

**LODGING SECURITY AND CRIMES AGAINST
TOURISTS IN A DEVELOPING NATION:
FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF ESTABLISHMENT
OWNERS AND MANAGERS IN TOBAGO**

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In recent years, Tobago, a popular tourist island destination in the southern Caribbean, experienced steady and substantial increases in recorded crimes against tourists. As a part of an assessment of the overall crime problem, we surveyed the owners and managers of resorts, hotels, villas, and guesthouses in two high-crime areas. The survey focused on security measures at the establishments and solicited perceptions of the nature and prevalence of crimes targeting tourists. The results reveal that lodging establishments—particularly villas and guesthouses—provide minimal security for guests, and crimes against tourists at these lodging establishments were not rare events. Further, although tourists staying in guesthouses had a higher likelihood of victimization than those staying in hotels and resorts, both burglaries and robberies were concentrated in a small number of hotels and resorts. Respondents from various types of establishments agreed that tourists become victims of crimes because they represent low-risk targets, often engage in risky behaviors, and are too willing to trust local residents. Establishment managers also suggested that offenders do not fear arrest by the police because convictions are quite rare. We suggest that routine police patrols of neighborhoods where lodging establishments are concentrated, coupled with a more expeditious response to calls for service and immediate arrests of identified suspects, would deter offenders and protect potential victims. However, long term improvements in lodging security coupled with focused community policing, problem-solving approaches, and situational crime prevention strategies would likely be effective at the most crime-prone establishments in Tobago.

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Introduction

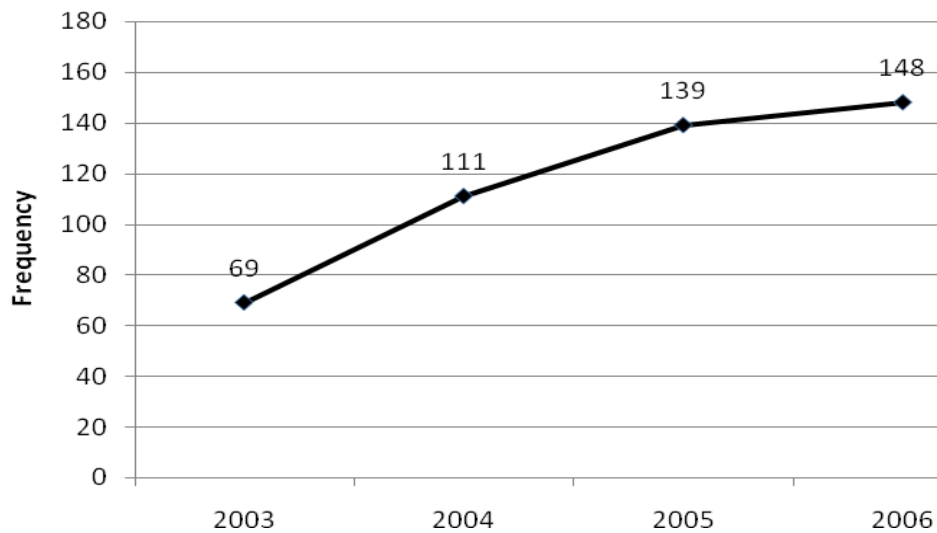
Although tourists who flock to the islands of the Caribbean are primarily interested in having fun and relaxing, they are also concerned about their safety and security (Bach, 1996). Tourists are reluctant to travel to countries where overall crime rates are high and where crimes against tourists are common. Government officials are similarly concerned about ensuring that tourists are not victimized and that the crimes that do occur are cleared expeditiously. This study explores crime, perceptions of crime, and perceptions of security through interviews of lodging establishment owners and managers in Tobago, a popular tourist destination in the southern Caribbean.

As is the case in other Caribbean islands, travel and tourism is vitally important to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that one in five Trinidad and Tobago jobs in 2007 would be in the travel and tourism industry and that the industry would experience 15 percent growth (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2007). This projected rate of growth ranks Trinidad and Tobago ahead of several other Caribbean nations, including the Bahamas, Saint Lucia, and Aruba. Further, the projected growth rate of travel and tourism in Trinidad and Tobago over the next ten years is expected to exceed overall tourism growth in the Caribbean. The WTTC reported in 2005 that travel and tourism was particularly important for Tobago, accounting for nearly 60 percent of total island employment and 46 percent of Tobago's Gross Domestic Product (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2005).

The vibrant and growing tourism industry in Trinidad and Tobago, however, may be jeopardized by rising crime rates, and particularly by increases in crimes that target tourists and other visitors. Increasing crime rates may be especially problematic in

Tobago, where, as noted above, travel and tourism plays such an instrumental role in the local economy. As [Figure 1](#) shows, crimes against tourists in Tobago more than doubled from 2003 to 2006, although the number of crimes remains relatively low. This increase led both the United Kingdom and the United States to issue warnings about travel to Tobago.

Figure 1
Recorded Crimes Against Tourists Between 2003 and 2006



Source: Trinidad and Tobago police station crime registers.

In July of 2007, for example, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the United Kingdom issued a travel advisory that warned potential visitors about violent crimes in Tobago, suggesting that: You should be aware that there are high levels of violent crime, especially shootings and kidnappings; British nationals have been victims of violent attacks, particularly in Tobago where law enforcement is weak (British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2007). A similar warning was issued by the U.S. Department of State: In Tobago, the media have reported

an increase in the incidence of violent crimes. While local authorities have announced increased measures to fight crime, the U.S. Embassy advises that when making reservations at private accommodations, visitors should ensure that 24-hour security is provided. There have been reports of home invasions in the Mt. Irvine area, and robberies occurring on isolated beaches in Tobago. Visitors to Tobago should ensure that all villas or private homes have adequate security measures (United States Department of State, 2007).

