

## CHAPTER 6

# CRIME PROFILE: HOME BURGLARY

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### Key points

- 43% of respondents said their households were burgled at least once in the past five years.
- People living in new or established suburbs were more at risk than people living elsewhere.
- The vast majority of burglaries were successful (83%).
- Burglaries were committed throughout the year.
- Half of all burglaries took place on Fridays and Saturdays.
- The majority of burglaries occurred between 00h00 and 06h00.
- In most cases (78%), victims reported that someone was at home during the incident.
- Levels of violence experienced during burglaries and the subsequent injuries sustained were high.

### Victim profile

Victim profiles indicate how the risk of crime varies according to people's economic status, gender, level of education, age and place of residence.

These factors may be directly associated with the opportunity to commit a crime. For example, people who live in rural areas are more likely to own crops and thus are more at risk of crop theft. Similarly, wealthier people are more likely to own a car and are thus more likely to become victims of car theft. Alternatively, the relationship may be more indirect. For example, people with lower incomes are more likely to use public transport facilities and are therefore more at risk of simple theft that occurs at transport nodes. The lifestyle of young people may expose them to assault linked to alcohol abuse at places of entertainment.

When interpreting victim profile data, it is important to note that the risk is calculated within particular variables. For example, if the age variable is considered, the risk of teenagers becoming victims is compared with the risk facing the elderly. The risk for

teenagers cannot be compared with that for women or people in formal employment, for example.

Table 5 shows that homes owned by their inhabitants and those in new or established suburbs were most at risk of burglary in Dar es Salaam. Risk decreased significantly for people residing in rural areas or in the inner city.

Victim characteristics	Highest risk (% households in each category that were victimised)	Lowest risk (% households in each category that were victimised)
Home ownership	Home owners (47%)	Non-home owners (35%)
Area of residence	Established suburbs (54%) New suburb (51%)	Rural area (26%) Inner city (28%)

The profile of burglary victims reflects a fairly standard picture of burglary in which victims tend to be wealthier. However, it should be remembered that the overall levels of burglary in the city were extremely high. Although the wealthy were more likely to be victims, a significant number of people in the lower income category were also victimised. It is also worth noting that the impact of property crime on the poor is particularly severe, since they may, for example, not be able to replace stolen goods.<sup>4</sup>

### Goods stolen during burglaries

In the vast majority of burglaries (83%), property was stolen. In the remainder of cases (17%), burglary attempts were unsuccessful. The survey does not provide data on whether burglars were interrupted during the course of the crime, or could not gain access to the premises on account of security measures.

### When burglaries occurred

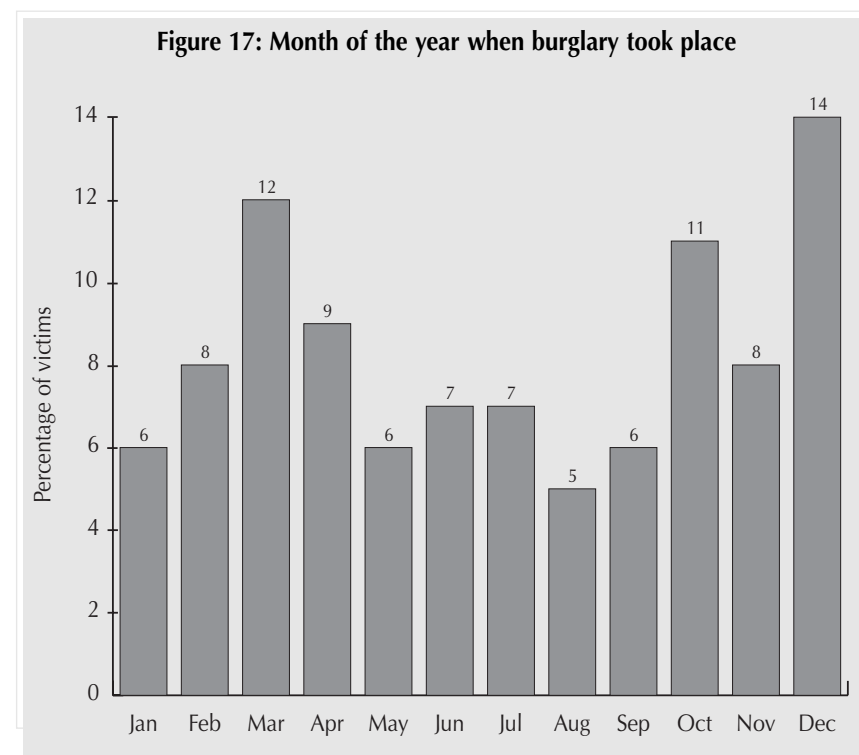
The victim survey attempted to determine the month during which the burglary occurred. Over the five-year period, monthly reports of burglary were fairly

