



Who is most at risk?

Victimisation trends in the 2007 national crime and victimisation survey

INTRODUCTION

With the very high levels of crime and violence that exist in South Africa, few have not experienced crime firsthand, or do not know others who have been victimised. Are there, however, factors that may place some at greater risk of experiencing crime than others? This paper, one of series of papers presenting the findings of the National Crime and Victimisation Survey conducted by the Institute for Security Studies in 2007, analyses the victimisation trends emerging from the data. It attempts to go beyond a basic reading of results to identify statistically what characteristics influence victimisation; the relative importance of different factors; and, whether they increase or decrease the likelihood of experiencing different types of crime. It does this using regression modelling of variables identified both in the preliminary analysis of the 2007 findings and in a range of similar studies conducted over the last decade.

Understanding the factors underlying victimisation can help in responding to and preventing crime. Many factors affect the likelihood of a particular person falling victim to crime. These range from demographic variables that cannot be addressed by the government or community and private initiatives, to social, economic and geographic characteristics that can, and that may change over the course of an individual's lifetime. An analysis of victimisation trends can assist in identifying and prioritising strategies to address crime, as well as allocating resources and responsibilities for this purpose.

The paper begins by providing a brief overview of the level and most frequent types of victimisation identified in the survey. It summarises the key factors thought to affect the likelihood of experiencing crime in South Africa, and presents the approach adopted in the analysis of the data. The paper offers a summary of the modelling outcomes for each of the crime-types identified, before drawing out the key issues and trends emerging from the study.

MOST COMMON CRIMES RECORDED IN THE 2007 SURVEY

One out of every five (20 per cent) respondents in 2007 had experienced some type of crime in the 12 months preceding the survey. They were either victimised themselves or saw a member of their household targeted. Of all crime-types, respondents were most likely to have experienced property crime (81 compared to the 23 per cent that experienced a violent crime). Those who had been victimised were most likely to have experienced a housebreaking, the theft of personal property, requests for bribes by government officials, a robbery or the theft of items from vehicles (in that order) (Figure 1).

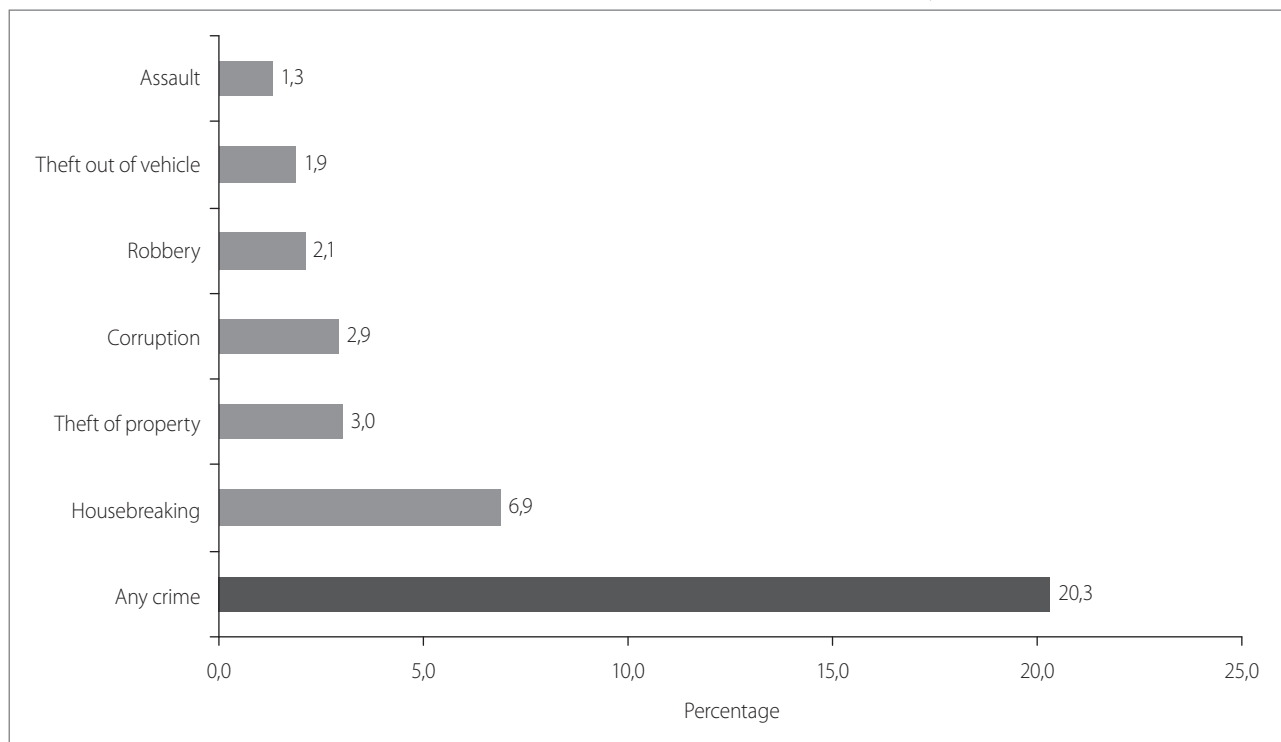
This paper examines which respondents were most likely to have experienced a housebreaking, the theft of personal property, theft of items from a vehicle or a robbery. Corruption is not included in the analysis, as the questions pertaining to this type of crime in the survey established how often bribes were requested rather than details of actual corruption, affecting their comparability with the other crimes. While assault was not amongst the top five crimes recorded in the 2007 survey, it is included in the analysis as it is considered one of the more serious crimes in South Africa.