In response to increasing crime and the warnings about travel to Tobago, the Trinidad and Tobago government launched an effort to reduce crimes against tourists in Tobago. This study reports the results from one part of a broader tourist crime diagnosis process that included structured and semi-structured interviews with visitors, residents, and business owners; on-site data collection; systematic observations of tourist activities in high-crime areas; and reviews of police and court policies and procedures for responding to tourist crimes. This study examines and analyzes the perceptions held by the owners and managers of resorts, hotels, villas and guest houses and considers security and safety in around these lodging locations.¹

To our knowledge, this is the first study of crimes against tourists based on the assessments of owners and managers of lodging establishments, who are in a unique position to provide information about the safety and security of their establishments and their guests and the prevalence of crimes in against those guests. The overall objective is to describe the steps that owners and managers of lodging establishments take to ensure safety and security in and around their properties, and to compare security

¹ We refer to these various lodging types as “establishments.” Guest houses are defined as structures that contain fewer than 14 rooms available for short-term rent or occupation.

measures across various types of establishments. We also examine establishment owners' and managers' perceptions of the nature and prevalence of crimes against tourists in Tobago, as well as their assessments of the factors that lead to victimization of tourists. The findings offer some direction for governments and police with respect to working with establishment owners and managers to prevent tourist crimes from negatively affecting the tourism industry.

Literature Review

Research on Caribbean Crime and Crimes Against Tourists

There has been a dramatic increase in crime—particularly violent crime—in the Caribbean and in Trinidad and Tobago since 1999. In fact, the Caribbean region recently had the highest murder rate in the world (The United Nations and The World Bank, 2007) and both property crime and violent crime have increased significantly in many Caribbean countries since 1970 (Harriott, 2002). In Trinidad and Tobago, specifically, overall crime rates have risen substantially, and the number of homicides rose 159 percent from 2001-2007. Further, in Trinidad and Tobago crime stories frequently occupy the front pages of newspapers, generate heated discussions by radio and television hosts, and consume the time and energy of political leaders. In many respects, crime may be the single most pressing social issue facing Trinidad and Tobago.

Although the economic impact of increasing crime rates has not been quantified, it is clear that crime, real or perceived, does affect tourism. Cities and countries with increasing crime rates will have fewer visitors and reduced tourism income (Ferreira and Harmse, 2000). In fact, reductions in tourism resulting from concerns about

crime have been documented in developing nations in the South Pacific and in the Caribbean (Levantis and Gani, 2000).

Regardless of the reality of crimes against tourists, the mere perception that a country is dangerous is sometimes enough to discourage potential visitors (Pelfrey, 1998; King, 2003). Although the probability of criminal victimization in the Caribbean is rather low for tourists (see King, 2003), media coverage of violent crimes or escalating crime rates may nevertheless negatively impact tourism and visitation. According to workers in the tourism industry, crime concerns were perceived as the primary problem affecting tourism in Jamaica (Dunn and Dunn, 2002), and evidence suggests that crime discouraged some vacationers from visiting that country (Alleyne and Boxil, 2003). Caribbean tourists might be more likely to be victims of property crime (de Albuquerque and Elroy, 1999), but reports of tourists who have been victims of violent crime can be particularly harmful for business and commerce. Apart from the effects of the victimization experiences on the tourists and their families, police responses to reported crimes also appear to influence tourists' decisions to return to a particular destination (Holcomb, 1985) and to engage in certain types of recreational activities.

*Routine "Tourist" Activities Theory
and Tourists as Suitable Targets*

Routine activities theory suggests that criminal acts are most likely to occur when suitable targets, motivated offenders, and the absence of capable guardians interact in a particular place and time (Clarke and Felson, 1993; Cohen and Felson, 1979). When considered within this context, it is clear that tourists, for a variety of reasons, are very suitable targets (Crotts, 2003).

First, tourists are desirable targets for motivated offenders, who assume that they will be less likely than local residents to press charges (Allen, 1999). Second, tourists often carry high-value items (e.g., jewelry, cash, cameras, cell phones, and other electronics) and frequently leave those items unattended in lodging establishments that may or may not be secure. Third, tourists are highly visible targets; they typically dress and behave differently than local residents and they stay and recreate in known tourist areas. Fourth, tourist destinations include environments that are readily accessible to motivated offenders, including nightclubs, dimly lit or poorly managed lodging establishments or parking lots, isolated beaches, and other insecure locations. Many of these tourist destinations are crime hotspots in and of themselves, and the addition of tourists may further increase the propensity for criminal activity.

Finally, some tourists, particularly younger travelers and those without children (Allen, 1999), participate in high-risk recreational activities including gambling, sexual activity, legal and illegal substance use, and late-night partying at nightclubs or on isolated beaches. These “routine tourist activities” increase risk for criminal victimization, as does general carelessness and unfamiliarity with local territories and behavioral practices (Glensor and Peak, 2004).

In some locations, including Spain, Barbados, Miami, Florida, and Hawaii, tourists have been victimized at higher rates than local residents (Harper, 2001; de Albuquerque and McElroy, 1999; Chesney-Lind and Lind, 1986).² Evidence is also available to suggest that tourist locations attract criminals and create unplanned opportunities for offending. Further, tourist locations

² The evidence of increased crime rates in tourist locations is hardly conclusive, as other studies have found no differences in victimization rates between tourists and local residents (see Pelfrey, 1998).

sometimes suffer from higher reported crime rates compared with other areas, although these rates may be misleading because calculations are sometimes based on local populations only, which do not include visitors (Reeder and Brown, 2005).

Schiebler, Crotts, and Hollinger (1996) used routine activities theory to examine crimes against tourists in ten Florida (United States) counties. The routine activity measures used in this study included the estimated number of visitors (suitable targets), a variety of crime and community demographic measures (motivated offenders and control variables), and the number of law enforcement officers, security officers, and the ratio of both law enforcement and security officers to the number of citizens (capable guardians). The authors of this study found that whereas neither the number of visitors nor the indicators of motivated offenders predicted crimes against tourists, the measures of capable guardianship had significant, but positive, effects on tourist crimes. Although this finding seems inconsistent with routine activities theory, it could reflect the reactive nature of law enforcement; that is, as crimes against tourists increase, more police and security guards are deployed (Crotts, 2003). More importantly, this measure of capable guardianship (the ratio of law enforcement and security officers to citizens) may lack content validity, since tourists are “capably guarded” in other formal and informal ways.

