THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CRIME (VICTIM) SURVEY IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

The international Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) has been developed by an International Working Group of criminologists which was set up in 1987 with expertise in victim survey methodology. Research coordinators recruited in each participating country have been responsible for conducting the fieldwork in their respective countries and to date 70 countries in developed and developing countries have participated in the four sweeps. The ICVS has three main aims, namely, to provide an alternative to police crime information, to use the standardised information for comparative purposes and to extend the information on who is most affected by crime (Van Kesteren, Mayhew & Nieuwbeerta 2000:1). It also enables the sharing of international expertise in the effective prevention of crime, can enhance the development of appropriate crime theories and counter inaccurate perceptions of crime. The survey information can further be used to improve policing, crime prevention and services to crime victims.

The SA National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), which was adopted in May 1996, was the first official move from an offender-based criminal justice system to a victim-centred criminal justice approach and in terms of National Programme 1.9 (NCPS 1996:65) it aims to develop and modify the criminal justice process by

- providing a meaningful role for the victim in the criminal justice process
- making the criminal justice system more sensitive and service oriented towards victims
- enhancing the accessibility of the criminal justice system to victims.

It is further argued that improving the situation of victims can make an important contribution to crime prevention as crime is a social rather than a security issue and the prevention of repeat victimisation is crucial as it forms a large proportion of crime in South Africa. Regular victimisation surveys can therefore make an important contribution to the prevention of criminal victimisation.

It is therefore a cause for serious concern that the office of the NCPS, which was based at the Ministry of Safety and Security, has now been terminated although the NCPS remains government’s official crime policy. According to an official in the Department of Justice, the principles and approaches of the NCPS are now considered to be a philosophy that must be followed by all government departments in all spheres of activity that may have a bearing on crime prevention. Although a number of criticisms were levelled at the NCPS (Naudé 2000:1-11), its aims should rather have been expanded as a comprehensive national crime prevention strategy, which is regularly reviewed and evaluated, can play an important role in the fight against crime as well as alleviate public fears about crime. Without a central regulating office it will be difficult to monitor government crime prevention strategies. Repeat victim surveys can play an important role in determining victimisation trends. This overview represents the
RESULTS OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CRIME (VICTIM) SURVEY

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to research the crime experiences of individual households and victims during the preceding calendar year in respect of certain property crimes and crimes against the person, the reporting of crime to the police, reasons for not reporting the crime, fear of crime, etc. In the case of crimes such as car theft, theft of personal property, assault and sexual incidents, questions were also asked about where the crime occurred. Victims of assault and sexual incidents were also asked whether the perpetrator was known to them, the type of weapon used and whether any injuries were sustained.

Measuring instrument

The standard face-to-face questionnaire developed by an international team of victimisation experts was used to collect the information. The international team together with representatives of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) in Italy, and the Netherlands Ministry of Justice got together with national co-ordinators from various regions in 1999 to review the questionnaire. Some new questions were added, some of which were region specific. The African questionnaire included additional questions on car hijacking, livestock and security officers.

Collection of the information

Forty-two fieldworkers recruited by the Bureau of Market Research at the University of South Africa were trained by the research co-ordinators in September 2000. They were trained in terms of the guidelines set out in the UNICRI training manual. The training focused on the objectives of the survey, specific administrative procedures, the selection of households and respondents (the first person over the age of 16 who was next due to have a birthday), refusals and/or reselection of households and respondents, interviewing procedure, the handling of sensitive questions, completion of the questionnaire and how to deal with multiple-answer questions and minimise reporting errors. The questionnaires were completed during the period 20 September to 30 November 2000.

Sampling procedure

A random sample of the magisterial districts of Johannesburg and Soweto was designed by the Bureau for Market Research, University of South Africa for the purposes of this study. For historical reasons the sample was compiled in terms of areas inhabited predominantly by Asian, black, coloured and white residents (see Table 1). Each of these areas was in turn classified into higher, middle and lower income areas. Within each of the latter areas a further classification was made according to the type of dwelling. More than 95% of the sample was realised as indicated in Table 2.

