

Consumer Survey

2017, March

Consumer confidence record high in March

Consumers' confidence in the economy has strengthened further. The consumer confidence indicator stood at 22.9 in March, having been 20.8 in February and 21.0 in January. The March figure is the highest measured – the same figure was reached in September 2010. In last year's March, the consumer confidence indicator received the value 10.4. The long-term average for the confidence indicator is 11.9. The data are based on Statistics Finland's Consumer Survey, for which 1,191 people resident in Finland were interviewed between 1 and 17 March.

Consumer confidence indicator (CCI)



1) average 10/1995 - 03/2017

All the four components of the consumer confidence indicator, that is, expectations of one's own and Finland's economy, general unemployment and the household's saving possibilities, improved somewhat in March compared with February. Compared with the corresponding period last year, all the components of the indicator apart from saving possibilities improved very clearly.

In March, consumers' views on their own and Finland's economy were very positive. The assessment of unemployment development was also optimistic. Consumers considered their household's saving possibilities good over the next 12 months.

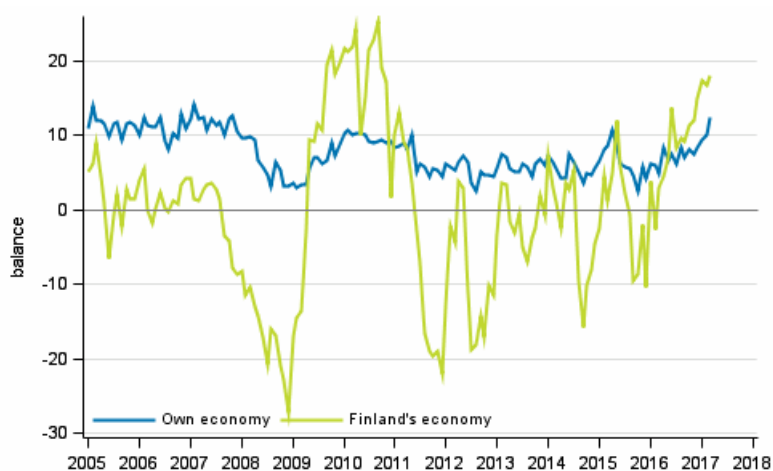
In March, consumers regarded the time very favourable for taking out a loan but not so much for buying durable goods or for saving. Employed consumers felt in March that their personal threat of unemployment had decreased clearly.

Consumers' own and Finland's economy

In March, 46 per cent of consumers believed that Finland's economic situation would improve in the coming twelve months, while only 11 per cent of them thought that the country's economy would deteriorate. In February, the respective proportions were 47 and 14 per cent and twelve months ago in March 36 and 26 per cent.

In all, 31 per cent of consumers believed in March that their own economy would improve and only 9 per cent of them feared it would worsen over the year. One month earlier, the corresponding proportions were 29 and 13 per cent, and one year earlier 24 and 15 per cent.

Consumers' expectations concerning their own and Finland's economy in 12 months' time



Unemployment and inflation

Altogether 43 per cent of consumers thought in March that unemployment would decrease over the next 12 months, while 18 per cent of them believed it would increase. In February the respective proportions were 39 and 21 per cent and twelve months ago gloomy at 21 and 42 per cent.

Eighteen per cent of employed persons reckoned in March that their personal threat of unemployment had lessened over the past few months, while 13 per cent thought it had grown. Twenty-three per cent of employed persons felt that they were not threatened by unemployment at all.

Consumers predicted in March that consumer prices would go up by 1.6 per cent over the next 12 months. The predicted long-term average inflation rate is 2.2 per cent. Consumers estimated that inflation is currently 0.9 per cent. In March 2016, the estimate was clearly lower, 0.2 per cent.

Buying of durable goods

In March, 42 per cent of consumers thought the time was favourable for buying durable goods. Twelve months ago, the respective proportion was 47 per cent. General intentions to spend money were moderate in March. Seventeen per cent of households were fairly or very certain to buy a car and six per cent a dwelling during the next 12 months. In March, 19 per cent of households were planning to spend money on renovating their dwelling within a year.

Saving and taking out a loan

Altogether 59 per cent of consumers considered saving worthwhile in March. In all, 67 per cent of households had been able to lay aside some money and 80 per cent believed they would be able to do so during the next 12 months. In the long term, the average share of households that have saved or think they will be able to save is 60 and 74 per cent, respectively.