*Lodging Establishments –
Capable Guardians or Crime “Hot Dots”*

An important component of tourist guardianship and protection is the security measures in and around hotels (see Rutherford and McConnell, 1987; 1991), motels, guest houses, rental homes, and other temporary housing facilities. To the extent that lodging establishments are well-protected, the perceived suitability of

tourists as targets is theoretically reduced. Further, from a routine activities perspective, lodging establishment owners can prevent crimes by protecting potential victims in and around the property, adequately securing the property (i.e., potential crime locations), and creating physical and social distance between potential victims and offenders. Research indicates that lodging establishments are often the primary settings for tourist victimizations (Allen, 1999; Schiebler, Crotts and Hollinger, 1996). Further, some studies have found that the specific types of accommodations are linked to victimization (Barker, Page and Meyer, 2002).

A study conducted in the United States, for example, found that establishment age, size, location within the city or country, and room rates were all linked to visitor safety and security; older, smaller, economy, and resort motels were least likely to have adequate safety and security features (Enz and Taylor, 2002). Therefore, these settings might be considered crime generators and/or "hot dots," which are the specific locations within broader crime hot spots that are particularly vulnerable and are thus repeat victimization locations (Clarke and Eck, 2005; Kuhns and Leach, 2008).

Other research suggests that safety and security are important considerations for potential tourists and for the tourism industry at large. For example, a survey of 930 hotel guests found that women and frequent travelers were more likely than other respondents to support additional security measures, and guests, in general, were willing to pay higher prices for increased security (Feickert, Verma, Plaschka, and Sev, 2006). A survey of elderly travelers suggested that some security features (i.e., emergency numbers by the bed, well-lit hallways, security chains on the doors, closed circuit TV systems, advisories on safe and unsafe

practices and areas) were viewed as more important than other common safety features, including armed security officers (Shortt and Ruys, 1994). In yet another study of 166 tourists in Florida, overall perceptions of safety were dependent on a number of factors, including physical security devices at the hotels, the respondent's level of education, and routine visibility of law enforcement officers (Milman, Jones and Bach, 1999). Finally, King (2003) suggests that the two most important factors that might keep potential visitors from visiting Caribbean tourist destinations include crime and fear of harassment. As a result, secure lodging settings might be particularly important in these kinds of vacation environments.

The Current Study

Although there are a number of large hotels in Tobago, most of the lodging options for tourists are privately-owned rental homes, small guest houses, cottages, and condos or apartments. These smaller establishments, which typically do not utilize the security features that are standard in larger hotels, may be especially vulnerable locations for crimes against tourists. We therefore focus on Tobago lodging establishments as potential tourist crime locations. We examine the security measures used in these establishments, the link between security measures and crime, the perceptions of managers and owners regarding the nature of tourist crimes, and the response of the police.

Methodology

Preliminary interviews with police leadership and lodging personnel suggested that Old Grange and Crown Point are the areas in Tobago where most tourists stay and where most crimes against tourists occur. Official crime reports confirmed this: 45 percent of all reported crimes against tourists were reported to the

Old Grange police station and 21 percent were reported to the Crown Point police station.³ We therefore designed a sampling strategy that focused on villas (villas are essentially houses or other single-family, stand-alone rental structures), guest houses (which had more than one rental property contained within a single building or structure), hotels and resorts in these two areas.⁴

Sampling Frame

We used four lists of hotels, guest houses, and villas to construct the sampling frame. The first was a list of realty agencies that managed villas. We contacted these companies and included those currently renting vacation properties in the sampling frame. The second was a list of 20 hotels, guest houses, and villas prepared by the House of Assembly, Department of Tourism, Research and Development. The third was a list of over 400 properties that we compiled from tourism websites including <http://www.mytobago.info/>. A number of villa managers indicated that this particular website was likely to have the most comprehensive list of lodging establishments. Finally, we used a list of lodging establishments that had been compiled by the Tobago Hotel Association Membership (THAM).

We merged these four lists and eliminated establishments found on more than one list. We also eliminated establishments that

³ We were unable to find population estimates for the Old Grange and Crown Point areas. Therefore, crime rates are not provided. However, Figure 1 illustrates that the reported raw numbers of crimes against tourists more than doubled between 2003 and 2006.

⁴ We initially considered including bars and restaurants in our study. However, there were only three primary bars that attracted tourists on a regular basis, and anecdotal evidence gathered onsite suggested that there is minimal night life in Tobago beyond these bars. Further, our reviews of the TTPS crime reports suggested that restaurants were not frequent tourist victimization spots. The bars were in places where tourist crimes tended to originate in some situations. However, many of those potential incidents should have been captured within the context of our establishment sampling process since many of these bars are also located in hotels.

were no longer in business, as well as those where we were unable to reach anyone regarding their willingness to participate. This process resulted in a final initial sampling frame of 374 eligible establishments.

*Survey Development and
Dissemination Process*

Using the tourist crime literature and previous studies examining security measures in hotels as a general guide, we developed a survey instrument that focused on the existence of security measures, the nature and prevalence of crimes against tourists, and the response of the police to crimes against tourists at or near the establishments.

More specifically, the survey was designed to gather data on 1) the general characteristics of the establishment (age, location, size in rooms, pricing category, and type of establishment); 2) the physical security measures currently in use (locks, lighting, remote monitoring, controlled access, check-in procedures); 3) security measures in parking areas (security personnel, lighting, controlled access, remote monitoring); 4) personnel security (armed or unarmed guards; training; procedures used in responding to crime); 5) administrative and procedural tasks related to security (monitoring of crime in the area, systems used to advise guests, written policies and procedures, use of background checks for employees, methods for recording crimes); and 6) measures of tourist crimes in the past year; and 7) perceptions of police responses to those offenses.