THE FACTORS AFFECTING VICTIMISATION

Many factors affect the likelihood of a particular person falling victim to crime. The findings from the International Crime and Victimisation Surveys (ICVS) conducted by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) elsewhere in Africa, and the globe, suggest that four types of factors are particularly influential in victimisation. These include:

- Where people live
- Whether they lead a risky lifestyle, including the extent to which they go out at night

Figure 1 The most common crimes experienced in the 12 months preceding the 2007 survey (percentage experienced)



- How attractive they are as a target, which is often measured through individual or household income
- The extent of guardianship, with the risk of victimisation increasing amongst those who are often in the company of strangers¹

International experience suggests that particular individuals and groups experience higher levels of victimisation than others. Hoyle and Zedner² argue that risk of victimisation is usually closely related to geographical area, while the risk of personal victimisation often correlates with factors such as age, sex and patterns of routine activity, such as going out in the evenings and consuming alcohol. A national victim survey carried out in the United Kingdom in 2002/2003, for instance, shows that people who had visited a pub more than three times in a month were at higher risk for all violent offences, and violence at the hands of strangers³.

Location and age appear to have a particular influence on victimisation. In their review of the 2000 ICVS results in seventeen industrialised countries Van Kesteren and colleagues⁴ found that people in the most urban areas were almost twice as likely to have been victimised as those living in the least urban locations.⁵ In a more recent analysis of multi-country ICVS data, Van Dijk and colleagues⁶ found that urbanisation was the single most powerful indicator of victimisation. Several international surveys also show that age is a key determinant of victimisation, with young men between the age of 16 and 24 generally most at risk⁷. These studies also show

that young women in this age group are also at high risk of sexual violence.

Other factors identified in the international literature include economic and marital status, educational attainment, as well as the extent to which people take measures to protect themselves against crime. Van Keresten and colleagues found that wealthier households were more likely to experience crime, with the differences most marked for car thefts, petty crime, and sexual incidents. Unmarried people were also shown to be at higher risk of victimisation than married individuals, although it is unclear whether this is because the potential accumulation of property makes them more attractive targets, or whether marital status is indicative of lifestyle factors. Educational status was also highlighted, although education appears less influential than age and marital status. Van Dijk and colleagues⁸ argue that the widespread adoption of security measures – target hardening – has also played an important role in inhibiting crime in Europe and America by reducing opportunities for crime.

There have been no advanced statistical analyses of victimisation factors in South Africa, but basic descriptive analyses of the data from several surveys over the last decade suggest characteristics that may increase the likelihood of experiencing crime. These include:

- *Demographic variables:* younger people appear at greater risk of becoming victims of violent crime. Research in Hillbrow in 2002, for instance, shows that most of those experiencing violent crime were

between the age of 16 and 35⁹. A nationally representative youth and victimisation survey conducted in 2005 by the Centre for Justice and Crime prevention (CJCP) also shows that almost one out of every four South Africans between the age of 12 and 22 (17 per cent) reported being assaulted in the 12 months preceding the survey¹⁰. Men seem at greater risk, except for sexual offences and assault, where young women are most likely to be victimised¹¹. Race is also a factor, most likely due to the close correlation between race and socio-political and socio-economic characteristics in South Africa

- *Location variables*: as elsewhere, living in urban as opposed to rural locations may increase the risk of victimisation, although there does not appear to be much differentiation between low-income and more affluent urban areas. Victimisation rates in densely populated inner city localities like Hillbrow, for instance, appear only marginally higher than those in more diffuse townships such as Meadowlands in Soweto¹². Studies also show significant differences in victimisation levels between provinces¹³.
- *Lifestyle factors*: a crime and victimisation survey conducted by UNICRI in Johannesburg in 2000 suggests that highly social lifestyles combined with interpersonal relationships and potential alcohol abuse increase the risk of victimisation¹⁴. The 1998 crime and victimisation survey conducted by Statistics South Africa also showed that affluent households were more likely than poorer households to have experienced crime¹⁵.
- *Target hardening*: the UNICRI survey also suggests that home security is a factor, with those with little or no security at greater risk of victimisation
- *Contextual factors*: research has shown that foreigners living in South Africa are at greater risk of both criminal victimisation and xenophobic attacks, such as those witnessed in 2008¹⁶. It has been further suggested that levels of community cohesion may influence crime rates, with high levels of cohesion - and thus the likelihood of being discovered and sanctioned - serving possibly as a better deterrent to criminals than policing¹⁷. Ted Leggett argues that familiarity facilitates communal action to prevent crime in formal and informal ways, noting that if people know their neighbours it becomes easier to identify people entering their homes illegitimately

The basic descriptive analysis used in these studies is useful in suggesting possible relationships between factors, but it does not allow one to establish causality, or the direction of effects (whether factors increase or decrease the chance of becoming a victim). In order to more comprehensively assess what factors increase the

risk of victimisation, this paper models the independent effect of each of the possible risk factors on the likelihood of experiencing a particular type of crime.

FACTORS AND APPROACH USED IN THIS PAPER

The paper examines five groups of variables that aim to capture the influence of personal, socio-economic and environmental factors on victimisation, as well as the extent to which target hardening and community-level policing impact on the likelihood of experiencing crime. The variables include:

- *Demographics*: the race, gender, age group and marital status of the respondent, as well as whether respondents were born in South Africa
- *Location*: province and whether respondents live in an urban area, an area under the jurisdiction of a traditional authority or other rural areas
- *Socio-economic status*: the Living Standards Measure (LSM) grouping into which respondents fall, determined by their possession of a range of durable household articles and access to services¹⁸; their level of education and their employment status. Household size was also included in analysis of housebreaking on the grounds that larger, and possibly more affluent, households may stand a greater chance of experiencing a burglary. This variable was not included in the analysis of the other crimes due to the potential for false effect: larger households may be at greater risk of victimisation simply by virtue of containing more people
- *Security*: the visibility of the police, measured by how often respondents see uniformed police personnel on duty in their area; whether the respondent has taken measures to protect their household or themselves against crime; whether there are organisations other than the police providing security services in the respondent's neighbourhood, such as private security companies, neighbourhood watches, street committees or vigilante groups; and whether there is a Community Policing Forum (CPF) or Sector Crime Forum (SCF) operating in the area
- *Environmental factors*: the cohesiveness of the community in which the respondent lives, measured using perceived levels of trust and mutual assistance in the neighbourhood

Not all of these factors apply equally to households and individuals, or by the same token, to crimes against the household such as housebreaking and crimes against the individual like robbery. For this reason, the factors are grouped into two categories: those pertinent to the

Table 1 Classification of household and individual-level factors

Factors	Household/Neighbourhood	Individual
Demographics	Race, where born	Race, gender, age, marital status, where born
Location	Province, community type	Province, community type
Socio-economic	LSM, size of the household	LSM, educational status
Security	Police visibility, whether measures have been taken to protect the household against crime, the presence of security organisations, the presence of CPF or SCF in neighbourhood	Whether the respondent has adopted measures to protect themselves or their car from crime
Environmental	Community cohesion	Community cohesion

household and those more applicable to individual respondents (Table 1).

