

## TUNIS (TUNISIA)

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A victimisation survey will be carried out at the beginning of 1993 and will cover a sample of 1,200 people chosen from Greater Tunis (city and suburbs) which is inhabited by roughly 20% of the entire population of Tunisia.

The data presented herewith were collected for a preliminary survey carried out in September-October 1992, and refer to a sample of 150 people living in the city of Tunis.

The respondents were categorised according to the following criteria:

- *gender*: the same proportion of male and female respondents were sampled;
- *location*: it was decided to limit the field of observation to the city of Tunis instead of Greater Tunis (which includes the various suburbs in the range of 20 km).

The city was divided into sectors, areas and blocks of houses, according to the distribution adopted by the *Institut National de la Statistique (INS)* and the district of Tunis.

Such distribution was based on a synthetical variable, the so-called "habitat system". This variable is made up of a number of socio-economic indicators from which five sectors were identified, each of them presenting globally homogeneous characteristics from the point of view of income and expenditure structure; equipment and access to common facilities; type of housing.

The distribution by sectors was as follows:

- upper level zone;
- middle level zone;
- traditional zone (the *medina*);
- first generation of semi-urban zone;
- second generation of semi-urban zone.

The sample was divided into three categories of socio-economic status:

- upper class (30%) corresponding to upper level zone;
- middle class (40%) corresponding to middle level zone;
- lower class (30%) corresponding to remaining zones.

At this phase of the research these categories were represented in almost equal proportions. For the 1993 survey the distribution will be more accurate and involve a larger sample. It will also include a stratification by area, since a sector may include areas belonging to another "habitat standing or system".

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## **Data collection techniques**

In order to carry out the interviews students received a three-day training course, during which they:

- studied the questionnaire and in particular the formulation of the questions in a Tunisian-Arabic dialect;
- attended four interviews carried out by the trainer;
- carried out exercises in data control and elaboration with the use of a manual treatment table (computerised data treatment with the SPSS software was not possible since the researchers were not familiar enough with this programme).

Each interviewer was provided with twenty randomly selected addresses in a given area, with the aim of completing fifteen interviews.

For the pre-testing it was decided to assign a female interviewer for each female respondent. In fact, it is believed that, in general, female students encountered less difficulties in gaining the trust of the respondents of both sexes.

For a number of reasons the 10 interviewers were only able to carry out an average of 1 or 2 interviews per day (including the completion of the data treatment table). As a result, it took more than fifteen days to complete the 150 questionnaires, after the cancellation of 9 non-applicable cases.

No major problems were encountered during the interviews; the interviewers were pleasantly surprised to note that the respondents talked spontaneously and without reservation about the various forms of offence; this attitude can be linked to the recent interest on the part of the mass media in this issue.

A few minor modifications were made to a number of questions. In particular, in the case of the question related to the period in which the crime was committed, the respondent was asked to indicate an exact date (year and, at least, season). This enabled a distinction to be made between the one-year (code 2) and five-year (code 1) period, and also provided information on the period of the year for further use.

## **Prevalence victimisation rates - 5 years**

Except for fraud and corruption, it appeared that the 150 respondents reported 130 cases of offences in the last five years. The most recurrent cases reported were personal theft (18.5%), attempted burglary (12.5%) and car vandalism (8%).

The majority of these offences were committed against middle class victims (52%), followed by the upper class (30%) and the lower class (18%).

The middle class respondents expressed dissatisfaction with police control, and in particular in the case of night patrols. On the contrary, the upper class appeared to be more satisfied with their security conditions.

This situation could explain in part the fact that the middle class is the category most affected by car vandalism and bicycle, motorcycle or even car theft. Theft of car remains insignificant and could be an indication of the low level of delinquency by organised gangs. This is confirmed by the fact that 53% of the victims (including victims of sexual incidents) mentioned individual acts, to which can be added 18% of the victims who mentioned two or more people, which could not be considered as gangs in the true sense.

Furthermore, since the phenomenon of gang delinquency has registered an increase during the last ten years, it was not surprising that this was one of the two main topics to be mentioned by the respondents. Indeed, it was mentioned by a third (32%) of them.

### **Prevalence victimisation rates - 1 year**

A preliminary, although cautious, remark must be made with respect to the one-year victimisation rates. The volume of crime reported by the respondents for this period appears much higher than the annual average registered for the five previous years, begging the question of whether this corresponds to an increase in crime. Before replying to this query a methodological evaluation is necessary.

Another interesting point is the high rate of consumer fraud mentioned by 71.5% of the respondents. This could be a result of the liberal option in Tunisia in the 80s, but such a finding becomes more significant taking into account that the "informal (unorganised) sector" covers more than 40% of the tertiary sector in urban areas, a percentage which is certainly higher for the capital.