The questions on establishment characteristics were often ordinal or underlying interval response categories that required checking a box or occasionally filling in a number (e.g., number of crimes). The questions on establishment security were "Yes" or "No"

questions (the specific measure was either used or not) as were the questions associated with police response.⁵

The survey was administered from May through July of 2007. We used several different dissemination methods because we believed it would be difficult to reach a large number of property managers with any one particular method and because mailed surveys typically produce lower response rates. As a first step, we asked the leaders of THAM to email the survey to hotel managers on their registered list; this process, however, did not generate high numbers of responses (about 7% of completed surveys). Further, due to privacy concerns, THAM was unable to release the list of names (or email addresses) of their members that received the survey using this method. We also left copies of surveys with seven individuals who managed larger numbers of properties, and asked them to complete a survey for each of the hotels, guest houses, and villas they managed. The completed surveys were then either mailed back to us (in just one or two cases) or retrieved by the research team on a subsequent visit to Tobago (about 2%).

Ultimately, the most effective dissemination process was to hand-deliver surveys to the owners and managers of the villas, guest houses and hotels and request that they complete the survey at that time. In situations where literacy and language challenges arose, we read the survey to the respondent and recorded his/her answers. The end result was that the majority of the surveys (over 90%) were completed in a face-to-face interview setting rather than as a self-administered data collection process. This methodology likely improved overall response rates and the validity of responses, as research staff were able to clarify

⁵ A copy of the survey is available upon request from the first author.

confusing language and otherwise assist with survey comprehension and completion.

We received completed, usable surveys from 200 of the 374 establishments, for an overall representative/response rate of 54 percent. To further clarify, 63.4 percent (237) of owners/managers completed the survey, although some were not usable because the identified establishment was not a lodging facility (e.g., it was a realtor or a rental company). In addition, only one respondent refused to participate in the study. The rest of the potentially eligible and identified establishments were not included for the following reasons; no one was present when we stopped by at 15 (4%) of the establishments; we could not find 85 (22.7%) of the establishments within the allotted research time; there were 17 (4.5%) establishments that were closed; we dropped off surveys at 13 (3.5%) establishments but were unable to follow up or retrieve them within the allotted research time; and six (1.6%) establishments were otherwise excluded from the final analyses. Overall, the response rate compares quite favorably with the Feickert et al. (2006) response rate of 23 percent and the Milman et al. (1999) response rate of 26 percent among hotel guests, and the King (2003) response rate of less than 22 percent among travel agents and agencies. Given that our final sample includes over 50 percent of the tourist lodging establishments in Tobago's two primary tourist areas, we believe that our results can be reasonably generalized to the island of Tobago.

Results

Summary of Survey Findings

Table 1 provides descriptive information about the Tobago lodging establishments included in the current analyses. The

sample contains only 9 (3%) establishments with 40 or more units and only 33 (15%) with 20 to 39 units. In contrast, 43 percent of the establishments have only one unit and 24 percent have two to five units. The overrepresentation of establishments with five or fewer units is largely due to the number of villas and guest houses in the sample. Most (76%) of the establishments are more than seven years old. With the exception of hotels and unclassified establishments, the majority are mid-priced. Relatively small percentages of guest houses (14%) and hotels (15%) are classified as luxury or upscale.⁶

Establishment Security

Table 2 presents data regarding the existence of security measures at these establishments. Approximately two thirds of the guest houses, half of the hotels, and a third of the villas have security measures that provide more than minimal security. Approximately half (49%) of the establishments in the sample, in other words, do not provide more than minimal security for their guests. Across all types of lodging establishments, the most frequent types of security measures are adequate lighting in the establishment (91%) and the parking area (80%), and regular inspection of locks (79%). More than half of all establishments also control access to guest areas (59%) and parking lots (55%). Very few establishments, on the other hand, use remote monitoring or surveillance equipment in guest areas or parking lots.

Although there are few differences across establishment types on some of the security measures (e.g., use of adequate lighting),

⁶ The development of the survey items was based in part on previous studies, some of which used the terms mid-priced, luxury, upscale, etc. Interviewers did not, however, attempt to define these terms for respondents, although all of the terms were read in cases where the data collection process occurred as an interview. We recognize that these are subjective assessments of the price and, to some degree, the quality of establishments.

Table 1
Descriptive Information About
Lodging Establishments in the Current Study.¹

	Total	Villa	Guest House	Hotel	Resort	Other
<i>Number of Units</i>						
1	97 (43%)	93 (77%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (22%)
2 – 5	53 (24%)	26 (22%)	22 (44%)	1 (5%)	1 (4%)	3 (33%)
6 – 10	17 (8%)	1 (1%)	12 (24%)	2 (10%)	1 (4%)	1 (11%)
11 – 19	16 (7%)	0 (0%)	10 (20%)	4 (20%)	0 (0%)	2 (22%)
20 – 39	33 (15 %)	0 (0%)	4 (8 %)	10 (50%)	17 (68%)	1 (11%)
40 – 74	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	1 (4%)	0 (0 %)
75+	7 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	5 (20%)	0 (0 %)
<i>Age of Establishment</i>						
Less than 7 Yrs	53 (24%)	32 (27%)	12 (25 %)	3 (15%)	2 (8%)	4 (36%)
7 – 14 yrs	116 (52%)	66 (56%)	18 (37 %)	7 (35%)	19 (76%)	6 (55%)
15 – 21 yrs	24 (11%)	7 (6 %)	12 (25 %)	2 (10%)	2 (8%)	1 (9%)
22 – 28 yrs	11 (5%)	4 (3 %)	4 (8 %)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
29 +	19 (9%)	9 (8 %)	3 (6 %)	5 (25%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)
<i>Price Point</i>						
Luxury	35 (16%)	26 (22 %)	3 (7 %)	1 (5%)	5 (20%)	0 (0%)
Upscale	34 (16%)	26 (22 %)	3 (7 %)	2 (10%)	1 (4%)	2 (22%)
Midprice	126 (58 %)	59 (50 %)	31 (69 %)	13 (65%)	19 (76%)	4 (44%)
Economy	17 (8%)	5 (4 %)	7 (16 %)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)
Extended Stay	5 (2%)	2 (2 %)	1 (2 %)	2 (1 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Location</i>						
Old Grange	153 (65%)	83 (69 %)	24 (48 %)	10 (50 %)	23 (92 %)	4 (33%)
Crown Point	84 (35%)	38 (31 %)	26 (52 %)	10 (50 %)	2 (8%)	8 (67%)

¹ Column percentages are reported.