In March, 73 per cent of consumers regarded the time good for raising a loan. The long-term average proportion is 62 per cent. Thirteen per cent of households considered raising a loan within one year.

Consumer confidence by major region and population group

In March, consumers' confidence in the economy was strongest in Greater Helsinki and weakest in Eastern Finland. Among population groups, upper-level salaried employees and entrepreneurs were most optimistic. The unemployed had the gloomiest expectations concerning economic development.

Prevalence of modern equipment in households in February

In February, as many as 86 per cent of households with persons aged 15 to 84 had a home computer and 90 per cent had an Internet connection at their disposal. Fifty-three per cent of households owned a tablet. Seventy-nine per cent of households owned at least one smartphone and 19 per cent some type of wearable technology like an activity tracker, smartwatch or optical head-mounted display.

Thirty per cent of households were watching a smart TV in February. Nearly as many households had a gaming console and some even an unmanned aerial vehicle or drone. Eighty per cent of households owned a car in February. More information about the prevalence of equipment can be found in Appendix figures 12 to 15 and in the database table.

Consumers' views of the economy

	Average 10/1995-	Max. 10/1995-	Min. 10/1995-	03/2016	02/2017	03/2017	Outlook
A1 Consumer confidence indicator, CCI = (B2+B4+B7+D2)/4	11.9	22.9	-6.5	10.4	20.8	22.9	++
B2 Own economy in 12 months' time (balance)	8.3	14.1	2.3	5.0	10.2	12.4	++
B4 Finland's economy in 12 months' time (balance)	3.4	25.3	-27.1	2.9	16.8	17.9	++
B6 Inflation in 12 months' time (per cent)	2.2	4.6	0.6	1.3	1.6	1.6	
B7 Unemployment in Finland in 12 months' time (balance)	-3.9	27.6	-51.1	-12.2	9.2	12.1	+
B8 Own threat of unemployment now (balance)	-1.4	7.6	-18.8	-6.9	1.3	4.8	+
C1 Favourability of time for purchasing durables (balance)	18.4	41.8	-14.2	21.0	16.2	17.0	=
C2 Favourability of time for saving (balance)	10.4	36.8	-19.6	1.7	11.3	12.7	=
C3 Favourability of time for raising a loan (balance)	17.6	42.0	-47.1	24.0	29.1	32.1	++
D2 Household's saving possibilities in the next 12 months (balance)	39.6	52.2	10.9	46.1	46.9	49.1	+

The **balance figures** are obtained by deducting the weighted proportion of negative answers from that of positive answers. The **consumer confidence indicator** (CCI) is the average of the balance figures for the

CCI components. The balance figures and the confidence indicator can range between -100 and +100 – the higher (positive) balance figure, the brighter the view on the economy.

Explanations for **Outlook** column: ++ Outlook is very good, + Outlook is good, = Outlook is neutral, - Outlook is poor, -- Outlook is very poor. Deviation of balance from average has been compared to standard deviation.

EU results

The (seasonally adjusted) Consumer Survey results for all EU countries are released on the European Commission website: European Commission, DG ECFIN, [Business and Consumer Survey Results](#).

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1. Method of the Consumer Survey

The Consumer Survey is a telephone interview survey by means of which it is possible to measure Finns' images - assessments and expectations - of the general economic development and the financial situation of one's own household, and intentions to make major purchases, save money or take out a loan. In addition, the survey is a tool for finding out how common modern equipment are in households. For the Consumer Survey, answers are given by means of answer options (qualitative survey).

The first Consumer Survey interviews were conducted in November 1987. Until 1991, the survey was carried out twice a year, in May and November. In 1992, the survey times increased to four: the survey months were February, May, August and November. Since October 1995, the Consumer Survey data have been collected monthly on assignment and partial financing of the European Commission.

The population of the Consumer Survey comprises 4.5 million persons aged 15 to 84 and their 2.6 million households in Finland. A sample of 2,350 persons is drawn for the survey for every month. The same sample is also used for the data collection of the Finnish Travel Survey. The target area is the whole country and the respondents of the survey represent the population in Finland, according to age, gender, region of domicile and native language.

The interviews of the Consumer Survey are conducted from Statistics Finland's Telephone Interview Centre (CATI) during the first two or three weeks of the month. In March 2017, in all, 1,191 responses were gained, so the non-response rate of the survey was 49.3 per cent (incl. over-coverage). The non-response rate includes those who refused from the survey or were otherwise prevented from participating, as well as those who could not be contacted.

