

Offender insight into the Australian stolen goods markets

The DUMA survey as a longitudinal window into property offenders' target selections

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Western Australian Police Force and the Australian Institute of Criminology for making their data available for this analysis

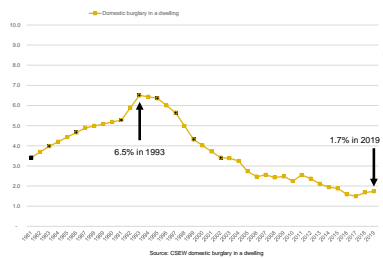


What I want to cover

- Background to burglary – some data and the security hypothesis
- Is security the whole story?
- How else can we explore this? What do offenders say?
- What does any of this mean?

1. Background to burglary – trends and the security hypothesis

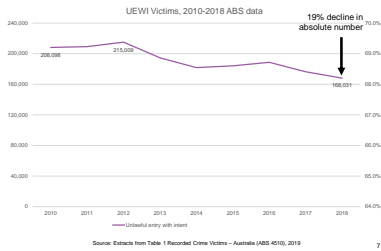
Residential burglary is in decline



Australian trends – victim surveys



Australian trends – police recorded crime



WA trends – police recorded crime



10 principles of opportunity and crime



1. Opportunities play a role in causing all crime
2. Crime opportunities are highly specific
3. Crime opportunities are concentrated in time and space
4. Crime opportunities depend on every day movements
5. One crime produces another
6. Some products offer more tempting crime opportunities
7. Social and technological changes produce new crime opportunities
8. Opportunities for crime can be reduced
9. Reducing opportunities does not usually displace crime
10. Focused opportunity reduction can produce wider declines in crime

Source: Felson, M., & Clarke, R.V. (1998). Opportunity makes the thief: practical theory for crime prevention

8. Opportunities for crime can be reduced



- The **Security Hypothesis** as an explanation for the Global Crime Drop
 - Parsimonious to local changes and global trends
 - See work by Farrell and colleagues (2010 onwards) for more detail
 - Works very well for vehicle theft and electronic immobilisers
- The opportunity reducing methods of **situational crime prevention** can be applied to all aspects of everyday life, but they must be tailored to specific situations
 - Risk, reward, effort, plus excuses and provocations

8. Opportunities for crime can be reduced



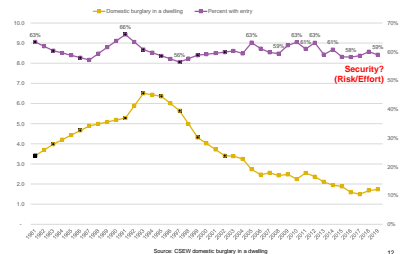
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Tseloni et al. (2017) Security Journal
 Used CSEW (2008-12) to estimate security protection influence of target hardening strategies

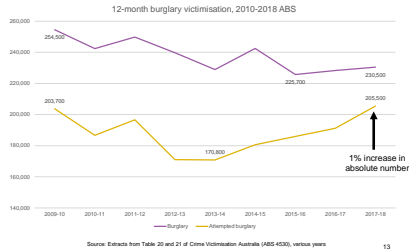
Most effective individual devices:
 external lights and door dead locks

Door/window locks + external lights + security chains
20 times greater protection
 (relative to no devices)

Fewer successful entries in UK

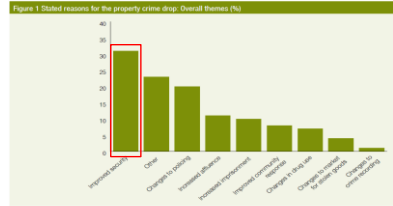


More attempted burglaries in Australia



Source: Extracts from Table 20 and 21 of Crime Victimization Australia (ABS 4532), various years

8. Opportunities for crime can be reduced



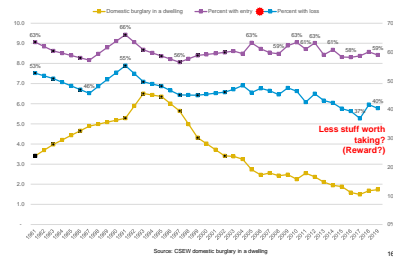
Note: Respondents could give more than one reason and therefore percentages may total more than 100%
Source: JIC DMR collection (2012 benchmark)