Table 2
Physical Security Measures at Lodging Establishments.¹

	Total	Villa	Guest House	Hotel	Resort
<i>Physical Security Measures</i>					
Systems provide more than minimal security	113 (51 %)	79 (66 %)	15 (31 %)	10 (56 %)	5 (20 %)
Regularly inspect locking systems	171 (79 %)	106 (91 %)	36 (77 %)	14 (78 %)	6 (24 %)
Provide adequate Lighting	203 (91 %)	104 (87 %)	47 (94 %)	19 (95 %)	24 (96 %)
Use remote monitoring / surveillance	44 (20 %)	4 (3 %)	14 (28 %)	5 (25 %)	19 (76 %)
Control access to guest areas	131 (59 %)	58 (49 %)	28 (56 %)	16 (80 %)	24 (96 %)
Check photo ID at check in	66 (30 %)	13 (11 %)	27 (56 %)	16 (84 %)	6 (24 %)
<i>Parking Area Security</i>					
Assign security Personnel	87 (39 %)	52 (44 %)	13 (26 %)	13 (68 %)	7 (28 %)
Provide adequate Lighting	182 (80 %)	94 (78 %)	38 (76 %)	17 (85 %)	23 (92 %)
Control access	125 (55 %)	62 (51 %)	24 (48 %)	12 (60 %)	21 (84 %)
Use remote monitoring / surveillance	18 (8 %)	4 (3 %)	8 (16 %)	3 (15 %)	1 (4 %)

¹ Column percentages are reported; the values for the "other" category of establishments are not reported but are included in the count of the "total" column.

villas and guest houses are substantially less likely than hotels to require photo identification at check-in or utilize security measures that restrict access to guest areas and parking lots.

Table 3 presents descriptive information about the use and training of security personnel and the use of various security procedures. Most establishments, regardless of type, do not employ armed security guards. Unarmed security guards are more likely to be found in resorts (96%), hotels (85%) and villas (68%) than in guesthouses (30%), and guesthouses and villas are less likely than hotels and resorts to train staff on methods of preventing crimes against guests or ways of responding to criminal events. Although many establishments reported that they monitor crime in the area and have a system in place for advising guests to avoid dangerous or high-crime areas, most, with the exception of resorts, do not have written policies detailing actions to be taken in the event of a security concern. Villas and guesthouses are also less likely than hotels or resorts to perform background checks on employees or to have procedures for recording crimes or unusual events at the establishment or in the local area.

As an additional measure of each establishment's security, we computed a summed security score that tabulated the number of different security measures used by the establishment. This variable counted the existence of 12 security measures (see Appendix A), making the theoretical range 0 to 12. The average

Table 3
Security Personnel and Procedures Utilized by Lodging Establishments.¹

	Total	Villa	Guest House	Hotel	Resort
<i>Personnel and Training</i>					
Unarmed security patrols guest areas	114 (62 %)	81 (68 %)	15 (30 %)	17 (85 %)	24 (96 %)
Armed security patrols guest areas	12 (5 %)	7 (6 %)	1 (2 %)	4 (20 %)	0 (0 %)
Armed security work in high crime areas	10 (5 %)	6 (5 %)	2 (4 %)	2 (13 %)	0 (0 %)
Train armed security personnel	11 (5 %)	2 (2 %)	4 (9 %)	2 (13 %)	2 (8 %)
Train staff on reporting and dealing with crime	104 (47 %)	42 (35 %)	19 (39 %)	13 (68 %)	25 (100 %)
<i>Security-Related Procedures</i>					
Monitor crime in area	163 (73 %)	91 (77 %)	27 (55 %)	11 (65 %)	24 (96 %)
System to advise guests of dangerous areas / crime	170 (77 %)	87 (73 %)	38 (81 %)	10 (59 %)	23 (92 %)
Written policy for action if security concern arises	59 (27 %)	22 (19 %)	10 (22 %)	3 (18 %)	21 (88 %)
Background checks for all staff	122 (56 %)	68 (59 %)	24 (49 %)	16 (84 %)	9 (36 %)
Background checks for all security personnel	87 (45 %)	46 (44 %)	9 (22 %)	7 (47 %)	23 (92 %)
Method for recording crime / unusual events at establishment and area	112 (51 %)	51 (44 %)	18 (38 %)	14 (78 %)	24 (96 %)
Receive crime reports/updates from police	41 (19 %)	3 (3 %)	8 (16 %)	8 (44 %)	21 (84 %)
Do you know how to get crime information from police	134 (60 %)	71 (60 %)	27 (54 %)	9 (50 %)	23 (92 %)

¹ Column percentages are reported; the values for the "other" category of establishments are not reported but are included in the count of the "total" column.

score for the establishments in our sample was 6.16 (SD = 2.24) and the median was 7.00. When we compared security scores across different types of establishments, we found significant differences ($F = 5.80, \alpha < .05$); guest houses (5.59) and villas (5.93) had significantly lower security scores than resorts (7.36) and hotels (7.88). The analysis also revealed statistically significant but small correlations between the number of security measures and the number of rental units ($r = .27$) and the age of the establishment ($r = .15$). Older establishments and those with more rental units utilized more security measures. On the other hand, there were no differences in the security scores of establishments located in the two police districts (Old Grange and Crown Point).

Crime at Establishments

The results of the survey confirm the importance of lodging establishments as locations for crimes against tourists. Approximately 43 percent (55 / 128 valid responses) of the owners and managers reported that a guest experienced some type of victimization in the year prior to the survey, and 26 percent (57 / 220 valid responses) indicated that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) responded to a crime at the establishment in that timeframe. Thirty-four out of 125 owners and managers (27%) reported at least one burglary in the year prior to the survey and 17 of 123 (14%) reported the occurrence of at least one violent crime (homicide, assault, sexual assault, and robbery). Overall, respondents reported that there were 76 burglaries and 35 violent crimes in and around these establishments in the year prior to the survey.