The response data of the Consumer Survey are expanded to the whole population with weighting coefficients. Weighting corrects the effects of non-response and improves the statistical accuracy of the data. The weights are established by using a calibration method and the probability of each observation to be included in the sample. The figures and series presented are not seasonally adjusted.

Appendix tables

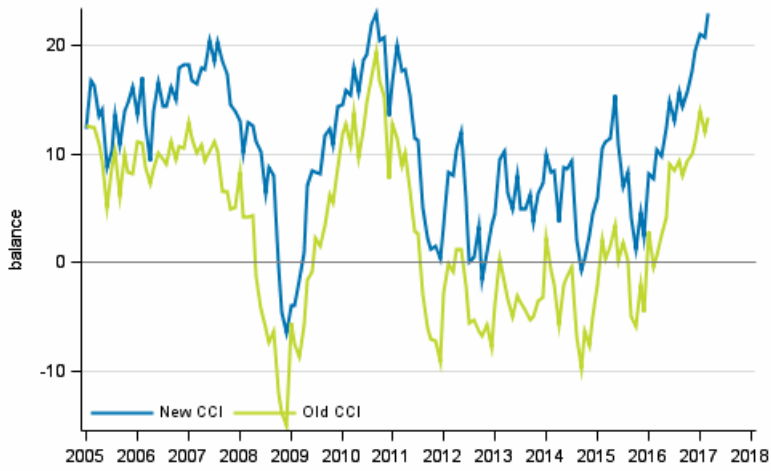
Appendix table 1. Consumers' views and intentions

	Average 10/1995-	Max. 10/1995-	Min. 10/1995-	03/2016	02/2017	03/2017	Outlook
A1 Consumer confidence indicator, CCI = (B2+B4+B7+D2)/4	11.9	22.9	-6.5	10.4	20.8	22.9	++
A2 Old CCI = (B1+B2+B3+B4+C1)/5	6.2	19.4	-15.0	0.7	12.0	13.3	+
A3 Micro indicator = (B2+D1+D2)/3	25.5	33.4	9.5	27.0	29.4	31.7	++
A4 Macro indicator = (B4+B7)/2	-0.2	22.8	-39.1	-4.7	13.0	15.0	++
B1 Own economy now (balance)	3.8	9.8	-4.0	-3.5	3.2	2.7	-
- Better (%)	23.2	30.6	16.4	16.4	23.6	21.0	
- Worse (%)	16.4	22.7	11.4	21.7	17.6	16.0	
B2 Own economy in 12 months' time (balance)	8.3	14.1	2.3	5.0	10.2	12.4	++
- Better (%)	25.7	33.4	18.2	23.6	29.1	30.6	
- Worse (%)	11.4	17.7	6.6	15.4	12.5	9.3	
B3 Finland's economy now (balance)	-3.1	29.5	-60.9	-22.0	13.4	16.7	+
- Better (%)	26.0	62.1	2.0	12.5	45.2	46.1	
- Worse (%)	28.8	88.5	4.2	47.2	16.9	12.6	
B4 Finland's economy in 12 months' time (balance)	3.4	25.3	-27.1	2.9	16.8	17.9	++
- Better (%)	31.3	57.3	11.6	36.0	47.4	45.8	
- Worse (%)	22.9	57.3	6.0	25.7	13.6	10.7	
B5 Inflation now (per cent)	2.2	5.8	-2.0	0.2	1.0	0.9	
B6 Inflation in 12 months' time (per cent)	2.2	4.6	0.6	1.3	1.6	1.6	
B7 Unemployment in Finland in 12 months' time (balance)	-3.9	27.6	-51.1	-12.2	9.2	12.1	+
- Less (%)	29.9	60.8	6.4	21.0	39.5	43.0	
- More (%)	34.7	83.3	6.9	41.7	20.8	18.4	
B8 Own threat of unemployment now (balance)	-1.4	7.6	-18.8	-6.9	1.3	4.8	+
- Decreased (%)	12.9	20.0	5.3	10.0	15.1	17.5	
- Increased (%)	17.2	31.9	7.9	21.1	17.0	13.3	
C1 Favourability of time for purchasing durables (balance)	18.4	41.8	-14.2	21.0	16.2	17.0	=
- Favourable time (%)	44.6	62.4	29.6	46.7	42.1	41.5	
- Unfavourable time (%)	26.3	45.7	17.7	25.6	25.9	24.5	
C2 Favourability of time for saving (balance)	10.4	36.8	-19.6	1.7	11.3	12.7	=
- Good time (%)	57.8	80.7	33.4	51.4	58.9	58.6	
- Bad time (%)	36.7	58.5	15.5	45.2	36.4	35.9	
C3 Favourability of time for raising a loan (balance)	17.6	42.0	-47.1	24.0	29.1	32.1	++
- Good time (%)	62.1	78.2	13.3	65.8	70.9	73.1	
- Bad time (%)	30.8	83.4	12.1	29.8	21.9	20.8	
D1 Household's financial situation now (balance)	28.5	35.1	14.7	29.9	31.3	33.7	++
- Can save (%)	59.8	70.0	38.6	65.5	64.9	67.2	
- Uses savings or gets into debt (%)	6.8	10.1	4.5	9.6	8.2	6.4	