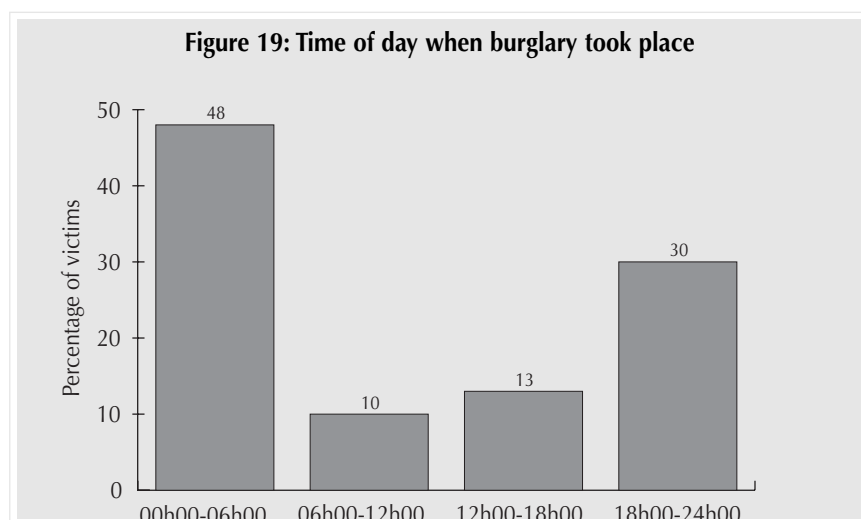
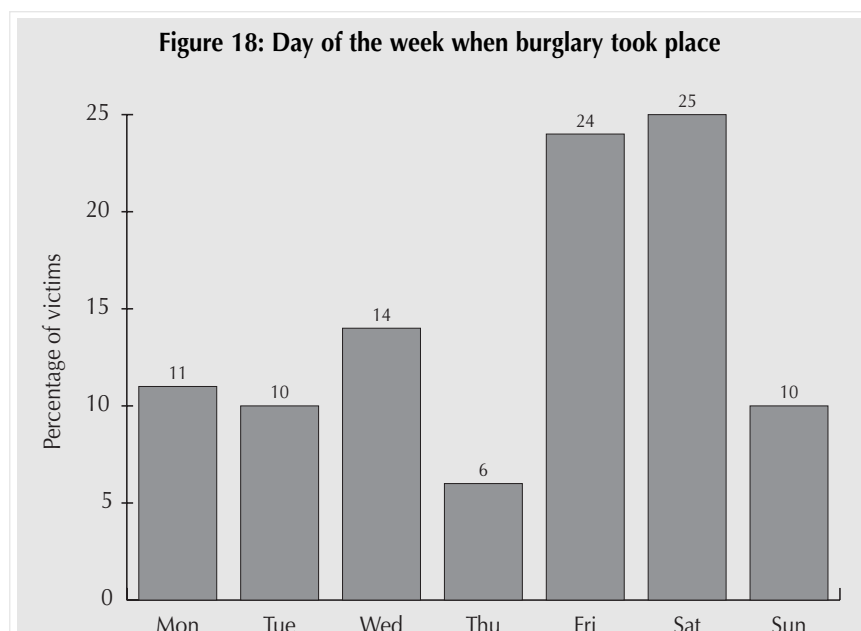
consistent. There were slightly more reports of burglaries occurring in December and March (figure 17).

