Poor Safety:

Crime and Policing in South Africa's rural areas

Monograph No 47
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compared to previous years

Executive summary

Some 18 million people — more than 46% of South Africa's population — live in rural areas, and years of racial discrimination have ensured that this population are predominantly very poor, undereducated and underemployed.

While crime in the rural areas is commonly thought to be less extensive than in the more developed urban areas, surveys indicate that people living in rural areas are victimised at rates similar to those of their urban counterparts. While the overall chances of becoming a victim may be similar, the impact of victimisation may be more severe in rural areas. Without access to social services and other support, the rural poor are the least able to deal with the impact of crime.

The research conducted for this monograph surveyed 756 inhabitants of 40 predominantly African rural settlements in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, the Northern Province, the North-West and the Free State. Of these respondents, 56.9% were victims of at least one crime between July 1993 and July 1998.

The most common crime was stocktheft (16.9% of the sample), with burglary and violent crime — murder, sexual assault and assault — respectively affecting 15.6% and 13.1% of the respondents.

The majority of the victims of crime believed that, with the exception of stocktheft, crime was committed by people living in their areas. Indeed, 72% of the victims of violent crime indicated that they knew their offenders — 58% by name and 14% by sight.

This may explain the relatively high rate of reporting of crime in these areas, especially the high rate of reporting to the police. These rates indicate that, despite a very limited presence and poor visibility, the police are still viewed as the primary authorities for dealing with crime in the

rural areas.

However, there appears to be a general lack of confidence in the ability of the police to deal with crime and a widespread dissatisfaction with the service provided by the police. Less than a quarter of the respondents believed that the police were able to deal with crime in their areas.

This is primarily a result of the general weaknesses in policing in South Africa (limited resources, an overly centralised and bureaucratic hierarchy, a general lack of appropriate skills and training, and a dearth of managerial and investigative expertise), being compounded in the rural environment by the geographic isolation of many of these areas, the lack of infrastructure, the skewed allocation of resources and the capacity constraints experienced by both the police and the public.

Therefore, interventions aimed at enhancing the safety of people living in the deep rural areas should focus on improving policing rather than on developing the complex participatory, multi-agency social crime prevention programmes, which are either being implemented in, or planned for some of South Africa's urban areas. The critical resources and capacity for these kinds of programmes either do not exist, or are underdeveloped in the rural areas. Interventions focused on enhancing policing are thus most likely to have the greatest impact in the short to medium term. Furthermore, improved policing is the most preferred intervention of people living in these areas.

The limited police presence and infrastructural constraints mean that most of the interaction between the police and those whom they serve, occur at the police station when assistance is sought. Thus, policing in these areas is predominantly reactive and interventions should therefore focus on improving services delivered at the community safety centre (or charge office), as well as intelligence and detective functions.

This implies amendments to current performance measurement systems, which focus largely on rates of reported crime. Measurements based on arrests and charges, as well as conviction rates for priority crimes should rather become the key to performance assessment.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study of crime and policing in the rural areas of South Africa is motivated by two factors: firstly, the lack of dedicated research and policy on the issue and, secondly, the process recently embarked upon by the department of safety and security to develop a policy framework aimed at enhancing rural safety and security.

The lack of research and policy on crime and policing in South Africa's rural areas can largely be attributed to the safety and security policy agenda being set by the concerns of the public, business organisations, the media and pressure groups concerned with the urban environment and the urban focus of policing.[1]

However, more than 18 million people, or 46% of South Africa's population, live in rural areas. Further, the history of racial discrimination in South Africa has ensured that this population remain predominately very poor, undereducated and underemployed. This is indicated in table 1 below, which is derived from the findings of the 1996 South African census.[2]

Table 1: Population profile of South Africa's provinces

Province	Total Population	Rural Population
Northern Province	4 929 368	4 388 067
		(88.0%)
North-West	3 354 825	2 183 091
		(65.1%)
Eastern Cape	6 302 525	3 998 148
		(63.4%)
Mpumalanga	2 800 711	1 706 425
		(60.9%)
KwaZulu-Natal	8 417 021	4 788 753
		(56.9%)
Free State	2 633 504	826 853
		(31.4%)
Northern Cape	840 321	251 415
		(29.9%)
Western Cape	3 956 875	440 867
		(11.1%)
Gauteng	7 348 423	218 146
		(3.0%)
	Education Level	
	No school or some primary	Grade 12
Northern Province	49.00%	14.00%
North-West	43.20%	13.30%
Eastern Cape	42.40%	11.10%
Mpumalanga	44.60%	14.60%
KwaZulu-Natal	40.80%	15.90%
Free State	38.50%	13.60%
Northern Cape	41.70%	11.90%
Western Cape	13.40%	18.90%
Gauteng	21.20%	23.60%
	Unemployment	% of employed earning >R500 monthly
Northern Province	41.00%	41.40%
North-West	32.80%	30.60%
Eastern Cape	41.40%	31.50%
Mpumalanga	33.40%	35.90%
KwaZulu-Natal	33.10%	27.60%
Free State	26.10%	37.90%
Northern Cape	27.20%	42.00%
Western Cape	18.60%	18.40%
Gauteng	20.90%	15.50%

Highlighted in this table is the fact that the vast majority of South Africa's poor live in rural areas. As May points out:

> "the rural areas contain 72% of those members of the total population who are poor. The poverty rate (the proportion of people falling below the poverty line) for rural areas is 71%."[3]

However, despite the high levels of poverty, undereducation and unemployment — factors often posited as conducive to high rates of crime — crime in the rural areas is generally thought to be lower than that which occurs in South Africa's cities and suburban areas.

Thus, apart from the high profile response to sporadic violence in areas like Tsolo/Qumbu in the Eastern Cape and Richmond in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as the government's rural protection plan which aims at combating violent attacks against commercial farms and smallholdings, there has been little strategic assessment of rural crime and the requirements for its reduction.[4]

Yet, the results of South Africa's first national victim survey, published in 1998, indicate that the

difference between levels of crime in urban and rural areas is not as great as may be commonly thought. This is particularly true of violent crime.

For instance, 29.9% of those living in urban environments experienced at least one crime during the five-year period from 1993-1997 compared to 26.1%, of those living in rural areas. However, where 6.6% of those residing in urban areas experienced at least one violent crime in 1997, 6.4% of those living in the rural areas were victimised.[5]

The national victim survey therefore suggests that people in the rural areas are victimised at rates similar to those of their urban counterparts. What differs most though, is the impact of the victimisation.

First and most important here is the 'absence of power', particularly the power to influence change, which, according to May, "is virtually a defining characteristic of being poor."[6] Thus, May notes:

> "poverty is characterised not only by a lack of assets and inability to accumulate them, but also by an inability to devise an appropriate coping or management strategy in the face of shocks and crises."[7]

While this is true also for the poor in urban environments, it is compounded in rural areas where the lack of infrastructural services — like communication and transportation — makes access to limited social services like health, welfare and policing extremely difficult. Lacking access to such support, the rural poor are the least able to deal with the impact of crime.

The purpose of this monograph is therefore to indicate the extent and nature of crime in 'deep' rural areas inhabited largely by the poor. It also outlines how crime affects people in the rural areas, and maps some of the issues, particularly those related to policing, which are relevant to the reduction of crime in the rural areas. It is hoped, therefore, that the monograph can contribute to the policy process of the department of safety and security.

Notes

1. A See Louw & M Shaw, *Stolen opportunities: The impact of crime on South Africa's poor*, ISS monograph 14, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, July 1994.

2. See Statistics South Africa, *Census in brief,* Statistics SA, Pretoria, 1988.

3. J May, *Poverty and inequality in South Africa,* report prepared for the office of the executive deputy president and the inter-ministerial committee for poverty and inequality, 13 May 1998.

4. The issue of attacks against farms is dealt with in depth in M Schönteich, *Attacks on farms and smallholdings: An evaluation of the rural protection plan*, ISS monograph series, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2000, and is therefore not discussed here.

5. See Statistics South Africa, *Victims of crime survey*, Statistics SA, Pretoria 1998.

6. Ibid, p 3.

7. Ibid, p 44.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The Institute for Security Studies has conducted crime victim surveys in four of South Africa's metropolitan areas, namely Johannesburg (July 1997), Durban (December 1997), Cape Town (February 1998) and Pretoria (April 1998). By using information derived from the victims of crime themselves, these surveys were able to present a view of crime independent of and often more detailed than that provided by aggregated police statistics. These surveys were useful, therefore, as supplements to highlight some of the shadowy areas of the picture painted by the official statistics on crime in these cities.

The same information was sought about crime and policing in the rural areas. Like the urban surveys, a rural victim survey would enable new information to be gathered that could provide detail on:

- the extent of crime;
- the nature of certain types of crime;
- the risk profile of inhabitants of rural areas;
- the levels of fear and insecurity;
- public perceptions of police service delivery; and
- what people in rural areas thought would be appropriate interventions to reduce crime.[1]

Accessing such information in a single research process is the strength of victim surveys conducted the world over. But, the methodology is limited by a number of factors, chief among which are biases in the data resulting from:

- the sensitivity of respondents towards discussing sometimes traumatic incidents;

- the ability of respondents to recall and articulate details of their victimisation accurately; and

- varying interpretations of what constitutes a crime — respondents may not realise that a particular incident constitutes a 'real crime', that is, one that is covered in the survey. This is sometimes the case with spousal abuse that the victim, living with the offender, does not perceive as assault. However, it is more likely in terms of incidents deemed trivial by the respondent, like petty theft or minor vandalism.

This survey, of course, has also been limited by these factors. In addition, as parental consent and specialised and expensive interview techniques are required to interview minors, those aged under 18 years were excluded from the sample.

Although care was taken to ensure that the sample survey was as representative of the African rural adult population as possible, cost constraints meant that comparatively few respondents — 756 — could be interviewed. Therefore, the results of the survey should not be read as definitive, but should rather be seen as broadly indicative of crime and policing in the rural areas.

To ensure the survey's balance and more detail on policing issues, a range of police officers at provincial, area and station level management in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Province and the North-West were interviewed between May and July 1998 and in October 1999.

The rural victims of crime survey

The survey of victims of crime in South Africa's rural areas was conducted in June and July 1998.

The survey was specifically and deliberately focused on African settlements in six of South Africa's predominantly rural provinces — the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Province, North-West and the Free State — as these areas are inhabited by the majority of South Africa's rural population.

A total of 756 adults — randomly selected after an initial segmentation, which spread the sample over 40 rural magisterial districts in the six provinces and categorised it in terms of gender, age and household status — were sampled by means of face-to-face interviews designed to facilitate completion of a standardised questionnaire.

A total of 430 individuals (56.9% of the sample) indicated that they had been the victim of at least one crime in the period between January 1993 and June 1998 (see table 2). Demographic details of the sample of 756 individuals are presented in tables 3 to 7.

As was expected, the realised sample population indicated that a relatively high number of adults (30%) were not economically active and that a very limited number of economically active people were able to generate an income. High rates of unemployment and meant that only 25.7% of the sample had access to income-generating employment (see table 7).

