

## THE NETHERLANDS

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### Description of the sample

During the first months of 1992 a nationwide sample of 2,000 persons were interviewed. A total of six weight factors - age, gender, household income, level of education, town size, house owned or rented - should provide a representative sample of the Dutch adult population (i.e. aged 16 years or over). This conclusion is reasonable: the age and gender breakdown is fairly in balance, although some overrepresentation in the above average income group does exist. This might be due to the data collection method that was used.

### Data collection technique

Interviewing was carried out by Interview Nederland B.V., a research company specialised in marketing and sales information. The Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technique was used. Telephone numbers were chosen by the computer by means of a regionally well spread random person selection procedure, and were then used to select households. A random selection procedure was again used within each household, based on questions about the composition of the household. Only respondents of at least 16 years of age were qualified to be interviewed.

Although all interviewers were experienced and well trained, they were personally briefed with the use of written instructions.

Besides providing an explanation of the structure of the questionnaire, much effort was made to train interviewers how to motivate unwilling respondents to cooperate. In case of doubt the respondents could contact a person to check the authenticity of the survey.

No particular problems were encountered, probably because this procedure has already been experimented, and the work was completed within the first months of 1992, according to the time schedule. The questionnaire was administered in Dutch.

### Response rate and recontacting

In general CATI surveys have a high non-response rate. A total of 4,924 telephone numbers were used, forming the so-called gross sample.

From this total should be deducted non-existent numbers, business numbers, and numbers that are always engaged or never reply.

Of the 3,012 relevant interviews 2,000 could be used, representing a response rate of 66%. 699 persons refused to be interviewed and 313 interviews were not

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valid. A repeated attempt to recontact the unsuccessful respondents after some weeks led to an increase of the response rate to the above-mentioned level.

## **Victimisation rates**

Table 1 shows the five-year prevalence rates for a series of crimes. It is clear from this table that besides the more or less accepted high frequency of cycle theft (31.1%) in the ownership category, car vandalism (31.8%) and theft from car (24.7%) were also extremely high. But also in the context of violence it is significant that 10.4% were victim of assault/threat.

These percentages are significantly higher than those of 1989: vehicle crimes grew from 18.7% to 22.8%, property crimes from 20.4% to 24.4%, and contact crimes from 6.1% to 7%. The same trend can be noted when comparing the two 5-year periods; here too the 1992 percentages for the above-mentioned crime groups are approximately 10% higher. Only burglary remained stable in all these cases.

From a comparison of the 5-year prevalence rates (Table 1) and 1-year prevalence rates (Table 2) of the 1992 survey, an overrepresentation of victimisation can be noted for the last year. This is completely in keeping with the general increase in criminality in the Netherlands mentioned above.

## **Reported crime**

The generally high reporting rates shown in Table 3 are striking. In most cases, such as car theft, the offence must be reported to the police in order to be refunded by the insurance company. Victims of car vandalism are less eager to report the incident, while sexual incidents rank lowest in this respect.

## **Reasons for not reporting**

Table 4 provides an overview of the reasons for which victims did not report the crime to the police.

The most frequently mentioned reason for not reporting - and this is valid for all crimes - was that the crime was not serious enough. The second most frequently mentioned reason was that the victim thought the police could do nothing. In cases of bicycle theft and theft from cars, 22.5% and 15.8% respectively of the victims thought that the police would not do anything. 30.7% of the victims involved in sexual incidents solved the problem themselves.

A total of almost 40% of the crimes were not reported to the police; this percentage is rather independent of age, gender, income level and urban or rural areas of residence.

## **Crime seriousness**

Table 5 presents an evaluation by the respondents of the seriousness of specific crimes.

It is clear that burglary with entry is viewed as very serious by more than 90%, and attempted burglary by more than 50% of the victims.

Theft of cars and motorcycles, robbery and assault/threat were evaluated as fairly serious or very serious by 70 to 80% of the victims. Finally, theft of bicycles and theft from sheds were generally viewed as less serious.

## **Victim support**

The main institutions that supported victims were: the family in 22.4% of the cases, the police (14.4%) and social welfare organisations (only 1.3%). Religious and voluntary organisations put together attributed to less than 1% of the cases. Women and elderly people tend to hold a more positive attitude towards victim support than men and young people.