The effect of these factors (where relevant) is modelled for each of the five crimes referred to earlier. The models for each crime type were run repeatedly with different combinations of variables, to assess the relative contribution of demographic, socio-economic, geographic, environmental and security factors to the likelihood of victimisation.¹⁹ The findings are presented in terms of whether a particular factor appears to have a statistically significant influence on victimisation (significance=>0.05) and the odds of experiencing crime given a particular factor, reported as an odds ratio (see Box 1).

Box 1 What is an odds ratio?

The odds ratio refers to the odds of an event occurring in one group to the odds of it occurring in another group. For the purposes of this paper, the odds-ratio refers to the likelihood of an individual within a particular category being victimised.

When calculating the odds-ratio, all variables are calculated in relation to a base category. If the base category used to explore the interaction between race and crime is 'African', for example, the odds of respondents from other race groups falling victim to crime is calculated against this group, to give a percentage more or less likely to be victimised. The exception occurs where there is numeric order to variables, such as in the case of age categories or where responses are evaluated on a 'high', 'medium' or 'low' scale. In these instances, only one value is calculated showing the changing odds of victimisation given each increase in age category or place on the scale.

The closer the odds are to one, the weaker the effect of a particular factor on victimisation and vice versa. If the odds are one, the group in question is as likely as those on the base category to be victimised. Odds ratios greater than one show that they are more likely to experience crime, while values less than one indicate that they are less likely.

HOUSEBREAKING

While the demographic characteristics are all significantly associated with the likelihood of experiencing a housebreaking, on their own they do little to explain

differences in victimisation.²⁰ Adding the geographical and socio-economic variables improves the predictive strength of the model,²¹ with the introduction of province and community type making the biggest impact. Including the security and cohesion factors further improves the model. Even with all these variables, however, the overall model still explains less than one tenth (5 per cent) of the variation between victims and non-victims in the sample, suggesting that there are other important factors at play. As summarised in Table 2, this last model shows that:

- Coloured respondents were slightly more likely than their African counterparts to have been burgled, while white and Indian respondents were less likely
- Those born outside South Africa were more likely to be victimised than those born in South Africa
- Those living in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng were most likely to have experienced a break-in, with respondents from KwaZulu-Natal more than twice as likely to have been victimised as those living in the Eastern Cape
- Those living in households in rural area under a traditional authority were also more likely than their urban counterparts to have been burgled, while those in other rural locations were less likely
- Unsurprisingly, the likelihood of experiencing a housebreaking increases with each rise in LSM grouping, with poorer households least likely to experience break-ins
- Larger households were also slightly more likely to experience a housebreaking
- Police visibility reduces the likelihood of break-ins, although victimisation does not drop consistently as police presence declines
- Those taking measures to protect their household from crime were no less likely to experience crime than those not adopting measures, and in fact were more likely to have been victimised. This may reflect the efficacy of these precautions, but it may also be that respondents who were burgled in the 12 months prior to the survey were simply more likely to have

taken measures to protect their household following the incident

- Interestingly, those living in areas where there are security organisations were only marginally less likely to have experienced a break-in than those living in areas without these institutions, suggesting that they have a limited impact on victimisation. Whether

there is a CPF or SCF in the community has no influence on the likelihood of being burgled

- Levels of cohesion, however, do appear to influence victimisation, with victimisation declining as levels of cohesion increase, suggesting that it is more difficult for burglars to operate in areas where community members know and look out for one another

Table 2 Factors influencing the likelihood of being burgled

		Significance	Odds ratio	% Difference
Race	(Base=African)	,000	1,000	
Coloured		,000	1,068	6,8
Indian		,000	,623	-37,7
White		,000	,511	-48,9
Citizenship	(Base=Not born in SA)	,000	1,000	
Born in South Africa			,619	-38,1
Province	(Base=Eastern Cape)	,000	1,000	
Free State		,000	,443	-55,7
Gauteng		,000	1,362	36,2
KwaZulu-Natal		,000	1,882	88,2
Limpopo		,000	1,147	0,2
Mpumalanga		,000	1,395	39,5
North West		,000	,895	-10,5
Northern Cape		,000	,551	-44,9
Western Cape		,000	1,196	19,6
Community type	(Base=Urban)	,000	1,000	
Traditional rural		,000	1,795	79,5
Other rural		,000	,447	-55,3
Socio-economic status		,000	1,118	11,8
Household size²²		,000	1,021	2,1
Police visibility	(Base=See once a day)	,000	1,000	
Seen once a week		,000	1,385	38,5
Seen once a month		,000	1,639	63,9
Less than once a month		,000	1,156	15,6
Never		,000	1,257	25,7
Target hardening (household)²³	(Base=No measures)	,000	1,000	
Measures adopted		,000	1,206	20,6
Security organisations	(Base= Absent)	,000	1,000	
Present		,000	,961	-3,9
CPF or SCF in area	(Base= Absent)	,000	1,000	
Present		,766	-	-
Cohesion²⁴		,000	,666	-33,4

THEFT OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

The factors examined fit slightly better when it comes to theft of personal property, although there are again clearly other factors influencing victimisation. There is very little difference between the model outcomes when only individual variables are examined and when both individual and household-level variables are included,²⁵ but the more comprehensive model is used as many of the thefts reported in the survey (29 per cent) occurred at respondents' homes.