Problems experienced with the collection of the data

Respondents in squatter areas had difficulty in understanding some of the questions or the aim of the survey owing to illiteracy and language problems. This necessitated that some of the questions had to be translated into one of the indigenous languages, which was time consuming and might have influenced the reliability of some of the data. Traditional heads of households had difficulty in understanding the interviewing selection process and were at times not keen to allow the interviewers to interview the selected respondent.
TABLE 1: SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION BY TYPE OF DWELLING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of dwelling</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House on separate stand</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat in block</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town/cluster/semi-detached</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement village</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House/flat/room in backyard</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal dwelling in backyard</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal dwelling in informal settlement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room/flatlet on a shared property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2: SAMPLE REALISATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population group</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Sample realisation</th>
<th>Percentage loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>1 021</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloureds</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1 400</td>
<td>1 336</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondents were reluctant to participate in the survey and expressed concern about having to provide information about gun ownership, household income or security measures. Self-employed people whose monthly income varied considerably also had difficulty in providing information on income.

While many respondents in poor areas demanded some form of compensation to participate in the survey, interviewers had difficulty in gaining access to property owners in many high income areas, many of whom were reluctant to allow strangers into their homes for interviewing purposes despite a letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the survey and the interview.

Some respondents were also fearful of expressing their views of the police or their neighbourhood, fearing some form of intimidation. This is probably due to the negative television programmes that were screened in the first half of 2000, showing police officers attacking and assaulting car hijackers and brutal attacks on illegal immigrants by police dogs for training purposes, as well as the high involvement of the police in corruption and robbery attacks, which received a lot of media attention. Most of these incidents occurred in the Johannesburg area. It is conceivable that these images could have had a tremendous impact on less sophisticated citizens.

Respondents also expressed fear that perpetrators would get to know about the survey and felt that it was a risk to participate in the survey. The general feeling was that township life in black areas was difficult, and the interviewers observed that many respondents felt intimidated. The interviewers reported that some
respondents were very anxious that they might become victims of violent or sexual crimes again, and some even accused the interviewers of working in collaboration with the perpetrators. Some respondents became emotional at having to recount experiences of violence and sexual incidents, while others had difficulty in recalling these crimes because they had blocked out the incidents emotionally.

Respondents often had trouble accurately recalling their experiences of crime, and other members of the household had to be consulted at times for verification of the information. Illiterate respondents had difficulty in placing the crime experience inside a specific time frame and many were unable to provide birth date details for themselves or the other household members. Questions had to be explained in an extremely simple way, therefore endangering the already difficult task of trying to maintain a common understanding of issues.

The very difficult circumstances under which interviews had to be conducted - at times bordering on intimidation and physical danger - complicated the work of the fieldworkers. Notwithstanding a sometimes variable response rate among members of the research group and possible “telescoping effects”, ICVS studies give a more realistic account of how many people were affected by conventional crimes, which are the crimes that most commonly tend to affect citizens on a daily basis. It is not the objective of this report to extrapolate the data in terms of universal generalisations applicable to the whole population residing in the area from which the respondents were sampled. The data, therefore, primarily reflect the experiences and views of the respondents who took part in the various surveys which is believed to be informative of general trends underlying the holistic crime phenomenon and experiences of victims of crime.

**COMPOSITION OF THE RESEARCH GROUP AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS**

Fifty-three percent of the respondents were female while approximately 58.4% were under the age of 35 years. Fifty percent of the respondents were single and the majority (60%) had obtained secondary level education at school. Thirty-two percent were unemployed or looking for work. Household size is still comparatively large as 59.5% of the households comprised four or more persons. The majority of the respondents rated their area status as middle area status, namely 59.4%, and most (56.2%) lived in houses while 21.6% lived in squatter (informal or shanty) houses. Yet 57% rated the economic status of the household as slightly better off than most households and 54.8% indicated that they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their household income. The household monthly income shows wide diversity with the largest group (17.5%) indicating that they earned between R501-R1000 (R8 equals approximately 1 US $) per month.