## **Attitudes towards the police**

On the whole, 73.9% of the respondents were satisfied with the way the police dealt with the reported incident(s). Although the variables related to gender, age, income and education were of little influence, women, elderly people and respondents with a lower level of education seemed slightly more satisfied with police performance. Respondents living in average sized urban areas were most satisfied, especially those living in their own house.

When asked to provide reasons for dissatisfaction with the police, it is interesting to note that 40.8% of the respondents, and in particular women, felt that the police did not do enough, while 36.7% thought that the police were not interested. Although most of the reasons for dissatisfaction are vague, a small percentage are more specific. Thus, 10.7% said they were disappointed by the fact that the police did not find or apprehend the offenders and 12.6% said that they did not recover their property. An important cause of dissatisfaction, expressed by 8.9% of the respondents, was that the police did not treat them correctly or were impolite.

In comparison with the relatively high level of satisfaction with police performance regarding reported crimes, satisfaction with the police in controlling crime in the area was significantly lower. In this respect, only 49.6% of the respondents thought the police were doing a good job.

In this context women, middle-aged people, people earning average incomes, people with a higher level of education and especially people living in larger cities, were most dissatisfied. In the bigger cities only 41.4% of the respondents believed that the police do a good job in controlling crime in their area.

It is interesting to compare the results of the nationwide research with an evaluation of area team policing in different districts of Amsterdam. As can be seen in Figure 1, between 45% and 55% of the respondents evaluated the job of the police in their district as excellent. This is significantly higher than the 41.4% of respondents living in the greater urban areas who expressed satisfaction in the nationwide survey.

## **Fear of crime**

21.7% of the respondents admitted that they feel a bit or very unsafe when walking alone in their area after dark. Some interesting differences between sub-categories are worth mention, however. Women (34.6%) felt unsafe much more frequently than men (8.6%); elderly people (33.3%) more often than young people (14.9%); less educated people more frequently (32.8%) than more educated people (15.7%); and finally, inhabitants of big cities (29.3%) more frequently than inhabitants of rural areas (9.7%).

When interpreting these data, one has to realise that the data are also average in these sub-categories, and presumably have a high standard of deviation. This is also the case in larger cities where inhabitants may feel extremely safe in some areas but, unfortunately, very unsafe in others. For example, this is clear from the results of recent research in a residential area in the city of Rotterdam (Provenierswijk) near to a legalised local community centre for drug and alcohol addicts. More than half of the population felt unsafe or very unsafe in their own area of residence.

### **Crime prevention**

Crime can be reduced by developing strategies to make it more difficult to commit criminal acts, and Table 6 presents an overview of preventive measures adopted in this sense.

The Table shows that 71.5% of the houses adopt at least one preventive measure against crime, the most popular of which is a door lock (58.7% of the respondents used them). Watchdogs are rather frequently used, especially in rural areas: 23% compared to 10.7% in larger cities. Special window and door grills are also becoming popular. Only 4% of the respondents used a caretaker or security guard, although this latter figure rose to 7.8% in the case of elderly respondents and 7.6% for less educated people. Instead, the most usual tendency was for neighbours to watch the house when people are away. This combination of caretaker and neighbour watch was used by 59.2% of the respondents, with a peak of 63.6% in the rural areas, in cases of an absence of one or two days.

Only 2.3% of all respondents, and 3.8% of the males, admitted to the possession of a firearm, while 1% of the men refused to answer. This weapon was used as protection against crime in 10.1% of the cases, but in the bigger cities rose to 23.6%. Since it is illegal to possess firearms without a special permission in the Netherlands, the reliability of these data is questionable.