When the household and individual variables are considered together, which province respondents live in, and whether they reside in an urban or rural area, again makes the single biggest difference to the likelihood of victimisation, although less so than with housebreaking.²⁶

As with housebreaking, the influence of security variables is uneven. While those living in areas where they never see the police were a little more likely to have been victimised than those living communities where the police are seen daily, those who see the police less frequently were less likely to be victimised. Respondents living in areas where there is a CPF or SCF were also slightly more likely to have experienced a theft than those in areas where these are absent, although this may reflect the establishment of structures in response to crime rather than their effectiveness. Levels of victimisation are lower in areas where there are security-oriented organisations in their neighbourhood, and amongst those who have taken measures to protect their household or themselves against crime. The model also shows that:

- Coloured, Indian and white respondents were all less likely than their African counterparts to have had possessions stolen. While the difference between African, coloured and white respondents is small, Indians were almost half as likely to have experienced a theft
- Women were more likely to be victimised than men
- Levels of victimisation were highest amongst young people between the age of 16 and 25, with the likelihood of victimisation decreasing by 20 per cent for every five year increase in age until 65 and from 66 onwards²⁷
- Widowed, separated or divorced, or single respondents were more likely to have experienced a theft than their married counterparts, suggesting that lifestyle factors may influence victimisation
- South Africans were substantially more likely to be victimised than those born elsewhere
- Those living in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal were most likely to have had property stolen, although

living in the Western Cape has no effect on victimisation

- Those living in rural areas were less likely to have experienced a theft than their counterparts in urban areas
- Those in higher LSM groupings were more likely to have been victimised than those in lower cohorts, with the likelihood of victimisation rising with each increase in LSM grouping
- Victimisation also rises with educational attainment
- Finally, while community cohesion is statistically significant to the model, the likelihood of experiencing a theft drops only fractionally as cohesion increases, and adding the cohesion variable does not strengthen the model

THEFT OF PROPERTY FROM VEHICLES

The variables were most effective in explaining the difference between victims and non-victims in the case of thefts from vehicles. Demographic variables alone explain one fourth (20 per cent) of the variation between victims and non-victims. Adding the location factors raises this to 25 per cent, with these again making the single biggest difference to the strength of the model. Including the socio-economic variables makes no difference, suggesting that these are not particularly influential when it comes to this crime type. Including the security and cohesion variables does strengthen the model, but to a much smaller degree,³⁰ to explain overall 27 per cent of the variation between victims and non-victims in the sample.

Race appears to have strong influence on the likelihood of victimisation. Indian respondents were more than 13 times more likely to have had possessions stolen from a vehicle than their African counterparts, while whites were more than 11 times more likely. The gap between African and coloured respondents is much smaller, but coloureds were still almost twice as likely to have had items stolen. These differences may be partially explained by lower levels of car ownership amongst African respondents – only 18 per cent reported that they or someone else in their household owned motor vehicle, compared to 43, 83 and 94 per cent of coloureds, Indians and whites respectively – but suggests that race groups represent factors that greatly affect victimisation levels.

The role of security variables is again unclear. As in the preceding models, police visibility does not appear to reduce the likelihood of having items stolen. The respondent's adoption of measures to protect themselves, their household or their car also have no affect, although as in the previous cases the positive numbers may reflect greater risk avoidance following an incident rather than the efficacy of the measures. However, those living in

Table 3 Factors affecting the likelihood of experiencing property theft

		Significance	Odds ratio	% Difference
Race	(Base=African)	,000	1,000	
Coloured		,000	,972	-2,8
Indian		,000	,517	-48,3
White		,000	,967	-3,3
Gender	(Base=Male)	,000	1,000	
Female		,000	,588	-41,2
Age		,000	,896	-10,4
Marital status	(Base=Married/cohabiting)	,000	1,000	
Widowed		,000	2,730	173,0
Divorced/separated		,000	2,361	136,1
Never married		,000	1,356	35,6
Citizenship	Base=Not born in SA	,000	1,000	
Born in South Africa			4,339	333,9
Province	(Base=Eastern Cape)	,000	1,000	
Free State		,000	,431	-56,9
Gauteng		,000	1,692	69,2
KwaZulu-Natal		,000	1,368	36,8
Limpopo		,000	,790	0,2
Mpumalanga		,000	,697	-30,3
North West		,000	,850	-15,0
Northern Cape		,000	1,060	6,0
Western Cape		,313	-	-
Community type	(Base=Urban)	,000	1,000	
Traditional rural		,000	,544	-45,6
Other rural		,000	,681	-31,9
Socio-economic status		,000	1,131	13,1
Education level²⁸		,000	1,392	39,2
Police visibility	(Base=See once a day)	,000	1,000	
Seen once a week		,000	,889	-11,1
Seen once a month		,000	,459	-54,1
Less than once a month		,000	,909	-9,1
Never		,000	1,104	10,4
Target hardening (household)	(Base=No measures)	,000	1,000	
Measures adopted		,000	,886	-11,4
Target hardening (Individual)²⁹	(Base=No measures)	,000	1,000	
Measures adopted			,266	-73,4
Security organisations	(Base=Absent)	,000	1,000	
Present		,000	,788	-21,2
CPF in area	(Base= Absent)	,000	1,000	
Present		,000	1,110	11,0
Cohesion		,000	,959	-4,1

areas where there are security-oriented organisations operating, or where there is a CPF or SCF were less likely to have been victimised, with the former half as likely as those living in areas without these structures to have had possessions stolen.

Levels of community cohesion appear to play a greater role in the likelihood of victimisation than with housebreaking and property theft. As Table 4 shows, the probability of experiencing thefts decreases by 48 per cent for every increase in cohesion. The model also suggests that:

- Women were more likely to have their possessions stolen than men
- The likelihood of victimisation increases with age, but the differences between age groups are very small, suggesting that the influence is weak
- South Africans were no more likely to have experienced the theft of items than those born elsewhere
- Single, never married respondents were more likely to have experienced a theft than their married or cohabiting counterparts, but divorced or separated respondents were less likely. Being a widow has no influence on victimisation
- Those living in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal were most likely to have been victimised, while living in North West province or the Northern Cape has no impact on victimisation
- Respondents living in rural areas were less likely to have experienced a theft than their urban counterparts
- The likelihood of victimisation rises for each increase in LSM grouping, but educational attainment appears to have a protective effect, with victimisation levels declining as education increases

ROBBERY

As in the case of housebreaking and property theft, the identified factors explain relatively little of the variation in the likelihood of being robbed. Although robbery constitutes a crime against the individual rather than the household, including only individual-level variables produces a weak model, which strengthens when variables such as the presence of security organisations and other structures and community cohesion are added – although the difference between the two is relatively small. This is most likely due to the large number of robberies in residential areas, where almost three fifths (58 per cent) of the incidents recorded in the 2007 survey occurred.

