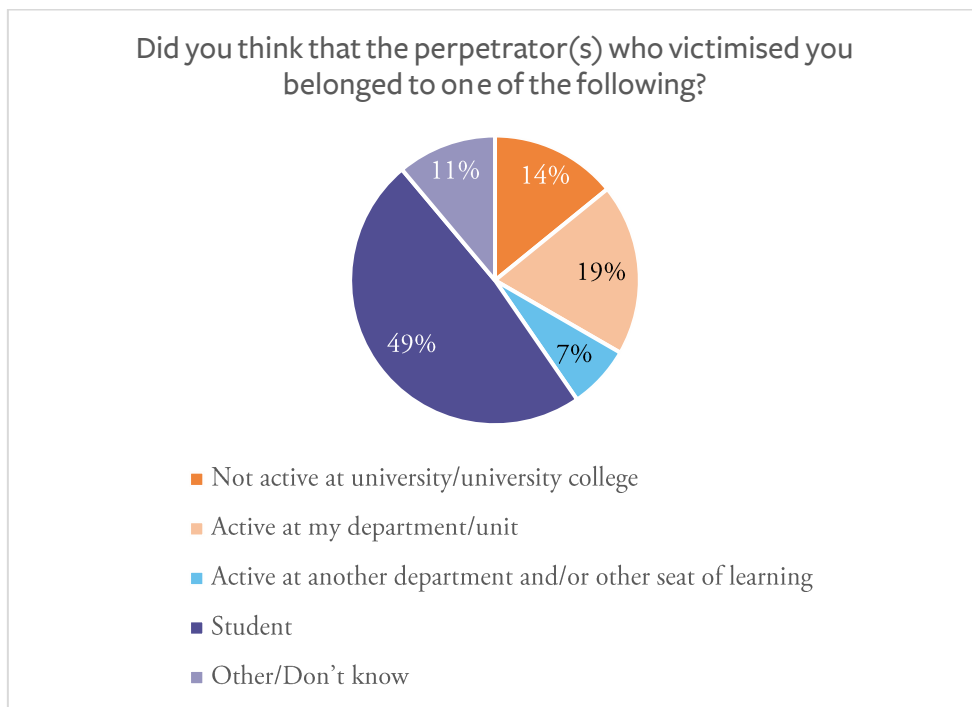


Men were relatively (but not absolutely) more likely to report victimisation in the context of research, opinion pieces and mentions or appearances in social media. Women were relatively more likely to be victimised in connection with online teaching/tutoring. Note that the breakdown here and the fact that it concerns victimisation in the previous year means that the numbers in each bar are relatively low. It can also be mentioned that victimisation in connection with debates was more common for the humanities and social sciences. These subjects were also over-represented in percentage terms in relation to supervision and teaching.

### PERCEPTION OF PERPETRATORS

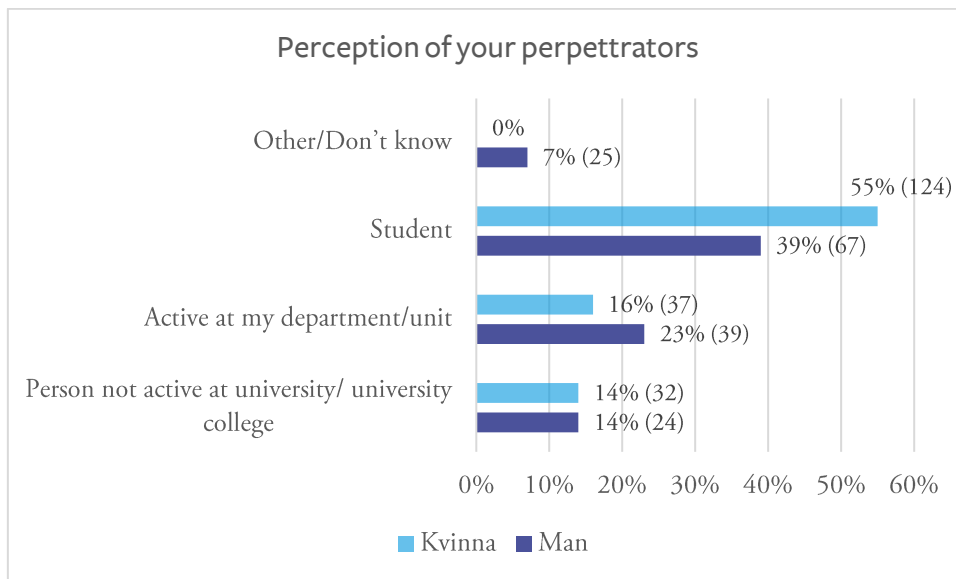
Of the 409 respondents who indicated that they had been exposed to some form of threat or harassment in the past 12 months, based on the most recent incident, almost half (49 per cent) indicated that the perpetrators were students. Of these, 19 per cent indicated that the perpetrator was a person or persons working in their own institution or unit. It should be noted that all response categories except 'student' are based on a small number of responses (N<100) and should therefore be interpreted with caution. In the presentation below, smaller groups (N<20) have been combined so that those working at other institutions and/or HEIs form one group and 'other'/'don't know' form another group.

**Figure 17: Assessment of your perpetrators (percentage)**



## GENDER DISTRIBUTION

Figure 18: Perception of your perpetrators (per cent of victims)



Women were significantly more likely to report being victimised by students. In percentage terms, men were victimised to a greater extent than women by employees within the same institution/unit. In the report, 'my department/unit' is reported separately from 'other department or higher education institution' because this has a different relevance from a work environment perspective (the latter group is too small to be included in the report,  $n < 20$ ).

## PERPETRATORS, BREAKDOWN BY PROFESSIONAL TITLE AND SUBJECT AREA

The fact that students were by far the largest group of perpetrators is almost entirely due to the victimisation reported among respondents under the occupational titles 'non-doctoral' and 'doctoral teaching positions'. Of those who reported students as perpetrators, 73 per cent (139 out of 190) belonged to the non-doctoral and doctoral teaching positions groups. Those with research positions and professorships reported victimisation more evenly across perpetrator groups. For the other two professional categories, students were still the largest group of perpetrators, but these figures were more in line with other categories. Professors were almost as likely to be victimised by colleagues as by students, while those in research positions were almost equally likely to be victimised by external persons.

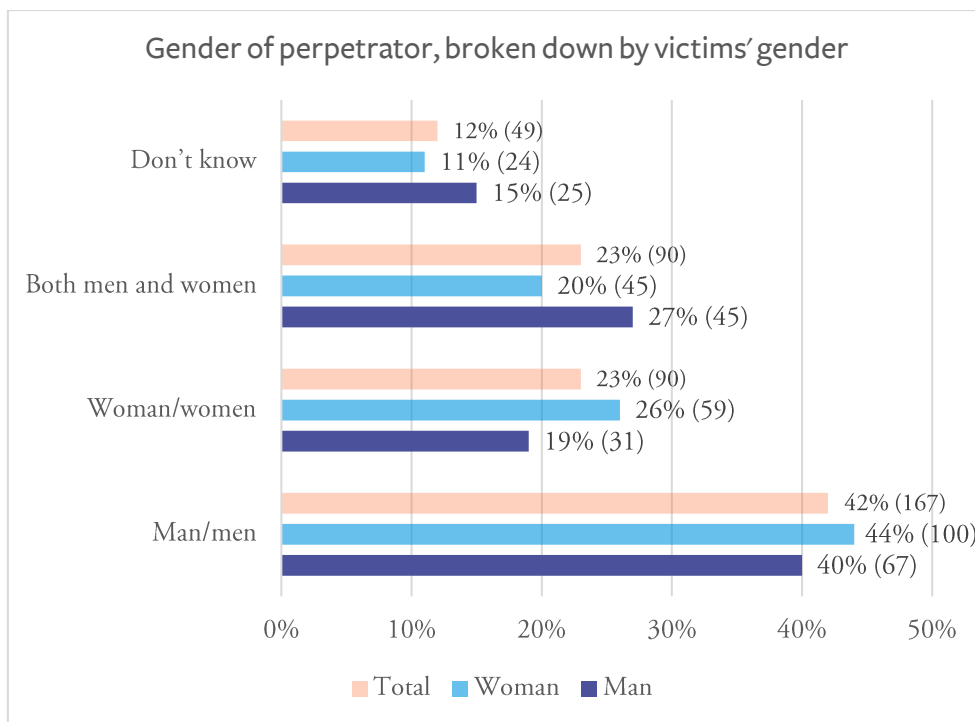
#### BREAKDOWN BY SUBJECT AREA

The distribution of perpetrator categories varies slightly between subject areas. Students comprise the largest group of perpetrators across all subject areas, but victims in the natural sciences, engineering and agriculture were almost as likely to report that the perpetrator was one or more persons working within the same department/unit as a student. The preponderance of students was significantly greater for the disciplines of medicine, comprising over 60 per cent, social sciences (47 per cent) and humanities (40 per cent).