Equally important is when during the week burglaries were committed. The victim survey suggests that most cases of burglary occurred on Fridays and Saturdays. These two days accounted for half of all burglaries throughout the week (figure 18).

The survey also sought to determine the time of day when burglaries occurred (figure 19). In this regard, very different results were found from those recorded in South African cities. Whereas in Durban only 15% of cases were reported as occurring between 00h00 and 06h00, almost half of the reported incidents in Dar es Salaam happened during this time.

This distribution is important since it is more likely that somebody would be home and probably sleeping during these hours. The survey asked whether or not anybody was at home at the time of the burglary. In the majority of cases (78%), somebody was at home when the crime occurred.





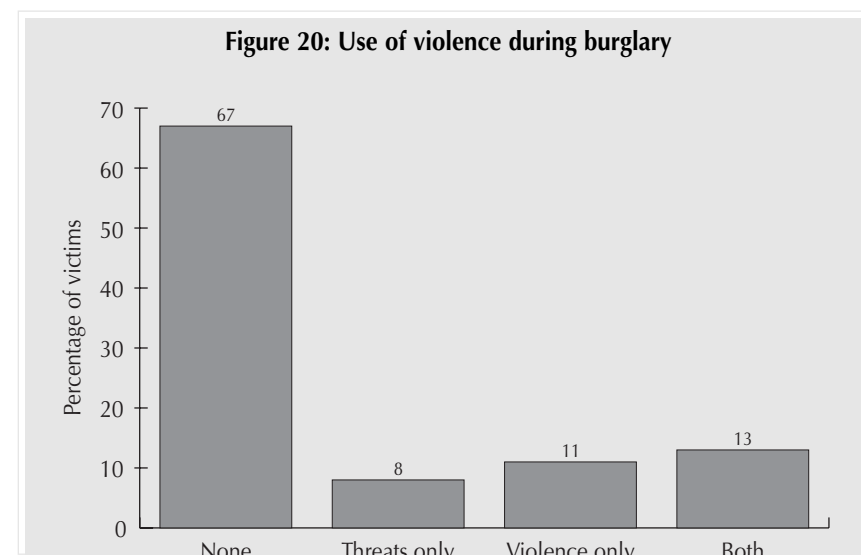
This data means that the possibility of confrontation with the burglar/s would be high. Also preventive solutions would need to focus on nighttime rather than daytime activity, particularly in the case of neighbourhood watch schemes or

SunguSungu. Finally, burglars probably use stealth to enter premises, since forced entry would wake household members. This may suggest that target-hardening devices such as heavy duty locks and window grills are often absent. This latter conclusion is supported by the data presented in chapter 13 on the use of protection measures.

### Use of violence

The findings outlined above are likely to impact on whether violence was used in the course of burglaries. If someone is at home when the crime occurs, there is the added possibility that violence can be used against that person.

As figure 20 shows, violence or threats of violence were used in approximately a third of burglaries. Given that levels of burglary in the city are high and that household sizes are large, it is likely that more than one person may be exposed to violence, or at the least to the trauma of seeing other members of the household hurt.



The levels of violence recorded in Dar es Salaam were lower, however, than in South African cities. In Pretoria, for example, 33% of victims said only violence was used, compared to only 11% in Dar es Salaam.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the use of weapons as opposed to just physical strength was slightly less common in Dar es Salaam. When weapons were used, these were most commonly sticks, pangas and clubs,

accounting for 43% of incidents, followed by physical strength and hands accounting for 33% of incidents. Guns were used in only 4% of violent incidents (figure 21). In Pretoria, by comparison, 21% of victims said a gun was used. Similar figures were recorded in the Durban victim survey.

## Injuries sustained

Few victims (8%) reported that injuries were sustained during the burglary, with an additional 23% reporting injuries to other members of the household. Given that the weapons used to commit burglaries in South African cities were more lethal than in Dar es Salaam, it is not surprising that many more victims reported injuries in Pretoria (24%).<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, of the injured victims in Dar es Salaam, 73% were treated in hospital. Given the prevalence of burglary, the cost to the state of providing medical care to the injured is likely to be considerable.

