

## CHAPTER 3

# LEVELS OF CRIME IN DAR ES SALAAM

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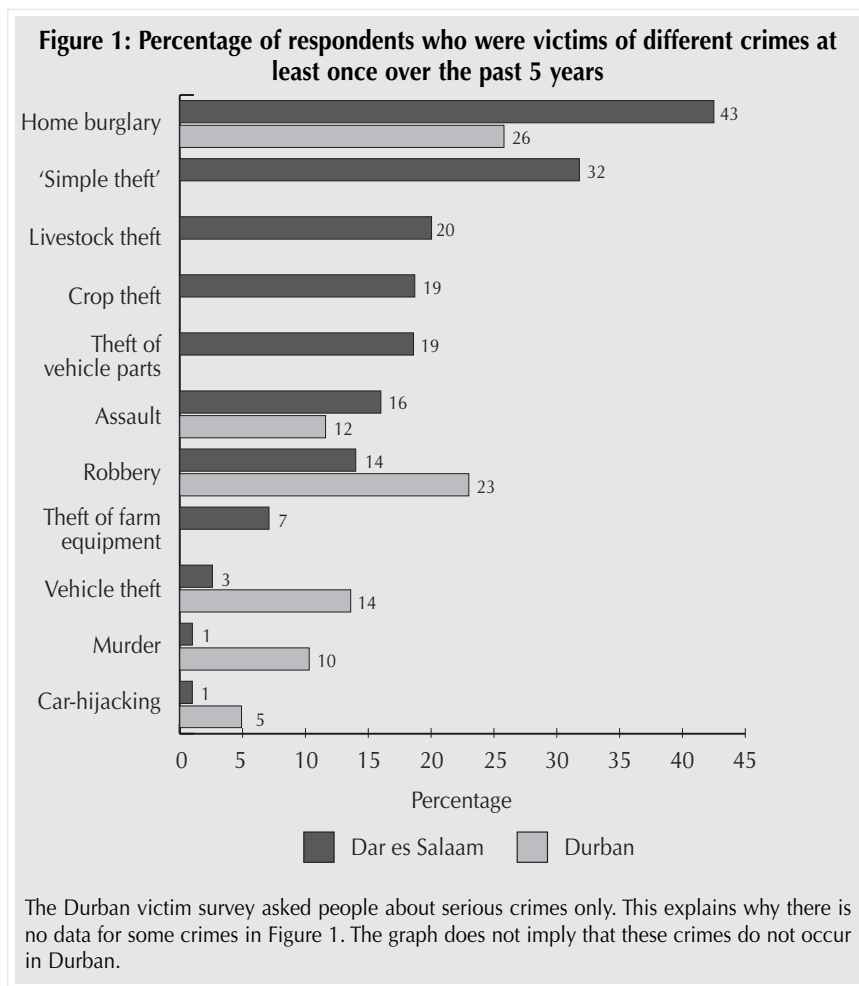
### Key points

- Residents of Dar es Salaam reported very high levels of burglary to the survey, with 43% of households being burgled over a five-year period.
- Simple theft was the second most common crime with 32% of people reporting victimisation.
- The theft of livestock and crops, which occurred mainly in the rural parts of the city, were also common.
- Although vehicle theft and hijacking rates were very low, the theft of external motor vehicle fittings (or 'vehicle parts theft') was common, being experienced by 19% of respondents.
- Comparatively high levels of assault (16%) are a reason for concern.
- Only 2% of respondents said that a member of their household had been murdered over the five-year period.
- With the exception of assault, rates of violent crime in Dar es Salaam were lower than in South African cities where similar surveys were conducted.

The most common crime experienced by the city's residents over the five-year period was burglary (figure 1). Surveys conducted as part of the International Crime Victims Survey of UNICRI typically show a high prevalence of burglary compared to other crimes in African cities. What is surprising is the very high levels of this crime type in Dar es Salaam. In a similar survey conducted by the Institute for Security Studies in Durban, South Africa, burglary was also found to be the most prevalent crime, but at a much lower rate. In Durban, a quarter (26%) of respondents reported this form of victimisation.

Simple theft (which involves property being stolen from an individual, but excludes the use of violence) was the second most prevalent crime recorded by the survey. The rate of robbery, which is a similar type of crime to simple theft except for the fact that it involves the use of force or violence, was much lower at 14%.

In South Africa by comparison, 23% of people surveyed in Durban reported being victimised by robbery over a five-year period. However, not all rates of violent



crimes were higher in South African cities than in Dar es Salaam. In Durban and Johannesburg, respectively, 12% and 16% of people reported being assaulted over a five-year period. In Dar es Salaam, the assault rate was similar at 16%.

Given that the majority of citizens live within the urban areas of Dar es Salaam, the relatively high rate of the theft of livestock and crops, for example, is surprising.

The rates of vehicle theft, vehicle hijacking and murder were very low over the five-year period. The relatively high rate of vehicle parts theft (particularly given the low

levels of car ownership in the city) raises questions regarding the sophistication and organisation of offenders based on their preference to steal parts rather than cars. In South Africa, for example, high levels of vehicle theft are facilitated by: organised criminal networks penetrating police and vehicle licencing departments, weak border controls, an ability to override complex vehicle anti-theft measures and an elaborate system for the sale of stolen parts and vehicles.