Table 2: Victimisation of respondents

Sample population	Frequency	Percentage
Victim of crime	430	56.9%
Non-victim	326	43.1%
Total	756	100%

Table 3: Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	354	46.8%
Female	402	53.2%
Total	756	100%

Table 4: Household status of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Head of household	239	31.6%
Spouse of head of household	219	29.0%
Child of head of household	241	31.9%
Parent of head of household	28	3.7%
Sibling of head of household	9	1.2%
Grandchild of head of household	5	0.7%
"Other relationship (relative, tenant, lodger)"	15	1.9
Total	756	100%

Table 5: Age of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage

	Frequency	Percentage
18-25 years	202	26.7%
26-35 years	171	22.6%
36-60 years	266	35.2%
Over 60 years	117	15.5%
Total	**756**	**100%**

Table 6: Education of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
No schooling	158	20.9%
Some primary school	74	9.8%
Completed primary school	120	15.9%
Some high school	218	28.8%
Grade 12 and/or professional qualification	186	24.6%
Total	**756**	**100%**

Table 7: Occupation of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Not economically active		
Student	125	16.5%
Pensioner	102	13.5%
Subtotal	*227*	*30.0%*
Economically active		
Home worker	132	17.5%
Unemployed	203	26.9%
Employed	194	25.7%
Subtotal	*529*	*70.0%*
Total	**756**	**100%**

Just more than half of those employed (51%) were fortunate enough to have full-time formal employment, while 27% were employed on a part-time basis and 22% in the informal sector, implying more sporadic, if not lower income. Therefore, given the profile outlined in table 1 (see p 8), it could not be expected that many of the employed would earn more than R500 per month.

Many households would therefore be dependent on R550 per month paid to the pensioners by the state's old-age pension fund, and by cash or in-kind support provided by migrant members of the household or other kinship networks, and subsistence farming.

Nevertheless, the size of households was generally large: 211 (27.9%) of the respondents indicated that they lived in households with four or less occupants, 437 (57.8%) said they lived in households with between five and eight occupants and the remaining 108 (14.2%) indicated that their households consisted of nine or more people.

As was expected, migrant labour played a large part in the lives of the sample population. A total of 448 (59.3%) respondents indicated that their households consisted of one or more migrant workers. Most of these households (78%) had one or two migrant workers living there, while 22% had between three and six migrant workers.

Further, a comparatively high number of respondents indicated that they either owned or had access to land that could be used for subsistence farming. In this respect, 376 respondents (49.7%) indicated that they owned their own land, rented land or had access to common land. This reflects a higher proportion than that noted by May who observed that "over one-third of rural households" engage in agricultural production, "making it the third most important

livelihood tactic used in the rural areas after remittances and wages from low-skilled jobs."[2]

In summary, the sample for the victim survey was drawn from the deep rural areas of South Africa and in terms of its defining characteristics, broadly matches that of the greater African rural adult population in the country. As indicated above, the realised sample were generally poor, undereducated and underemployed, lived in large households and were largely dependent for survival on access to arable land and income from migrant labour, remittances, kinship networks and sporadic employment.

Thus, even though the sample size was small, the experience of the respondents, and especially their victimisation, may be viewed as typical of the poorest rural areas of South Africa.

Notes

1. For more detail on these issues, see A Louw, <u>Crime in Pretoria: Results of a city victim survey</u>, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, and Idasa, Pretoria, 1998.

2. J May, Poverty and inequality in South Africa, report prepared for the office of the executive deputy president and the inter-ministerial committee for poverty and inequality, 13 May 1998.

Chapter 3: The incidence, nature and impact of crime

Key points

- Over half (59.6%%) of the sample were victims of at least one crime between 1993 and July 1998. Stock theft was the most prevalent crime type, followed closely by burglary.

- The theft of cattle and sheep may be more organised and motivated by 'greed' rather than 'need' as in the case of other types of stock theft.

- The vast majority of all victims believed crime, with the exception of stock theft, is committed by people living in their areas. The majortiy of victims of violent crime (72%) knew the perpetrators — 58% by name and 14% by sight; 54% of those reporting vandalism knew the offender.

- Less than a quarter of all victims changed their behaviour after victimisation. The implications for crime prevention are important, since people are usually required to alter their daily activities in some way to reduce their likelihood of becoming a victim.

Incidence of crime

More than half of the sample (59.6%) had experienced at least one crime between 1993 and 1998. In 1997 — the most recent twelve month period covered by the survey — 20.2% of the sample were victimised.

Over the five year period, the most common crime was stock theft (17% were victims), followed closely by burglary (16%) (Figure 1). One in ten rural people surveyed experienced vandalism — mostly directed against a vehicle (Table 8). Property crimes were far more prevalent among the rural sample than violent crimes. Of the violent crimes, the most common offences reported

to the survey were assault and murder. A few people reported robbery (24) and sexual assault (19).

Figure 1: Percentage victims of crime between 1993 and July 1998
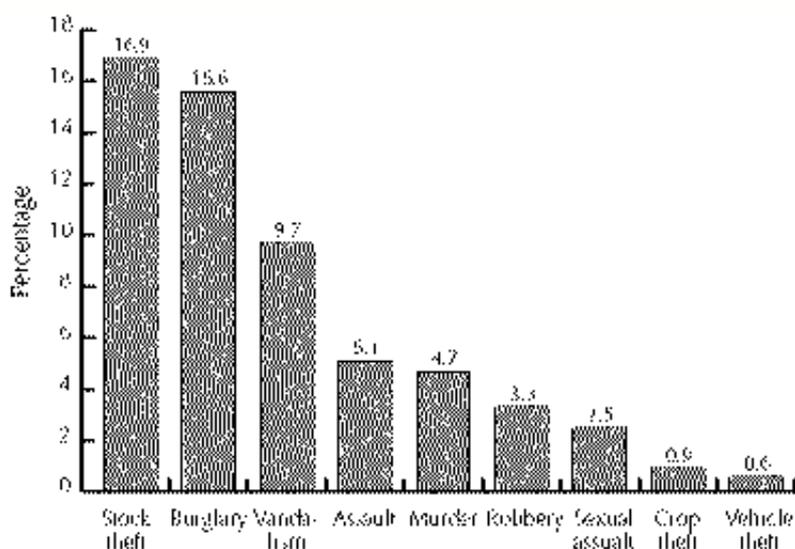
Table 8: Actual and attempted crimes reported to the survey, 1993-July 1998

	1998		1997		1996		1993-5		Total actual
	Actual	Attempt	Actual	Attempt	Actual	Attempt	Actual	Attempt	
Stock theft	47	7	40	6	25	3	16	1	128
Burglary	49	8	38	7	13	7	18	4	118
Crop theft	0	0	3	1	2	0	2	0	7
Hijacking	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Vehicle theft	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	1	5
Deliberate damage to property	22	2	25	3	13	0	14	3	74
Robbery	11	3	6	3	5	0	2	1	24
Assault	11	3	17	1	6	2	5	0	39
Murder	4	2	13	0	10	0	9	1	36
Sexual assault	6	3	7	2	5	0	1	1	19
Total	150	28	153	24	81	12	67	12	451

Table 9: Comparative perspective: Percentage people and households victimised by crime between 1993-1997

Crime type	Percentage of victims
Burglary	18.8
Theft of stock and poultry	11.5
Assault	*10.7
Deliberate damage to dwellings and vehicles	6.9
Robbery	*5.4
Vehicle theft	4.4
Carjacking	2.4
Murder	2.4
Sexual offences	1.4
Individuals were asked whether theyu had been victims of these crimes. For the rest of the crimes in the table, the proportion of households that were affected is shown.	
Source: *Victims of crime survey*, Statistics SA, April 1999"	

Stock theft

Stock theft was defined in the survey as "the theft of stock owned by the household only." The discussion below of the details of the crime refers to the most recent incident of stock theft (as opposed to all incidents reported between 1993 and 1998).

Livestock and poultry were kept by the vast majority of rural households (81%). The most common type was poultry followed by cattle, goats, sheep, pigs and donkeys (table 10). Except for those who kept poultry, respondents were most likely to own small numbers of livestock (table 11). In the case of those who owned cattle, for example, 41% had between six and ten cattle and 30% owned between one and five cattle. Only 6% of respondents who owned cattle kept more than 20 animals.

Table 10: Number of respondents owning livestock and poultry (n = 756)

	Number	Percentage
Poultry	460	61
Cattle	447	59
Goats	334	44
Sheep	181	24
Pigs	139	18
Donkeys	105	14

Table 11: Percentage people owning different quantities of livestock and poultry (n = 610)

Number of stock	5-Jan	10-Jun	15-Nov	16-20	20+	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Poultry	17	34	16	13	21	100
Cattle	28	41	17	9	6	100
Goats	45	33	13	5	4	100
Sheep	35	30	21	7	7	100
Pigs	76	13	8	1	2	100
Donkeys	95	5	0	0	0	100

When asked how many of each type of stock were lost in the most recent incident of theft, more cattle were reported stolen than any other livestock: 633 cattle were taken, 178 sheep, 171 goats, 42 pigs, 20 chickens/ducks and 11 donkeys/horses. Stock was most likely to be stolen in small numbers (figure 2).

Figure 2: Number of animals stolen in the most recent incident of stock theft
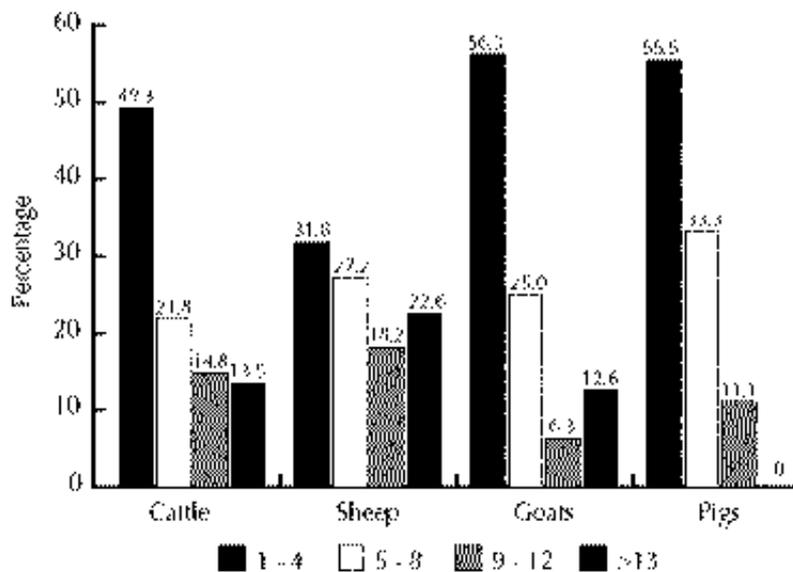
When and where stock theft occurred

Most stock theft was reported to have been committed during the week (73%) with the remaining 30% of cases occurring at the weekend. The most likely time that stock theft was committed, was in the evening: 43% of respondents recalled the crime taking place between 18h00 and 00h00; 25% said it happened between 12h00 and 18h00 and 20% reported victimisation between 06h00 and 12h00. The least likely time for the stock theft was in the early morning between 00h00 and 06h00: only 11% of victims reported this time.