#### GENDER OF PERPETRATORS

The most common categories of perpetrator for both men and women were men or groups of men. Women were slightly more likely to be victimised by both men and women, while men were more likely to be victimised by groups of both men and women.

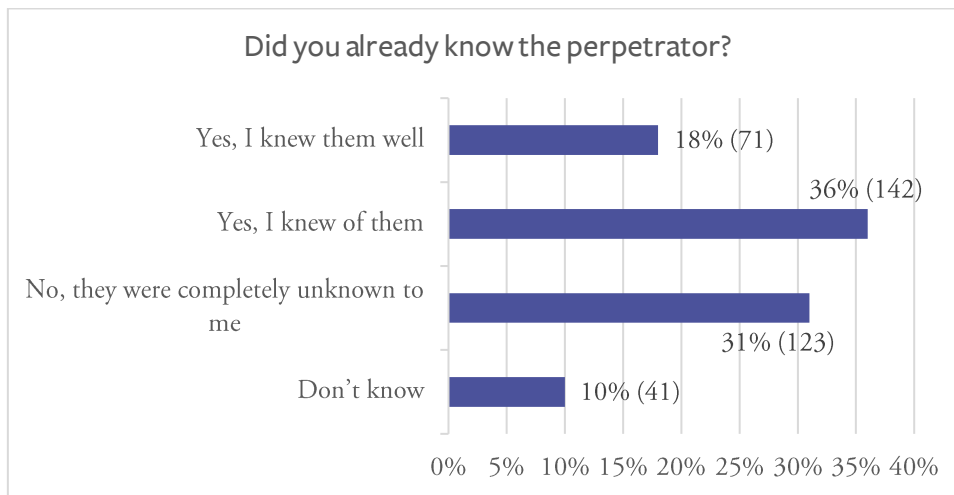
Figure 14: Gender of perpetrators, male and female (percentage, number in brackets)



#### VICTIMS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH PERPETRATORS

About half of the victims indicated that they either knew the perpetrator well or knew of them, while the other half indicated that they were unknown or the victim did not know if the perpetrator was known or unknown (likely because the perpetrator was anonymous).

**Figure 20: Did you already know the perpetrator?**

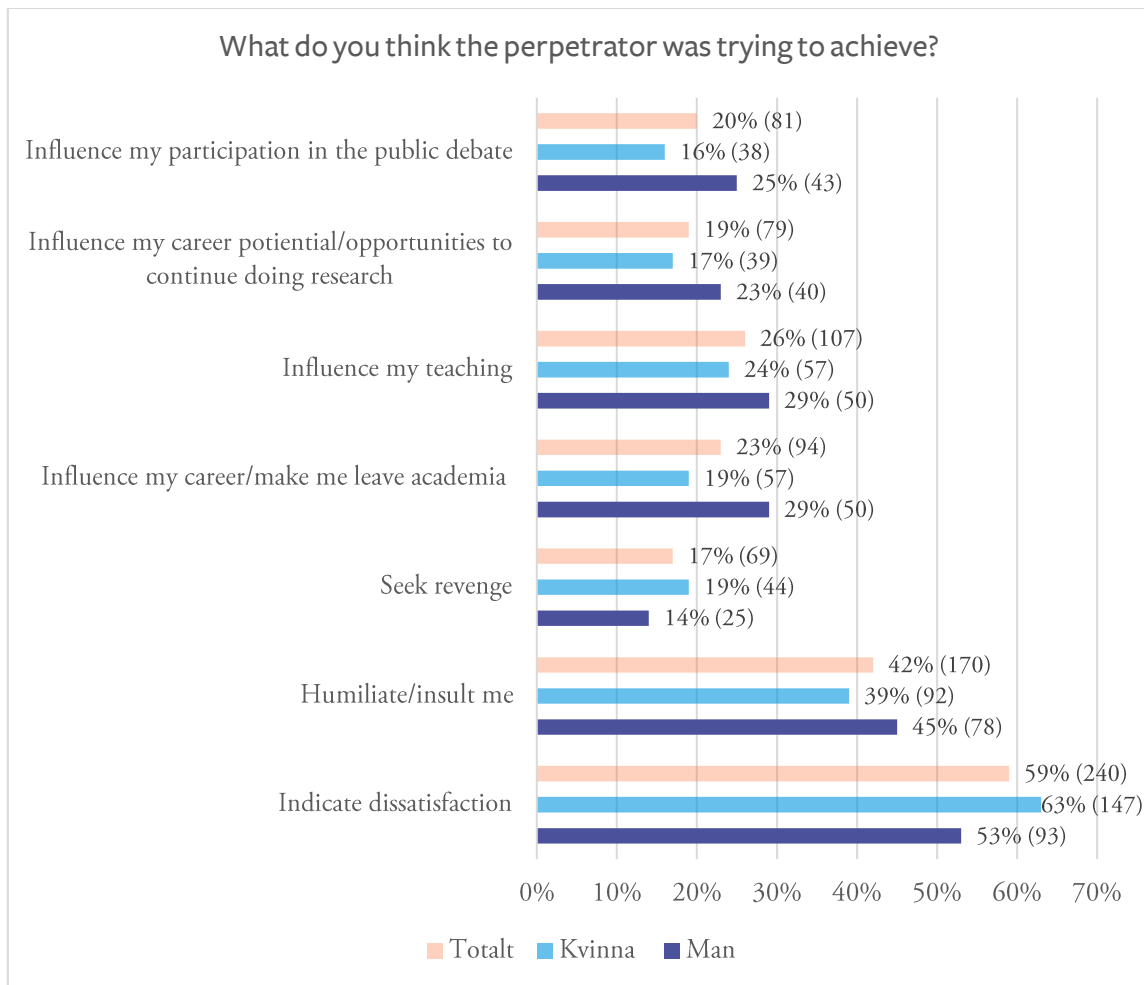


#### WHAT DID THE PERPETRATOR WANT TO ACHIEVE?

Of those who said they had been exposed to some form of threat and/or harassment in the previous 12 months, 60 per cent said they thought the person(s) who victimised them wanted to show displeasure. Additionally, 43 per cent said they believed that those who attacked them wanted to humiliate or insult them.<sup>6</sup> Men were more likely to perceive that a perpetrator's intention was to affect the victim's career prospects or participation in public debate. Women were more likely to indicate that a perpetrator's intention was to show displeasure.

<sup>6</sup> This question allows multiple answers, which accounts for the total being >100 per cent.

