

## FINLAND

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### Description of sample

The sample was nationwide, representing all Finnish-speaking adults resident in Finland. The Swedish-speaking minority (6% of the population) was excluded from the sample frame. The gross sample covered 2,354 Finns aged 15 years or older. The net sample consisted of 1,924 persons.

Since the data of the International Crime Survey and the 1989 national survey referred to a sample of respondents aged 16 years and over, this requirement was also followed in the 1992 survey.

The sampling procedures differed to some extent from those used in the 1989 survey. The sample was drawn from the Central Population Register which contains data on the whole Finnish population in alphabetic order. The company carrying out the interviews, Statistics Finland, prefer this system to the random dialing system because of the better quality of population register samples.

Although it is not possible to reach the whole population by telephone, a telephone number was found for 81.7 per cent of the persons in the gross sample. It has been estimated that, although over 90 per cent (94-95%) of Finns can be reached by telephone, a high proportion of them are not listed on the published telephone directories (Statistics Finland is presently preparing a technical report on the consequences of complementing the telephone sample with face-to-face interviews in a victimisation survey similar to the 1992 survey. Preliminary results indicate that, under Finnish conditions, the effects are not very great).

A letter of introduction was sent to all interviewees before the interview, explaining the aim of the study, the sample frame and the confidential nature of the study. The letter also asked those persons who are not registered in the telephone directories to provide a number where they could be reached, and this resulted in about 50 new telephone numbers.

The method used in 1992 proved more effective than that used in 1989. This difference, however laudable, is a possible source of measurement differences, as it implies that the 1992 data include more violence-prone persons than the 1989 data, and this tends to be confirmed, in fact, by the preliminary results. In general terms, Statistics Finland assumes that the results of the 1992 survey are comparable to the 1989 survey.

### Data collection technique

The interviews were carried out exclusively by telephone, using the CATI technique (Blaise).

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The interview team was comparable to an interview company: Statistics Finland maintains an interview organisation that relies on a network of trained interviewers. In this case, fifteen women and one man, for a total of 16 interviewers, were engaged in the field work. The majority of the interviews were performed in a centralised fashion under the direction of Statistics Finland in Helsinki. About one-fourth of the field work was done by ten interviewers with portable computers, working at home; this part, as all others, of the sample was allocated to the interviewers randomly. The interviewers went through a one and a half day working session immediately before initiating the actual field work.

Particular problems have not been listed systematically in this preliminary report.

The questionnaire was translated from the English language original. The 1989 questionnaire was used as a reference although questions related to consumer fraud were omitted. The interviewers found question COL 110 troublesome and unreliable and therefore this item was not included in the data file.

Data were collected between February 21 and March 31, 1992. The questionnaire was administered only in the Finnish language.

### **Response rate and recontacting**

The net response rate was 86%, and the gross response rate was 70.2% (Table 1).

Refusals did not present a major problem. A total of 79 persons (3.4% gross, 4.2% net) refused to participate. Other reasons for non-participation were illness or inability to participate - 56 persons; inability to establish a contact (i.e. the person could not be contacted) - 90 persons; and other reasons - 39 persons.

If a respondent could not be reached at the first attempt, several new attempts were made until the completion of the field work period.

This resulted in 1,655 completed interviews of persons aged 15 years or older. For purposes of international comparison, and for comparison with the first 1989 sweep of this survey, the lower age limit is 16, and thus the number of completed interviews is 1,620. The composition of the respondents in the completed interviews is reproduced in Table 2.

The 1992 survey appeared to be an improvement on the 1989 survey, and this is reflected in the much lower refusal rate and a better overall response rate.

### **Victimisation rates**

The main results regarding victimisation rates are presented in Tables 3 and 4. The prevalence rates for 5 years and 1 year respectively were calculated from the population aged 16 and over. The items "consumer fraud" and "corruption" were not included in the Finnish version of the 1992 questionnaire.

The highest prevalence rate for the one-year period referred to damage to cars. Bicycle theft and assault or threatening behaviour ranked second. As compared with the 1989 survey, the data show slightly higher rates for almost all types of offences covered in the survey. Identical rates to the 1989 results were found only in house burglary, pickpocketing and physical assault. The rate for "other personal theft" is lower than in 1989. It is felt that the slightly higher victimisation rates may (in part)

result from the higher response rate - the higher the response rate, the more likely it is that high-risk persons are included in the interviews.