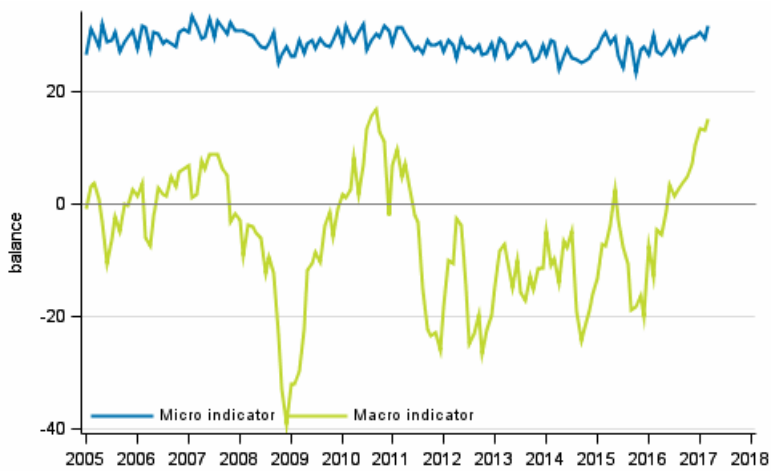
	Average 10/1995-	Max. 10/1995-	Min. 10/1995-	03/2016	02/2017	03/2017	Outlook
D2 Household's saving possibilities in the next 12 months (balance)	39.6	52.2	10.9	46.1	46.9	49.1	+
- Can save (%)	74.1	82.3	56.6	78.8	79.2	79.7	
- Cannot save (%)	24.1	40.3	16.5	20.4	19.6	18.6	
D5 Household's intentions to raise a loan in the next 12 months (% of households)	13.1	17.8	9.1	12.7	12.3	12.6	-
- Yes, certainly (%)	5.6	8.5	3.1	6.0	5.0	5.6	
- Possibly (%)	7.6	11.4	5.0	6.6	7.3	7.0	
E1 Spending on durables, next 12 months vs last 12 months (balance)	-8.9	-2.4	-18.2	-11.9	-13.0	-8.7	=
- More (%)	21.4	30.8	13.9	17.5	18.4	20.2	
- Less (%)	32.8	40.4	26.5	33.2	33.3	29.7	
E2 Intentions to buy a car in the next 12 months (% of households)	16.7	21.7	12.7	15.2	14.9	17.1	=
- Very likely (%)	8.5	12.1	5.1	6.8	7.2	7.6	
- Fairly likely (%)	8.2	10.4	5.3	8.4	7.7	9.5	
E4 Intentions to buy a dwelling in the next 12 months (% of households)	7.0	11.3	4.1	5.2	6.6	5.7	-
- Yes, certainly (%)	3.0	5.2	1.3	2.2	2.8	2.2	
- Possibly (%)	4.0	6.2	2.2	2.9	3.8	3.5	
E5 Intentions to spend money on basic repairs of dwelling in the next 12 months (% of households)	18.8	27.0	9.8	18.9	18.0	19.3	=
- Very likely (%)	12.5	19.0	5.0	12.4	13.3	12.0	
- Fairly likely (%)	6.4	9.1	3.2	6.5	4.7	7.3	