**Figure 21: What do you think the perpetrator(s) wanted to achieve? Only those who reported an incident in the previous 12 months (percentage, number in brackets)**



#### COMBINATIONS OF FACTORS: TYPE OF EXPOSURE PLUS AFFILIATION OF PERPETRATOR

The distribution of different types of victimisation in combination with perpetrator affiliations mostly resulted in very small groups. Only the larger groups are reported here. Students were reported as perpetrators for most incidents for all types of threats and harassment. The most common forms of victimisation associated with students were ‘threatening emails’ and ‘false reports’. Of all threatening emails reported as a recent incident, 54 per cent came from students. Of the threats/harassment made by students to participants, 38 per cent came in the form of threatening emails. For the smaller groups ‘external persons’ and ‘don’t know’, threatening emails and threats/attacks via social media were the

most common. Only isolated cases of social media attacks were attributed to ‘internal’ perpetrators.

#### **SITUATION PLUS AFFILIATION OF PERPETRATOR**

Colleagues were reported as perpetrators mainly in cases of victimisation that occurred in connection with the publication of research findings or ongoing research. In these cases, it was much more common for colleagues than students to be perpetrators. Students were mainly reported as perpetrators in connection with teaching/supervision. External perpetrators were most commonly identified in the context of debates and social and other media, but it is worth noting that other university/university college staff are an equally or slightly larger group in these cases as well.

#### **GROUP MEMBERSHIP OF PERPETRATORS**

In most cases, reported by 64 per cent of respondents, the victim did not know of or did not perceive the perpetrator(s) as belonging to a particular group. Note that this refers to those who reported victimisation at some point in the previous 12 months and that this was the most recent incident.

It was reported by 12 per cent (48 people) of respondents that they perceived the perpetrator(s) as belonging to a far-right/racist group and 8 per cent (31 people) to an anti-feminist group/other anti-gender movement. The category ‘other type of group’ was cited by 11 per cent of respondents (44 people). Other groups provided as response options were feminist group, anti-racist group, environmental/animal rights, left-wing extremist group, religious group and interest organisation. These groups were cited as being behind a smaller proportion of incidents (fewer than 20 people).

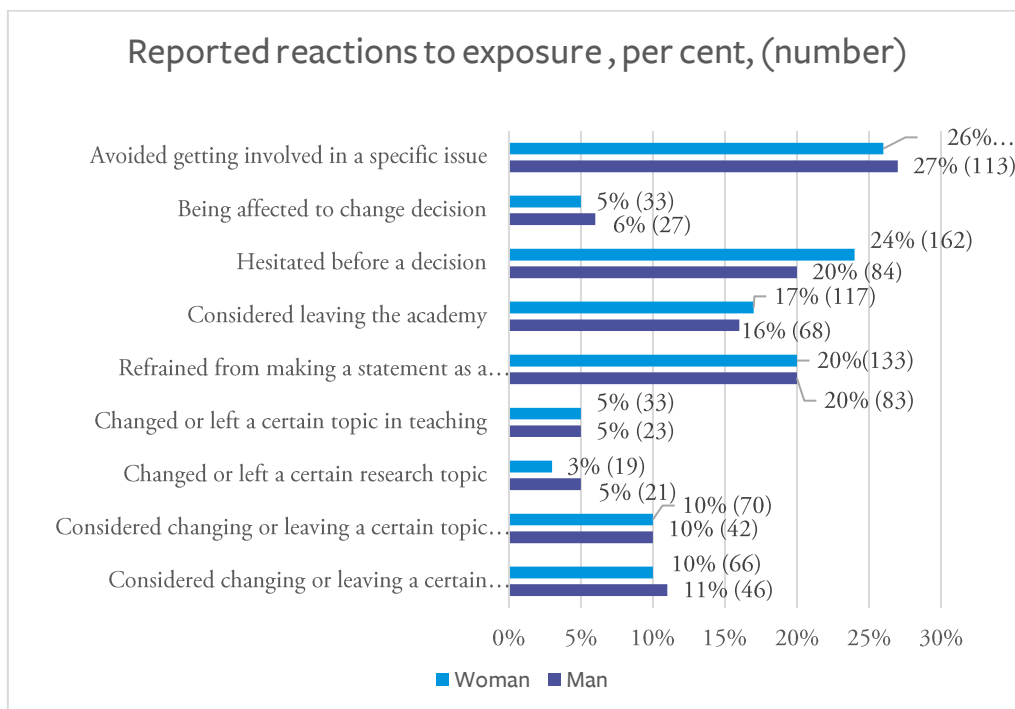
#### **Consequences**

This section presents consequences for all categories of victimisation, i.e. violence, theft and vandalism, as well as threats and harassment. The consequences of risk/worry of victimisation are also reported here. Of those exposed, 48 per cent reported some form of negative consequence of exposure. Of all respondents to the survey, 39 per cent reported some form of negative consequence of concern/risk of victimisation.

### NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF VICTIMISATION

The most common negative consequence of victimisation was avoiding engagement in a specific issue, as reported by 26 per cent of women who were exposed and 27 per cent of men who were exposed. However, hesitating before making a decision and refraining from expressing an opinion on an issue were also common consequences. As Figure 22 shows, there is an even gender distribution with regard to negative consequences of victimisation. Note, however, that the figures are presented as a percentage of those exposed, and that women were exposed to a greater extent and comprised a larger group of respondents in the survey.

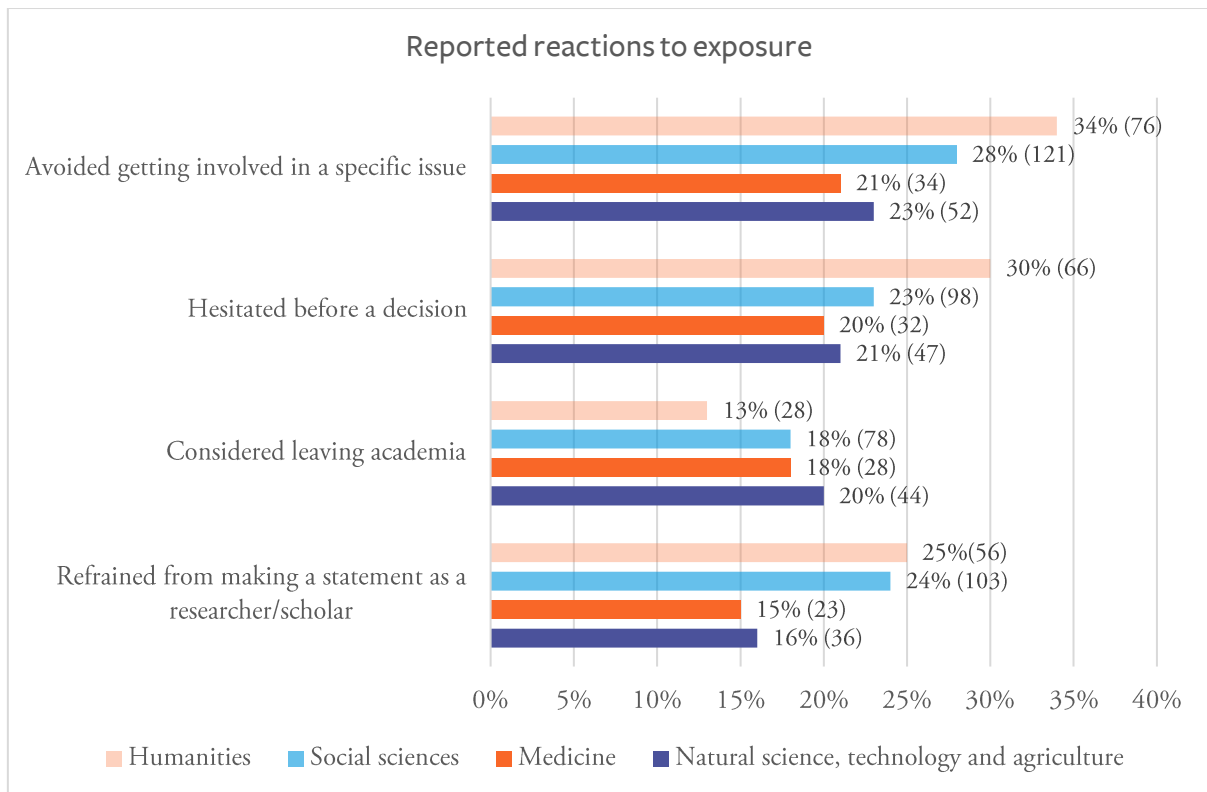
**Figure 22: Consequences of exposure, by gender (percentage, number in brackets)**



It was more common for victims in the humanities and social sciences to refrain from speaking out as researchers. Victims in these disciplines were also more likely to avoid engaging with a specific issue.