During the 1989 survey, Finland was classified as a low-crime country compared to the European rates. This conclusion still holds true for the 1992 survey: bicycle theft and personal violence are still the only offences for which Finland exceeds the 1989 European average.

### **Reasons for not reporting**

Table 5 gives the reporting rates for the most recent incident in each crime category. Theft of car and theft of motorcycle were almost always reported, while house burglary with entry ranked third. Theft from car and bicycle theft were also reported in more than half of the cases. Personal incidents were reported much less often, a result which corresponds to findings of many previous studies. An almost identical reporting level was found in the 1989 survey, albeit with a few minor variations.

Table 6 presents reasons for not reporting the most recent incident to the police, item by item. Typical choices were that the offence was "not serious enough" and "police could do nothing". For some items, "solved it myself" and "police won't do anything" were frequently mentioned. In personal contact crimes the respondent often answered with "solved it myself" which is quite understandable; in such events, the offender is more likely to be personally known to the victim than in, say, cases of car theft or car vandalism.

### **Crime seriousness**

Table 7 presents the victims' only assessment of the seriousness of the most recent victimisation experienced, according to each category of incident. The results indicate a wide variation in the evaluations of the level of seriousness, the most serious offences being theft of car and burglary with entry (i.e. the same offences that were most often reported to the police). Those incidents that were most often judged as being "not serious" were thefts from car, car vandalism and sexual incidents. These data were not identical to the data of the 1989 survey.

It might be a good idea to develop this point further, for example, by asking all the respondents some questions about the seriousness of crime. This might be done by providing a few very concrete event descriptions (as in the question on sentences that should be given to offenders). It would obviously also be interesting to cross-tabulate this item with reporting the events to the police and reasons for not reporting them.

### **Victim support**

The 1992 questionnaire examined the subject of victim support in greater detail than the 1989 questionnaire. In 1989, only two questions were asked, both referring to special victim support agencies. In 1992, the victims were asked in a more general manner whether they had received any support from friends, relatives, or a number of other sources. The second question of the 1989 survey, asking the respondents whether they thought they might have benefitted from the services of a

special victim support agency, was phrased in almost - but not quite - the same way as in 1992; it would therefore be possible to compare the answers of both sweeps.

Organised victim support is not very widespread in Finland and is limited mainly to shelters for victims of domestic violence, and a few assistance telephones run by a few voluntary organisations. Also, a system of state compensation for damage caused by crime has existed since 1974. If the answers to this topic (whether the respondent had received support from a special agency) is to be examined in greater detail, it might be necessary to ask what kind of special organisation the respondent had in mind.

The percentages of victims receiving help varied as shown in Table 8. Men received less support than women from the two most important sources in Finland. Due to a programming error in the computerised questionnaire, those victims who stated that they had not received support from "a specialised agency to help crime victims" were not asked whether they thought they would have benefitted from such agencies (i.e. this question was not asked at all).

### **Attitudes towards the police**

Overall, respondents were rather satisfied with the way police reacted to reported crimes. 70% of the men and 72% of the women who had reported an offence said they were satisfied with the way the police had dealt with the incident.

Table 9 provides percentages of satisfied victims according to gender and type of crime.

Nevertheless, dissatisfaction was also rather common, the most common reasons provided being "didn't do enough" (25%) and "were not interested" (14%). Table 10 lists these reasons according to the gender; men tended to think that the police didn't do enough more than women, whereas women pointed out more often than men that the police did not find the offender or were slow to arrive. In general, however, these gender differences are rather small.

Although, given the small numbers of relevant cases, a cross-tabulation of reasons for dissatisfaction by type of offence is not very meaningful, a certain consistency does however exist in this relationship. Car theft, for instance, was unusually often combined with "police did not keep me informed". Similarly, in the case of theft from car, the complaint often was that police did not recover the lost property or that they were too slow to arrive. In cases of car vandalism, the police didn't do enough or did not find the perpetrator. In cases of bicycle theft, respondents stated that the police were not interested, did not recover the property, or did not keep the victim informed. In burglary cases, the "police didn't do enough" was the most frequent reply, while in cases of personal theft, respondents complained that the property was not recovered. In assault cases, the most common complaint was that the police were not interested or did not treat the victim correctly. It is possible, at this point, to discern an emerging pattern whereby the complaints are based on a conflicting definition of the importance of the matter at hand; those rather unserious events that are often considered by the police as both unimportant and useless to investigate, are considered important by the victim.