Over half (53%) of the most recent incidents of stock theft occurred in the vicinity of the homestead. Nearly half (47%) of the animals were taken from their grazing lands. Seventeen victims could not recall where the theft happened.

Nature of stock theft and use of violence

Most victims (73%) were at home — either relaxing or engaged in household activities — when their stock was stolen. Nearly a quarter (23%) were in the vicinity of their homes. Only 4% were out of town when the crime was committed and one respondent was herding the cattle when the theft happened. This data suggests that stock thieves are not deterred by the presence of owners and are, in fact, most likely to strike when household members are present.

Thirty-two (15%) of the victims of stock theft witnessed the crime. Most (53%) said that threats were made by the perpetrators and nearly half (47%) reported the use of violence. However, only five people were injured in the course of the crime. Weapons were visible in 22 of the 32 incidents where the victim was present. In 14 of these incidents, perpetrators used a firearm, and knives, pangas and physical strength were used in the remainder.

When asked about the perpetrators and their motives for committing the crime, victims indicated that locals were highly likely to be involved: 39% said the theft was committed by both locals and outsiders, and a further 37% believed locals were responsible (figure 3). The vast majority of victims (86%) thought that the motive for the theft was private financial gain. Five respondents named faction fighting as the cause, three mentioned conflict over resources and two said the crime was related to political conflict. The remaining nine victims either mentioned other reasons or could not think of a possible motive.

Figure 3: Whether perpetrators were locals or outsiders according to victims of stock theft (n=126)
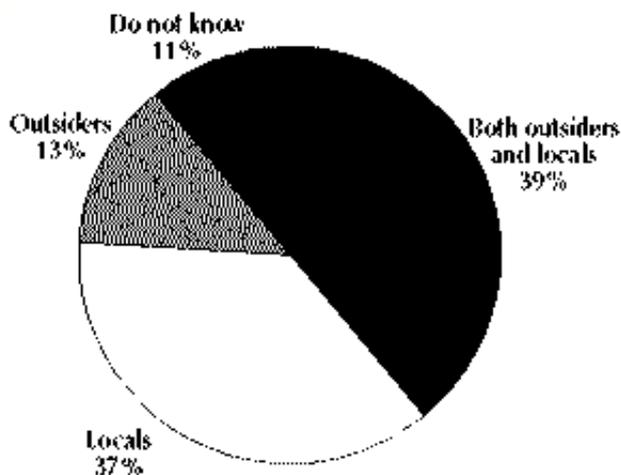
Impact of stock theft

Victims were asked how they or their family/dependants were affected by the most recent incident of stock theft. Forty-four (35%) did not know what the impact had been. Of the remaining 82 victims who did describe the impact of the crime, most (67%) mentioned the financial loss and economic implications. A further 22% described emotional impact ranging from anger and revenge to sadness and depression. The physical impact was limited, with only one respondent mentioning the need for hospitalisation, while another moved away from the area.

Victims were also asked whether their daily activities had been affected by the crime. Most (87%) said there had been no change. Of the ten respondents who explained how their activities had changed, six mentioned better ways of guarding their stock (such as hiring a guard, sleeping in the kraal and keeping guard dogs at night). One looked for a job to support his/her family while another relocated. Seven of the sixteen victims felt safer as a result of these changes.

Specific questions were also asked about the types of protection that victims used to prevent stock theft. Less than half of the victims (43%) adopted protective measures and even then, the types of measures reflect the difficulties facing stock owners and particularly the rural poor, in preventing this type of crime. The most common form of protection was to build stronger kraals, followed by the use of 'traditional methods' (table 12).

Table 12: Methods of protection used to prevent stock theft (n = 121)

Type of protection	Number	Percentage
No measures	69	57
Build stronger kraal	21	17
Traditional methods	15	12
Sleep in kraal	8	7
Dogs/knobkierries/fences	6	5
Do not leave animals in the grazing land	2	2
Total	121	100

Burglary

Burglary was defined as "theft of property from, or forced entry into the respondents' residential or domestic premises, and not their work premises." The discussion below of the details of the crime refers to the *most recent* incident of burglary (as opposed to all incidents reported between 1993 and 1998). Most of the burglaries (75%) reported to the survey resulted in goods being stolen.

When burglary occurred

Most burglaries were reported to have occurred on a weekday (64%) with Friday being the most likely day of the week. More than a third (36%) of the victims indicated that the crime was committed on a weekend, with Saturday being the more likely of the two days.

Most burglaries (53%) occurred at night — between 18h00 and 00h00 — which is also the time when people are most likely to be at home. Continuing with this trend, 22% were committed in the afternoon between 12h00 and 18h00. A further 18% occurred between 06h00 and 12h00 and the remaining nine respondents said they were burgled between 00h00 and 06h00.

Nature of the burglary and violence used

Although most burglaries were committed during those times of the day when people are most likely to be at home, 63% of victims reported that their homes were not occupied when the burglary was committed. Of the 48 cases where someone was at home during the burglary, violence was only used in a quarter (25%) of incidents. Threats were made in 17% of cases, but in most incidents of burglary when someone was at home (58%), neither threats nor violence was used.

Injuries were sustained in only three of the 20 cases (15%) where threats and violence were used. Half of the respondents (50%) who were present when the burglary occurred, said that no weapon was visible. Eight said the perpetrator(s) had used a firearm, four mentioned a knife, four physical strength and two an axe or panga.

Comparative perspective: the use of violence during burglaries

According to the ISS city victim surveys, 33% of victims in Durban and Pretoria said violence was used during the course of the burglary. Fewer people in Johannesburg (20%) said the same.

Burglary victims were more decisive than stock theft victims on the question whether the crime was committed by locals or by people from outside their area. The majority (74%) believed that locals were behind the burglaries, with a quarter (24%) saying both locals and outsiders were involved. Only three respondents (3%) thought outsiders alone were responsible.

As in the case of stock theft, the vast majority of burglary victims (86%) believed the perpetrators were motivated by private financial gain. Three respondents attributed the burglaries to political conflict, two to faction fighting and five could not think of possible motives.

Impact of burglary

Respondents were asked to describe how the burglary had affected their families and themselves. The financial impact was overwhelming: 68% of victims alluded to economic consequences which were no doubt exacerbated by the fact that only 2% of the victims had insured their household contents against theft. Among those who mentioned financial impact, 33 said they could not replace the stolen goods, four said they required the stolen items for survival, and another four had to borrow money from their neighbours or from money lenders.

The emotional impact of the crime was reported by a quarter of burglary victims. Twelve said they were fearful, seven mentioned depression, four explained that their whole family had suffered from shock as a result of the incident, and two cited anger and revenge. Only one person mentioned the physical impact of the burglary in the form of requiring hospitalisation.

Despite the negative impact of the burglary, only 16% of victims changed their daily routine as a result of the crime. Of these 21 victims, 13 said they felt safer as a result.

Violent crime and robbery

For the purposes of this survey, crimes that involve violence are divided into two groups: assault, murder and sexual assault are analysed as one group and are referred to as 'violent crime'. Robbery and carjacking (a subcategory of 'robbery') are considered separately and are referred to as 'robbery'.

Violent crime: assault, murder and sexual assault

The following definitions of these crimes were used in the survey:

- *Assault* includes any incident in which the victim was personally attacked or hurt. This may have occurred in the home or elsewhere in a public place, and may have been committed by someone known to the victim such as a relative, friend or family member or by a stranger.

- *Murder* includes the deliberate killing of someone in the respondent's household or immediate family residing in the same house as the respondent.

- *Sexual assault* includes any action in which an individual is forced either by threats or the use of force, to perform sexual acts against his/her will. These acts may include — but are not restricted to — sexual intercourse, and can occur in the victim's home, someone else's home or a public place. The perpetrators may or may not be known to the victim.

When and where violent crime occurred

Just over half of violent crimes were committed during the week (53%) with Friday being the most likely day. The rest (47%) of these offences occurred over the weekend, with many more reported on Saturday than on Sunday. Although this trend is similar to that for burglary and stock theft, violent crimes were more likely to have occurred over the weekend than property crimes.

Unlike the property crimes already covered above, the most likely time that violent crimes were committed was in the afternoon between 12h00 and 18h00, with 50% of victims saying that violent crimes were committed during these hours. A third (32%) occurred at night between 18h00 and 00h00; 18% between 06h00 and 12h00; and only one incident between 00h00 and

06h00.

The most common location for assault, murder and sexual assault was 'in the village' (43%), followed by the home where one third of respondents said they were victimised (figure 4).

Figure 4: Where violent crimes were committed (n=104)
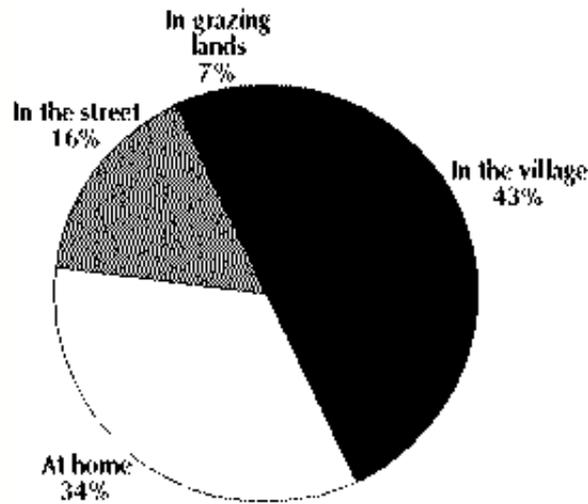
Table 13: Comparative perspective on where violent crimes* happened (%)

	In a home	Elsewhere
Pretoria	33	67
Durban	27	73
Johannesburg	20	80
Cape Town	33	67
* Violent crimes include assault, murder and sexual assault Source: ISS city victim surveys		

Nature of violent crime and weapons used

The demographic profile of the victims of assault, murder and sexual assault is as follows:

- *Assault*: of the 41 victims who described incidents of assault in detail, 26 (63%) were women and 15 (37%) were men.

- *Murder*: of the 39 people who described the most recent incident in which a member of their household was murdered, 31 said that one person was killed. Most of the victims (30) were males. Equal numbers of victims were between the ages of 19 and 30 as those between the ages of 31 and 50 years. Only six victims were older than 50.

- *Sexual assault*: of the 25 survivors whose details respondents provided to the survey, 12 were below the age of 20 and ten were between 20 and 30 years old. Only three women were over 30 years. Most respondents (21) described the incident as rape; three said it was attempted rape, and one called it 'offensive behaviour'.

When asked what they were doing at the time of the incident, victims were most likely to be at home relaxing, completing household chores, or travelling to or from work or church (figure 5). This data matches that above on where violent crimes occurred.

