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SUMMARY

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CRIMES AGAINST RETAIL AND MANUFACTURING PREMISES IN FINLAND

The research is based on a nationally representative survey of crime against retail and manufacturing business premises in Finland. The research was targeted at premises which had at least one employee (who could be the entrepreneur himself/herself) and which had been operating for the duration of the 12 previous months. The sample was stratified by geographical area and the number of staff on the premises. Large premises were over-sampled to ensure adequate number of respondents.

The fieldwork was carried out using CATI (computer assisted telephone interview) between March and June 2010. Prior to the interviews, preliminary information was mailed to the respondents. This material included a help-sheet questionnaire and a letter of recommendation signed by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior, as well as by the leaders of three major economic organizations. The overall response rate was 81 per cent (80 per cent for retail premises and 82 per cent for manufacturing premises). Typically, respondents were managers, persons responsible for security issues, or business owners.

The respondents were asked about sixteen types of crime. These included different kinds of theft, fraud, embezzlement, vandalism, burglary, robbery, violence against employees, industrial or commercial espionage, extortion, bribery, and electronic crime. The premises were asked which of the sixteen types of crime they had experienced in the 12 months prior to being interviewed. For each crime type, follow-up questions were asked regarding the details of the most recent crime incident. Questions about the cost of crime, reporting to the police, crime prevention measures and effects of crime (such as losing customers or employees) were also included in the survey.

Prevalence of crime against businesses. Results show that both retail and manufacturing premises experience multiple kinds of crime but that the quantity and structure of crime differ in these sectors. Retail premises were

much more likely to be crime targets than manufacturing premises; 69 per cent of retail premises and 24 per cent of manufacturing premises experienced at least one crime during the past year. Figure 1 shows last year victimization rates by sector.

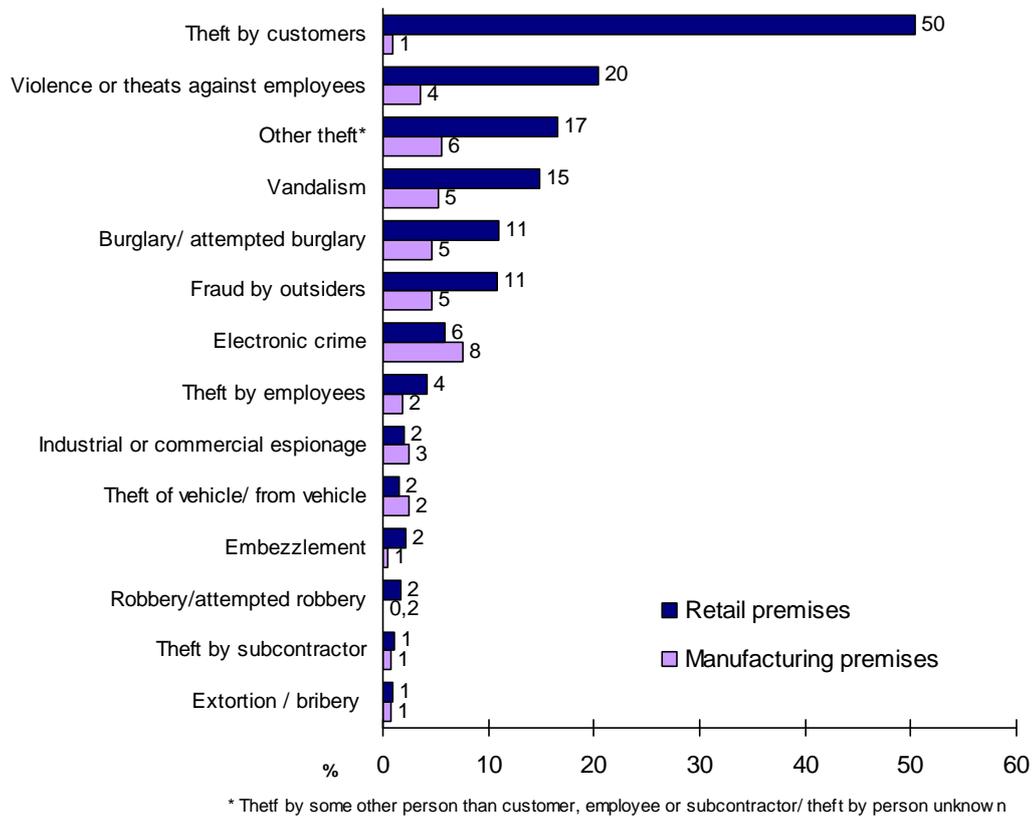


Figure 1 Last year victimization of retail and manufacturing premises, %

The most common crime suffered by retailers was theft by customers. Different kinds of theft constituted altogether 86 per cent of crimes against retailer premises. Violence or threats against employees and vandalism were relatively common in the retail sector (Figure 1). The most prevalent type of crime against manufacturing premises was electronic crime such as hacking. Different kinds of theft constituted a significant share of the crimes committed against manufacturers.

Large premises were more likely to be victims of crime compared to smaller premises. The variety of different crime types committed was also more extensive among larger premises than among smaller ones, which typically suffered few different types of crime. However, when the number of crimes experienced during the previous 12 months was counted as rates per employee, multiple victimization was seen to exist in businesses from all personnel size groups. The results indicate that some premises suffer

repeated and multiple victimization and therefore account for a high proportion of all crime incidents.

Correlates of business crime. Multivariate analyses were conducted to examine the risk factors of business victimization. The findings suggest that phenomena related to public disorder (such as drunkenness, begging, loitering youth groups, graffiti, etc.) are robustly associated with victimization risk. Long/late opening hours and a high number of customers were significantly related to the victimization risk of retailers. Regional socio-economic disadvantage was a comparatively weak correlate of business victimization risk, a finding that may reflect the socially homogeneous nature of Finnish society.

The most important crime damages that were sustained included direct financial losses such as stolen goods, damaged property, and the cost of time spent in dealing with the crimes. Few premises reported that crime and crime threats had led to losing customers or employees, or to difficulties in recruiting staff. Crime-related pressure to change the location of the premises was also rare. However, those retailers and manufactures who reported most crime victimization also suffered above-average incidence of such negative consequences of crime.

Comparative findings. In this report, the prevalence of crimes against Finnish business premises is compared with findings from other European countries. In many cases, the comparability of such surveys is weak, but in some offence types, common source in ICCS and ICBS based questionnaires provide partial comparability. In the current research, the closest comparability is with studies conducted in England and Wales. With respect to the retail sector, Finnish retail premises manifested lower levels of burglary, auto related theft, fraud, embezzlement, and property destruction than English retail premises. With regard to violence and threats against personnel, the situation was similar. The sole offence type which was more common among Finnish retail premises was shoplifting. As concerns manufacturing premises, the prevalence of crime victimization was consistently lower in Finland.