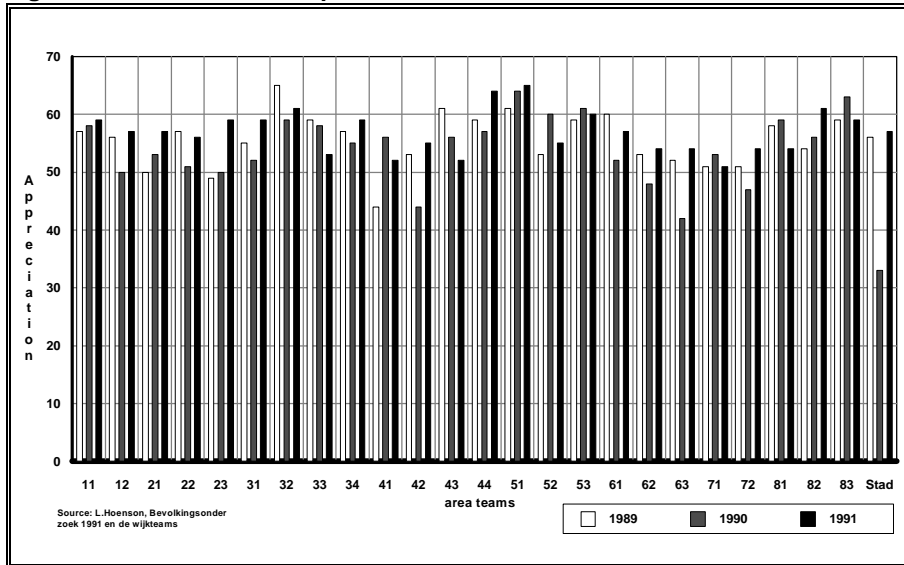
In most cases (43.5%) just one crime prevention measure was used to protect the houses. However, this was considered insufficient by some respondents who used two (19.8%) or even three or more (8.2%) different means to protect their homes.

### **Attitudes towards punishment**

Table 7 lists the proposed sentences for a recidivist burglar who has stolen a colour TV. Most of the respondents, (47.6%) considered a community service order as the most appropriate sanction. The majority of the 9.4% of respondents who preferred a fine were women, middle-aged people, and people with a higher level of education and often living in a rural area. On the other hand, most of the 25.9% of those respondents who chose a prison sentence of between 2 and 6 months were men and younger people with a lower level of education.

## FIGURE and TABLES

**Figure 1: Satisfaction with police in Amsterdam districts**



**Table 1: Prevalence victimisation rates (5 years)\***

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	2.1
Theft from car	19.1
Car vandalism	24.6
Theft of motorcycle	2.8
Theft of bicycle	28.6
(Owners)	
Theft of car	2.7
Theft from car	24.7
Car vandalism	31.8
Theft of motorcycle	14.5
Theft of bicycle	31.1
Burglary with entry	9.9
Attempted burglary	10.4
Robbery	2.8
Personal theft	14.2
Sexual incidents	6.5
Assault/threat	10.4
Pickpocketing	5.4
Sexual assault	0.8

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

**Table 2: Prevalence victimisation rates (1 year)\***

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	0.5
Theft from car	6.8
Car vandalism	9.5
Theft of motorcycle	1.0
Theft of bicycle	9.9
(Owners)	
Theft of car	0.7
Theft from car	8.4
Car vandalism	11.8
Theft of motorcycle	5.0
Theft of bicycle	10.8
Burglary with entry	2.0
Attempted burglary	3.0
Robbery	1.0
Personal theft	4.6
Sexual incidents	2.3
Assault/threat	4.0
Consumer fraud	4.9
Corruption	
Theft from garages, lockups	3.0
Pickpocketing	2.1
Sexual assault	0.7
Assault with force	1.3

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

**Table 3: Reported crimes**

	%
Theft of car	90.1
Theft from car	74.6
Car vandalism	39.3
Theft of motorcycle	93.9
Theft of bicycle	67.1
Burglary with entry	90.4
Attempted burglary	51.7
Robbery	59.0
Personal theft	53.4
Sexual incidents	12.2
Assault/threat	43.49