**FIVE-YEAR VICTIMISATION RATES**

**Vehicle theft and car vandalism**

Theft of a car was reported by 10.8% of the respondents, while the highest incidence of crime (12.9%) involved theft from a car. Six (6.1%) percent indicated that they had been victims of car hijacking, and vandalism was experienced by 7.8%. If the incidents of car theft and car hijacking are combined, car theft incidents increase to 16.9%, making car theft the most prevalent crime experienced by the respondents.
Theft in terms of vehicle ownership

Most owners were the victims of theft from a car (28.9%) and theft of a bicycle (28.5%). Theft of a motorcycle involved 25% of incidents while 24.2% of incidents involved the theft of a car. A total of 37.8% respondents experienced theft of a car if the incidents of car theft and car hijacking are combined, again making car theft the most prevalent crime.

Other crimes

Personal theft was the crime experienced most by all the respondents, namely 25.7%, followed by burglary with entry (24.8%), assaults or threats (21.6%) and robbery (16.9%). Stock theft (2.5%) and sexual incidents (females only) (5.8%) had the lowest incidence.

ONE-YEAR VICTIMISATION RATES

Vehicle theft and car vandalism

Over a one-year period (1999) theft from a car (4.3%) had the highest incidence, followed by theft of a car (3.5%), while car vandalism involved 2.8% of incidents. If the incidents of car theft and car hijacking are combined, the total incidence of car theft incidents increases to 5.7%.

Vehicle thefts in terms of vehicle ownership

The data reflects that car theft (7.9%) and car hijacking (5%) combined had the highest incidence, namely 12.9%, followed by theft of a motorcycle (11.4%) and theft from a car (9.6%).

Other crimes

Consumer fraud (9.5%), pickpocketing or personal theft (8.8%) and burglary with entry (7.9%) were the crimes most often experienced by the respondents in 1999.

INDIVIDUAL CRIME CATEGORIES

Theft of a car and car hijacking (last incident)

Fifty-two percent of all car thefts occurred at the victims’ residence while 31.9% occurred elsewhere in the city or the local area. Most car thefts (91%) were reported to the police although the vehicle was recovered in only 37.5% of incidents. As vehicles are expensive items it is not surprising that 96.5% of the victims viewed the theft as very serious or somewhat serious.

Car hijacking incidents (55.6%) mostly occurred elsewhere in the city or local area where the victim lived, while 22.2% of incidents occurred near the victim’s own home. Only 12.3% of incidents occurred at the victim’s home. Most hijacking incidents involved three or more perpetrators (63%) or two people (25.9%). In 85.2% of incidents the perpetrators were armed, mostly with a handgun (90%), and the majority of the offenders were strangers (66.7%). The weapon was actually used in 30.4% of incidents resulting in 19.8% of victims sustaining an injury. All the hijacked victims consulted a doctor or faith healer after the incident.

In 71.6% of cases the vehicle was actually stolen and 74.1% of victims reported the car hijacking to the police in order to recover the property (34.3%) or because the victim wanted the offender to be punished (18.2%), while 17.5% were of the opinion that car hijacking was a serious crime, which should be reported to the police. The vehicle was only
recovered in 51.7% of cases and 45% of the respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the way in which the police handled their case. Most respondents were dissatisfied because they felt that the police did not do enough (28.7%) or because they did not apprehend the offender (22.6%).

Most incidents were not reported to the police because the respondents were of the opinion that the police would not do anything about it (50%), could not do anything about it (25%), or because they had no insurance (25%). A further 18.6% indicated that they had reported the incident to another public or private agency. Ninety-six percent of respondents regarded car hijacking as very serious or somewhat serious. Most (88.9%) respondents did not receive assistance from any victim support agency and 60.5% were of the opinion that they would have benefited from such services.

**Theft from a car (last incident)**

Theft from a car mostly occurred at the victim’s home, namely, 65.7% of cases. A further 17.4% of incidents occurred elsewhere in the city or local residential area while 12.2% of incidents occurred near the victim’s home, and 52.9% of thefts were reported to the police. Most theft incidents were reported to the police to recover the property (28.6%), because the victim wanted the offender to be punished (17.9%) or for insurance purposes (17.4%). Only 50.5% of the victims were satisfied with the manner in which the police dealt with their cases. Dissatisfaction was mostly due to the fact that the victims were of the opinion that the police did not do enough (26.2%), did not recover the property (16.8%), did not apprehend the offender (15.9%), because the police were not interested in the case (14%) or they were slow to arrive (14%).

