

# Contents

Tables	ix
Graphs	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii
1 Looking for Nations with Little Crime	3
2 Scant Records of Little Crime: Official Icelandic Crime Reports, 1881–1996	18
3 Prohibition of Beer in Iceland	29
4 Crime Stories in the Icelandic Press	48
5 Fear of Crime in a Changing Society	61
6 Sex Laws and Sex Crimes in a Land of Equals	81
7 Distortion of the Legal Process: Drug Police and Drug Courts	92
8 Icelandic Police and Court Systems	105
9 Prisons in Paradise: The Correctional System in Iceland	116
10 A New Understanding of Nations with Little Crime	137
References	153
Index	168

# Tables

1.1	Crimes known to the police in Nordic capitals in 1993	13
1.2	Prison figures for selected European countries in 1993	14
2.1	Early criminal court convictions, 1881–1925 and 1946–1952	20
2.2	Modern criminal court convictions, 1966–1977	21
2.3	Persons indicted and arraigned, 1978–1985 and 1989–1994	22
2.4	Number of cases investigated by the State Criminal Investigative Police, 1988–1996	24
2.5	Court records of the number sentenced to the Prison and Probation Administration, 1989–1996	25
2.6	Percentage distribution of incarcerations in Icelandic prisons, 1985–1997	26
3.1	Comparative demographic and economic characteristics of Iceland and the United States, 1910–1970	40
4.1	Numerical and percentage distributions of newspaper crime reports, for various years from 1969 to 1993	50
5.1	Do you believe crime to be a growing problem in Iceland? 1989 survey	63
5.2	Have you, or has anyone in your family, been a victim in the past six months or the past year? 1989 and 1994 surveys	78
5.3	Do you feel safe when walking alone late at night in your residential area? 1989 and 1994 surveys	79
7.1	Number of suspects arrested by the Icelandic drug police, 1986–1990	95
7.2	Types and amounts of substances seized by the Icelandic drug police, 1985–1995	96
		ix

x    Tables

7.3	Police proceedings and legal outcomes in drug court cases, 1985–1991	99
7.4	Percentage distribution of Icelandic police suspects in drug cases, 1986–1991	103
9.1	Percentage distribution of prisoners, 1985–1998	130
9.2	Percentage distribution of imprisonments, 1985–1998	132
9.3	Percentage distribution of prison releases, 1985–1998	134

# Graphs

5.1	Do you believe crime to be a major or a minor problem here in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, in total and by gender	64
5.2	Do you believe crime to be a major or a minor problem here in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, by age	65
5.3	Do you believe crime to be a major or a minor problem here in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, by location	66
5.4	Are crime punishments too harsh, reasonable, or too lenient here in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, in total and by gender	68
5.5	Are crime punishments too harsh, reasonable, or too lenient here in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, by age	69
5.6	Which of the following types of crime do you believe to be the most serious problem in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, in total and by gender	70
5.7	Which of the following types of crime do you believe to be the most serious problem in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, by age	72
5.8	Which of the following do you believe to be the most likely explanation for why people become involved in crime here in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, in total and by gender	73

- 5.9 Which of the following do you believe to be the most likely explanation for why people become involved in crime here in Iceland? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, by age 74
- 5.10 Do you oppose or favor Iceland's adoption of a law allowing capital punishment for serious crime such as deliberately murdering another person? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, in total and by gender 76
- 5.11 Do you oppose or favor Iceland's adoption of a law allowing capital punishment for serious crime such as deliberately murdering another person? Percentage distributions of 1989 and 1994 survey respondents, by age 77