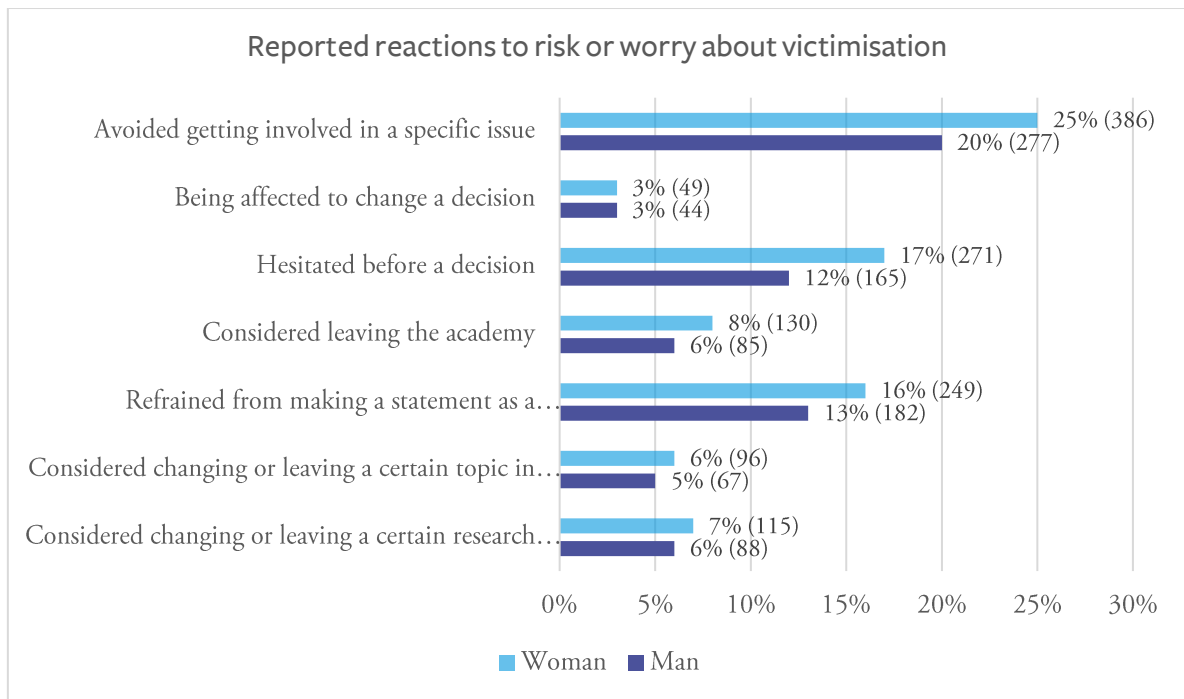
**Figure 23: Consequences of exposure by subject area (percentage, number in brackets)**



#### **NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF RISK OR CONCERNS ABOUT EXPOSURE**

All respondents were asked about negative consequences arising from the risk or fear of exposure. Among them, 39 per cent reported consequences. Figure 24 below shows that women were more likely than men to report negative consequences arising from risks or concerns about victimisation.

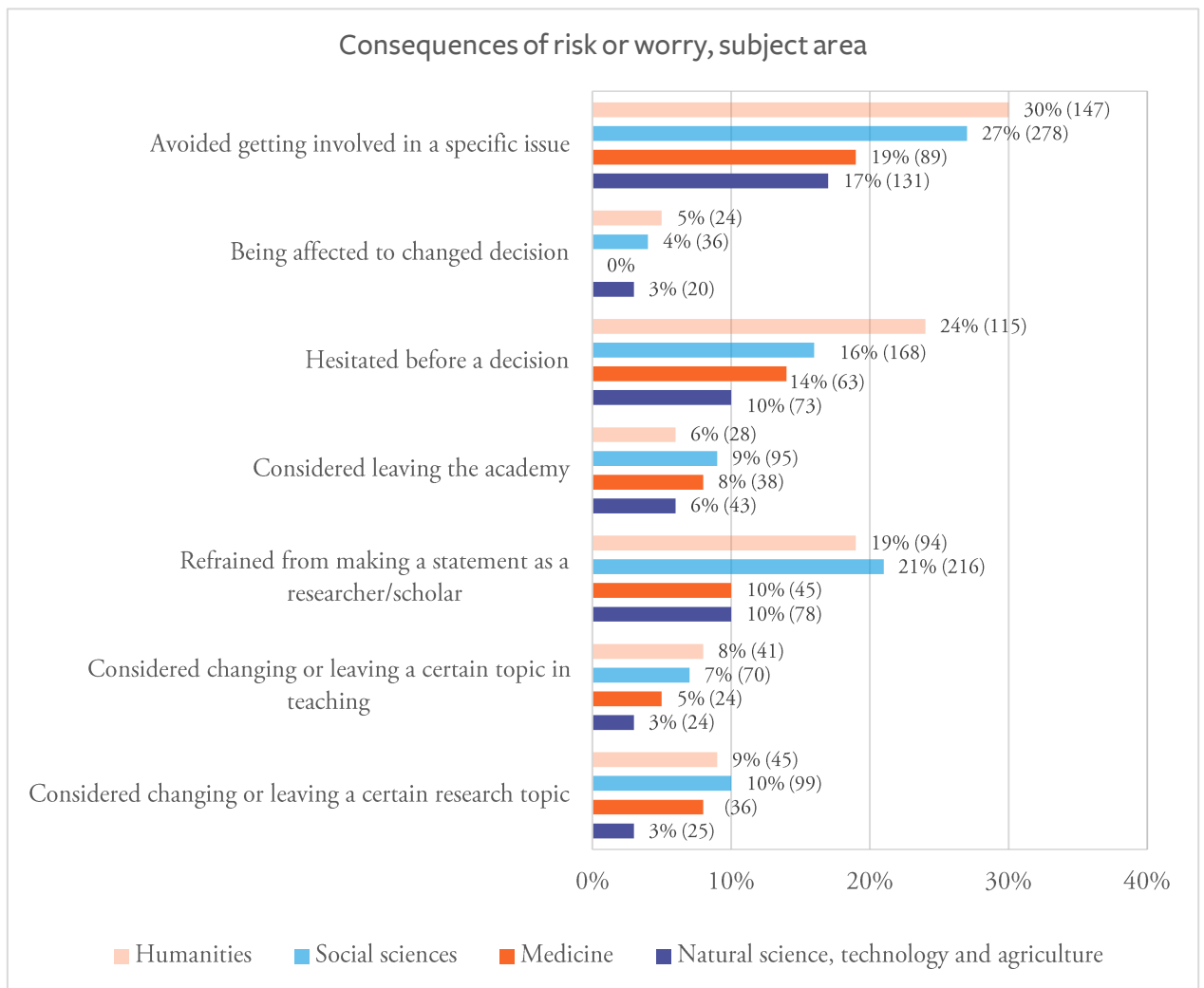
**Figure 24: Consequences of risk or worry about victimisation (percentage, number in brackets)**



#### CONSEQUENCES OF RISK OR WORRY OF VICTIMISATION, BY SUBJECT AREA

Judging by the distribution across subject areas, it appears that the most at-risk subjects, i.e. the humanities and social sciences, were also those in which negative consequences arising from concerns and/or risks of exposure were reported to the greatest extent. The clearest difference compared to the other disciplines can be seen in the consequences ‘refrained from speaking out’ and ‘avoided engaging on a particular issue’. It is also worth noting that respondents in the humanities were more likely to say that they hesitated before making a decision because of risks or concerns of this kind.