Reasons cited for not reporting the theft to the police mainly concerned the fact that the respondents were of the opinion that the police could not do anything due to lack of evidence (25.2%) or because they did not regard the incident as serious enough (23.4%), while a further 17.6% of respondents felt the police would not do anything about the theft. Fourteen percent indicated that they had reported the theft to another public or private agency and 62.8% regarded the incident as very serious.

**Car vandalism (last incident)**

Most car vandalism incidents occurred at the victim’s home (53.8%), 22.1% occurred elsewhere in the city or local area while 19.2% of incidents occurred near the victim’s home. Fifty-seven percent (56.7%) of car vandalism incidents were reported to the police and 62.5% of respondents regarded the incident as very serious.

**Theft of motorcycles (last incident)**

Seventy-three percent (72.7) of motorcycle thefts occurred at the victim’s home and 18.2% near the home. More than half the incidents (54.5%) were reported to the police and 81.8% of victims regarded the incident as very serious.

**Theft of bicycles (last incident)**

Most bicycle thefts occurred at the victim’s home (67.8%) while a further 24.1% of incidents occurred near the victim’s home. Only 24% of bicycle thefts were reported to the police and 35.6% of respondents indicated that they regarded the incident as very serious.
Theft of livestock (last incident)

Only 7.2% of respondents indicated that they own livestock. Twenty-seven percent (27.3%) of the respondents reported loss of livestock during 1999. In the majority of cases poultry (72.7%) or cattle (15.2%) were stolen and most incidents occurred at the victim’s home or on grazing land, (18.2%). Only 36.4% of cases were reported to the police with the hope of recovering the property (45.5%) or to have the offender caught and punished (22.7%). Reasons given for not reporting the crime were that the victims felt that the police would not do anything (25%) or because they had solved the crime themselves (25%). Most victims (72.7%) regarded the incident as very serious (42.4%) or somewhat serious (30.3%).

Burglary and attempted burglary

Burglary and attempted burglary incidents accounted for 24.8% of crime experiences over a five-year period. Thirty-two percent of burglary incidents occurred in 1999 while 39.3% occurred before then and 28.1% of incidents occurred in 2000. Most victims (75.3%) indicated that they had been burgled only once in 1999 while 17.2% had been burgled twice and 7.5% had been burgled three times or more. In 92.4% of incidents property was actually stolen and the value of the stolen property mostly varied between R1001 and R2000 (15.7%), R2001 and R3000 (13.4%), and R501 and R1000 (13.1%). In 68% of cases the victims suffered some damage to their property. In most cases the damage was fairly insignificant, as in 31.6% of cases the damage was less than R100 and in 20.4% of cases the damage varied between R101 and R200.

Sixty-two percent (61.9%) of burglaries were reported to the police with the purpose of recovering the property (32.5%) or because the victim wanted the offender to be caught and punished (20.9%). Only 31.2% of victims were satisfied with the way in which the police handled their case and most expressed dissatisfaction because the police did not do enough (26.7%), because the police did not recover the property (17.8%) or because the police did not keep them informed (14.1%). Burglaries were not reported to the police because the victims indicated that they had solved the case themselves or that the perpetrator was known to them (32.3%) while 22.8% were of the opinion that the police could not do anything owing to lack of proof. Seventy-seven percent of the victims regarded the incident as very serious. Only 5.7% of victims indicated that they had received some assistance from a victims' support agency, while 57.7% felt that such agencies are useful.

Only 14.6% of the respondents indicated that they were the victims of attempted burglary over the past five years. Most attempted burglary incidents occurred in 2000 (39.5%) or before then, while 28.2% of incidents occurred in 1999. Sixty-nine percent (69.1%) of victims had been a victim only once during 1999, while 23.6% had been a victim twice. Forty percent (39.5%) of the incidents were reported to the police and 48.7% of the victims regarded the incident as very serious.