Figure 5: What victims of violent crime were doing at the time of the incident (n=105)
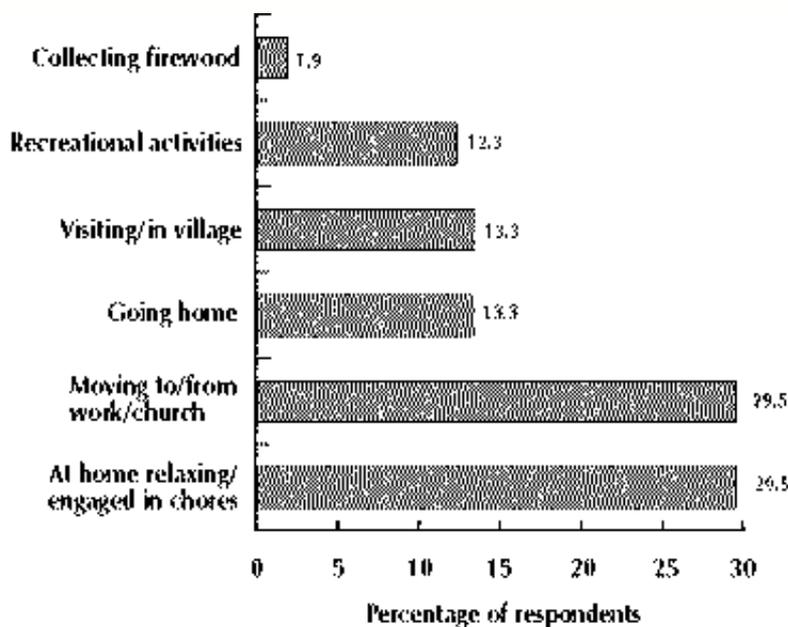
Although victims were more likely to be alone when they were attacked, a significant minority were in a group: over half (55%) were alone and 45% were in company. A similar trend is evident with respect to the numbers of offenders: 55% of victims reported only one attacker; 37% recalled between two and four attackers, and 8% reported more than five perpetrators.

Violent crimes were most likely to be carried out with the use of sheer force: in 36% of cases, respondents said physical strength was used. Knives were used in a quarter of incidents (25%) with firearms and pangas/axes reported with almost equal frequency (table 14). The majority of victims (68%) sustained injuries as a result of violent crime.

Table 14: Weapons used to commit violent crime

Type of weapon	Number	Percentage
No weapon was visible	14	11
Physical strength/hands	46	36
Knife	32	25
Gun (handgun/pistol)	21	16
Axe/stick/panga/club	16	12
Total	**129**	**100**

The vast majority of violent crime victims knew the perpetrators: 58% said they knew the attacker by name and 14% recognised the offender by sight. Only 27% did not know who had committed the offence. Of those who knew the perpetrators by name, 46% identified the perpetrators as a family member; 34% were a spouse or intimate partner, and the remaining 20% were identified as friends or colleagues.

Given that many victims knew their offenders, it is not surprising that 61% of respondents believed people from their area were responsible for these crimes. In this respect, 27% attributed these violent offences to both locals and outsiders, 9% were unsure and only 4% thought outsiders alone were responsible.

Table 15: Comparative perspective: Percentage victims who knew the offender

	Assault		Murder	
	Name	Sight	Name	Sight
Pretoria	30	16	40	21
Durban	19	25	28	21
Cape Town	37	18	51	12
Source: ISS city victim surveys				

The fact that a third of violent crimes occurred in the home and that 50 of the 66 perpetrators known by name were either family members, spouses or intimate partners suggests that much of the violent crime takes the form of domestic violence. This explains why few respondents associated violent crimes with political conflict, faction fighting or private financial gain (table 16). Alcohol abuse is likely to be one of the factors linked to violent crimes of this nature: 39% of respondents thought the incident was related to the consumption of alcohol; 30% disagreed and 31% were unsure.

Table 16: Respondents' views on factors causing violent crime

Factors	Number	Percentage
Other	60	61
Private financial gain	14	14
Tribal/faction fighting	12	12
Political conflict	7	7
Conflict over resources, eg land	6	6
Total	**99**	**100**

Impact of violent crime

As would be expected, emotional impact was mentioned by more victims of violent crime than of property crimes covered above. Half of the 66 violent crime victims (50%), who spoke about impact, described depression, shock and anger experienced by themselves and members of their households after victimisation. Financial considerations were nevertheless mentioned by 21 respondents, most of whom noted the impact of the loss of a breadwinner as a result of a murder.

As was reported by stock theft and burglary victims, few victims of violent crime (16%) indicated that their daily activities changed after the incident. Four said they no longer walked alone at night, one stopped drinking in public places, another moved to a new village and one respondent reported separating from her spouse.

Robbery

Only 36 victims described their experiences of robbery in detail. The analysis below therefore reflects only the experiences of these victims and not those of robbery victims in rural areas in general.

The following definitions for robbery and carjacking were used in the survey:

- *Robbery*: the theft of any item from the respondent's person, where force or the threat of force is used.

- *Carjacking*: the theft of the person's car, van, or bakkie from the respondent's person using force or attempted force.

Most of the robberies reported to the survey took the form of a 'mugging'. Of the 30 victims who described incidents of robbery in detail, 14 said that belongings or money were stolen from them; three said a wallet was taken, and another three reported the loss of a handbag. Five said food and clothes were stolen from their homes and another five reported the loss of tools or equipment. Only six respondents described a carjacking in detail.

None of the property that was stolen from the 36 victims who described robbery in detail, was covered by insurance.

When and where robbery occurred

Of the 36 victims describing robbery, 25 (69%) said the crime was committed on a weekday — in most cases, Friday. The remaining offences occurred at the weekend. The most likely time for robberies was after 12h00: 16 victims reported being victimised between 12h00 and 18h00, and 13 said the crime occurred between 18h00 and 0h00. The remaining seven robberies happened in the morning between 6h00 and 12h00.

Over half of the victims were robbed while in their village: 23 (64%) reported this to be the case. The remaining nine said the crime occurred when they were at home and four were walking in the street at the time of victimisation.

Nature of robbery and weapons used

Seventeen victims of robbery were alone when the crime was committed — the remaining 13 were in a group. In 25 of the 36 cases, there were between two and four offenders. Eight victims reported one offender and one said there were more than five.

Violence was used in half of the incidents of robbery; in the other half, victims reported being threatened only. The most likely weapons were knives (used by 34% of offenders), followed by physical strength (31%) and guns (26%). Six victims were unable to see whether the assailant carried a weapon or not. Only nine victims (25%) sustained injuries as a result of robbery. The majority were unharmed.

As in the case of the other crimes covered above, most robbery victims believed that the crime was committed by people from their area: 21 respondents (70%) said that locals were responsible; eight named both locals and outsiders and one was unsure. The motive for the crime was believed to be financial gain in 34 of the 36 cases.

Impact of robbery

As in the case of other crimes involving property, robbery victims were most likely to describe the financial implications of the crime: 12 victims mentioned various financial issues; ten described emotional consequences such as fear, depression and anger, and three said the impact was minimal.

The victimisation experience was unlikely to result in victims changing their behaviour, however. Only 11 (32%) described changes to their daily activities. Of the nine who gave details about these changes, five improved the security around their homes, three said they no longer walked alone at night and one had to find a new job as a result of the loss of income incurred by the robbery.

Deliberate damage or destruction of property

In the survey, deliberate damage to property covered acts of vandalism committed against a house/kraal, crops, livestock, farm equipment, fencing or a vehicle.

Although 74 people in the sample reported having been a victim of vandalism between 1993 and July 1998, only 26 respondents described the most recent incident in detail. Trends cannot be drawn from such a small sample, and the details below therefore describe the experiences of the 26 victims only and not those of vandalism victims in rural areas generally.

When and where vandalism occurred

Eighteen of the 26 victims said the crime was committed on a weekday, with the remaining six occurring over the weekend. Eleven incidents of vandalism occurred at night between 18h00 and 00h00, with seven reported from 12h00 and 18h00, and three each from 00h00-06h00 and 06h00-12h00.

Twelve of the 26 crimes were committed at the victim's home and ten reportedly occurred in the victim's village. The remaining four incidents took place either in the grazing land or kraal. At the time of the incident, fifteen of the victims were at home, either relaxing or engaged in household activities. One respondent was away at the time and another was engaged in recreational activity.

Nature of vandalism and violence used

During the course of the incident, 24 of the 26 victims said violence was used. Nevertheless, only two respondents sustained injuries as a result. In two incidents, up to seven other people were injured.

In 12 cases, weapons were not visible to the victim. Equal numbers of victims that did notice the perpetrator's weapons (3 in each case) mentioned firearms, knives and axes/pangas.Ten of the incidents were committed by only one offender, eight by between two and four perpetrators and four by more than five. Fourteen victims reported knowing the offenders, seven by name and seven by sight. Not surprisingly, when asked if they thought the offenders were locals or from outside the area, eighteen respondents believed they were locals. Six said both locals and outsiders were responsible for vandalism and one implicated outsiders only.

Possible motives for vandalism offered by victims were private financial gain (9), other reasons (8), political conflict (4), conflict over resources (3) and faction fighting (2).

Impact of vandalism

Ten victims mentioned emotional consequences such as depression, anger and fear. Five victims said the vandalism had affected them economically, four said the crime had no real impact on them, and two said they took the law into their own hands as a result.

Only six of the 26 victims changed their daily activities as a result of the incident. Four mentioned measures to enhance their own security, including keeping someone at the homestead at all times, not walking alone at night and getting watch dogs. Another two had sought employment to supplement the loss of income as a result of the vandalism.

Discussion of key points

The extent of victimisation in the rural areas covered by the survey is not dissimilar to that reported in the national victims of crime survey. It is also not surprising that the most common crime in rural areas is stock theft, followed by burglary. Owning stock is one of the characteristics that distinguishes the rural population from that of urban areas. Burglary was the most common crime recorded in the victims of crime survey, as well as in the four city victim surveys conducted by the ISS in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Pretoria between 1997 and 1998.

Stock theft

Some indicators suggest that the theft of certain types of stock (cattle and sheep) may be organised and motivated by opportunities for resale, rather than by 'need' — an intuitive explanation for crime in poor areas:

- A large number of cattle were reported stolen (633 in all). In the case of sheep, large numbers were stolen at a time (Figure 2), which makes stealing 'for the pot' an unlikely explanation.

- Victims of stock theft were least likely of all victims to say that people from their area committed the crime (Figure 6). The involvement of both outsiders and locals in stock theft supports the argument that this type of crime is more organised and less opportunistic than the others covered in the survey.