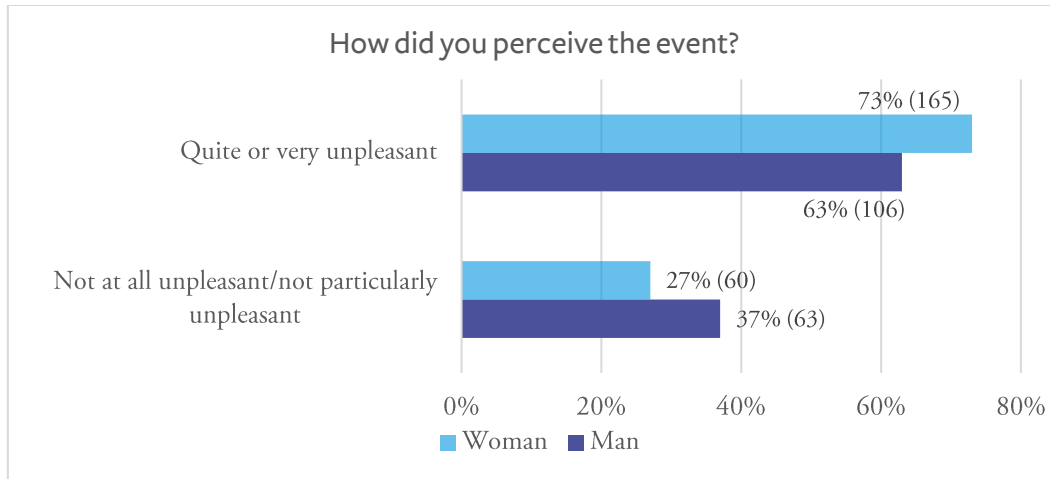
**Figure 25: Consequences of concerns about exposure, breakdown by subject area (percentage, number in brackets)**



#### UNPLEASANTNESS

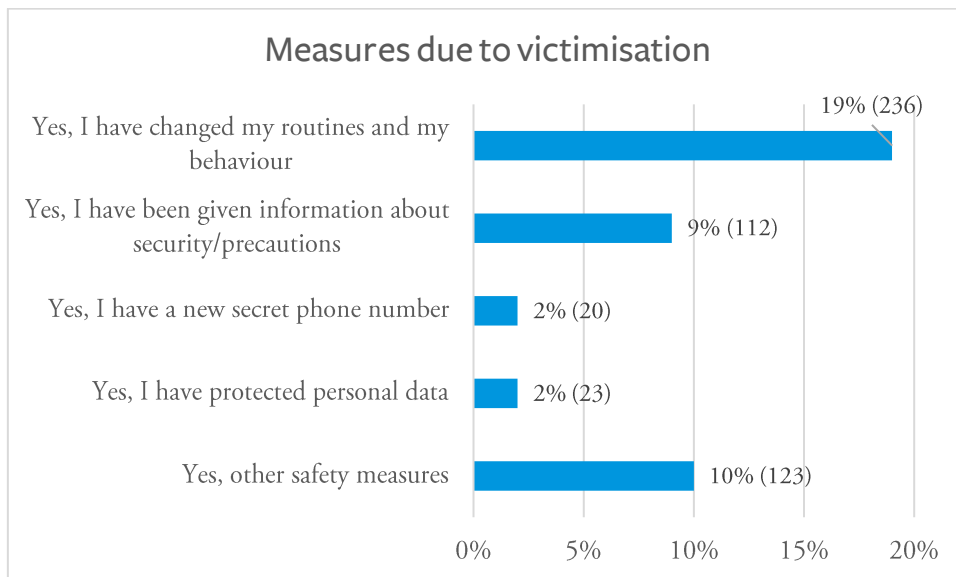
Of those who were victims of violence, vandalism or theft, 89 per cent perceived the incident as quite or very unpleasant. The corresponding figure for the category of threats and harassment was 69 per cent. As Figure 26 shows, there was some difference between the sexes. This question was addressed to those who had been victimised at some point in the last 12 months.

**Figure 26: How did you perceive the event, by gender (percentage)**



#### SECURITY MEASURES AND SUPPORT

**Figure 27: Measures for victims**

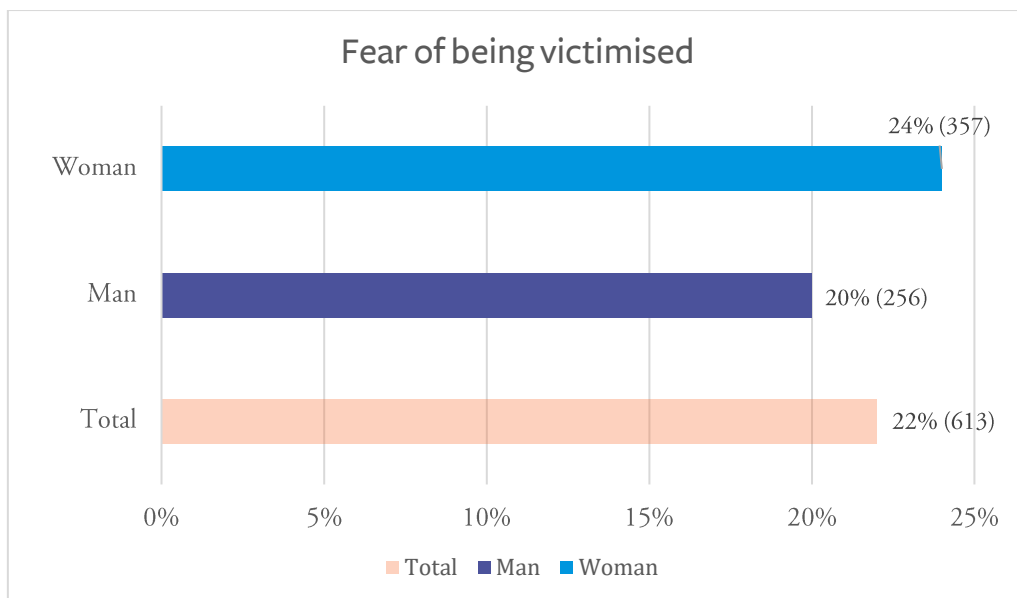


In the figure, categories with few respondents ( $N < 20$ ) have been omitted, but note that these categories did receive some responses. These categories were: acquired an assault alarm, changed residence and applied for a restraining order. Almost twice as many women as men stated that they had changed their routines and/or behaviour as a result of victimisation (152 and 84 respectively).

### FEAR OF BEING VICTIMISED

Twenty-two per cent of all respondents stated that they were worried that they or a family member would be the victim of a crime or other unpleasant event because of their research or teaching.

**Figure 28: Have you ever been worried that you or a relative would be the victim of a crime or other unpleasant event because of your research/teaching?**



Women reported worry to a slightly higher extent than men. It is noteworthy that fewer respondents stated that they were worried about being victimised than said they had actually been victimised.

### EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC

A large majority (80 per cent) of those who had been victimised at any point stated that their victimisation had not been affected by the pandemic. Eight per cent stated that their victimisation had decreased due to the pandemic, while 12 per cent stated that it had increased. Note that victimisation has likely *changed form* due to the pandemic.

#### INFORMATION ON SUPPORT

All survey participants were asked whether they were aware of the existence of an action plan or similar for victims of crime or other unpleasant events. Of these, a clear majority stated that they either were unaware of the existence of an action plan or knew that there was no such action plan. Overall, ten per cent stated that there was an action plan or similar at their institution, 25 per cent that there was an action plan at their HEI, 8 per cent that there was no action plan at their institution or university/university college and 57 per cent that they did not know if there was an action plan at either level.