Appendix figures

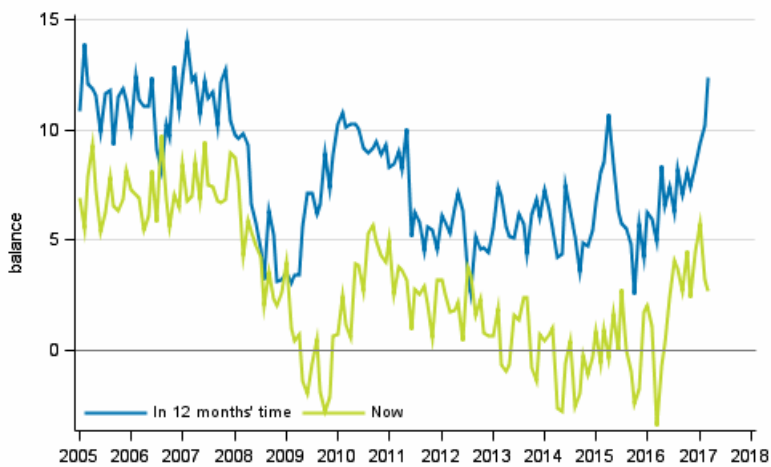
Appendix figure 1. Consumer confidence indicator (CCI)



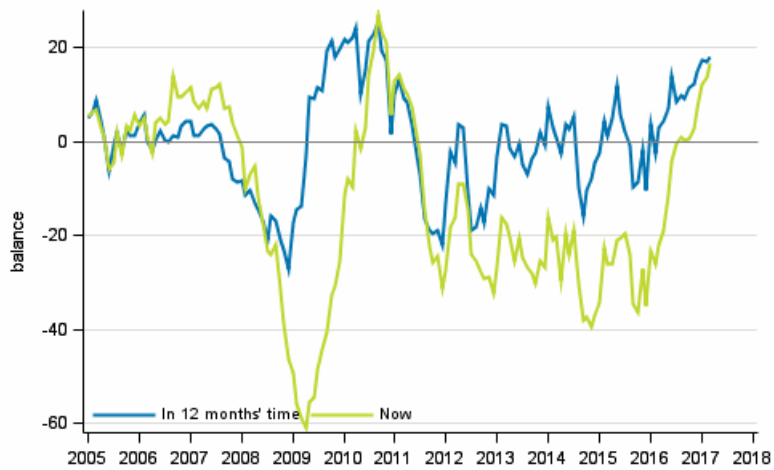
Appendix figure 2. Micro and macro indicators