Figure 6: Victims who thought the crime was committed by someone from their area
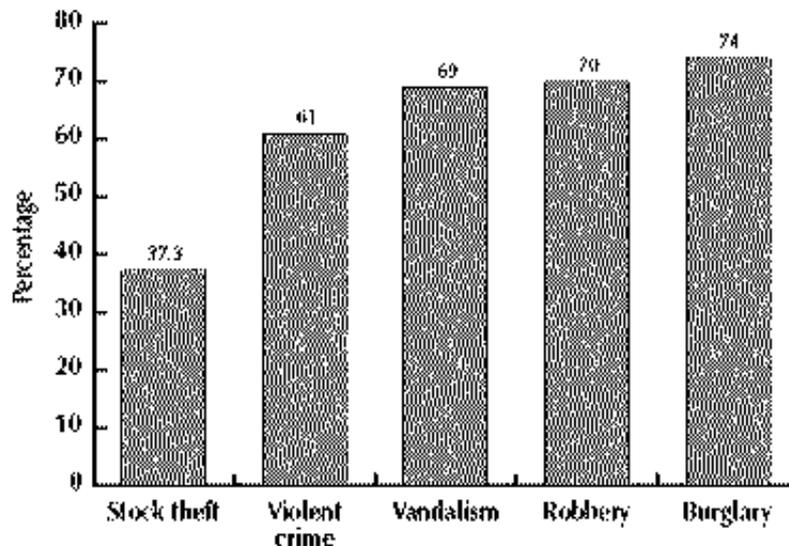
Stock was most likely to be stolen from the vicinity of the homestead at the time when people were most likely to be at home. This could suggest that the crimes were well planned — and that the presence of people was not a potential obstacle — or that little deters offenders from committing stock theft, whether physical security to protect the target, or consequences of the criminal justice system.

Preventing stock theft is likely to be difficult. The vast majority of respondents (87%) did not change the way they handled their stock after victimisation. Furthermore, over half of the victims of stock theft did not protect their stock from theft in any way. Of those who did, most either built

stronger kraals or used traditional methods of protection. More sophisticated measures or lifestyle changes were probably unaffordable for most of the rural respondents.

Common indicators across crime types

When crime occurs

Victims of all crimes covered in this discussion were most likely to say the offence was committed on a weekday with Friday being the most common day of the week. The most likely time was in the evening between 18h00 and 0h00 in the case of stock theft, burglary and the deliberate destruction of property. Violent crimes and robberies were most likely in the afternoon and early evening.

Familiarity with offenders

Victims were asked whether they thought offenders came from their own areas or from outside. The vast majority of all victims, with the exception of those reporting stock theft, thought that crime was committed by locals. The second most likely response was that locals and outsiders together were responsible for crime. This suggests that many victims have some idea of who the perpetrators are.

In the case of violent crime and the destruction of property, victims were directly asked whether or not they knew the perpetrators. In this respect, 72% of violent crime victims knew the perpetrators — 58% by name and 14% by sight. Of those who knew the attackers by name, 46% identified them as family members. In the case of vandalism, 54% of victims knew the offender. Many victims therefore know who is responsible for committing crimes against them, suggesting important points of intervention for the police and courts — securing a conviction should be easier — and for crime prevention — domestic violence requires interventions other than law enforcement.

Motives for the crime

In the vast majority of cases, victims believed the motive for the crime was financial gain (Figure 7). Not surprisingly, violent crime was most likely to be attributed to other motives. Factors explaining domestic violence are probably the 'other' motives: a third of violent crimes were committed in the home and 50 of the 66 perpetrators who were known to the victim were family members, spouses or intimate partners. Although mentioned by only 50 respondents in total, political conflict and faction fighting were factors in violent crime and vandalism.

Figure 7: Victims' views on the causes of particular crimes

Vandalism 8 / 9 / 9
Robbery 1 / 1 / 34
Violent crime 64 / 25 / 14
Burglary 5 / 5 / 226
Stock theft 7 / 10 / 107

Number of victims

■ Other ☐ Political conflict/faction fighting
▨ Financial gain
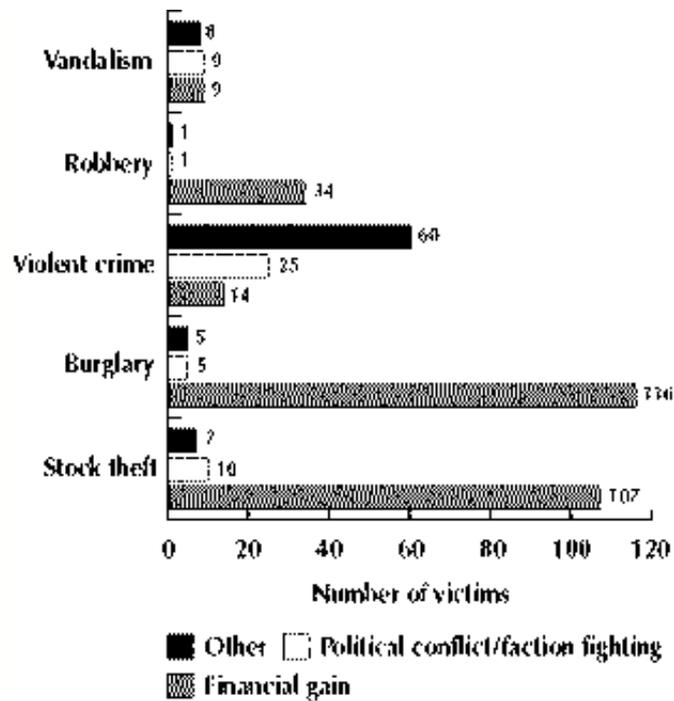
Response to victimisation

Victims of all crime types are unlikely to change their behaviour after victimisation (figure 8). This data has important implications for crime prevention, since crime prevention measures usually require people to alter their daily activities in some way to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim. The response of rural respondents may be attributed to a lack of knowledge about how to improve their safety. It is more likely, however, that most cannot afford improved physical security to protect their homes and belongings, or are restricted in the choices they can make about where they live, work and socialise, and how they get there.

Figure 8: Victims who changed their behaviour after victimisation
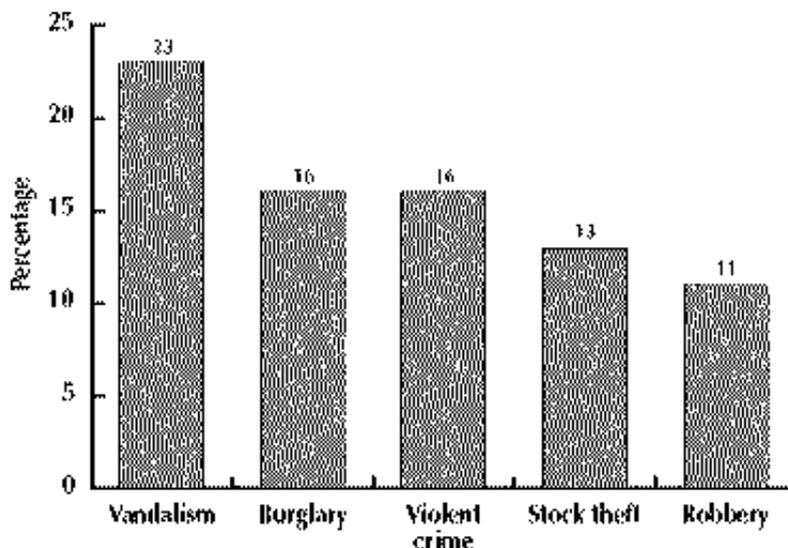
Chapter 4: Fear of crime

Key points

- Fear of crime is less pronounced in rural than in metropolitan areas.

- Respondents were most worried about becoming a victim of murder (33%), burglary (17%) and stock theft (16%).

- 61% used rudimentary forms of physical protection to safeguard their homes — only 33% felt safer as a result.

- There is a weak correlation between feelings of safety and policing. Those who think the police are performing well do not feel safer than those who have little confidence in the SAPS.

- People who often see a police official on duty in their village and who live less than one kilometre from a police station, feel less safe than those who rarely see the police and who live more than 50 kilometres from a police station.

Introduction

Information about the fear of crime and public perceptions of safety should be as important to policy makers, the police and crime prevention practitioners as information about crime itself. Crime affects people in ways that are more insidious than actual victimisation. The fear of crime — or more accurately anxiety and concern about crime — have become commonplace in everyday life in South Africa. This fear is caused not only by actual experiences of victimisation, but also by anxiety about the consequences of crime and by feelings of helplessness to prevent crime.

Anxiety about crime can have negative effects on behaviour: feelings of insecurity are heightened, people's sense of well-being and their quality of life are eroded, freedom of movement becomes restricted, and defensive and wary behaviour increases.[1] In South Africa, probably the most serious consequence of fear of crime and the perception that the criminal justice system is ineffective is the widespread support for 'alternative' forms of justice and vigilante activity.[2] Allied to this has been a hardening of attitudes towards criminal justice evidenced in support for the death penalty and for harsh sentences.[3]

Fear of crime and its consequences can also have implications for crime reduction interventions in an area. Where feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system are high, it will be more difficult to introduce longer term measures aimed at reducing the causes of crime. The public is more likely to support short-term, high profile law enforcement type interventions.

The survey covered the following issues regarding the fear of crime:

- how safe people feel during the day and after dark while walking in their village and their fields, or collecting wood/water;

- the types of crime that people fear the most; and

- the types of measures used to protect the home.

Feelings of safety

The vast majority of rural respondents felt safe during the day — whether walking in their village, working in the fields or collecting firewood or water (figure 9). However, the opposite is true at night, particularly when victims are in their fields or collecting wood or water (figure 10).

Figure 9: How safe people feel when walking to their village (n=756)
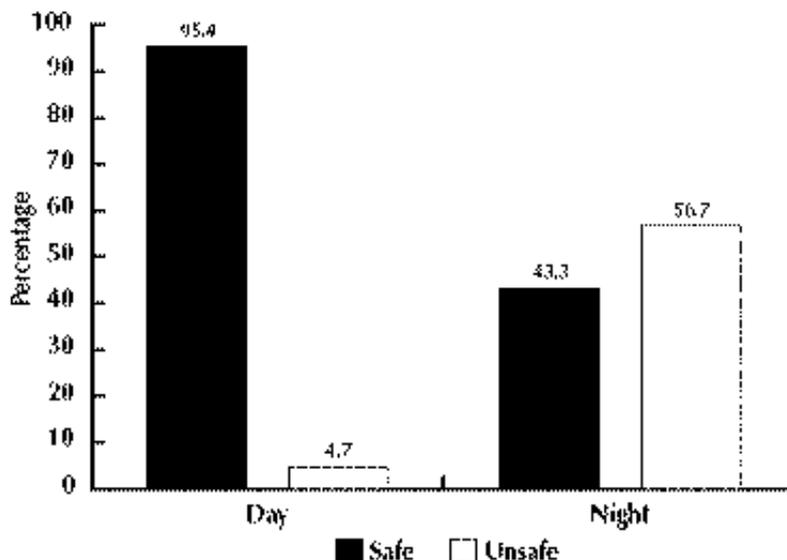
Figure 10: How safe people feel when working in their fields, or collecting firewood and water (n=756)
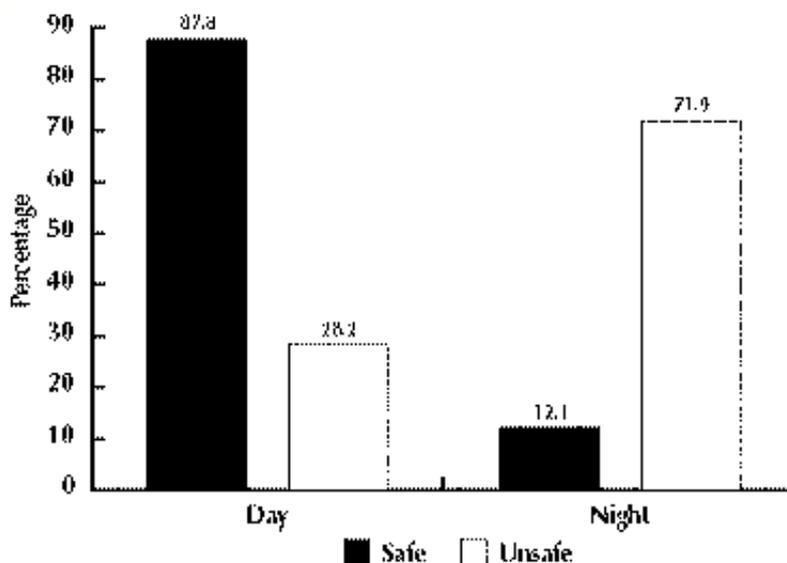
People living in deep rural South Africa are much more likely to feel safe than those in metropolitan areas (table 17).