When all the variables are considered, location again most influences the chances of being victimised. Incorporating a variable on whether the respondent

adopted measures to protect themselves against crime and the cohesiveness of the community strengthens the predictive strength of the model slightly, while the inclusion of the socio-economic variables has no influence.³¹ Overall, the model only explains 12 per cent of the variation between victims and non-victims, again pointing to the influence of other factors.

In contrast to the previous crimes, the likelihood of victimisation was greatest in the Western Cape (Table 5). Respondents living in the Western Cape were almost three times more likely than those living in the Eastern Cape to experience a robbery. Those living in Limpopo experienced similar victimisation rates, while those living in the other provinces were less likely to have been robbed. Despite the high victimisation levels in the Eastern Cape, those living in rural areas were generally less likely to have been robbed than their urban counterparts.

As in the case of housebreaking and property theft, it is difficult to determine clear trends on the role of the security factors. Police visibility does not reduce the likelihood of being robbed, although target hardening and the presence of security-oriented organisations do reduce the likelihood of victimisation. The model also indicates that:

- White, coloured and Indian respondents were more likely to have been victimised than African respondents, with whites almost twice as likely to have been robbed
- Women were less likely to be robbed than men. In contrast to the other crimes, the likelihood of victimisation rises slightly with age, although this effect appears relatively weak
- Unmarried respondents were more likely to have been robbed than their married or cohabiting counterparts, suggesting a link to lifestyle factors, with single people more likely to be out alone at night when robberies often occur
- Nationality has no bearing on victimisation
- More affluent respondents were only marginally more likely to have been robbed, although victimisation again declines with educational attainment
- Victimisation levels drop as community cohesion increases

ASSAULT

As with robbery, household-level variables appear to influence the likelihood of being assaulted, with community cohesion and security factors doubling the amount of variation between victims and non-victims.³² This is understandable given the nature of the crime. Assault includes domestic violence, and many beatings

Table 4 Factors affecting the likelihood of experiencing theft from a vehicle

		Significance	Odds ratio	% Difference
Race	(Base=African)	,000	1,000	
Coloured		,000	3,427	242,7
Indian		,000	14,461	1346,1
White		,000	13,382	1238,2
Gender	(Base=Male)	,000	1,000	
Female		,000	1,217	21,7
Age		,000	1,017	1,7
Marital status	(Base=Married/cohabiting)	,000	1,000	
Widowed		,634	–	–
Divorced/separated		,000	,291	-70,9
Never married		,000	1,625	62,5
Citizenship	Base=Not born in SA	,720	1,000	
Born in South Africa				
Province	(Base=Eastern Cape)	,000	1,000	
Free State		,000	,169	-83,1
Gauteng		,000	1,309	30,9
KwaZulu-Natal		,000	1,116	11,6
Limpopo		,000	,245	0,2
Mpumalanga		,000	,223	-77,7
North West		,504	–	–
Northern Cape		,710	–	–
Western Cape		,000	,599	-40,1
Community type	(Base=Urban)	,000	1,000	
Traditional rural		,000	,595	-40,5
Other rural		,000	,127	-87,3
LSM group		,000	1,090	9,0
Education level		,000	,754	-24,6
Police visibility	(Base=See once a day)	,000	1,000	
Seen once a week		,000	,976	-2,4
Seen once a month		,000	,487	-51,3
Less than once a month		,564	,251	-74,9
Never		,000	,846	-15,4
Target hardening (Household)	(Base=No measures)	,000	1,000	
Measures adopted		,000	1,046	4,6
Target hardening (Individual)	(Base=No measures)	,000	1,000	
Measures adopted		,000	2,122	112,2
Target hardening (Car)	(Base=No measures)	,000	1,000	
Measures adopted			1,149	14,9
Security organisations	(Base= Absent)	,000	1,000	
Present		,000	,497	-50,3
CPF in area	(Base= Absent)	,000	1,000	
Present		,000	,551	-44,9
Cohesion		,000	,761	-23,9

Table 5 Factors affecting the likelihood of being robbed

		Significance	Odds ratio	% Difference
Race	(Base=African)	,000	1,000	
Coloured		,000	,419	-58,1
Indian		,000	,323	-67,7
White		,000	,272	-72,8
Gender	(Base=Male)	,000	1,000	
Female		,000	,451	-54,9
Age		,000	,958	-4,2
Marital status	(Base=Married/cohabiting)	,000		
Widowed		,670	-	-
Divorced/separated		,000	2,711	171,1
Never married		,000	1,272	27,2
Citizenship	Base=Not born in SA	,000	1,000	
Born in South Africa			,795	-20,5
Province	(Base=Eastern Cape)	,000	1,000	
Free State		,000	,288	-71,2
Gauteng		,000	,622	-37,8
KwaZulu-Natal		,000	,362	-63,8
Limpopo		,000	1,162	0,2
Mpumalanga		,000	,116	-88,4
North West		,000	,291	-70,9
Northern Cape		,000	,702	-29,8
Western Cape		,000	1,587	58,7
Community type	(Base=Urban)	,000	1,000	
Traditional rural		,000	,330	-67,0
Other rural		,000	,284	-71,6
LSM group		,000	1,053	5,3
Education level		,000	,923	-7,7
Police visibility	(Base=See once a day)	,000	1,000	
Seen once a week		,000	,889	-11,1
Seen once a month		,000	,813	-18,7
Less than once a month		,000	,872	-12,8
Never		,000	,713	-28,7
Target hardening (Individual)	(Base=No measures)	,000	1,000	
Measures adopted		,000	,823	-17,7
CPF in area	(Base= Absent)	,000	1,000	
Present		,000	,923	-7,7
Cohesion		,000	,823	-17,7

occur within the domestic environment, with the survey findings showing that one out of every three (36 per cent) assaults occurred in respondents' homes, while an additional 15 per cent happened in the street in a residential area or in someone else's home.