### **Reported crime**

It is not surprising to note that, in the context of Tunisian culture, only 10.5% of sexual incidents were reported to the police. Of course this figure includes both rape (3 cases) and other forms of sexual harassment (see Table 4).

According to Table 5, these incidents are generally dealt with by "other authorities" or remain "personal", although most cases mentioned by women were considered as "fairly serious" (64%) and even "very serious" (12%) (Table 6).

This can also be applied to personal theft, robbery and car vandalism. Nevertheless, this reaction could be explained less by cultural factors and more by the objective attitude of the respondents towards the police and their effectiveness in these cases, as is shown in Table 5.

Generally speaking, this attitude towards the police is more strongly felt among the middle class (15/40), especially when referring to personal theft, theft from a car and car vandalism. Surprisingly, it is more infrequent among the "lower" classes.

Although the data collected for this preliminary survey do not allow for an extensive analysis, they are useful in that they provide a basis for methodological reflection on the improvement or adaptation of the questionnaire to the needs of the particular social context. Of course, this should also take into consideration the international comparability of the results.

## TABLES

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

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	1.5
Theft from car	6.5
Car vandalism	8.0
Theft of motorcycle	6.5
Theft of bicycle	6.0
<b>(Owners)</b>	
Theft of car	6.5
Theft from car	33.5
Car vandalism	40.0
Theft of motorcycle	55.5
Theft of bicycle	41.0
Burglary with entry	7.5
Attempted burglary	12.5
Robbery	5.5
Personal theft	18.5
Sexual incidents	21.5
Assault/threat	14.5

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

**Table 2: Prevalence victimisation rates (5 years) according to socio-economic status (absolute value)**

	Socio-economic status			
	Lower	Middle	Upper	Total
Theft of car	0	2	0	2
Theft from car	1	2	7	10
Car vandalism	2	6	4	12
Theft of motorcycle	4	4	2	10
Theft of bicycle	2	4	3	9
Burglary with entry	3	4	4	11
Attempted burglary	3	9	7	19
Personal theft	4	13	11	28
Assault/threat	1	4	2	7
Sexual incidents	8	5	3	16

**Table 3: Prevalence victimisation rates (1 year)\***

	Victimisation rate (%)
Theft of car	0.5
Theft from car	6.0
Car vandalism	5.5
Theft of motorcycle	3.5
Theft of bicycle	3.5
(Owners)	
Theft of car	3.5
Theft from car	30.0
Car vandalism	26.5
Theft of motorcycle	27.5
Theft of bicycle	22.5
Burglary with entry	3.5
Attempted burglary	7.5
Robbery	3.5
Personal theft	8.5
Sexual incidents	12.0
Assault/threat	4.0
Consumer fraud	71.5
Corruption	6.5

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

**Table 4: Reported crimes**

	%
Theft of car	100.0
Theft from car	47.5
Car vandalism	30.0
Theft of motorcycle	80.0
Theft of bicycle	57.0
Burglary with entry	87.5
Attempted burglary	55.0
Robbery	30.5
Personal theft	39.0
Sexual incidents	10.5
Assault/threat	69.5

**Table 5: 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		70.0	21.4		16.7	50.0	33.3	52.0	22.7	
Solved it myself		10.0		66.7	33.3	50.0	11.1	16.0	9.1	75.0
Inappropriate for police			14.3		16.7			20.0		25.0
Other authorities				33.3	16.7			4.0		
My family solved it							11.1	8.0		
No insurance										
Police could do nothing		10.0	50.0	33.3		50.0	22.2	16.0		25.0
Police won't do anything		50.0	14.3		16.7		11.1	12.0	13.6	25.0
Fear/dislike police			7.1						18.2	
Didn't dare					16.7				4.5	
Other reasons		10.0	21.4			50.0	33.3		45.5	50.0
Don't know							11.1		9.1	25.0

\* 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 6: 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	100.0	42.0	15.0	13.5	7.0	12.5	22.0	22.0	12.0	54.0
Fairly serious		58.0	50.0	66.5	71.5	62.5	54.0	56.0	64.0	38.5
Not serious			35.00	20.0	21.5	25.0	24.0	22.0	24.0	7.5

\* Percentage based on victims of specific crimes.

**Table 7: Crime prevention measures\***

	%
Installed burglar alarm	9.3
Installed door locks	60.7
Installed window/door grills	41.3
Maintain watchdogs	8.0
High fence	27.3
House has a caretaker	8.0
None of these	8.7
Others	2.7
Ask somebody to watch home	67.3
Neighbours watch anyway	28.0
Possession of firearms	4.7
House is insured against burglary	20.7

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