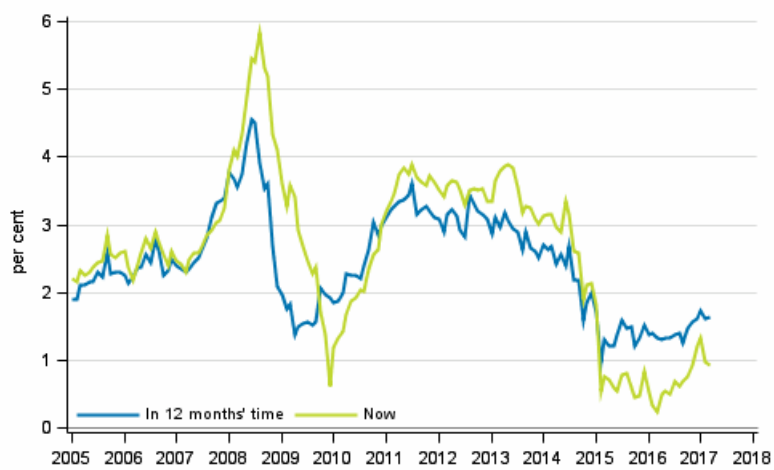
Appendix figure 3. Own economy



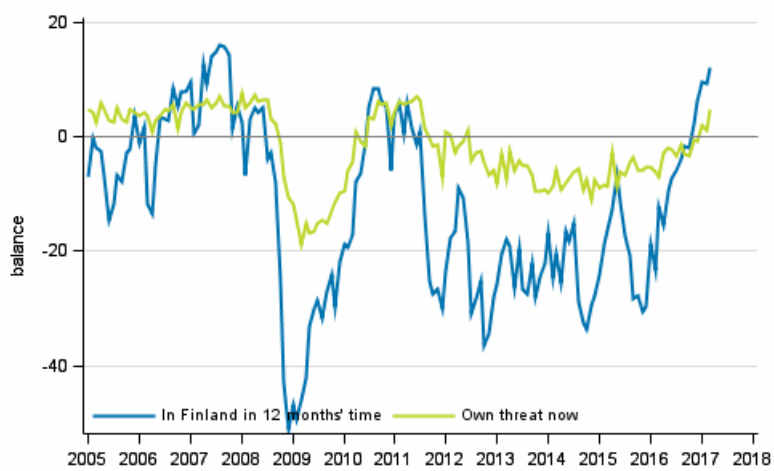
Appendix figure 4. Finland's economy



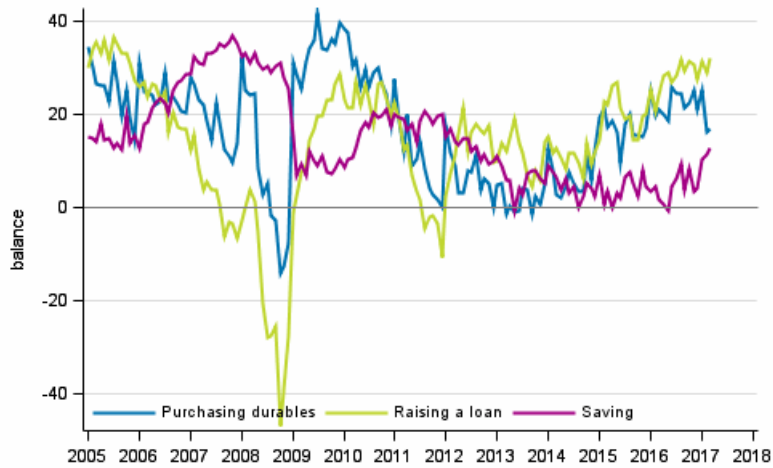
Appendix figure 5. Inflation



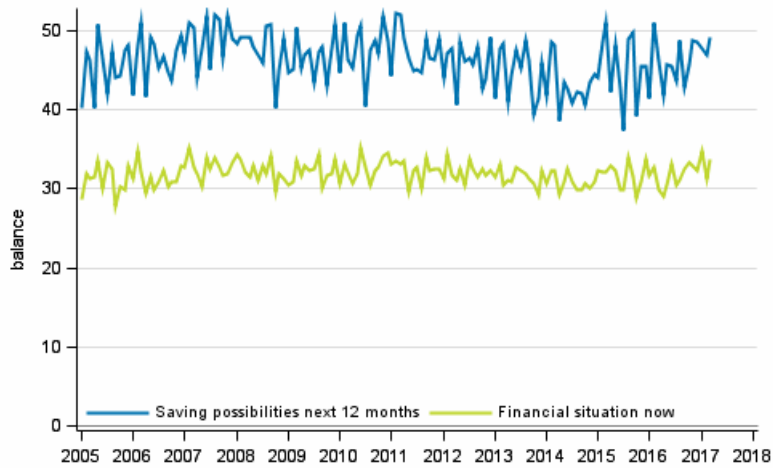
Appendix figure 6. Unemployment



Appendix figure 7. Favourability of time for



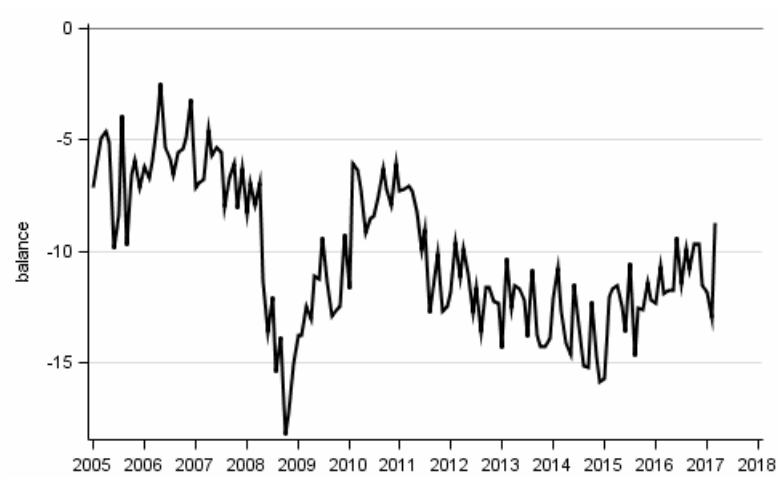
Appendix figure 8. Household's financial situation and saving possibilities