Robbery

Seventeen percent (16.9) of the respondents were victims of robbery during the past five years, of which 33.2% of incidents had occurred in 2000, 32.7% before then and 31.9% during 1999. Ninety percent (90.3%) of the victims had been a victim only once in 1999. Most of the robbery incidents occurred elsewhere in the city or local area (49.6%), 29.2% near the victim’s home while 17.3% of cases occurred at the victim’s home. Three or more offenders were involved in 47.3% of incidents while two or more offenders were involved in 35% of incidents. The offenders
were strangers in 72.6% of cases and only 10.6% of the respondents knew the offenders by sight and 10.2% did not see the offenders. The offenders were armed in 77.9% of cases, mostly with a handgun (72.2%) or with a knife or panga (20.5%). The weapon was used in 20.5% of incidents and in 85% of cases property was actually stolen. Only 38.5% of robbery cases were reported to the police, mainly because the victims wanted to recover their property (25.8%) or to have the offender punished (25.8%).

Most victims (58.6%) expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which the police handled their case. The main reasons for the victims’ dissatisfaction were that they felt that the police did not do enough (21%), that the offender was not apprehended (18.4%) or because their property was not recovered (15.8%).

Although 73.9% of the respondents regarded the robbery incident as very serious, only 12.8% reported the incident to the police. The robbery incident was not reported to the police because the respondents indicated that the police could do nothing (30.2%), because they had solved the crime themselves or that the perpetrator was known to them (16.4%), while 13.2% did not regard the robbery incident as serious enough to report. Only 5.3% of the victims had made use of the services of a victims’ agency while 59.3% were of the opinion that such agencies would be useful to help victims of crime.

Personal theft

Twenty-six percent (25.7) of the respondents were the victims of a personal theft during the past five years. Thirty-four percent (34.3%) of the incidents occurred in 1999, 33.4% in 2000 and 31.4% before then, and most victims reported only one incident (76.3%) in 1999, while 17.8% indicated that they had been victims twice. The majority of the incidents (50.3%) occurred elsewhere in the city of local area while 21.5% of cases occurred in the victim’s home. Sixty-eight percent of the victims were holding or carrying the property that was stolen and only 29.4% reported the incident to the police. The incident was regarded as very serious by 59.6% of the respondents.

Assaults and/or threats

Almost a quarter of the respondents (21.6%) indicated that they had been victims of assault or threats. Most assault incidents (37.8%) were experienced in 2000, while 32.3% of incidents occurred before then, and 29.9% of incidents in 1999. Seventy-six percent (75.6%) of the victims reported only one incident in 1999, while 10.5% reported two incidents and 8.1% five and more incidents. Almost half (49.6%) of the assault incidents occurred in or near the victims home, while 41.3% of incidents occurred elsewhere in the city or local area. Only one offender was involved in most cases (40.6%) while three or more offenders were involved in 30.2% of incidents and two offenders in 28.5% of cases. The perpetrator was known to the victim in 58% of cases (44.1% knew the perpetrator by name and 13.9% by sight). A boyfriend (10.8%), spouse or partner (10.2%) or a close friend (9.6%) were the perpetrators in most assault incidents. Force was used in 55.6% of cases and in 44.4% of incidents the victims were just threatened. A handgun was used in 46% of assault cases and a knife or panga in 28.7% of cases, and the weapon was actually used in 51.7% of incidents. Almost half (47.9%) the respondents indicated that they suffered an injury as a result of the assault and 76.1% had consulted a doctor or a healer for their injuries.

Only 33% of assault incidents were reported to the police, because the victim wanted the offender to be punished (38%) or because the assault was regarded as serious (26.9%). Forty-eight percent (48.4%) of the victims expressed satisfaction with the manner in which the police
handled their cases. Respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the police indicated that the police did not do enough (36.9%) or that they did not apprehend the offender (21.7%), while 12% felt that the police did not keep them properly informed about their case.

