

The impact of victimization on the daily activities of South Africans - A case study of the 2011 Victims of crime survey

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During the 1990's a significant and rapid evolution started in relation to the role of National Statistical agencies (NSAs) in the collection and dissemination of statistics. Currently the field of crime statistics is regarded as one of the statistical areas where NSAs have to increasingly play a leading role in relation to the scope and quality of statistical collection and dissemination. Safety and Security has been identified as one of the strategic priorities of the Government of South Africa and this increases the importance of and need for more comprehensive statistics on the patterns of crime and victimization in the country. The South African National Development Plan 2030 also states that by 2030 people living in South Africa should feel safe and have no fear of crime. This paper examines the relationship between crime and victimization statistics, and the impact it has on the daily activities of South Africans. Policies related to safety and security can only begin to improve the living conditions of ordinary citizens if they are based on comprehensive statistical databases that not only include information from administrative sources, but also from victimization surveys. The results of the Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS) 2011 revealed that most South Africans fear becoming victims of housebreaking and robbery. Furthermore many South Africans do not feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood and a significant proportion modify their daily activities as a result of a fear of victimisation. The paper continues by exploring how these statistics could be used to inform crime prevention policies and strategies, as well as establish performance targets and indicators for the assessment of interventions and progress in relation to safety and security.

Key Words: Victimization, national planning strategy, safety and security