Source: Brown, 2015, Trends and Issues 456, Australian Institute of Criminology

2. Is security the whole story?

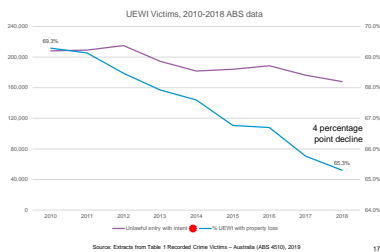


Also fewer burglaries with loss recorded



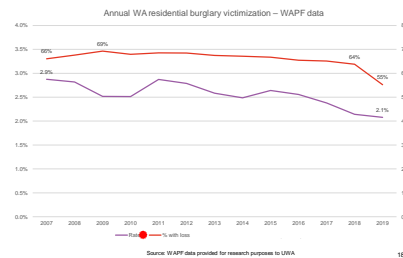
Source: CSER domestic burglary in a dwelling

Also fewer burglaries with loss recorded



Source: Extracts from Table 1 Reported Crime Victims - Australia (ABS 4010, 2019)

Also fewer burglaries with loss recorded



Source: WAPF data provided for research purposes to UWA

Why are people getting in and not taking things?



1. Opportunities play a role in causing all crime
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6. Some products offer more tempting crime opportunities



- Not all products are equally at risk for theft
- Products are more attractive to thieves when they are
 - C oncealable – easier to remove, transport, and dispose
 - R emovable – you have to take it to steal it
 - A vailable – macro-, meso-, and micro-level availability
 - V aluable – without value, it is not worth stealing
 - E njoyable – relates to disposability of items – greater demand
 - D isposable – stolen goods are generally converted into cash/drugs

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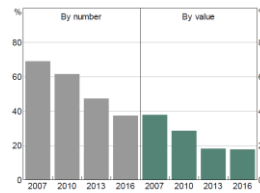


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- CRAVED items can change over time as a function of market forces (the life-cycle theory, Wells-Smith and Burrell, 2005, Brit.J.Crim)
 - Stable CRAVED – jewellery, gold, cash
 - Variable CRAVED – small electronic goods, clothes

Is the decline in cash use contributing to the trends?

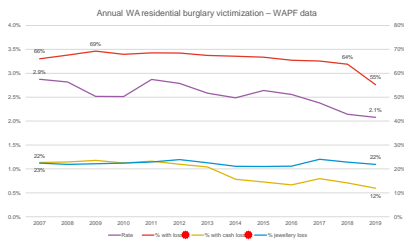


Figure 13: Cash Payments
Per cent of consumer payments



Source: RBA calculations, based on data from Global Datastream, Boies and Roy Morgan Research

Cash declines, jewellery stable...



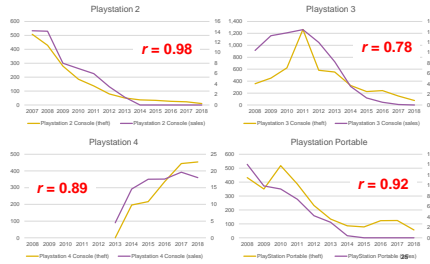
Source: WAPF data provided for research purposes to UWA

What about the influence of a shortening product life cycle?

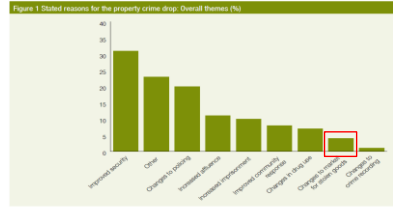


- "Technology based commodities such as mobile phones and computers have shorter innovation cycle so that the previous generation becomes obsolete faster, either functionally or psychologically."
 - Lebraton & Tuma (2006) A quantitative approach to assessing the profitability of car and truck tire remanufacturing. Int J Production Economics*
- "Product life cycle in electronic industry is shorter than before due to technology advances, and as a result, an outdated product could reach its end-of-use even if it is still in a good condition."
 - Hueth (2011) An inventory control model with consideration of remanufacturing and product life cycle. Int J Production Economics*
- Implications for the market-side (value/disposability) of CRAVED

What about the influence of a shortening product life cycle?