All respondents were also asked if they knew where to turn if they were victims of crime or similar unpleasant events. Overall, 68 per cent replied that they knew and 32 per cent that they did not know.

## Some reflections on the findings

Here are the investigator's own reflections on the findings presented above.

### The threat comes from within

One finding that stands out from the survey is that threats and harassment directed at representatives of the higher education sector appears to be primarily an internal problem in HEIs. Perpetrators were mainly students and colleagues of the targeted person, and the most common situations in which incidents occurred were in connection with teaching. This finding partly contradicts the perception that has dominated public debate of threats and harassment mainly affecting researchers in connection with research communication on politically charged topics and being committed by external perpetrators. It could be argued that there are two different problems with regard to threats and hatred directed at representatives of the higher education sector, the first, and more extensive, being internal and the second external. It may be that these problems are so distinct that they deserve to be dealt with separately, at least in terms of preventative measures.

### Threats to democracy and/or work environment issues

A common argument is as follows: Threats and harassment risk silencing individuals whose research and teaching fulfil an important function in public debate. If these voices are silenced, and especially if there are shared themes among the perspectives that are silenced, it will have a negative impact on democratic processes, more specifically on the deliberative aspect of democracy that presupposes an open public dialogue between equals. It is through this line of argument in particular that the problem is put forward as a threat to democracy. The notion that the threat is external and politically motivated seems to stem from media reports and research from related fields such as politics, culture and journalism. However, incidents of a more internal nature are less likely to reach the media, which is not surprising given that the consequences and concerns of victimisation are precisely that people remain silent. Another factor that may cause the problem to be misrepresented is that reporting usually focuses on the most serious incidents, which are not necessarily the most common.

The problem as described in this study is likely to overlap with the occurrence of bullying and other forms of toxic work environment in higher education. Where

incidents occur internally, it is likely that no clear demarcation between these problems can be made. The fact that victimisation mainly points to internal factors may also indicate that it often involves *conflicts*, rather than attacks in a stricter sense. Conflicts are in many ways more complicated both to investigate and to counter, not least for employers, who may have responsibilities to both parties and cannot or should not pick a side.

The question of how to deal with threats and harassment in academia seems to be something that has fallen ‘between the cracks’ – it is not clear whether it is a question of the work environment or safety. In cases where victimisation is linked to forms of communication, for example in social media, there may also be a lack of clarity as to the extent to which the victim has been affected in their capacity as a private individual or as an employee. Under-reporting may also be due to victims wanting to avoid causing problems (for both themselves and their employer) over incidents that are not perceived as serious enough to be a security issue.<sup>7</sup>

## Distribution across subjects

An important finding of the survey is that victimisation was greater in the humanities and social sciences, although it occurs across all subject areas. However, the results do not provide information on why this was the case. One guess why this may be so is that it is because the humanities and social sciences are more *interpretive* disciplines, and that they often deal with topics that are in some sense charged. Another possibility is that it has to do with the relative scarcity of resources in these fields, which may lead to higher levels of student dissatisfaction, more competition for scarce resources and other related conflicts. The survey shows that subjects within which particularly high levels of exposure have previously been reported have above average levels, but not dramatically so. It is possible that these subjects would have stood out more in the results if the survey had focussed solely on victimisation by external perpetrators. The

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<sup>7</sup> Given that the survey period coincides with the distance teaching of the COVID-19 pandemic, and teaching that dominated the risk situation in the results, it is also relevant to consider the students’ working environment during the pandemic (UKÄ 2022).



exposure in the material was mainly from students and colleagues, who has actively chosen to engage in these topics

## Women more exposed

Another finding that stood out in the survey, and which appeared to be more prominent in the higher education sector than in comparable surveys in, for example, politics, journalism and cultural work, was that women were more exposed to virtually all forms of incidents, and experienced negative consequences of both exposure and concern/risk of exposure to a greater extent. This was particularly true for victimisation related to the teaching situation, which was also the most common form of victimisation. When it comes to victimisation related to external communication and with external perpetrators, the distribution was more even between genders (see below). This was similar for the category ‘false reports’.

## Research communication and risks

The aspect of exposure to threats and hate that has received most attention in recent years is what happens in the context of exposure/activity in social and traditional media. It is in relation to such outreach activities in particular that the direct impact on open discourse becomes clear. While the findings of this study support the view that risks are greater for those who are more active in the media, only a minority were active in these forums in their capacity as researchers, and this was not where most incidents appeared to occur. Victimisation on social media, for example, appeared to be relatively evenly distributed between genders, but it is perhaps worth noting that different strategies may lie behind this distribution. The fact that women were not more exposed may be due to the fact that they avoided these environments to a greater extent, which was also supported by the fact that women were more likely to report that they avoided speaking out or getting involved in a particular issue due to exposure or concern about victimisation.

It is important to look at consequences not only of exposure but also of concern and risk of exposure, since they are largely the same. Actual exposure is already limited by people taking precautions and limiting themselves to avoid risks and discomfort. This is also to be seen as a detriment, both to open dialogue and to individuals’ abilities to reach out, establish contacts, get new assignments and so

on. It also means that even if exposure can be limited in this way, it is a limitation that is in turn a negative consequence of the existence of threats and harassment. Moreover, this damage is very difficult to gauge.

## Consequences

The consequences described in the report largely consist of various forms of self-censorship, perceived unpleasantness and other effects that in various ways raise the threshold for participation in public discourse, the dissemination of relevant ideas and theories and engagement on issues. As noted above, it is very difficult to estimate the impact of this and the extent to which it is influenced by the actual risk of exposure. However, the findings indicate that the subject areas that report the highest levels of exposure, i.e. humanities and social sciences, also report higher levels of concern and negative consequences of concern/risk of exposure.

## Future studies and prevention measures

The picture that emerges from this study has some significance for how the area should be investigated in the future. First and foremost, there is an overall need to conduct similar studies again, partly to see if the problem persists even under more typical working conditions than those prevailing during the pandemic, and partly to get an idea of what the development looks like. There is a widespread perception that the scope of the problem is increasing, but it would be beneficial to have this impression confirmed or refuted in the form of data. Furthermore, the findings of the present study can be used to guide more focussed investigations into those areas where the problem appears to be most acute, such as teaching and supervision. What factors influence the risk of victimisation in these situations? There is a need to examine how researchers'/teachers' workloads and resources relate to the risk of victimisation and its negative consequences, and to look more closely at the issue in relation to work environment problems such as incidences of bullying.

In this study, only differences between subject areas were studied, but there is reason to examine the distribution across individual subjects more closely to identify, for example, whether victimisation is even more concentrated than is apparent here. There is also reason to carry out case studies and more qualitatively orientated studies to supplement the understanding of the problem with knowledge of how victimisation takes shape.

The results of the survey can also be used to help develop preventive measures. The fact that most threats seem to be internal has a bearing on the type of preventive measures that can be taken. The fact that many respondents seem to lack knowledge about where to turn or whether there are action plans regarding victimisation also demonstrates a need for more work in this area.

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## Appendix

### I: Missive

#### **Threats and hatred against researchers and teachers**

**Information about the study:** Welcome to participate in a survey on threats and hatred directed at researchers and teachers working in Swedish universities and colleges. The purpose is to investigate researchers' and teachers' vulnerability and concerns about harassment, threats and violence, and its consequences for work. The survey applies to 2021 and is aimed at SULF's members. Results are presented in a report with overall conclusions. We who collaborate on the survey are SULF, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg, and the Swedish Association of Universities and University Colleges (SUHF).

**Your answers are important:** We hope you will participate and share your experiences. Your answers are important, whether you are exposed or not. It is voluntary to participate in the survey and you can cancel your participation at any time. Your participation is anonymous and your answers are treated confidentially. After completing the analysis of the results, all answers are deleted.