Assault incidents were not reported to the police because 29.6% of the respondents indicated that the perpetrator was known to them and that they had solved the case themselves, 15.8% felt that the police could not do anything and 13.4% were of the opinion that the case was not serious enough. Fifteen percent (14.9%) of the victims reported the assault to other public or private agencies. Most victims (62.1%) regarded the incident as very serious and 85.1% regarded the incident as a crime. Only 8.7% made use of a victim support service and 57.6% were of the opinion that the services of such agencies would have been useful.

Sexual offences

Eleven percent (10.9) of the female respondents were victims of sexual offences over the past five years. The offences are fairly evenly spread as 36.3% occurred before 1999, 35.1% occurred during 2000 and 28.6% during 1999. The majority of the victims (72.7%) experienced only one sexual offence in 1999 of which 37.7% occurred elsewhere in the city while 33.8% occurred in the victim’s home or near the victim’s home (20.8%). In 66.2% of the cases one offender only was involved. The offender was known by name in 50.6% of incidents and in 14.3% of cases the offender was known by sight. In most instances the perpetrator was a boyfriend (18%), relative (16%) or a colleague from work (8%). The offenders were armed in 40.3% of cases, mostly with a knife or panga (35.5% of cases) or a handgun (32.2% of cases). The weapon was actually used in 38.7% of incidents and 77.9% of the victims regarded the incident as very serious. In 40.3% of cases the victims regarded the incident as rape, and in 26% of cases it was regarded as attempted rape, while 92.2% of the victims regarded the incident as a crime. Only 39% of the sexual incidents were reported to the police because the victims wanted the offender to be punished (35.5%) and because they were of the opinion that crime is a serious event, which should be reported (29%). Only 40% of the victims were satisfied with the manner in which the police dealt with their report and most were dissatisfied because they were of the opinion that the police did not do enough (37%) or that they did not apprehend the offender (33.3%). Sexual incidents were not reported to the police because the victim knew the perpetrator (37%) or because their family had solved the crime themselves (18.5%) while 11.1% expressed the view that the police would not do anything about the offence. Seventeen percent (16.9%) of the respondents indicated that they had reported the incident to another public or private agency. Only 10.4% of the victims received assistance from a victim support agency, although 49.3% expressed the view that victim services would be helpful to victims.

Consumer fraud

Consumer fraud was reported by 9.5% of victims in 1999, and in 59.1% of incidents a shop of some sort was involved, while 15.7% of incidents involved construction or repair work. It is significant to note that only 8.7% of fraud incidents were reported to the police, while 6.3% of incidents were reported to a public or private agency.

Corruption

Only 2.9% of the respondents reported that they were victims of corruption in 1999 and only 25.6% of these incidents were reported to the police. In 15.4% of cases the corruption incident was reported to some other public or private agency. Contrary to the 1996 victimisation survey,
the respondents indicated that teachers/lecturers (20.5%) were mostly involved in corruption incidents and no respondent implicated the police in corruption, whereas in the 1996 survey, most corruption experiences involved the police (53.6% of incidents). In the light of the fear and intimidation expressed by many of the respondents during the interviewing process, as well as the fear of police brutality in the Johannesburg area that could have been created as a result of high media exposure in a few isolated incidents in 2000 these findings should be treated with circumspection.

Respondents who reported the incident to the police did so to reduce the incidence of corruption (38.1%) and because they felt that corruption was a crime that should be reported (23.8%). A further 19% reported the incident because they wanted the offender to be caught and punished. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the manner in which the police dealt with their report. Most respondents were dissatisfied with the police for unspecified reasons (45.4%) and because the police were not interested in their case (27.3%).

These findings again seem to indicate that the respondents were reluctant to give specific reasons for their dissatisfaction with the police, and that fear and intimidation may have influenced their response. Most corruption incidents were not reported to the police because the victims did not regard the incident as worthy of reporting (41.3%) while 17.4% indicated that it was too much trouble to report the incident.


**Victimisation rates**

From Table 3 it is evident that vehicle theft remained fairly stable while theft from a car decreased by about 5%, while theft from a car decreased significantly (about 6%). Theft of a bicycle decreased as well as car vandalism, while theft of a motorcycle increased by about 4%.