Table 17: Comparative perspective: Feelings of safety

	Daytime (%)		Night time (%)	
	Safe	Unsafe	Safe	Unsafe
Johannesburg	60	40	17	83
Pretoria	81	19	31	69
Durban	68	32	27	73
Cape Town	72	28	28	72

The fear of crime is caused by several factors, including:

- actual victimisation;
- the perceived risk of becoming a victim;
- anxiety about the consequences of crime;
- feelings of helplessness to prevent crime; and
- the perceived ability of the police to offer protection and enforce the law.

In terms of actual victimisation patterns, chapter 3 showed that people living in deep rural areas are most at risk of stock theft and burglary. Levels of murder were also high compared to other violent crimes: 4.7% of respondents reported a murder in their household between 1993 and July 1998, while 5% reported being assaulted and only 3% robbed. In the Johannesburg metropolitan area, by comparison, 4% of the population reported a murder in their household between 1993 and July 1997, while 16% were assaulted and 24% were robbed.[4]

This may explain why rural respondents were most likely to fear murder above other types of crime, followed by burglary and stock theft (table 18). Thus, people fear those crimes they are most likely to experience, as well as those with the most serious consequences. The data also suggests that fear of crime is not necessarily irrational, but often based on actual experiences and should therefore be taken seriously.

Table 18: Type of crime that people fear most in their area (n = 683)

Crime	Percentage
Murder	33
Burglary	17
Stock theft	16
Rape	8
Theft	5
Robbery	4
Child abuse	2
Assault	2
Drug & gang related	1
Other	12

Types of protection used

The ability to prevent crime reduces feelings of helplessness and can thus reduce the fear of crime. Most rural respondents (61%) used some form of physical protection in their homes (table 19); the remaining 37% had no means of protection. However, such measures do not necessarily make those who use them feel safer. Only 33% of respondents whose homes were protected, said they felt safer as a result; 40% said there was no change and 27% felt unsafe despite taking these precautions.

Table 19: Types of protection used to safeguard home

Protection	Number	Percentage
Dog	251	33
Wood/thorn bushes	137	18
High fence/wall	113	15
Axe/stick/club	99	13
Traditional methods	73	10

Special door lock	37	5
Gun	23	3
Burglar bars on windows	12	2
Burglar alarm	10	1
Security guard	4	1
Community patrols	2	0

However, it is possible that measures other than physical protection for the home may make people feel safer. For example, 54 (7%) respondents said that their community made its own arrangements to protect itself. Although this is a small percentage of all respondents, 80% of these said this was an effective way of securing the area — in stark contrast to only 35% of all respondents who believed the police could control crime in their area.

Safety and policing

The fear of crime is also related to public confidence in the police's ability to provide assistance to victims and to enforce the law. The majority of rural respondents said the police in their area were doing a poor job to control crime (see chapter 6 below). They were also likely to believe that, compared to previous years, the effectiveness of the police service in their area stayed the same or became worse, rather than improved. The survey data shows that most rural respondents rarely (if ever) see a police official and have limited access to the police (transport and telephones).

It would be expected that those rural respondents with little confidence in the police and limited access to the services offered by the police would be more inclined to feel unsafe. This hypothesis, however, is not supported by the survey results:

- Equal proportions of people who thought the police were doing a 'good job' to control crime in their area and who said the police were doing a 'poor job', said they felt safe at night (figure 11).

- More respondents who believed the police service has become worse compared to previous years, felt safe than those who felt unsafe (figure 12).

- Rather than increasing feelings of safety, greater police visibility seems more likely to make rural respondents feel unsafe. Those people who saw a police official on duty in their village less than once a month or 'never', were more likely to feel safe at night than people who saw the police at least once a month (figure 13).

- Most respondents who live more than 50 kilometres from the nearest police station felt safe at night, compared to only 23% of those who live less than one kilometre from a police station (figure 14). However, as the distance from the nearest police station increases from one kilometre to 50 kilometres, the proportion of people who feel safe declines.

Figure 11: People who feel safe at night in relation to their assessment of police performance in their area
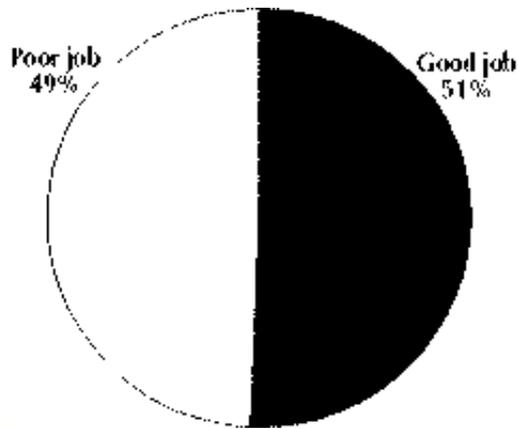
Figure 12: People who feel safe in relation to whether they think policing has improved compared to previous years
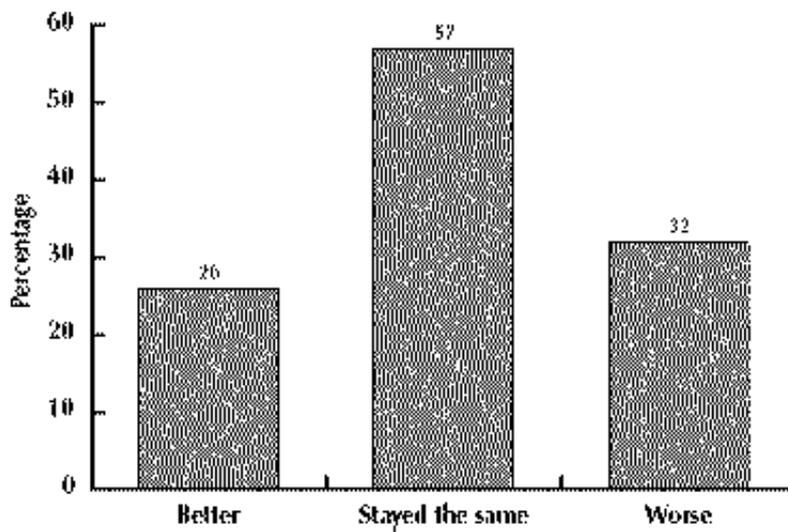

**Figure 13: People who feel safe in relation to the frequency with which they see the police in their area**
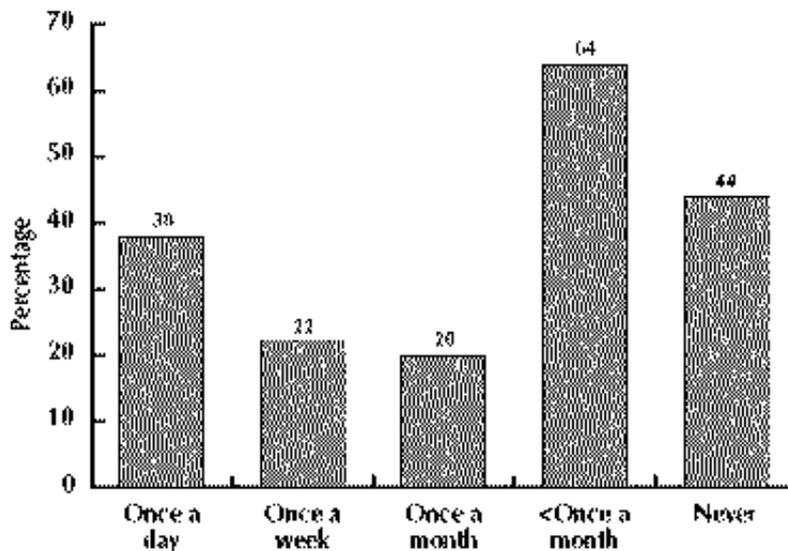
Figure 14: People who feel safe in relation to the distance of their homes from a police

station
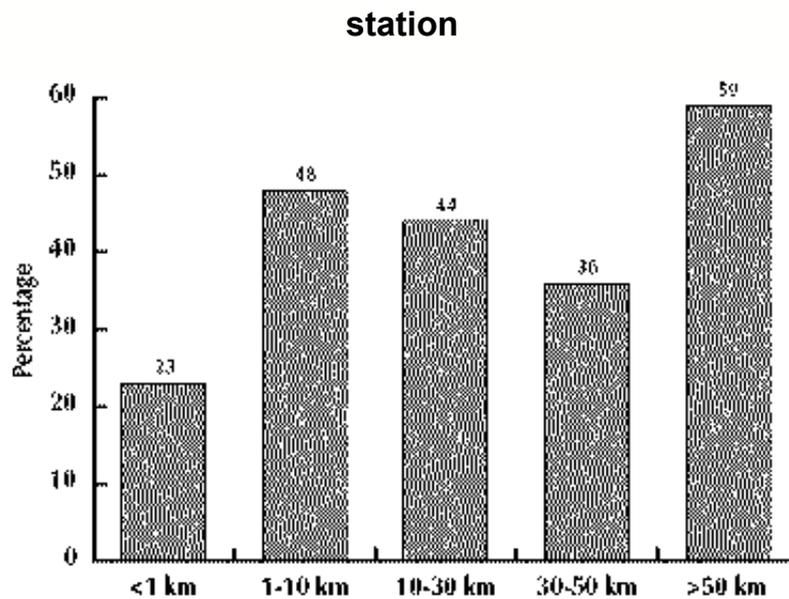
These findings suggest that feelings of safety in deep rural areas are not closely associated with how well the police are believed to be performing. This could be because policing is so weak in these areas that people simply do not associate feeling safe with police activity. It is also likely that other factors in rural areas have more impact on the fear of crime, such as the geographic isolation of communities, the vulnerability of individuals as a result, and the inability of people to protect themselves from crime.

