

The use of the victimisation survey and administrative data to examine crime under-reporting in South Africa

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The ability for the law enforcement agencies to combat crime is dependent on the cultural beliefs and the way the community perceived such agencies. Crime has become a central topic for discussions in the recent years. The need to assess and evaluate crime demands data producing agencies to produce quality statistics. The lack of quality and reliable data always prohibit the intellectual to understand our community better. The report will use the Victims of Crime Survey data and data from South African Police Services to better understand the predicament of crime in South Africa. Irrespective of the differences in measurement, time and space between the two data sources, the results shows a great magnitude of comparability over time. The victimization survey shows the dark figures not reported to the police, and the reasons for not reporting. A comparison between the actual levels of crime and perceptions about which crime commonly take place was revealed as housebreaking/burglary in 2011. Six out of 10 South African households perceived housebreaking/burglary to be the most common type of crime. It was also the most common crime experienced at least by 5,4% of the households, but with about 60% of households had reporting the incidents to the police. This suggests that public perceptions about the level of crime in South Africa are not far off the actuality. The under-reporting of some of the crimes incidents may be an indication of lack of public confidence in the police. The victimization survey results are significant incorporated with the crime statistics obtained from administrative data in order to maximize our understanding of the extent of crime and the under-reporting of crime.

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