Satisfaction with the way police control crime in the area was rather high, and may reflect the fact that Finland has a rather low crime rate. However, the percentages of those who claimed that the police are doing a good job are likely to

vary according to various dimensions, such as age, gender and regional distribution, and by the fact that a respondent has been victimised or not.

### **Fear of crime**

Fear of crime was measured in an indirect manner. Three questions were posed, two of which were related to street crime, and one to the risk of house burglary. Two of these questions had also been included in the 1989 questionnaire.

Fear of crime, as measured by the 1992 indicators, was generally limited (see Table 12).

According to the 1992 survey, the Finnish public is not very worried about house burglary. 13.7 per cent thought that such an event over the next twelve months was likely or very likely; 79 per cent thought it was not likely. No differences between men and women were registered in this respect.

Feeling unsafe in the street after dark was more common, in particular among women. Most (93%) of the men felt fairly safe or very safe, whereas one-fourth (27%) of the women felt a bit unsafe or very unsafe. This difference is also reflected in the measures taken when going out - one-tenth of the men but one-third of the women had avoided certain places or certain people the last time they went out after dark. Also, seven per cent of the women said they never go out compared to only one per cent of the men. A breakdown by age showed that the "never go out" were almost exclusively elderly women.

### **Crime prevention**

Crime prevention was measured by reading out a number of possible protective measures that might be taken in order to prevent house burglary.

The respondents had resorted to various crime prevention measures as shown in Table 13. The listed measures are rather unusual in Finland. Special door locks were the most commonly used burglary prevention measure and were reported by one-fifth of the respondents of both genders. Finland also shows a very low level of house burglaries (in the 1989 European comparison).

Some of the indicators used in the survey are ambiguous as to their validity as an active crime prevention measure: caretakers or janitors are usually not employed as a form of burglary prevention, although their presence can make other measures unnecessary. Moreover, in Finland nowadays caretakers are only used for maintenance purposes, and therefore represent a rather weak form of crime prevention measure. They are generally employed in multi-storey flats, where high fences are not used as a defence against burglaries; high fences are more appropriate in the case of detached or semi-detached houses which are less common in Finland than in many other countries. The item related to dogs is also problematic since dogs are likely to be kept for reasons other than crime prevention. Nevertheless it can be presumed that, if a dog is kept, it probably will be considered as a possible burglar-deterrent, again making the need for other measures seem superfluous. Although these problems are probably well known, it will be very difficult to provide a more detailed analysis of crime prevention behaviour with the present quality of data on this matter. Other forms of crime prevention behaviour covered by the survey were measured by questions related to neighbourhood co-

operation, possession of firearms, and burglary insurance (this last question was not included in the Finnish 1992 survey). However, these indicators are difficult to interpret. Many Finnish households (one out of four) possess firearms, usually rifles or shotguns for hunting purposes but which may also be used for crime protection; only six per cent of the households possessed handguns.

Neighbourhood protection measures are also difficult to compare since they depend very much on the general characteristics of the neighbourhood, and not only on the respondent's relationship with crime prevention behaviour. It was rather usual for the Finnish respondents to ask the neighbours or the caretaker to watch one's home: 39 per cent of the respondents said they had done so, but an additional 10 per cent said the neighbours would watch anyway, resulting in about half (49.2%) saying they did not resort to this preventive measure.

The results were rather similar to those of the 1989 survey, although a direct comparison cannot be made since the question was put in a somewhat different way.

### Attitudes towards punishment

The survey question used for this problem was the same as in the 1989 survey. Table 14 presents the 1992 distributions.

In 1989, popular attitudes were clearly more in favour of fines and suspended sentences. This probably highlights a change in attitudes resulting from social innovation: community service was actually introduced in the Finnish criminal justice system in 1991. This has probably resulted in an increased awareness of the meaning of this penal sanction, and consequently a much larger proportion of the respondents chose this alternative in 1992.