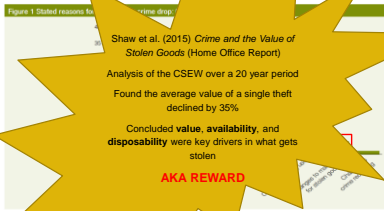
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Note: Respondents could give more than one answer and therefore percentages may total more than 100%.

Source: Brown, 2015, Trends and Issues 456, Australian Institute of Criminology

What about the influence of a shorter product life cycle?



Note: Respondents could give more than one answer and therefore percentages may total more than 100%.

Source: AC DUMA collection 2017 (pre-pilot)

Brown, 2015, Trends and Issues 456, Australian Institute of Criminology

3. How else can we explore this? What do offenders have to say?

The DUMA surveys as a source of information



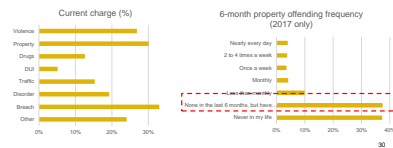
- Drug Use Monitoring in Australia (DUMA) survey
 - Established 1999
 - Quarterly survey of police detainees at multiple sites across Australia
 - Participation voluntary and confidential
 - Independent of police – administered by trained researchers
- DUMA stolen goods survey addenda undertaken 7 times since 2002

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02
06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02
06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02
06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02
06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02
06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02
06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02	06/02
- N = 6,079 arrestees across the 7 iterations
- 21% said they had stolen something in the last 12 months
 - Of these, 13% stole daily and 49% stole less than once a month

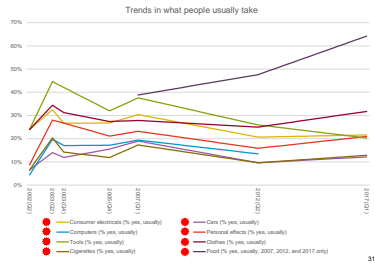
Who participated?



- 84% male
- Average age 31 years
- 17% Indigenous
- 14% spent time in youth detention
- 40% had previously been in prison

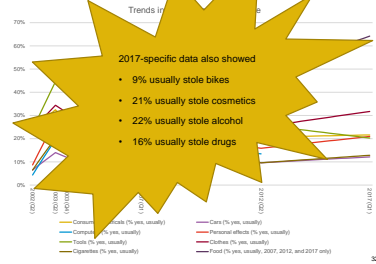


What did they prefer to take?



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What did they prefer to take?



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Where did they prefer to take things from?



Sampling period	Shop (%)	House (%)	Public place (%)	Car (%)	Person (%)
2002-2012 weighted avg.					
2017-specific					
Consumer electricals (22%)					
Cars (12%)					
Bikes (9%)					
Personal effects (21%)					
Tools (15%)					
Cash (20%)					
Cosmetics (21%)					
Clothes (32%)					
Cigarettes (13%)					
Alcohol (22%)					
Food (64%)					
Drugs (16%)					

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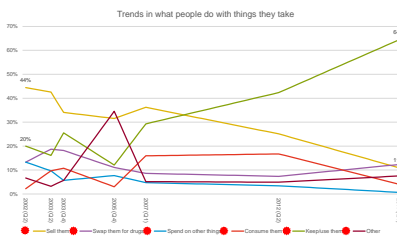
Where did they prefer to take things from?



Sampling period	Shop (%)	House (%)	Public place (%)	Car (%)	Person (%)
2002-2012 weighted avg.	66	12			11
2017-specific					
Consumer electricals (22%)	81				
Cars (12%)		44	39		17
Bikes (9%)		23	69		
Personal effects (21%)	45	19		10	16
Tools (15%)	55	14			18
Cash (20%)	13	23	13	13	23
Cosmetics (21%)	87				10
Clothes (32%)	96				2
Cigarettes (13%)	53	11		11	26
Alcohol (22%)	94				
Food (64%)	98				
Drugs (16%)		22			74

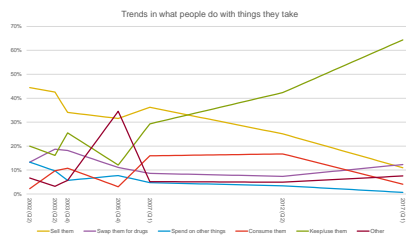
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What did they do with the things they took?