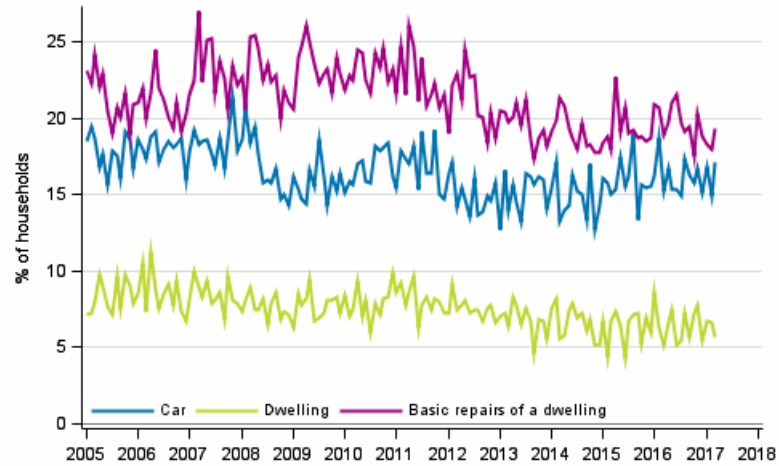
Appendix figure 9. Household's intentions to raise a loan, next 12 months



Appendix figure10. Spending on durables, next 12 months vs last 12 months

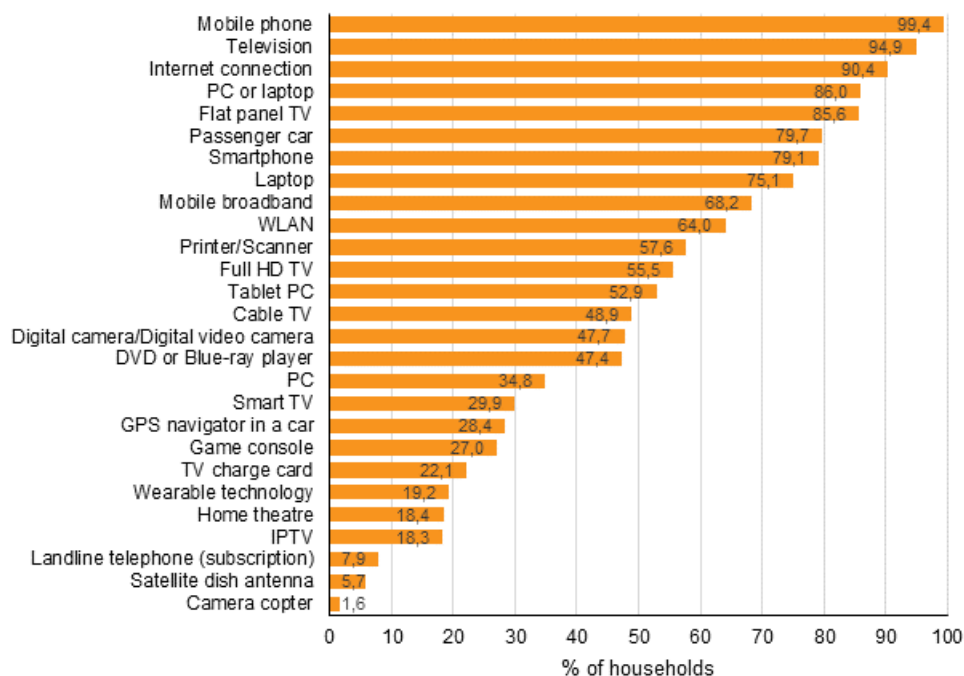


Appendix figure 11. Household's intentions to buy, next 12 months

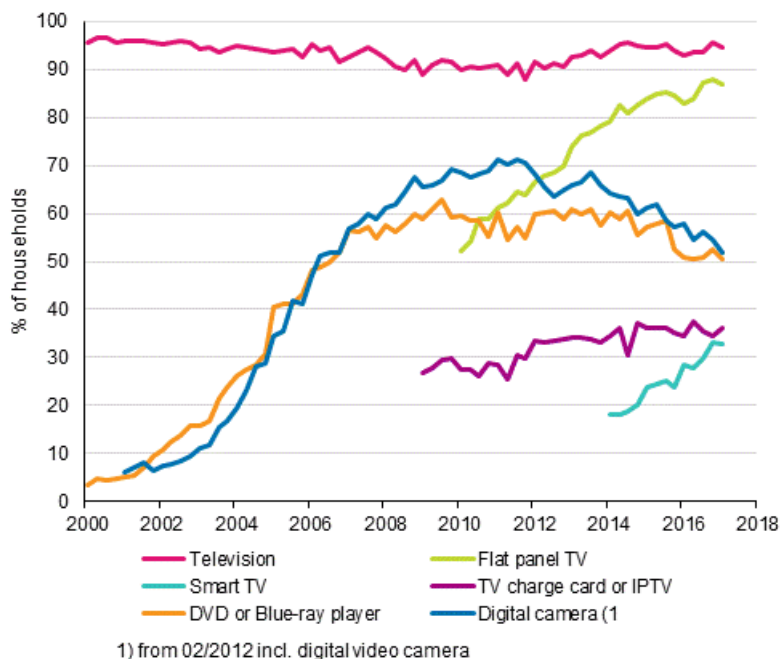


Prevalence of modern equipment in households

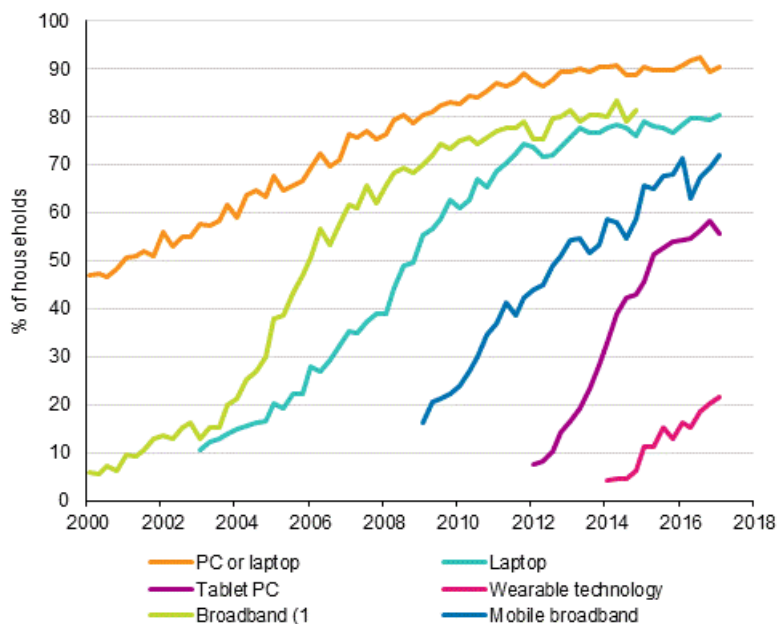
Appendix figure 12. Prevalence of equipment and connections in households, February 2017