### Repeat victimisation

#### Key points

- Repeat victimisation is fairly common in Dar es Salaam with the highest rates being reported by victims of vehicle parts theft and thefts of crops, livestock and farm equipment.
- Assault victims were more likely to be victimised repeatedly if the assault took place in the home, concurrent with patterns of domestic abuse.
- Patterns of repeat victimisation in Dar es Salaam for crimes such as burglary and robbery present opportunities to target preventive programmes more effectively.

When the same person is the victim of the same type of crime more than once, this phenomenon is known as repeat victimisation. It is important to track repeat victimisation, since it raises a number of questions about the effectiveness of prevention and how limited resources can be effectively targeted. Where repeat victimisation is common, prevention strategies can focus on improving the protection of first time victims of a particular crime in order to maximise the impact of the strategy.

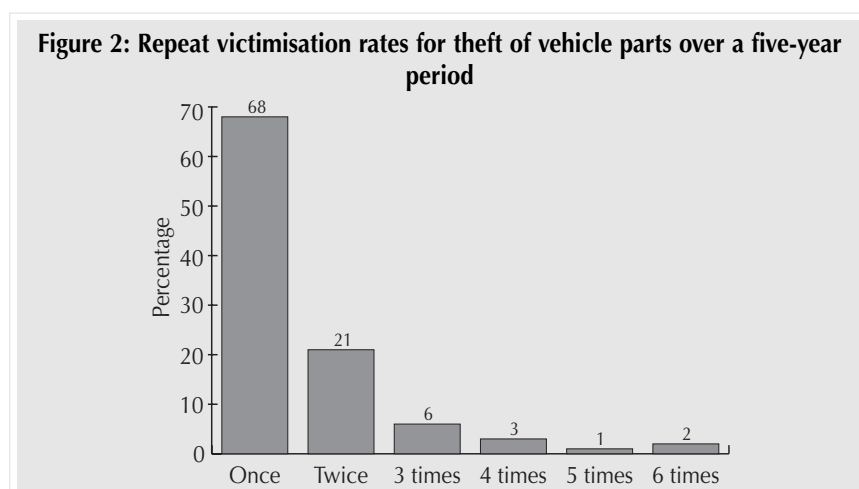
Several factors play a role in where and when victimisation occurs. Among these are issues relating to behavioural and environmental factors surrounding the criminal events. By isolating those most at risk, policy makers are pointed towards priority areas where intervention should occur.

In comparison, levels of repeat victimisation in Durban were low with only 7% of people having been victims of the same crime more than once. However, levels of repeat victimisation in Durban were lower than in other South African cities that were surveyed by the ISS. Although the time periods for measurement were slightly different, victim surveys in Cape Town and Johannesburg illustrate this point. For example, between 1993 and 1995, in Cape Town 17% of respondents had been victims of the same crime more than once. Levels of repeat victimisation in

Johannesburg were extremely high – 60% of mugging/robbery victims experienced this crime more than once. High levels of repeat victimisation were similarly recorded for car theft, sexual assault, burglary, assault and car-hijacking in Johannesburg.<sup>2</sup> Although significantly lower than in Johannesburg, repeat victimisation rates in Dar es Salaam were relatively high, ranging from 35% among victims of vehicle parts theft to 51% for crop theft.

### *Theft of vehicle parts*

In the case of theft of vehicle parts, repeat victimisation was more likely than for burglary or simple theft. A third of victims (33%) reported having vehicle parts stolen more than once. The remaining 68% experienced vehicle parts theft only once (figure 2).



### *Theft of crops, livestock and farm equipment*

High rates of repeat victimisation were also recorded among the predominantly rural-based crimes. One-third of victims of theft of farm equipment were victimised more than once in the five-year period (34%), as were victims of livestock theft (33%). Crop theft victims were equally likely to be victimised more than once (51%), or once only (49%).

Various interpretations can be forwarded to explain the high levels of repeat victimisation among this group of crime victims, including the ease of offending, the lack of policing and the difficulties in taking measures against these types of incidents. The most likely explanation is probably that perpetrators, motivated by their desire to satisfy immediate needs, take only what they can carry and do so repeatedly.

### *Simple theft*

For simple theft, repeat victimisation was reported by a quarter of victims (24%). The remaining 76% of victims experienced simple theft only once. Given that this form of crime is typically opportunistic in nature, it can be assumed that the same victim is not specifically sought out a second time, but rather that the levels of repeat victimisation relate more to individual risk profiles.

### *Assault*

Levels of repeat victimisation for assault were similar to those for simple theft and burglary, with 24% of victims having experienced the crime more than once over the five-year period. Since domestic assault is often ongoing, it is possible that these kinds of assaults account for the experiences of repeat victimisation recorded by the survey.

### *Burglary*

Repeat victimisation among burglary victims was low compared to other crime types, with 22% of victims being victimised more than once in the five-year period (figure 3). Since people who have been burgled once have a one in five chance of being burgled a second time, it may be worthwhile to investigate the benefits of target-hardening, neighbourhood watch and other programmes that focus on first time burglary victims. In order to use resources effectively, such programmes should target individuals with high-risk victim profiles (see Chapter 6 below).