The results also show that those who have the greatest contact with the police feel more unsafe than those who hardly ever see the police. It is likely that, given the resource constraints facing the SAPS in rural areas (see Chapter 6 below), people only see police officials during times of 'crisis'. In other words, it is only when a situation is very serious — which usually implies high levels of violence — that the police will visit an area. As a result, people associate a police presence with danger rather than with safety.

This does not explain, however, why people who live very close to a police station (less than one kilometre) feel much less safe than those who live more than 50 kilometres from a police station. It is possible that crime levels are lower in the more remote rural areas than in the areas where police stations are located — usually on main roads and in more populated regions or villages. It is also possible that people who live close to a police station have higher expectations of the police's ability to protect them, than those who live further away. Since rural policing is weak, these expectations are probably not met, causing people to feel less safe.

Notes

1. C Mirrlees-Black, P Mayhew & A Percy, The 1996 British crime survey: England and Wales, *Home Office Statistical Bulletin*, 19/96, Research and Statistics Directorate, London, 24 September 1996.

2. See M Schönteich, *Justice versus retribution: Attitudes to punishment in the Eastern Cape*, ISS Monograph 45, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, February 2000.

3. Ibid.

4. A Louw, M Shaw, L Camerer & R Robertshaw, *Crime in Johannesburg: Results of a city victim survey*, ISS Monograph 18, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, February

Chapter 5: Victim support and safety strategies

Key points

The most common sources of support were family (26%), police (20%), friends (16%), traditional authorities (13%) and neighbours (12%).

Support from traditional authorities was much more sought after among victims of property crimes (17%) than of crimes involving violence (6%).

- Although only 20% of victims sought the assistance of the police, 49% said the one kind of support they would have liked, was more effective policing.

- 72% said the government should focus on policing and justice to make rural areas safer, mostly by improving the accessibility of the police.

- Besides policing, the first choice of 80% was for the government to create more jobs. Secondly, 47% wanted harsher penalties for offenders.

- When asked how they could make their area safer, 67% of respondents said they did not know. This correlates with other survey findings that suggest very low levels of awareness about what ordinary citizens can do to reduce crime.

The needs of victims

Addressing the needs of victims of crime, both practically and emotionally, enables them to cope better with the experience of victimisation, encourages them to participate in the investigation and prosecution of offenders, and to regain faith in the criminal justice system. As a result, numerous efforts by the government and by non-governmental organisations have been directed at meeting the needs of victims of crime in recent years.

The city victim surveys conducted by the ISS, however, found low levels of awareness about victim support services and their benefits. As a result, and because few services are actually available to the majority of people in metropolitan areas, few victims had ever used these services.[1] It is thus unlikely that people living in deep rural parts of the country would have access to victim support services. Consequently, victims in the rural survey were not asked about victim support services. Instead, their views on who they turned to for help after victimisation and what kind of assistance they would have liked, were recorded.

Victim support

Victims of each crime type could name three organisations or groups that they turned to for help. Across all categories of crime, the most common source of assistance was family members, followed by the police, friends and traditional authorities (such as chiefs or elders) (table 20). Only 4% of victims did not seek assistance from anyone, and only 2% turned to their local community police forum.

Table 20: Who victims of major crime types turned to for help

	Burglary		Stock theft		Robbery		Vandalism		Violent crime		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Family	79	28	65	23	5	28	16	27	60	28	225	26
Police	54	19	55	19	3	17	8	14	52	25	172	20
Friends	36	13	40	14	2	11	13	22	43	20	134	16
Traditional authority	44	15	53	19	1	6	6	10	10	5	114	13
Neighbour	45	16	34	12	4	22	8	14	16	8	107	12
Traditional healer	10	3	18	6	3	17	2	3	1	0	34	4
No one	13	5	14	5		0	2	3	9	4	38	4
Doctor	1	0	2	1		0	1	2	18	9	22	3
CPF	5	2	5	2		0	3	5	2	1	15	2

Note: 'Violent crime' includes murder, assault and sexual assault; 'robbery' includes carjacking and other types of robbery."

There were some differences in the behaviour of victims of crimes involving violence and crimes in which property only was taken when seeking assistance. In both cases, family and the police were the two most popular sources of assistance. However, violent crime victims were much more likely to seek the assistance of friends than those who experienced property crimes (figure 15). Violent crime victims were also marginally more likely to look to the police, family and doctors for help. Traditional authorities were clearly a much more popular choice for the victims of property than of violent crimes.

Figure 15: Who victims turned to for help (n=861)
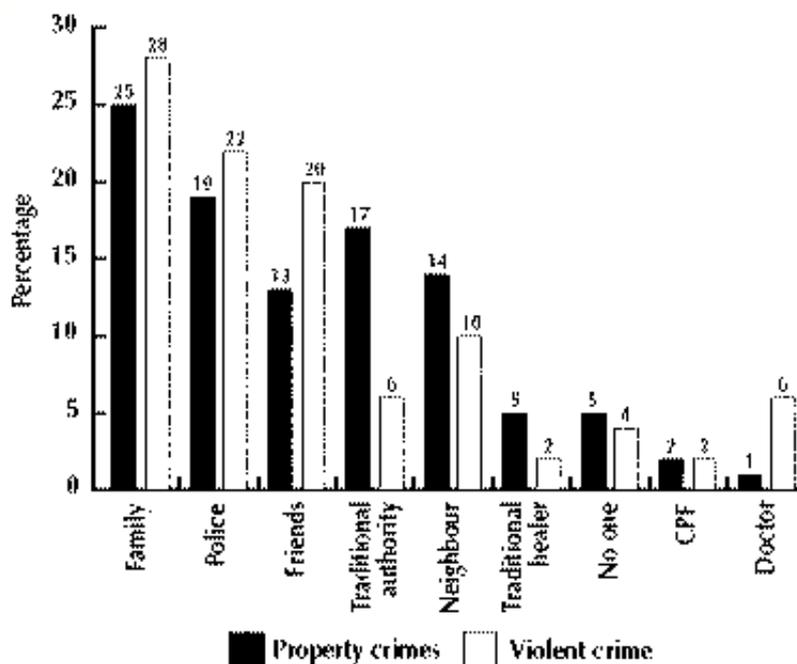
These results are similar to those reported in other victim surveys and reflect the types of assistance that victims of crime look for. In most cases, victims seek a balance between moral support (those who turn to family, friends and neighbours) and the need to resolve the matter — either through the criminal justice system (those who turn to the police) or through alternative means. Traditional authorities, for example, may assist in mediating in cases where offenders are known, in order to recover their property or mete out alternative forms of punishment.

The survey findings on the kinds of support that victims would have liked, illustrate this point further. Half of all victims (49%) said they would have liked more effective policing and law enforcement. Although much less popular, other types of assistance included moral support (counselling was mentioned by less than ten respondents) and community support (table 21).

Table 21: Types of assistance that victims would have liked

	Burglary		Stock theft		Robbery		Vandalism		Violent crime		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Effective law enforcement	66	57	48	47	17	49	11	46	41	44	183	49
Moral support	10	9	7	6	9	26	9	38	35	37	70	19
Community support	19	16	25	24	4	11	3	13	6	6	57	15
Information	13	11	20	19	2	6		0	2	2	37	10
Practical support	8	7	3	3	3	9	1	4	10	11	25	7

Note: 'Violent crime' includes murder, assault and sexual assault; 'robbery' includes carjacking and other types of robbery."

Although only 20% of victims actually sought the assistance of the police after victimisation (table 10), half of the sample said that the support they would have liked, was effective policing (table 11). This disparity is probably a result of the survey methodology: when asked what support they would have liked, victims were allowed only one option. This is in contrast to the three options they were given when asked who they turned to for help after victimisation.

Although victims of property and violent crimes sought help from largely similar sources (figure 15), the kind of support they would have liked was quite different.

The most popular types of support sought by victims of crimes involving violence were effective law enforcement (45%) and moral support (35%). Few mentioned community support, information on how to prevent crime or practical support (which includes medical attention, legal aid or advice, financial relief, and others — figure 16). Victims of property crime, by comparison, were more likely to call for better law enforcement (52%) than violent crime victims. It is unlikely that victims of violent crimes are less interested in prosecuting offenders. Rather, the methodological limitation in making one choice only probably meant that many of these victims opted for moral support above law enforcement — a type of assistance sought by only 8% of property crime victims.

Figure 16: Types of support victims would have liked (n=372)
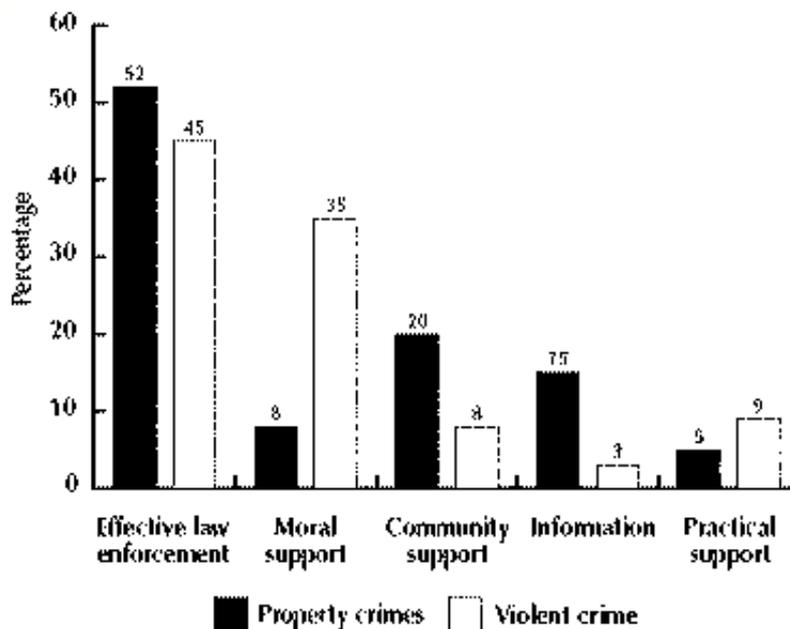
Victims of property offences were also more keen on community support and information on prevention than were victims of violence. The latter probably believe that violent offences are difficult to prevent — hence the low numbers who sought information on prevention or community support, both of which are required for developing preventive measures.

Safety strategies

Respondents (both victims and non-victims) were asked about the types of strategies that the government and individuals themselves should employ to make rural areas safer. These views are important for policy makers and planners, because they indicate:

Opinions of people about what is needed in their areas

Gathering the views of those affected has become accepted practice in local development initiatives - the same should apply in the design of strategies to reduce crime.

How to plan for the short and long term

If the vast majority of respondents call for improved law enforcement and justice, this reflects a sense of urgency among the public. It would therefore be unwise to focus all crime reduction efforts on long-term projects such as schools-based violence reduction and education projects to reduce domestic violence. A balance would be required between short-term, highly visible projects and such longer term efforts.