A more detailed investigation of those crimes reported in the survey shows that guests at some establishments were at a particularly high risk of victimization. For example, there were 25

burglaries reported at one establishment (33% of all burglaries) and six burglaries at two others, eight robberies occurred at one establishment (28% of all robberies) and six occurred at a second location; and finally all five non-sexual assaults reported by owners and managers were reported at one establishment. In fact, 49 percent of the 76 total burglaries occurred at three establishments and 48 percent of 29 total robberies occurred at two establishments.

The three establishments where the burglaries were concentrated are larger (75 to 149 units), older establishments with rooms that are mid-priced and above. Two of these high-incidence locations are resorts and the other is a hotel. One establishment utilizes ten of the security measures included in the composite scale, the second utilizes seven, and the third uses six. The two establishments where the robberies were concentrated, one of which was also the location of six burglaries, scored below the median on the number of security measures in place. One of these establishments was a mid-priced hotel with more than 75 rental units and the other was a luxury guest house with two to five rental units. Both establishments were older than 14 years. These high-incidence establishments are ideal candidates for focused police attention and situational crime prevention approaches.

There is an important limitation with the crime victimization measure used here. The establishment victimization measure is not risk adjusted. In other words, the victimization measure does not account for the number of guest-night stays at establishments. Using a risk adjusted measure is akin to calculating a crime rate, which is appropriate when comparing units of analysis that have different levels of risk. For instance, a small guest house that has 20 percent of the guest-night stays compared to a larger hotel faces a much smaller risk of victimization. If those two

establishments report comparable numbers of victimizations, the small guest house likely has a higher overall victimization risk. To capture victimization risk it is important for future research to adjust for the number of guest-night stays. In this study, however, those data were not available. Therefore, the current results must be interpreted with some caution since we were unable to adjust for differential risks associated with guest stay rates.

*Relationships between Crime Events
and Establishment Characteristics*

To determine whether guests at certain types of establishments were more likely to experience some type of victimization, we examined the relationships between lodging establishment characteristics, lodging security measures and the prevalence of criminal victimization. We found very few statistically significant differences. For example, the likelihood of victimization did not vary by police station district and did not vary systematically by either the typical room price point or the age of the establishment. Thirty-nine percent of the establishments in Old Grange (31 of 79) and 49 percent of those in Crown Point (24 of 49) reported that a guest experienced at least one crime event. The rate of victimization was 40 percent (6 of 15) for luxury, 53 percent (10 of 19) for upscale, 37 percent (29 of 78) for mid-priced, and 50 percent (5 of 10) for economy establishments; it was 64 percent (9 of 14) for establishments less than seven years old, but was 73 percent (11 of 15) for establishments between 15 and 21 years old, and 43 percent (6 of 14) for establishments that had been in existence for more than 28 years.

Two establishment characteristics—the type of establishment and the number of rental units—were related to the prevalence of criminal victimization. Reported victimization was substantially

lower for guests at resorts (29%; 7 of 24) than for guests at hotels (40%; 6 of 15), villas (42%; 26 of 62) and guest houses (61%; 14 of 23). Victimization was more likely at establishments with two to five units (74%; 14 of 19) than at those with one unit (38%; 20 of 53), 6 to 10 units (57%; 4 of 7), 11 to 9 units (50%; 6 of 12), or 20 or more units (28%; 10 of 35).

The findings are also mixed with respect to the relationships between security measures and victimization. Several of the security measures were not related to the prevalence of tourist victimization. For example, the likelihood of victimization was not affected by the existence of systems that provide more than minimal security; it was 44 percent (30 of 69) for establishments that reported having a system that provided more than minimal security and 40 percent (22 of 55) for establishments that reported not having such a system. The prevalence of victimization was also unrelated to whether the establishment controlled access to guest areas (39%; 32 of 82) or did not control access to these areas (49%; 22 of 45) or whether the establishment did (41%; 35 of 85) or did not (46%; 19 of 41) train staff on reporting and handling crimes against tourists.

A number of the security measures did affect the likelihood of guest victimization. As shown in Table 4, six of the statistically significant relationships are in the expected direction but two are not. The six security measures associated with a reduced likelihood of guest victimization are using security guards to patrol guest areas, providing adequate lighting in parking areas, controlling access to the parking areas, monitoring criminal activities in the area of lodging establishment operations, using a written policy to outline procedures and actions to take when a security concern comes to the establishment's attention, and using a method to record criminal and unusual activity in the area of the

establishment. Surprisingly, regularly inspecting locking systems and using remote surveillance systems to monitor parking areas were both associated with an increased likelihood that the establishment would report at least one tourist crime.

Table 4
Bivariate Relationship Between Security Measures
and Reporting at Least One Tourist Crime in the Previous 12 months.¹

<i>Security Measures</i>	<i>Reported a Victimization</i>
Security personnel patrol guest room areas	34 %
No security personnel to patrol guest room areas	69 %
Provide adequate lighting in the parking area	38 %
Do not provide adequate lighting in the parking area	80 %
Control access to the parking area to exclude unauthorized persons	37 %
Do not control access to the parking area to exclude unauthorized persons ($\alpha = .69$)	53 %
Monitor criminal activity in the area of operations	40 %
Do not monitor criminal activity in the area of operations	69 %
Have a written policy outlining procedures and actions if security concern arises	27 %
Do not have a written policy outlining procedures and actions if security concern arises	55 %
Have a method for recording criminal and unusual activity at establishment	32 %
Do not have a method for recording criminal and unusual activity at establishment	100 %
Regularly inspect locking systems	48 %
Do not regularly inspect locking systems	27 %
Use remote monitoring of the parking area	69 %
Do not use remote monitoring of the parking area	40 %

¹ Row percentages are reported in the table; all relationships significant at .05 with the exception of controlling access to the parking area ($\alpha = .69$).

*Factors that Affect the
Likelihood of Victimization*

The owners and managers were also asked two open-ended questions regarding the factors that affect the likelihood of tourist victimization. Specifically, they were asked why Tobago tourists became the victims of crime and what could be done to reduce the likelihood of victimization. Although some respondents attributed tourist crime to broader structural problems such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of education, most emphasized that tourists were suitable targets whose routine tourist activities placed them at increased risk. Respondents from all types of establishments indicated that tourists are victimized because they are “low risk/high reward” targets. Their summarized comments included the following:

- They are targeted by young guys who do not work and who think that the tourists are loaded with money;
- Tourists are perceived to have cash and valuables—they are easy targets;
- Basically, they think white people are all rich and that they are easy marks; there are too many people here who just sit around and do nothing, thinking that they can take advantage of people;
- Because they’ve got money, honey; more money and less risk;
- There are too many youth with nothing to do and a belief that tourists come here with their pockets full of money; they see them as easy targets.