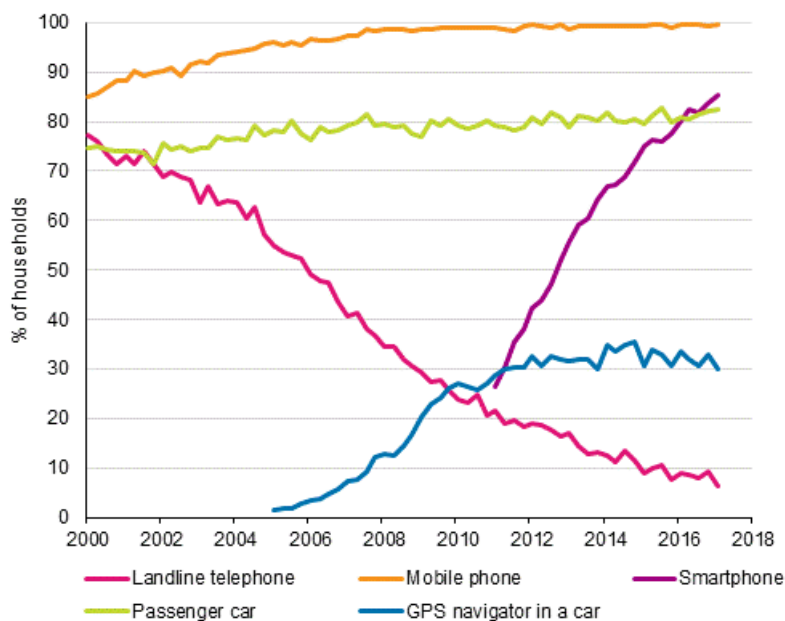
Appendix figure 13. Television equipment in households 2/2000–2/2017 (15 to 74-year-old target persons' households)



Appendix figure 14. Information technology in households 2/2000–2/2017 (15 to 74-year-old target persons' households)



Appendix figure 15. Telephones and car in households 2/2000–2/2017 (15 to 74-year-old target persons' households)



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Source: Consumer Survey 2017, March. Statistics Finland