Popular attitudes seem to be in clear conflict with the official usage of community service: the survey respondents seem to consider community service as a suitable alternative to fines and suspended sentences whereas the official purpose was to create an alternative to unconditional imprisonment.

## TABLES

**Table 1: Response/non-response in the gross and net samples**

	Persons, whole sample	Persons aged 16 and over	
	N	N	%
Responses	1,655	1,620	86.2
Non-responses	269	259	13.8
Refusals	79	79	4.2
Sick, not able	56	56	3.0
No contact	95	85	4.5
Other reasons	39	39	2.1

Net sample total	1,924	1,879	100.0
No telephone number	432	412	18.0
Gross sample total	2,356	2,291	100.0

**Table 2: Respondents of the 1992 Finnish survey by age, gender and region**

	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Helsinki area							
Men	10	22	23	21	8	13	97
Women	14	38	32	21	18	29	152
Rest of Southern Finland							
Men	46	65	74	55	43	61	344
Women	55	66	78	61	52	82	394
Central Finland							
Men	29	40	46	26	26	37	204
Women	24	45	35	32	36	47	219
Northern Finland							
Men	10	28	23	12	14	10	97
Women	18	25	18	18	20	14	113
Total							
Men	95	155	166	114	91	121	742
Women	111	174	153	132	126	172	878
Total	206	329	329	246	217	293	1620

**Table 3: Prevalence victimisation rates (5 years)\***

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	1.6
Theft from car	9.3
Car vandalism	13.7
Theft of motorcycle	0.8
Theft of bicycle	14.5
(Owners)	
Theft of car	1.9
Theft from car	11.3
Car vandalism	16.7
Theft of motorcycle	4.9
Theft of bicycle	15.8
Burglary with entry	1.5
Attempted burglary	2.2
Robbery	2.6
Personal theft	9.7
Theft from garage	7.6
Pickpocketing	5.4
Sexual incidents	10.4
Assault/threat	11.7
Sexual assault	3.9
Assault with force	6.2

\* Prevalence - percentage of respondents who have been victims of a specific form of crime once or more.

**Table 4: Prevalence victimisation rates (1 year)\***

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	0.7
Theft from car	3.0
Car vandalism	5.6
Theft of motorcycle	0.2
Theft of bicycle	4.9
(Owners)	
Theft of car	0.8
Theft from car	3.6
Car vandalism	6.8
Theft of motorcycle	1.5
Theft of bicycle	5.3
Burglary with entry	0.6
Attempted burglary	0.6
Robbery	1.0
Personal theft	3.2
Theft from garage	2.6
Pickpocketing	1.8
Sexual incidents	3.7
Assault/threat	4.1
Sexual assault	0.7
Assault with force	2.0
Consumer fraud	
Corruption	

\* Prevalence - percentage of respondents who have been victims of a specific form of crime once or more.

**Table 5: Reported crimes**

	%
Theft of car	100.0
Theft from car	56.0
Car vandalism	36.0
Theft of motorcycle	92.0
Theft of bicycle	55.0
Burglary with entry	74.0
Attempted burglary	22.0
Robbery	30.0
Personal theft	38.0
Sexual incidents	12.0*

Assault/threat	26.0
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\* If only "rape", 53%

**Table 6: Reasons for not reporting\***

	Theft of car %	Theft from car %	Car vandalism %	Theft of motorcycle %	Theft of bicycle %	Burglary with entry %	Robbery %	Personal theft %	Sexual incidents %	Assault/ threat %
Not serious enough		57.0	51.0	33.0	34.0	81.0	40.0	35.0	55.0	45.0
Solved it myself		1.0	3.0	33.0	18.0		9.0	12.0	11.0	15.0
Inappropriate for police			1.0					1.0	5.0	3.0
Other authorities			1.0		2.0		4.0	10.0		3.0
My family solved it			1.0		7.0				2.0	1.0
No insurance		1.0	4.0		2.0					
Police could do nothing		24.0	24.0	33.0	13.0	19.0	13.0	17.0	10.0	12.0
Police won't do anything		11.0	11.0		13.0		8.0	10.0	5.0	9.0
Fear/dislike police							1.0			
Didn't dare			1.0				1.0		2.0	2.0
Other reasons		4.0	2.0		8.0		1.0	15.0	8.0	9.0
Don't know		1.0	1.0		3.0				1.0	1.0

\* Percentages calculated on victims who said they had not reported the last incident of each type of crime to the police - multiple answers possible.

