

# Goods targeted in thefts 'change with market values'

February 22 2016

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The more expensive an item, the more likely it is to be targeted by thieves and stolen, a report by a University of Warwick academic has revealed.

Report author Mirko Draca undertook the work for the Social Market Foundation. Called It's prices, stupid: Explaining falling [crime rates](#) in the UK - the study analyses monthly data over a 10-year period from the Metropolitan Police and the Office for National Statistics to try to establish a link between prices and crime.

And the findings show that the rise in the theft of goods such as mobile phones, bicycles, jewellery and the decline in audio equipment, TVs and DVDs taken from properties in London is indeed closely linked to price.

The research indicates that a 10% increase in prices is associated with a 3.5% increase in crime - showing criminals are quick to react to the changing value of consumer goods.

Dr Draca is based at the University's Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy (CAGE), a research centre with the Department of Economics. He said the findings suggest that "prices deserve serious further investigation as a main driver of crime across the UK".

He added: "The evidence presented here for London indicates that a strong relationship between prices and crime exists across a full range of goods.

"Falls in the value of key, commonly stolen goods appear to have driven down the returns to property crime."

The [report](#) also established that if criminals find it difficult or costly to adapt to and overcome technologies, such as Find My iPhone, this has the potential to kill off any theft incentives, as well as cost.

And the report said the police could look at predictive policing depending on market prices and whether they start to rise or fall - especially in the instance of items such as metals.

**More information:** [www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploa ... rime-in-uk-FINAL.pdf](http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/rime-in-uk-FINAL.pdf)

Provided by University of Warwick

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