**Questions on the content of the survey:** *David Brax*, Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research at the University of Gothenburg: [david.brax@genus.gu.se](mailto:david.brax@genus.gu.se)

**Thank you for your participation!**



## II: Survey

**Are you active as a researcher or teacher at a Swedish university?**

Yes

No

### Part 1/4: Background issues

We start with some questions about you and your activity as a researcher and/or teacher

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

##### 1. Sex/gender

Woman

Man

Non-binary

Other

I prefer not to answer

##### 2. Age

Under 30 years

30-39

40-49

50-59

60 years or over

##### 3. Were you born in Sweden?

Yes

No

I prefer not to answer

##### 4. Were your parents born in Sweden?

Yes, both my parents

One of my parents

No, none of my parents

I prefer not to answer

#### EMPLOYMENT/POSITION

### 5. Type of employment/position at your university

Fixed-term employee/fixed-term employment

Permanent employment

Scholarship

### 6. The extent of your employment

Under 25 %

25-49 %

50 %

51-75 %

76-99 %

100 %

Not employed

### 7. What is your job title? (if there is more than one, select the main one)

Lecturer

Associate senior lecturer/assistant professor

Associate Professor

Doctoral student

Researcher

Senior lecturer

Postdoc

Professor

Other research or teaching staff with a doctorate

Other research or teaching staff without a doctorate

## RESEARCH

### 8. What is your main research area?

Natural sciences (mathematics, computer and information science, physics, chemistry, earth sciences and environmental sciences, biology)

Technology (civil engineering, electrical engineering and electronics, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, materials engineering, medical engineering, natural resource engineering, environmental biotechnology, industrial biotechnology, nanotechnology)

Medicine and health sciences (basic medical and pharmaceutical sciences, clinical medicine, health sciences, medical biotechnology)

Agricultural science and veterinary medicine (agricultural science, forestry and fishing, animal science, veterinary medicine, biotechnology with applications to plants and animals)

Social sciences (psychology, economics and business, educational sciences, sociology, law, political science, social and economic geography, media and communication sciences)

Humanities and art (history and archeology, language and literature, philosophy, ethics and religion, art)

Other

No research

### 9. Research subject: In recent years, threats and abuse have been reported against representatives of certain research areas and against researchers who use certain methods: Do you conduct research in these subjects and/or do you use the following methods?

Several options can be chosen

Public health

Animal testing

Gender research

Domestic politics

International politics

Climate research

Criminology

Critical studies

Migration research

Stem cell research

Other subject

No

#### TEACHING

##### 10. What is your main teaching subject?

Natural sciences (mathematics, computer and information science, physics, chemistry, earth sciences and environmental sciences, biology)

Technology (civil engineering, electrical engineering and electronics, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, materials engineering, medical engineering, natural resource engineering, environmental biotechnology, industrial biotechnology, nanotechnology)

Medicine and health sciences (basic medical and pharmaceutical sciences, clinical medicine, health sciences, medical biotechnology)

Agricultural science and veterinary medicine (agricultural science, forestry and fishing, animal science, veterinary medicine, biotechnology with applications to plants and animals)

Social sciences (psychology, economics and business, educational sciences, sociology, law, political science, social and economic geography, media and communication sciences)

Humanities and art (history and archeology, language and literature, philosophy, ethics and religion, art)

Other

No teaching

**11. In recent years, threats and abuse have been reported against representatives of certain research areas and against researchers who use certain methods: Do you teach in these subjects and/or do you use the following methods in your teaching?**

Several options can be chosen

Public health

Animal testing

Gender research

Domestic politics

Climate research

Criminology

Critical studies

Migration research

Stem cell research

International politics

Other subject

No

**RESEARCH COMMUNICATION AND ACTIVITY IN SOCIAL/TRADITIONAL MEDIA**

**12. To what extent have you, as a researcher/teacher, been mentioned in the media (incl. social media) in the last 12 months?**

Not at all

To a very small extent

To a fairly small extent

To a fairly large extent

To a very large extent

**13. In your role as a researcher/teacher, to what extent have you been active on social media (e.g. chat forums, Facebook, Twitter) during the past 12 months?**

Not at all

To a very small extent

To a fairly small extent

To a fairly large extent

To a very large extent

**14. To what extent do you consider that you, as a researcher/teacher, are known to the public?**

Not at all

To a very small extent

To a fairly small extent

To a fairly large extent

To a very large extent

**15. To what extent have you been engaged in research communication/collaboration in the last 12 months?**

Not at all

To a very small extent

To a fairly small extent

To a fairly large extent

To a very large extent

#### **Part 2/4: Exposure/victimization**

The following questions are about your possible exposure to violence, vandalism and theft as a researcher and/or teacher. Later in the survey, questions about your possible exposure to threats and harassment will follow.

**CATEGORY 1: VIOLENCE, VANDALISM AND THEFT**

**16. Have you ever, due to your research or teaching, been exposed to any of the following?**

(If you do not find an alternative that corresponds exactly to the situation, choose the one that matches most closely. You may choose more than one alternative.)

Punches, kicks or similar.

Being pushed, or similar

Armed violence

Arson/explosion

Graffiti vandalism

Theft

Another form of vandalism

Sexual violence

Other forms of violence

No

**17. Did any of these incidents occur within the last 12 months?**

Yes

No

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS ABOUT EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE, VANDALISM AND THEFT**

**18. How many of these incidents occurred during the last 12 months?**

1-3 events

4-6 events

7-9 events

10 events or more

**19? Which type of act was the most recent?**

Punches, kicks or similar.

Being pushed, or similar

Armed violence

Arson/explosion

Graffiti vandalism

Theft

Other forms of violence

Sexual violence

Other forms of violence

**The following questions are about the latest incident, unless otherwise stated**

**20. According to your impression, do you think the incident took place mainly because of**

Publication of research results

Financing decision

During ongoing research

Publication of opinion piece

Press-release

Teaching/supervision in the same physical space

Teaching/supervision online

Mention/occurrence in social media

Mention/occurrence in other media

Other

I don't know

**21. How many people took part?**

2

2-4

4 or more

I don't know

**22. What was the gender of the offender/s?**

Man/men



Woman/women

Women and men

I don't know

**23. How did you perceive the incident?**

Not at all unpleasant

Not very unpleasant

Quite unpleasant

Quite unpleasant

**24. Have you been targeted by the same person/persons before?**

Yes

No

I don't know

**25. Did you know the person/persons that targeted you from before?**

Yes, I knew them well

Yes, I was aware of them

Yes, but only from previous incidents

No

I don't know

**26. Did you perceive the offender/s as one of the following**

Choose the option that suits you best

Not active at a university

Employed at my department/unit

Employed at other department at my university

Employed within my subject, at other university

Employed at other subject, at other university

Student

Other

I don't know

**27. What relation did you have to the person/s targeting you?**

Equal standing

Relationship where they were in a subordinate position/in a position of dependence

Relationship where you were in a subordinate position/in a position of dependence

Both subordinate and superior

No relation

I don't know

**28. Did you perceive the person/s targeting you as member/s of or sympathizing with any of the following?**

If you do not find an exact option, choose the closest option, several options can be selected

Anti-feminist group/other anti-gender movement

Feminist group

Right-wing extremist/racist movement

Interest group

Criminal network/organization

Local action group

Environmental/animal rights group

Left-wing extremist group

Religious group

Other type of group

Did not perceive the perpetrator/s as member of/sympathizing with any group

I don't know

**29. What do you think the person/s targeting you mainly wanted to achieve with their actions?**

If you do not find an exact option for a situation, select the option that fits best, several options can be selected

Show dissatisfaction

Humiliate/insult you

Seek revenge

Influence your research

Influence your teaching

Influence your participation in the public debate

Influence your career potential/opportunities to continue doing research

None of the above

Do not know

Other

**CONTINUATION PART 2/4: EXPOSURE CATEGORY 2. THREATS AND HARASSMENT**

**30. Have you ever, due to your research or teaching, been exposed to any of the following?**

If you do not find an option that exactly fit the situation, choose the most fitting option. Several options can be selected.

