



JDiBrief - Analysis

Public transport victimisation: SUMMARY (1 of 5)

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PURPOSE: Understanding who is likely to be vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime on public transport is a worthwhile exercise because it facilitates the protection and reassurance of such sub-groups.

THEORY: It has been known for many decades that not all targets are at equal risk of becoming a victim of crime. Some people are, by virtue of their socio-demographic qualities or lifestyle choices, more vulnerable to being selected by offenders. Two of the most influential theories relating to crime occurrence are the routine activity approach and the rational choice approach. A victim's routine activities can be particularly telling in explaining when and where they become vulnerable to crime. Appreciating that offenders make rational decisions when selecting their targets allows us to hypothesise what conditions increase the risk of crime happening. Profiling the victim population on public transport allows us to understand what these high-risk settings or socio-demographic characteristics are so that we can align crime reduction resources accordingly.

METHOD: The victimisation *rate* of the travelling population refers to the number of crimes per population at risk during a period of time in an area. Determining this figure for various modes of transport is possible through using passenger data sets for the population at risk (rather than the standard – yet inappropriate – resident population denominator common in rate calculations). These provide an approximation of the demographics of the travelling population. Surveys do though have the universal limitation of sample size, hence results from analysis using their data should be interpreted with caution.

Estimating the rate of victimisation involves comparing the victim population with the travelling population to determine the frequency of crime happening to different sub-groups. We can use index values to help us calculate how these populations compare. To do this we use the following formula: **(% victim population / % population at risk) * 100**. An index value of 100 indicates that the risk of victimisation is proportional to the sub-group, values under 100 mean that there is a lower than expected risk of victimisation and index values higher than 100 means there is a greater than expected risk of victimisation.

APPLICATION: This method is illustrated using crime and passenger survey data from London (UK). Index values were calculated that compared the bus-crime victim population to the bus-travelling population. Figure 1 shows the analytical results for different age groups for robbery/theft, sexual offences and violent offences. This shows that young people (under 18 years) are at a disproportionately high risk of victimisation for all crime types. In contrast, older people (over 65 years) have a lower than expected risk of victimisation. This information is useful for integrating into victim awareness campaigns.

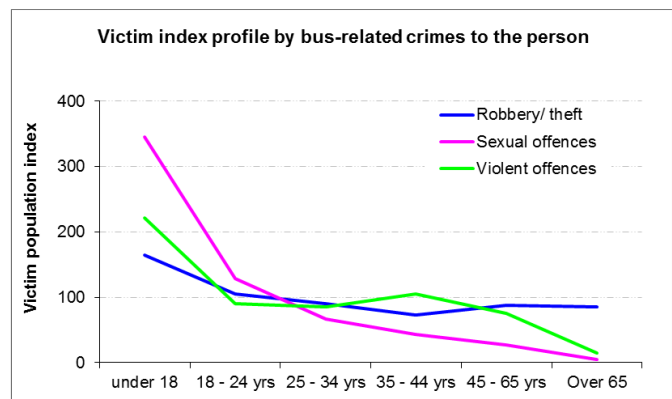


Figure 1 - Victim index profile by bus-related crimes to the person