**Table 7: Crime seriousness\***

	Theft of car %	Theft from car %	Car vandalism %	Theft of motorcycle %	Theft of bicycle %	Burglary with entry %	Robbery %	Personal theft %	Sexual incidents %	Assault/ threat %
Very serious	67.0	13.0	14.0	30.0	18.0	50.0	43.0	19.0	21.0	33.0
Fairly serious	21.0	47.0	48.0	70.0	54.0	34.0	45.0	57.0	47.0	46.0
Not serious	12.0	40.0	38.0		27.0	12.0	12.0	31.0	31.0	21.0

\* Percentage based on victims of specific crimes.

**Table 8: Percentage of victims who received, or would have appreciated receiving support**

	Men (%)	Women (%)
Relatives, friends, neighbours	27	41
Police	20	26
Social welfare agencies		1
Religious organisations		
Voluntary organisations		
Specialised agency		
Other	4	3
(N)	(398)	(365)

**Table 9: Satisfaction with police (% of victims who reported offence and who declared being satisfied with the way the police dealt with their report)**

Offence type (N)	Men (154) %	Women (146) %	Total	
			%	N
Theft of car	75	63	70	20
Theft from car	80	90	85	40
Car vandalism	62	79	70	50
Theft of motorcycle	100	33	67	6
Theft of bicycle	61	74	69	71
Burglary with entry	90	75	86	14
Attempted burglary		50	50	4
Theft from outbuilding	91	67	77	26
Robbery	100		100	2
Personal theft	39	65	53	38
Sexual incidents				1
Assault/threat	74	67	71	28
Total	69	72	71	300

**Table 10: Reasons for dissatisfaction (by gender)**

Reason	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total (%)
Police didn't do enough	27	21	24
Were not interested	25	28	26
Didn't find/apprehend offender	11	14	13
Didn't recover property	15	12	14
Didn't keep me properly informed	4	8	6
Didn't treat me correctly	11	6	9
Were slow to arrive	4	6	5
Other reasons	4	4	4
Don't know			
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(57)	(47)	(104)

**Table 11: Satisfaction with police in controlling area of residence (by gender)**

	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total (%)
Good job	55	51	53
Not a good job	24	22	23
Don't know	21	27	24

Total	100	100	100
(N)	(769)	(849)	(1,619)

**Table 12: Fear of/concern with crime (according to three indicators)**

	Men (%)	Women (%)
How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark?		
Very safe	63	34
Fairly safe	30	38
A bit unsafe	5	21
Very unsafe	2	6
Don't know	0	1
Total %	100	100
The last time you went out after dark, did you avoid certain streets, places or people for reasons of safety?		
Yes	9	32
No	90	59
Don't know/can't remember	0	2
Never go out	1	7
Total %	100	100
What are the chances that over the next twelve months someone will try to break into your home?		
Very likely	1	1
Likely	12	13
Not likely	80	79
Don't know	7	7
Total %	100	100
(N)	(769)	(849)

**Table 13: Crime prevention measures (% of respondents by gender)**

	Men	Women	Total
Burglar alarm	1.3	0.8	1.0
Special door locks	18.7	21.0	19.9
Special window/door grills	1.0	0.8	0.9
Keep watchdogs	10.3	11.9	11.2
High fence	3.7	2.4	3.0
Caretaker/security guard	9.0	12.8	11.0
Refused to answer	0.7	0.6	0.6
None of these	62.0	58.7	60.3
(N)	(769)	(849)	(1,618)

**Table 14: Attitudes towards punishment (sentence to be imposed on recidivist burglary of TV set)**

	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total (%)
Fine	12.9	12.4	12.7
Prison	15.5	11.6	13.5
- % in favour of prison sentence of 6 months or more	(40%)	(38%)	(39%)
Community service	53.8	57.9	55.9
Suspended sentence	10.6	11.7	11.2
Other sentence	4.7	1.7	3.1
Don't know	2.5	4.7	3.6

Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0
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