Threatening statement eye to eye

Threatening phone call

Threatening sms/mms

Threatening letter/postcard

Threatening e-mail

Threats/attacks via social media  
Hijacked internet account (or fake account created in your name)  
Exposed on the internet  
Exposed on poster/flyer  
Threatening "gift"  
Unlawful photograph/recording  
Unpleasant visit, persecution or mapping  
False filing of reports  
Other threatening event  
Unwanted sexual attention  
No

**31. Did any of these incidents occur within the last 12 months?**

Yes  
No

**32. How many of these incidents occurred during the last 12 months?**

1-3 events  
4-6 events  
7-9 events  
10 events or more

**33. Which type of incident was the latest?**

Threatening statement eye to eye  
Threatening phone call  
Threatening sms/mms  
Threatening letter/postcard  
Threatening e-mail  
Threats/attacks via social media  
Hijacked internet account (or fake account created in your name)

Exposed on the internet  
Exposed on poster/flyer  
Threatening "gift"  
Unlawful photograph/recording  
Unpleasant visit, persecution or mapping  
False filing of reports  
Other threatening event  
Unwanted sexual attention

**The following questions are about the latest incident, unless otherwise stated.**

**34. According to your impression, do you think the incident took place mainly because of...**

Publication of research results  
Financing decision  
During ongoing research  
Publication of opinion piece  
Press-release  
Teaching/supervision in the same physical space  
Teachings/supervision online  
Mention/occurrence in social media  
Mention/occurrence in other media  
Other  
I don't know

**35. Towards whom or what was the action directed?**

Towards me  
Towards a relative  
Towards another person  
Towards my department

Towards my subject

It was not clear

It was not directed at anyone/anything in particular

**36. How many offenders were involved?**

1

2-3

4 or more

I don't know

**36. What was the gender of the offender/s?**

Man/men

Woman/women

Women and men

I don't know

**38. How did you perceive the incident?**

Not at all unpleasant

Not very unpleasant

Quite unpleasant

Very unpleasant

**39. Have you been targeted by the same person/persons before?**

Yes

No

I don't know

**40. Did you know the person/persons that targeted you from before?**

Yes, I knew them well

Yes, I was aware of them

Yes, but only from previous incidents

No

I don't know

**41. Did you perceive the offender/s as one of the following?**

Not active at a university

Employed at my department/unit

Employed at other department at my university

Employed within my subject, at other university

Employed at other subject, at other university

Student

Other

I don't know

**42. Did you perceive the person/s targeting you as member/s of or sympathizing with any of the following?**

If you do not find an exact option, choose the closest option, several options can be selected

Anti-feminist group/other anti-gender movement

Anti-racist group

Feminist group

Right-wing extremist/racist movement

Interest group

Criminal network / organization

Local action group

Environmental/ animal rights group

Religious group

Did not perceive the perpetrator/s as member of/sympathizing with any group

Left-wing extremist group

Other type of group

I don't know

**43. What do you think the person/s targeting you mainly wanted to achieve with their actions?**

If you do not find an exact option for a situation, select the option that fits best, several options can be selected

Show dissatisfaction

Humiliate/insult me

Seek revenge

Influence my career/make me leave academia

Influence my teaching

Influence your career potential/opportunities to continue doing research

Influence my participation in the public debate

None of the above

Other

Do not know

**Questions about the total threat level related to your role as a researcher/teacher in 2021.**

**44. Did you perceive that any of the events you were exposed to as a researcher / teacher during the last 12 months have to do with the perpetrator's negative or hostile perceptions about**

Several alternatives possible

Sex

Transgender identity or expression

Ethnicity

Religion or other belief

Disability

Sexual orientation

Age

None of the above



**45. Do you perceive that any of the events you were exposed to had to do with your research/teaching subject?**

Yes

No

I don't know

**46. Do you perceive that your exposure to events of this kind has been affected by the pandemic?**

Yes, it has increased

Yes, it has reduced

No, the extent is the same

#### **Part 3/4: Concerns, consequences and the experiences of others**

This section contains questions about both your own and others' exposure to and concerns about being exposed to criminal or other threatening acts and the possible consequences

**47. Have any safety precautions been taken as a result of what you were exposed to?**

Yes, I have changed my routines and my behavior

Yes, I have received information about safety/precautions

Yes, I have a new secret phone number

Yes, I have obtained/received an assault alarm

Yes, I have protected personal information

Yes, I have changed residence

Yes, I have applied for a restraining order (restraining order)

Yes, other security measures

No

**48. Have these events had an impact on your personal life?**

Yes, to a large extent

Yes, to some extent

No

**49. Are you aware of anyone else being the victim of a crime or other similar unpleasant event during the last 12 months because of their research/teaching?**

Yes

No

**50. Do you perceive that events of this kind have been affected by the pandemic?**

Yes, there has been an increase

Yes, it has reduced

No, the extent is unchanged

I don't know

**51. Have you ever been concerned that you or a close relative would be the victim of a crime or another unpleasant event because of your research/teaching?**

Yes

No

**52. Have you ever, because of being targeted**

Considered changing or leaving a certain research topic

Considered changing or leaving a certain topic in teaching

Changed or left a certain research topic

Changed or left a certain topic in teaching

Refrained from making a statement as a researcher/scholar

Considered leaving the academy

Hesitated before a decision

Being affected to changed decision

Avoided getting involved in a specific issue

No, none of the above

**53. Have you ever, because of fear/concern of being targeted**

Considered changing or leaving a certain research topic

Considered changing or leaving a certain topic in teaching

Changed or left a certain research topic

Refrained from making a statement as a researcher/scholar

Considered leaving the academy

Hesitated before a decision

Being affected to changed decision

Avoided getting involved in a specific issue

No, none of the above

**Part 4/4: Support/follow up/information about safety procedures**

**54. Were you in contact with the police yourself due to the incident?**

Yes

No

I don't know

**55. Have you or anyone else reported the incident to the police?**

This concerns the latest incident

Yes

No

I don't know

**56. What was the main reason that the incident was not reported to the police?**

It would not lead to anything

I managed it myself

Lack of trust in the police  
Lack of trust in the justice system  
Considered it to be part of the job  
Considered it not to be important  
Did not want to go through the process  
Wanted to avoid attention in the media  
I was afraid to  
Other reason

**57. Did you report the incident to someone else than the police?**

Security personnel at the university  
Head of department or similar  
Work environment representative  
Union representative  
Equal treatment representative  
Other  
No

**58. What was the main reason that the incident was not reported?**

It would not lead to anything  
I managed it myself  
Lack of trust in the representatives  
Considered it to be part of the job  
Considered it not to be important  
Did not want to go through the process  
Wanted to avoid attention in the media  
I was afraid to  
I did not know where to turn  
Other reason

**59. To what extent have you needed support or help in connection with the incident?**

Not at all

To a very small extent

To a fairly small extent

To a fairly large extent

To a very large extent

**60. To what extent have you received support or help in connection with the incident?**

Not at all

To a very small extent

To a fairly small extent

To a fairly large extent

To a very large extent

**61. Who has provided you with support?**

From a Colleague

From the Police

From a Crime victim hotline/ non-profit organization

Occupational health care

From HR

From my boss

From a partner, relative or friend

From social services

From a security officer or equivalent

Other

From no one

**62. Is there an action plan for researchers'/teachers' exposure to crime or similar unpleasant events?**

Yes, at my department

Yes, at my university

No

I do not know

**63. Do you know where to turn if you, in your role as a researcher/teacher, are targeted by a crime of other unpleasant incident?**

Yes

No



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