In contrast with housebreaking, property theft, theft from vehicles and robbery, the security variables do the most to strengthen the model. Demographic variables alone account for only 5 per cent of the variation between victims and non-victims. Adding the geographic and socio-economic variables increases the amount of variation explained to 9 per cent, but this rises to 13 per cent when security factors are included. Levels of social cohesion further strengthen the model, but only marginally. Overall, the most comprehensive model explains 14 of the variation in the sample.

The model shows that white respondents were substantially more likely to have been assaulted than their African and coloured counterparts (Table 6). White respondents were more than two times more likely to have been victimised than African respondents. Coloured respondents were less likely to have experienced an assault, while being Indian does not influence the likelihood of victimisation.

The model also suggests that all other factors being equal, respondents in the Northern Cape were considerably more likely to have been victimised than their counterparts living in other provinces. While those living in the Northern Cape generally experienced lower levels of crime, they were more than three times more likely than respondents living in the Eastern Cape to have experienced an assault, suggesting that interpersonal violence is a particular problem in this province. Respondents living in Limpopo were next most likely to have been victimised, followed by those living in Mpumalanga and the Western Cape. The Free State shows the lowest victimisation levels, where respondents were 57 per cent less likely to have been assaulted than their counterparts in the Eastern Cape. Other key findings include that:

- Despite assaulted encompassing domestic violence, men were more likely to have been victimised than women
- Levels of violence were highest amongst 16 to 25 year olds, with the likelihood of victimisation decreasing with age. This supports the findings of the CJCP survey mentioned earlier, which found very high levels of assault South Africans between the age of 12 and 22³³
- Divorced or separated respondents were more than four times more likely than their married or cohabiting counterparts to have experienced an assault, suggesting that abuse may have been a factor in the breakdown of these relationships. This

raises questions over the value of this variable for understanding risk, as marital status at the time of the study may reflect a person's decision to leave an abusive relationship rather than their vulnerability to this crime

- South Africans were no more or less likely to have been victimised than those born elsewhere
- Respondents living in rural areas, and in areas outside the jurisdiction of a tribal authority in particular, were less likely to have been assaulted than those living in urban areas
- The likelihood of being assaulted declines with each increase in LSM grouping, but increases with educational attainment. These higher victimisation levels amongst better educated respondents may, however, reflect greater awareness of what constitutes assault rather than greater vulnerability
- As with theft and robbery, the role of police visibility in reducing crime is unclear. While those living in neighbourhoods where they see the police daily are less likely to be assaulted than those living in areas where they never see the police or see them on a weekly or monthly basis, those who see the police less than once a month were less likely to have been victimised
- The effect of the other security factors is also varies. While those living in areas where there are security-oriented institutions were less likely to have been assaulted than those in areas without, the presence of a CPF is not associated with lower crime levels. The adoption of security measures by the household does reduce the likelihood of victimisation, but the adoption of self-defence measures by individual respondents has no influence
- Levels of community cohesion reduce the likelihood of victimisation

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The primary finding running through all the models is the seemingly poor explanatory power of the tested variables. In the strongest model, that for theft from a vehicle, the chosen factors explain only one quarter of the variation in the likelihood of being victimised, while in the weakest, that for housebreaking, they explain less than one tenth. This suggests that while personal characteristics; where one lives and the nature of the neighbourhood one lives in, do influence victimisation, these do not provide a sufficient explanation for why some people fall victim to crime and others do not. Given the levels of crime and victimisation in South Africa, it may simply be that all South Africans are at a very high risk of being victimised, irrespective of who they are, their access to resources or where they live.

Table 6 Factors affecting the likelihood of being assaulted

		Significance	Odds ratio	% Difference
Race	(Base=African)	,000	1,000	
Coloured		,000	,586	-41,4
Indian		,695	–	–
White		,000	2,096	109,6
Gender	(Base=Male)	,000	1,000	
Female		,000	,712	-28,8
Age		,000	,839	-16,1
Marital status	(Base=Married/cohabiting)	,000		
Widowed		,000	1,808	80,8
Divorced/separated		,000	5,053	405,3
Never married		,000	1,517	51,7
Citizenship	(Base=Not born in SA)	,000	1,000	
Born in South Africa		,731	–	–
Province	(Base=Eastern Cape)	,000	1,000	
Free State		,685	,427	-57,3
Gauteng		,000	,943	-5,7
KwaZulu-Natal		,000	1,126	12,6
Limpopo		,000	1,588	58,8
Mpumalanga		,000	1,394	39,4
North West		,000	,499	-50,1
Northern Cape		,000	3,393	239,3
Western Cape		,000	1,385	38,5
Community type	(Base=Urban)	,000	1,000	
Traditional rural		,000	,499	-50,1
Other rural		,000	,174	-82,6
LSM group		,000	,796	-20,4
Education level		,000	2,014	101,4
Police visibility	(Base=See once a day)	,000	1,000	
Seen once a week		,000	1,175	17,5
Seen once a month		,000	1,651	65,1
Less than once a month		,000	,375	-62,5
Never		,000	1,481	48,1
Target hardening (Household)	(Base=No measures)	,000	1,000	
No measures taken		,000	,324	-67,6
Target hardening (Individual)	(Base=No measures)	,681	1,000	
No measures taken		–	–	–
Organisations providing protection	(Base= Absent)	,000	,681	
Present		,000	,414	-58,6
CPF in area	(Base= Absent)	,000	1,000	
Present		,000	1,310	31,0
Cohesion		,000	,594	-40,6