Crimes such as burglary with entry, attempted burglary, robbery, and consumer fraud remained relatively stable, while a slight decrease is evident in the case of assaults and threats (about 2%). Corruption decreased significantly by about 4%, while the biggest decrease is evident in the case of sexual incidents, which soared in 1995 to 39.2% but are now down to more or less the 1992 level (about 2%). The high incidence of sexual offences in 1995 can probably be ascribed to the high media attention given to this type of crime at the time, encouraging victims to report and expose incidents and to seek help. Police recorded statistics of sexual offences also reflected a significant increase during this period. Louw’s (2001:11) research of recorded crime rates in the Johannesburg area also confirms that recorded crime rates in Johannesburg remained largely unchanged during this period.

**Crimes reported to the police**

The reporting of crimes to the police shows a steady increase since the first survey as only 33.8% of crimes were reported to the police in 1992, which increased significantly to 42.1% in 1995 and to 44.1% in the current survey, representing an increase of 10.3% in the reporting rate since 1992. From this it appears that despite an increase in public exposure to the police and their acclaimed functionality as illustrated by the increased reporting of crime to the police, so far public confidence has not been significantly restored (also see increasing fear of crime below). A higher insurance rate, which increased from 21.7% in 1995 to 26.5% in 1999 may partly explain the higher reporting rate.
### TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF VICTIMISATION RATES (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Type of crime</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vehicle theft</strong></td>
<td>Theft of a car</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theft from a car</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Car vandalism</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theft of a motorcycle</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theft of a bicycle</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vehicle theft in terms of vehicle ownership</strong></td>
<td>Theft of a car</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theft from a car</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Car vandalism</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theft of a motorcycle</td>
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<td>7.0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theft of a bicycle</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other crimes</strong></td>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Robbery</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal theft</td>
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<td>10.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
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<td>39.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<td>Assualts/threats</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fear of crime**

During the 1992 survey, 15.2% of the respondents felt very safe walking in their residential area after dark, while 43.7% felt very unsafe. In 1995 only 12.5% of the respondents felt very safe and 39.5% very unsafe, while the current survey indicates that people feel less safe as only 9.4% of the respondents indicated that they felt safe, while 52.9% indicated that they felt very unsafe. It is obvious that fear of crime is increasing, which can probably be ascribed to less faith in the abilities of the police to control and reduce crime and the high media coverage accorded to crime in South Africa since the end of the liberation struggle.

**CONCLUSION**

South Africa is still very much a racially divided country and there are huge disparities in income, housing and education as a result of the legacy of apartheid. Unemployment is high and foreign direct investment is low, despite good economic policies being in place, which is detrimental to the development of the country. As is typical of developing countries, the criminal justice system is not functioning adequately for a variety of reasons, including poor training, inexperience, lack of resources and poor administration. The increased focus on crime since the end of the liberation struggle leads to the general perception that crime rates are high in South Africa. A comparison of the 1992, 1995 and 1999 crime victimisation rates, however, indicates that crime rates have remained fairly stable in the Johannesburg and Soweto magisterial districts over that period. In fact, theft from a car decreased considerably in the case of vehicle owners (about 6%), assaults decreased by about 2% and corruption by about 4%. Attitudes toward the police have also remained stable, while there was a significant increase of crimes reported to the police: from 33.8% in 1992 to 44.1% in 1999, which can
be ascribed partly to higher insurance coverage.

Theft of a car (85.4%), car hijacking (85.2%), theft of a motorcycle (81.8%), sexual offences (77.9%), burglary with entry (77.3%) and robbery (73.9%) were rated the most serious crimes. On average 44.1% of crimes were reported to the police. Overall, victims reported the crimes to recover their property (25%) or because they wanted the offender to be caught and punished (23.8%).

Most crimes are committed at the victim’s home or near the victim’s home (54.5%) and in the city where the victim lives (38.1%). These findings indicate that victims’ lifestyle and interpersonal relations may be a factor in their victimisation. An outgoing lifestyle and alcohol abuse may make people more vulnerable to crime. There also seems to be a need to step up security at residential homes as well as a need for more focused policing in residential and suburban areas.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