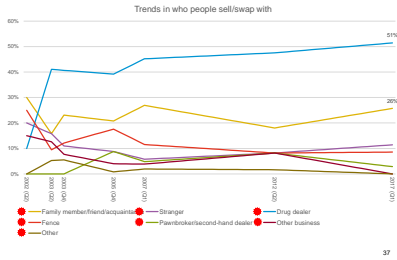
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What did they do with the things they took?



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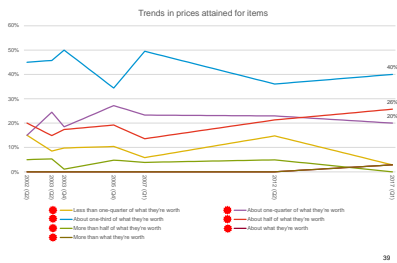
Who did they sell/trace the things they took with?



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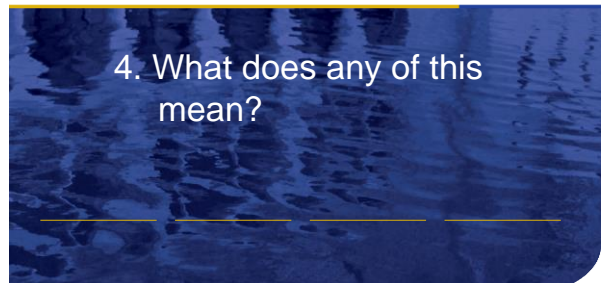
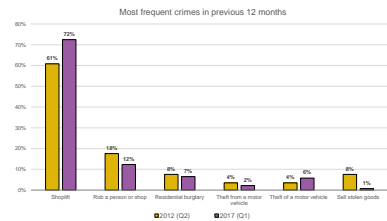
How much did they get for the things they took?



How much did they get for the things they took?



How does this relate to offending patterns?



4. What does any of this mean?

Summing it up



- Burglary continues to decline
 - Attempts increasing – risk/effort
 - Entry with no loss increasing – reduced reward
- Who were our arrestees?
 - 10% offending at least weekly but one-third not for the last 6-months
- Target selection
 - Huge preference for shops over houses
 - Increases in food/clothes/personal consumables
 - Declines in electrical/computing
- Use of goods – increases in 'keeping' and declines in 'selling'
- Selling to – drug dealers and people they know
 - Some indication internet being used
 - Value consistent and low – typically $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{5}$ of original value

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Implications for theory



- Reducing reward is likely reducing offender motivation to commit burglaries
- This idea is compatible with the security hypothesis (risk/effort)
- Also compatible with explanations of offending that draw on cognitive psychology (domain-specific expertise) and economics
 - Offenders have reduced opportunity to 'learn' how to be an effective burglar – fewer available targets (macro- and meso-level) and less chance to gain financial reward
 - A no-result burglary and/or failed attempts to sell items that are stolen may well **influence the perceived utility** of burglary
 - Reducing the attractiveness of engaging in this crime in the future

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Practical implications



- Clear implications for targeted prevention interventions
- Continue to design-in/create techniques to reduce disposability of stolen goods
 - e.g., phone kill switches, immobilizers, preferred purchasers of second hand metal, bike registers
- Disrupt stolen goods markets (traditional and emerging e-markets)
 - The **market reduction approach** (see Sutton)
 - Think '**crime scripts**' and link with drug dealers as fences
- Potential for long-term sustainable crime prevention without arrest or conviction (much like car immobilisers)

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Where to next?



- Use available data to monitor trends
- Find out more about the stolen goods market in Australia
 - The more we know, the more we can do to disrupt it
- Explore what is **increasing in houses and shops**
- Compare these signatures with other jurisdictions

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Thank you



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