Having said this, the models do highlight factors that may increase vulnerability to crime. Location clearly impacts on the likelihood of being victimised. With the exception of assault, respondents' provincial location and whether they resided in an urban or rural area made the single biggest difference to their chances of experiencing crime. Those living in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal were most likely to experience property crime (housebreaking, property theft and the theft of items from a car), while those in the Western and Northern Cape were most likely to experience violent crime (robbery and assault respectively). With the exception of housebreaking, those living in urban areas were also substantially more likely to have been victimised than their counterparts living in rural areas. The models also highlight factors that are less influential:

- *Socio-economic variables*: socio-economic variables appear to exert only a weak influence on victimisation. While LSM grouping and educational attainment were statistically significant, introducing these variables into the models generally strengthened them only marginally or not at all, suggesting that other factors are more important in understanding risk
- *Nationality*: whether respondents were born in South African or elsewhere also appears less important. Nationality had no bearing on the likelihood of experiencing a robbery or assault, while South Africans were more likely to experience theft. Only in the case of housebreaking were non-South Africans more likely to be victimised, although given the weakness of the model it is questionable how much weight should be given to this finding
- *Community cohesion*: introducing the community cohesion variable had only a small effect on the models, suggesting that cohesion has less impact than suggested by the odds ratios in some of the models

The influence of the security variables is unclear. The findings suggest that the visibility of the police in

communities has little impact on victimisation. An unpublished analysis of the 2003 crime and victimisation data produced similarly unpredictable findings, suggesting either that the police's presence on the ground has no effect, or that the question measures poorly the impact of visible policing – or policing, for that matter – on crime (Table 7). It may be, for instance, that the police focus their resources on high-crime areas, which results in a greater police presence in these areas. Target hardening and the presence of CPF's or CSFs also have a frequently counter-intuitive effect, although as noted already, this may not reflect the efficacy of these measures or institutions. It is possible that those who have experienced crime are simply more likely to explore ways of improving their security, while forums for collaboration around crime issues are more likely to be established in high-crime areas.

The presence of security organisations, in the form of security companies, street committees, neighbourhood watches or vigilante groups does appear to reduce crime, however. The findings for all five crime types show that those living in neighbourhoods where such institutions exist were less likely to have been victimised. The difference between respondents living in areas with and without institutions is often relatively small, but the consistency of the trend suggests that their presence or absence is an important factor in understanding victimisation.

Overall, the findings suggest that location, demographic variables like race, gender, age and marital status, and the presence of security-oriented organisations have the most reliable influence on victimisation - although there are questions about the value of looking at marital status in the case of crimes like assault. Socio-economic factors and levels of trust and mutual assistance in neighbourhoods do influence victimisation, but to a lesser degree, while nationality appears to have a limited impact on victimisation levels.

Table 8 summarises the results for the geographical and demographic variables, and the presence of security organisations for those most and least at risk of

Table 7 The influence of police visibility in reducing crime (2003)

	Housebreaking	Theft	Theft from vehicle	Robbery & hijacking	Assault & sexual assault
Police visibility (Base=See police once a day)	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Seen once a week	1,243	0,922	1,717	1,516	1,308
Seen once a month	1,216	1,420	1,931	1,341	0,715
Less than once a month	1,115	1,117	0,818	0,940	1,675
Never	1,261	0,898	0,882	1,206	1,074

Source Burton, 2003

victimisation. Comparison of the findings for each crime suggests some broad patterns:

- African and white respondents were most likely to have been victimised
- Men were more often victimised than women. This may reflect lifestyle factors, with men more likely to be out at night, when crime often occurs
- Young people are more likely to be victimised than older people, although the elderly may be more vulnerable to crimes like robbery
- Those living in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal experienced property crime more often than those residing in other provinces, although those living in Western and Northern Cape appear vulnerable to violent crime. The latter may be linked to the levels of drug and alcohol use in the Western and Northern Cape, which have amongst the country's highest rates of arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, as well as the highest rate of recorded drug crimes³⁴
- Those in urban areas experienced more crime than those in rural areas, particularly rural areas not under the jurisdiction of a traditional authority

- Those living in neighbourhoods where there are security-oriented organisations are less likely to be victimised than those in areas without

CONCLUSION

This paper is a first attempt to model the factors associated with victimisation in South Africa. The often counter-intuitive findings point to the need for further investigation of the available crime and victimisation data, to explore the nature and consistency of trends over time, as well as the how accurately the results capture complex issues such as the relationship between policing and crime.

The findings also suggest areas for intervention to address crime. While it is difficult to address through public and private action the correlation between demographic variables and victimisation, the influence of civil security institutions suggest greater scope for partnerships between civilians and the police. Forums for cooperation between the police and civilian institutions need to be established, and where they already exist, strengthened to better facilitate information sharing

Table 8 Those most and least at risk for each of the five crime types

Crime	Most at risk	Least at risk
Housebreaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Coloureds ■ Those in KwaZulu-Natal ■ Larger households ■ Those in rural areas under a traditional authority ■ Those in areas without security organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whites ■ Those living in the Free State ■ Smaller households ■ Those living in other rural areas ■ Those in areas with security
Property theft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Africans ■ Men ■ 16 to 25 year olds ■ Widows ■ Those in Gauteng ■ Those living in urban areas ■ Those in areas without security organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indians ■ Women ■ Respondents over 65 ■ Married/cohabiting respondents ■ Those in Mpumalanga ■ Those living under a traditional authority ■ Those in areas with security
Theft from vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whites ■ Women ■ 16-25 year olds ■ Single respondents ■ Those in Gauteng ■ Those in urban areas ■ Those in areas without security organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Africans ■ Men ■ Respondents over 65 ■ Divorced/separated respondents ■ Those in the Free State ■ Those in other rural areas ■ Those in areas with security
Robbery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Africans ■ Men ■ Respondents over 65 ■ Single respondents ■ Those in the Western Cape ■ Those in urban areas ■ Those in areas without security organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whites ■ Women ■ 16-25 year olds ■ Married/cohabiting respondents ■ Those in Mpumalanga ■ Those living in other rural areas ■ Those in areas with security
Assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whites ■ Men ■ 16-25 year olds ■ Divorced/separated respondents ■ Those in the Northern Cape ■ Those in urban areas ■ Those in areas without security organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Coloureds ■ Women ■ Respondents over 65 ■ Married/cohabiting respondents ■ Those in the Free State ■ Those living in other rural areas ■ Those in areas with security

and collaboration. Despite the ambiguous findings on the impact of CPFs and SCFs, these represent the most obvious institutions for facilitating such cooperation. Sector policing, with its emphasis on building relationships between police officers and communities, represents another avenue for building cooperation between actors, highlighting the need for continued efforts to refine and entrench sector policing as a tool for more effectively preventing and responding to crime.