Respondents also stated that tourists are victimized because they are too willing to trust local residents, are careless about their own safety, and often engage in risky behavior or mix with the wrong

crowd. The owner of one villa, for example, stated that tourists are easy targets “because they ignore our advice and go where they should not go.” Other respondents emphasized that tourists assume that the island is safe, that locals are friendly and, as a result, they “let their guard down.” As the manager of one guesthouse put it, “tourists are vulnerable to being taken in by overly-friendly locals and are victimized when they (tourists) take them (locals) to where they are staying.”

When we asked them what could be done about tourist victimization in Tobago, the owners and managers of the lodging establishments emphasized that tourists needed to be better educated about the risks of victimization and about measures they can take to increase their safety. One respondent stated that tourists should be told as soon as they get off the plane that “Tobago is not as safe as it might seem” and that they should be “warned about dangerous places and dangerous activities.” The manager of a guesthouse similarly said that “tourists need to use their common sense; they cannot simply befriend everyone they meet on the street—this is especially true of women, who need to understand that there are men and boys here who will take advantage of them.”

Another common theme was the need for improvements in police response to tourist crime and for “swift justice” in the courts. For example, one respondent stated that “the police service has to be retrained to deal with modern Tobago needs, responding to crime and collecting evidence properly.” Another respondent recommended that the law be changed “so that crimes against tourists get into court right away; now, they fly to London or wherever and don’t want to come back for trial.” Some respondents also mentioned that tourist victimization could be

reduced if lodging establishments had better security measures in place and if street lighting were improved.

Discussion

The focus of this study was crimes against tourists in Tobago, an island in the Caribbean that in recent years has experienced a substantial increase in crimes targeting tourists. Using data gleaned from surveys administered to the managers or owners of 200 lodging establishments in two high-crime areas, we examined the types of security measures utilized by these establishments, as well as respondents' perceptions of the nature and prevalence of crimes against tourists and their beliefs about the factors that could increase or decrease the likelihood of victimization. We also explored the relationships between establishment characteristics, security measures, and the likelihood of tourist victimization.

The results of our study indicate that many Tobago lodging establishments, particularly villas and guesthouses, provide minimal security for their guests. In fact, the most common "security measures" utilized by these establishments are ensuring that guest areas and parking lots are adequately lit and regularly inspecting locks (which was actually significantly associated with the likelihood that a tourist crime was reported during the past year). Very few establishments of any type employed armed guards, and unarmed guards are found in only two-thirds of villas and less than a third of guesthouses. Most establishments, regardless of type, do not use remote monitoring or surveillance equipment in guest areas or parking lots, and villas and guest houses are substantially less likely than hotels or resorts to require photo identification at check-in, perform background checks on employees or security guards, or train staff on preventing and responding to crimes against tourists. The summed security scores

for villas and guest houses were also significantly lower than those for hotels and resorts.

In the United States, many establishment owners and managers might be surprised to learn that there is an increasing expectation for them to provide security in and around their properties. Rutherford and McConnell (1991) summarized much of the case law (up through the early 1990s) on hotel security. In essence, larger hotels are, by law, required to install and inspect locking systems, provide adequate lighting in halls and other areas, control access to guest areas, use remote monitoring systems (in some situations), employ and train security personnel (and the security personnel must be armed if the hotel is located in a high crime area), train staff in safety and security procedures, monitor local crime activities, and establish processes for notifying guests of dangerous areas and/or known criminal activities around the hotel.

Further, it is clear that the responsibility for the safety and security of guests does not necessarily end at the property lines. United States courts have indicated that hotel operators must be cognizant of the crime patterns in the local vicinity and be prepared to respond accordingly “with due diligence” to ensure the safety of guests in and around the property (Rutherford and McConnell, 1987; 1991). In many situations, simply having written safety and security policies and providing visitors with crime and safety information is essentially enough to establish due diligence.

The fact that security measures are more limited at Tobago villas and guest houses might suggest that tourists staying in these types of establishments may be more vulnerable than those staying in hotels or resorts. Our findings, however, are not entirely consistent with this inference. Although we did find that

the likelihood that an establishment had experienced at least one crime against a tourist in the year before the survey was greater for guesthouses than for hotels and resorts (and for establishments with 2 to 5 units than for smaller or larger establishments), we also found that over 40 percent of *all* burglaries were concentrated at just two resorts and one hotel. The situation is further complicated by our finding that these three establishments had relatively high scores on our composite security index. The relative lack of security measures at villas and guest houses may make guests (or their rooms) suitable targets for victimization, but increased use of security measures at hotels and resorts does not necessarily protect guests from crimes such as burglary and robbery.

Our finding that establishments do not regularly perform background checks on employees or provide training to employees on responding to crimes against tourists also merits comment.⁷ The lack of background checks is significant because some owners and managers believed staff members and security personnel are sometimes directly or indirectly involved in crimes against tourists. Security and staff at lodging establishments are cognizant of tourists' travel habits, aware of the valuables and property they have with them, and often know when they will be leaving the property and the island.

In other words, staff and security personnel are often aware of routine tourist activities and recognize when tourists are most vulnerable. The situation is further exacerbated by employees' lack of training on how to respond to crimes against tourists, which can be a significant concern in situations where tourists were engaging in illegal or risky behavior at the time of the incident and thus are reluctant to report it to the police.

⁷ Some establishment managers reported that police did not always complete background checks when they were requested.

Establishment personnel who are informed of a tourist crime incident should be able to assist guests who have been victimized. However, the survey evidence shows that these personnel may not be adequately prepared to respond when these situations arise. This lack of preparation, however, may improve in the future. The Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (2006), which was fully established by July 2003, was developed:

To strengthen and intensify efforts to disrupt the capacity of terrorist networks to threaten the ability of individuals to travel and move safely between and recreate in Member States, by strengthening the coordination and provision of technical assistance in the establishment and implementation of and compliance with security standards and practices, including those related to tourist and recreational facilities.