**Table 4: 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	0.0	40.0	49.1	0.0	20.9	19.6	26.4	31.5	36.9	31.5
Solved it myself	0.0	1.5	7.0	0.0	5.4	25.8	13.5	14.0	30.7	14.0
Inappropriate for police	0.0	8.9	6.6	0.0	6.8	0.0	12.7	12.6	9.7	12.6
Other authorities	0.0	1.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0
My family solved it	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No insurance	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Police could do nothing	0.0	23.4	20.6	0.0	35.2	16.2	12.5	16.5	17.0	16.5
Police won't do anything	0.0	15.8	14.0	0.0	22.5	8.3	7.6	11.9	9.9	11.9
Fear/dislike police	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.6	0.8
Didn't dare	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	4.3	9.3	4.0	3.0	4.0
Other reasons	0.0	6.7	7.9	0.0	14.9	11.1	26.7	13.2	10.3	13.2
Don't know	100.0	6.1	4.2	100.0	3.4	25.1	0.0	2.6	2.1	2.6

\* 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 5: Crime seriousness\***

	Theft of car %	Theft from car %	Car vandalism %	Theft of motorcycle %	Theft of bicycle %	Burglary with entry %	Attempted burglary %	Theft from garages %	Robbery %	Personal theft %	Sexual incidents %	Assault/ threat %
Very serious	48.2	11.5	8.1	41.2	14.4	90.4	51.7	19.4	46.5	25.0	28.9	41.6
Fairly serious	31.1	30.9	25.0	34.7	38.9	9.1	42.2	24.8	22.6	31.4	36.6	31.1
Not serious	20.7	57.6	66.9	24.1	46.7	0.5	6.1	55.8	30.9	43.7	34.4	27.2

\* Percentage based on victims of specific crimes.

**Table 6: Crime prevention measures\***

	%
Installed burglar alarm	7.6
Installed door locks	58.7
Installed window/door grills	14.7
Maintain watchdogs	15.3
High fence	8.7
House has a caretaker	4.4
None of these	27.9
Others	.6

Ask somebody to watch home	
Neighbours watch anyway	
Possession of firearms	2.3
House is insured against burglary	

\* Percentages based on total sample of respondents - multiple answers possible.

**Table 7: Attitudes towards punishment**

	Total	Sex		Age			Household income		
		Male	Female	16-34 years	35-54 years	55+ years	> average	< average	unknown
Base all respondents	2000	990	1009	667	760	573	667	1012	321
Fine	187	85	103	61	77	50	58	102	27
%	9.4	8.5	10.2	9.1	10.1	8.7	8.7	10.1	8.4
Prison	518	283	235	213	152	153	183	254	81
%	25.9	28.6	23.3	32.0	20.0	26.8	27.4	25.1	25.4
Community services	951	438	513	296	404	251	326	477	148
%	47.6	44.2	50.8	44.4	53.2	43.7	48.9	47.2	46.1
Suspended sentence	158	86	72	56	67	35	45	91	23
%	7.9	8.6	7.2	8.4	8.9	6.1	6.7	9.0	7.1
Any other sentence	88	52	36	21	28	39	29	46	13
%	4.4	5.3	3.6	3.1	3.7	6.9	4.4	4.5	4.2
Don' t know	97	47	50	20	31	45	27	42	28
%	4.8	4.7	5.0	3.0	4.1	7.9	4.0	4.1	8.8
Total	2000	990	1009	667	760	573	667	1012	321
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

	Education completed at			Town size (thousands)			House		
	<15 years	16-19 years	>20 years	<10 inh.	10-15 inh.	>50 inh.	unknown	owned	rented
Base all respondents	401	855	559	424	655	680	242	1082	897
Fine	36	69	64	35	72	59	23	109	74
%	9.0	8.1	11.4	8.2	10.9	8.6	9.3	10.1	8.3
Prison	118	241	102	108	153	187	70	247	266
%	29.5	28.1	18.3	25.5	23.4	27.5	29.0	22.9	29.7
Community services	176	419	283	210	324	322	95	531	414
%	43.9	49.0	50.6	49.5	49.5	47.4	39.2	49.1	46.1
Suspended sentence	21	66	52	32	54	57	16	93	61
%	5.2	7.7	9.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	6.5	8.6	6.8
Any other sentence	21	35	29	18	31	31	8	54	34
%	5.3	4.1	5.1	4.4	4.7	4.5	3.4	5.0	3.8
Don' t know	29	26	29	21	20	24	30	47	48
%	7.2	3.0	5.2	5.1	3.1	3.6	12.6	4.3	5.3
Total	401	855	559	424	655	680	242	1082	897
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0