Addressing crime should be a priority in all provinces, but the higher levels of property crime in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal and violent crime in the Northern and Western Cape suggests that these should receive particular attention. Responding holistically to crime encompasses not only making the criminal justice system work better, but also changing public attitudes towards crime and addressing the underlying socio-economic factors that feed crime. This will require not only allocating sufficient resources to expand the reach and quality of policing and the responsiveness of the courts, but also integrating the concept of social crime prevention across a range of government departments, particularly the departments of social development and education. The implementation of the new Liquor Bill in the Western Cape also needs to be prioritised, and its effectiveness explored, with a view to introducing similarly tight controls in the Northern Cape and other provinces.³⁵

NOTES

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- 13 See for, instance, P Burton, A Du Plessis, A Louw, D Mistry, and H Van Vuuren, National Victims of Crime Survey: South Africa 2003, *ISS Monograph Series* no. 101, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2003.
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- 17 Legget, Rainbow Tenement.
- 18 The LSM divides the population into 10 LSM groups, 10 (highest) to 1 (lowest). For more information on the LSM measure, see The South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), 'The SAARF AMPS Living Standards

Measure (LSM)', available at [www.saarf.co.za/AMPS/technicalreport2006/datafiles/Technical/Tech per cent202006 per cent20~ per cent20Pages per cent2098-104 per cent20Com.pdf](http://www.saarf.co.za/AMPS/technicalreport2006/datafiles/Technical/Tech%20per%20cent202006%20per%20cent20~%20per%20cent20Pages%20per%20cent2098-104%20per%20cent20Com.pdf) (accessed 1 April 2008).

- 19 The models were run in SPSS using the binary logistic regression function at a 95 per cent confidence level. The models were run using the 'enter' method and 'block' function, with each block containing variables of a particular type (demographic variables, socio-economic variables etc.). Specified tests included Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness of fit and the CI exp(B).
- 20 Nagelkerke R Squared = .02 per cent.
- 21 Nagelkerke R Squared 3 and 4 per cent respectively
- 22 Small households contain between one and three individuals, medium between four and seven, while large households contain more than seven individuals.
- 23 This refers to measures taken at the household level, including increasing the security of one's home, hiring a private security company, buying dogs, joining a neighbourhood watch or vigilante group or joining the local CPF or SCF.
- 24 This is a composite measure derived from three questions: whether people in the neighbourhood can be trusted, whether the respondent knows the person who lives next door to them and whether people in the neighbourhood help them when they need it. Those responding yes to none or only one of these questions scored low, those responding yes to two questions medium and those responding yes to all three high.
- 25 When household factors such as police visibility in the respondent's community, community cohesiveness and whether or not there is a CPF, CSF or a security organisation in the area are removed, the model has a Nagelkerke R Squared value of 8 per cent. Adding these factors increases this to 9 per cent.
- 26 The geographic variables only strengthening the model only by 2 per cent.
- 27 Age was coded into 10 age categories: 16–25, 26–29, 30–35, 36–39, 40–45, 46–49, 50–55, 56–59, 60–65 and 66 and over.
- 28 This was calculated by combining and then scoring the highest level of school and post-school education obtained by respondents. Respondents with no or only some basic schooling and no or limited post-school education (such as diploma courses or vocational training) scored low, respondents with a matric and some university education scored medium while those with a matric and post-graduate training high.
- 29 This refers to measures taken at the individual level, such as carrying a weapon or taking self-defence lessons.
- 30 Nagelkerke R Squared = 2 per cent and 0.2 per cent respectively.
- 31 With only the demographic variables, the model showed a Nagelkerke R Squared value of 4 per cent. Adding the location variables increases this to 10 per cent, with the adoption of security measures and community cohesion increasing the Nagelkerke R Squared by 1 per cent.
- 32 Without the neighbourhood security and cohesion factors, the model explains only 7 per cent of the variation in the sample. With these variables, the overall model explains 14 per cent.
- 33 Leoschut and Burton, *How Rich the Rewards?*
- 34 See, for example, T Leggett, *What's Up in the Cape? Crime rates in the Western and Northern Cape provinces*, *Crime Quarterly* no. 7. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2004.
- 35 Western Cape Liquor Bill [B 2—2008] P.N. 103/2008. The Bill calls for stricter licensing of establishments, the simplification of the licence application process, training of licence holders, as well as higher fines and stiffer sentences for contraventions of the Act. It provides the police with increased powers to close licensed premises and to issue compliance orders to licence holders. The Bill also requires that municipalities and ward councillors comment on applications and the zoning of the premises to be licensed.



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ABOUT THIS PAPER

This paper explores whether there are factors that may place some people at greater risk of experiencing crime in South African than others. The paper is one of a series of papers presenting the findings of the National Crime and Victimization Survey conducted by the Institute for Security Studies in 2007. This paper analyses the victimisation trends emerging from the data. It attempts to go beyond a basic reading of results to identify statistically what characteristics influence victimisation; the relative importance of different factors; and, whether they increase or decrease the likelihood of experiencing different types of crime. It does this using regression modelling of variables identified both in the preliminary analysis of the 2007 findings and in a range of similar studies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robyn Pharoah is an independent researcher working in Cape Town, in South Africa. She worked previously for the ISS Crime and Justice Programme in Pretoria and oversaw the running of the 2007 National Victimization Survey.

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