As a result, safety and security preparation, training and established security standards at lodging establishments may improve in the near future in Tobago. Whether those improvements will impact crimes against tourists is, of course, unknown.

Currently, crimes against tourists at lodging establishments in Tobago are not rare events. More than 40 percent of the owners and managers of these establishments reported that at least one guest was victimized in the twelve months prior to the interview, and a fourth indicated that the police responded to a crime at their establishments.

In total, there were 76 burglaries and 35 violent crimes reported in these 200 establishments in the past year. Further, the incidence of crimes against tourists is concentrated at relatively few establishments; 40 percent of the burglaries occurred at just three

establishments and nearly half of all robberies occurred at only two establishments.

Clearly, some lodging establishments in Tobago can be characterized as crime "hot dots" (Kuhns and Leach, 2008) and/or particularly risky facilities (Clarke and Eck, 2007), which are ideal locations for increased police attention and situational crime prevention approaches (Clarke and Eck, 2005). This implication was confirmed by one establishment manager, who described a villa property that was the location of repeated tourist victimizations. This villa was located adjacent to a walking path that provided easy access to potential victims. The manager of the villa reported that the owners were considering selling the property and that some guests were encouraged to bring dogs with them for protection. It would be helpful if property owners ensured that managers and employees (including security personnel) are attentive to crime concerns, trained adequately, working and communicating with police, and aware of the liability risks that owners may face (Clarke and Eck, 2007; Chamard, 2006).

Consistent with past research, respondents from all types of establishments agreed that tourists become victims of crime because they represent low-risk targets (Crotts, 2003; Glensor and Peak, 2004). Similarly, managers of villas and guesthouses said tourists place themselves at risk for victimization by engaging in risky behavior and being too willing to trust locals while on vacation. They also stated that offenders know that the likelihood of arrest for victimizing tourists is low, since many tourists do not report the crimes to the police and those who do file a report often leave the island before an arrest can be made. Managers noted that offenders also believe that even if they are arrested, they will ultimately be released because the victim, who has returned to his

or her home country, is unlikely to return to Tobago to testify at trial. Establishment managers/owners recommended better educational programs for tourists on security risks and crime prevention methods, and that increased police patrols, better training of police, and higher clearance rates are vital to reducing tourist crimes.

We also heard several anecdotes from managers and owners about crime victims who had been treated poorly by police, crime scenes that were either botched or not fully processed, incomplete investigations, and other procedural inadequacies. For example, one manager told us that he had called the police to report a crime more than seven days before our interview but had not yet received a follow-up phone call. Even if we assume that these anecdotal accounts overstate the seriousness of the problem, it is clear that the Tobago police have an image problem with the owners and managers of lodging establishments. Tobago police managers should ensure that their officers receive community policing and customer service training and regularly meet and work with establishment owners to improve relationships and share information (Chamard, 2006).

Considered collectively, the results of our study suggest that crimes against tourists could be reduced by a strategic law enforcement approach targeting crime hot spots and/or hot dots. For a variety of reasons, tourists—and the lodging establishments where they stay—are vulnerable targets for both property and violent crimes. Routine police patrols of communities and neighborhoods where these establishments are concentrated, coupled with a more expeditious response to calls for service and immediate arrests of identified suspects, would help deter offenders and protect potential victims. There is some evidence that increased patrols would be effective. In May of 2006, a Joint

Task Force (JTF) composed of Coast Guard and Army personnel was established in Tobago. The task force mounted around-the-clock patrols on the island, provided their contact information to lodging managers, and responded to crimes when they were in a position to do so. The managers we interviewed held the JTF in high regard, suggesting that the officers were professional and responsive to the concerns of people visiting or living on the island. Unfortunately, the task force was disbanded in May 2007, a common concern when using short-term crackdown approaches to resolve systemic crime problems (Scott, 2004). Sustained community policing and problem solving efforts might improve conditions in the future.

Vacation destinations, such as Tobago, whose economies are closely coupled to the tourism industry, must respond aggressively to crimes against tourists. Doing so will require a multi-faceted strategy that involves tourism officials, local law enforcement, the owners and managers of lodging establishments and other businesses, and the providers of other services to tourists.

The kind of problem diagnosis and results described in this study can be a valuable launching pad for such multi-faceted interventions. Future research projects might expand the knowledge base by exploring the various measurement processes used to capture tourist crime data, including tourist visitation data, arrest and calls for service data, perception-based data, and anecdotal information, and providing clarity on the extent to which tourist crimes represent substantial real risk. Comparisons of rates of tourist crime versus other types of crimes should be encouraged and studies should also assess the extent to which tourists are victimized relative to locals and the extent to which tourists themselves engage in criminal acts while on travel.

Additional research should also focus on the security environment in and around lodging establishments (including integrating Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design concepts).

Further, focused studies on how police and criminal justice systems react to tourist crimes and how those reactions are perceived within and outside the tourist destination should also be pursued. Cross-country comparisons of tourist crime risks would further improve our understanding of the extent of the challenge. Arguably, the reputation of a tourist destination should not be linked to media-driven single events or rare phenomena. On the other hand, tourists should also be truthfully informed of the risks associated with their desired destinations and of the potential consequences of their routine tourist activities while on vacation.

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Appendix A**SURVEY ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE COUNT OF SECURITY MEASURES VARIABLE (0 = NO, 1 = YES):**

1. Systems provide more than minimal security
2. Regularly inspect locking systems
3. Provide adequate lighting
4. Use remote monitoring / surveillance
5. Control access to guest areas
6. Use a metal detector at entrances where guests access the establishment
7. Check photo ID at check in
8. Assign security personnel to the parking areas
9. Provide adequate lighting in the parking areas
10. Control access to the parking areas to exclude unauthorized persons
11. Security personnel (armed and/or unarmed) patrols guest areas
12. Train staff in procedures for reporting and dealing with crime