People's opinions about the causes of crime

Although the factors that cause crime can be generalised, the views of those who are affected often reflect differences in emphasis which should be considered by policy makers.

When asked what the government should do to make rural areas safer, 21% of rural respondents said they did not know. Among those who did have an opinion on the issue, there was overwhelming support for criminal justice-type interventions: 72% mentioned improvements to the systems of policing and justice. Similar views were recorded in the city victim surveys conducted in the metropolitan areas of the country.[2]

In most cases, rural respondents wanted the government to improve the accessibility of the police - through deploying more officials, building more police stations or ensuring that the police were available 24 hours a day (figure 17). Where justice was concerned, 17% of respondents identified the need for harsher sentences for criminals.

Figure 17: What government shuld do to make rural areas safer

	Percentage
Police available 24 hours	3
Better street lighting	6
Better training for police	5
Equip police with vans, phones	4
Build police station nearby	10
Heavy penalties for offenders	17
Create jobs	23
Deploy more police	28
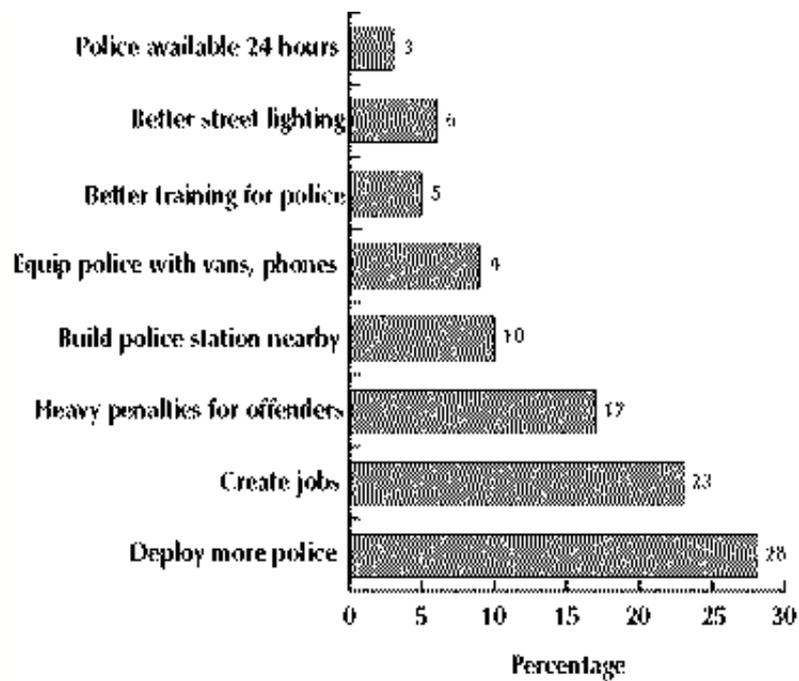
Less than a quarter said the government should focus on job creation to reduce crime in rural areas. This is perhaps surprising, given that the survey was conducted in the poorest rural areas in the country, reflected in the demographics of the realised sample (see chapter 2), and that most victims identified financial gain as the motive for most crimes (see chapter 3). However, the findings probably reflect just how weak policing is in rural areas, as well as the belief that the criminal justice system should be responsible for resolving crime.

Comparative perspective: What government should do to make your area safer (percentage)

	Johannesburg	Durban	Cape Town	Pretoria
Effective policing	65	56	49	60
Harsher penalties	23	22	27	26
Development/job creation	12	21	24	14
Source: ISS city victim surveys				

This is supported by results of a follow-up question in which people were asked what the government should do, *besides policing*, to make rural areas safer. Respondents' first and second choice were recorded. The most popular choice (80%) was more jobs for the unemployed. The second choice was harsher penalties for offenders (including sentencing and tougher bail conditions), followed by improving local infrastructure and developing the area (table 22).

Table 22: What government should do to make rural areas safer, besides policing

1st choice	Number	Percentage
More jobs for the unemployed	577	80
Harsher penalties for offenders	99	14
Teach youth norms and values	24	3
Improve infrastructure/develop area	16	2
Mobilise the community	7	1
2nd choice	**Number**	**Percentage**
Harsher penalties for offenders	334	47
Improve infrastructure/develop area	176	25
Teach youth norms and values	107	15

Mobilise the community	75	11
More jobs for the unemployed	22	3

Comparative perspective: What government should do to make your area safer, besides policing (%)				
	Johannesburg	Durban	Cape Town	Pretoria
Job creation	43	46	59	57
Harsher penalties	37	30	22	29
Norms & values for youth	9	12	10	5
Improve local infrastructure	3	6	5	5
Community mobilisation	8	6	3	3
Source: ISS city victim surveys				

Although the importance of job creation and development in reducing crime is clearly illustrated by these results, it is nevertheless revealing that harsher penalties were mentioned by many respondents. This illustrates that rural respondents expect equal weight to be given to an effective criminal justice system as to other longer term strategies. Understanding and responding to public attitudes to punishment and sentencing in particular should be an important part of any crime reduction strategy.

Reducing crime requires a co-operative effort between the government and its agencies, and civil society. For this reason, respondents were asked what they could do to make their area safer.

Over two-thirds of all respondents (67%) said they did not know how they could contribute towards local safety. This large proportion is significant, since it suggests that the level of awareness about what ordinary citizens can do to reduce crime is very low:

- Further, few victims of crime in rural areas changed their behaviour after the incident: 23% in the case of vandalism, 16% for burglary and violent crime, 13% for stock theft and 11% for robbery.

- Only 7% of all respondents said their community made alternative 'arrangements' to protect itself, and only 29% said there was a community police forum in their area.

However, the potential does exist for individual and community-based activities to reduce crime. A wide range of interventions were suggested by respondents in response to the question about what they could do to make their area safer (table 23). In addition, the overwhelming majority (80%) of the 54 respondents who said that their community made alternative 'arrangements' to protect itself, believed that these measures were effective in securing the community. (Community police forums, however, had less success: only 42% said their local CPF had made a difference to crime in their area.)

Table 23: What respondents said they could do to make their area safer

	Number	Percentage
Do not know	495	67
Create a policing/safety forum	88	12
Introduce business skills/training/jobs	41	6
Report crime to the police/safety forum	35	5
Whatever I can offer	22	3
Better security around the home	19	3
Buy a gun	9	1
Take the law into my own hands	9	1
Organise social events	8	1
Look after the elderly	2	0

| Move to a better place | 1 | 0 |

Notes

1. See A Louw, M Shaw, L Camerer & R Robertshaw, *Crime in Johannesburg: Results of a city victim survey*, <u>ISS Monograph 18</u>, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, February 1998; L Camerer, A Louw, M Shaw, L Artz & W Scharf, *Crime in Cape Town: Results of a city victim survey*, ISS <u>Monograph 23</u>, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, April 1998; A Louw, <u>*Crime in Pretoria: Results of a city victim survey*</u>, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, and Idasa, Pretoria, August 1998; R Robertshaw & A Louw, *Crime in Durban: Results of a city victim survey,* ISS Monograph, forthcoming 2000.

2. See A Louw, Comparing crime in South Africa's major cities: Results of four city victim surveys, <u>*African Security Review, 8(1)*</u>, 1999.

Chapter 6: Policing the rural areas

Key points

The general weaknesses of policing in South Africa are compounded in the deep rural environment by the geographic isolation and inaccessible topography of many of these areas, a lack of infrastructure and the resource and capacity constraints of the police and those whom they are meant to serve.

Consistent visible policing, a common strategy for deterring particular crimes in urban environments is impossible, for all practical purposes.

The limited police presence in the rural areas and infrastructural constraints mean that most interaction between the police and those whom they serve, occurs at the police station when police assistance is sought.

> Policing is therefore almost wholly reactive, but its effectiveness is severely limited by the ability of the police to respond adequately, and especially, by the lack of communication and feedback provided by the police to those who report crime.

> There appears to be a practical prioritisation in which the most serious crime is responded to as fast as possible, and lesser cases dealt with when time and resource constraints allow, or in other instances, simply discarded.

> Very little, if any, information on the manner in which the police are dealing with the reported crime is provided to the victim.

Therefore, there appears to be a general lack of confidence in the ability of the police to deal with crime in the rural areas and dissatisfaction with the service provided by the police.

Despite this, the levels of crime reporting and especially reporting to the police, are realtively high, indicating that police in the rural areas are still viewed as the primary authorities for dealing with crime

Challenges facing rural policing

In his foreword to the KwaZulu-Natal department of safety and security's 1998 annual report, the member of the executive committee of the provincial legislature responsible for the safety and security portfolio, *Inkosi* N J Ngubane, notes that: "Conscious of the failures of the past, we tend to face the future with a certain amount of trepidation."[1] Given the challenges facing effective policing in the rural areas of South Africa, trepidation may well be the only appropriate emotion for those responsible for its delivery.

Indeed, such are these challenges that the 1998 white paper on safety and security deliberately did not engage with them, but rather directed the department of safety and security "to prioritise the development of policy related to the provision of effective and efficient law enforcement and crime prevention in the rural areas."[2]

What, then, is it that makes 'effective and efficient law enforcement' in the rural areas so difficult? Most obviously, the general weaknesses of policing in South Africa — such as limited resources, an overly centralised and bureaucratic hierarchy, a general lack of appropriate skills and training, a dearth of managerial expertise, and a limited intelligence and investigative capacity — are compounded in the rural environment by the geographic isolation of many of these areas, their lack of infrastructure, the skewed allocation of resources and the capacity constraints of the police and those whom they are meant to serve.

The range and scope of these issues imply a fundamental redefinition of the role of the police in rural environments.

Tugela Ferry and its police station provide a brief example. Situated on the banks of the Tugela river deep in the hilly and scenic KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, the small town of Tugela Ferry may only be accessed via the winding R33, and the rusting wrecks that litter the side of the road at fairly regular intervals, caution for care. The town itself is little more than a short and potholed main road, lined on either side with general dealer stores, hawkers selling fruit and vegetables, a supermarket, petrol station and a mini-bus taxi rank. Yet, outside this centre live some 1.5 million people, located in ten localities spread over roughly 1 400 square kilometres. The population is very poor, the vast majority of people of economically active age are unemployed and the return of migrant labourers, as job opportunities for semi and unskilled labour in the formal sector shrink throughout the country, has placed enormous pressure on local development.

The site of significant political violence from the mid-1980s to early 1990s, the area is notorious for its violence. Although the political violence has dissipated, the area is now troubled by aggressive 'faction-fighting' related to high rates of stock-theft, as well as murder and armed robbery. Recently, there has also been an increase in taxi violence, hijacking and vehicle theft. For years the Tugela Ferry area has been associated with a wide proliferation of firearms including handguns and semi-automatic rifles. However, in 1998, the specialised police firearm unit was apparently moved away from its base at the station to Glencoe, some 97 kilometres away.[3]

Set to deal with this are Tugela Ferry's police station commissioner, the young, articulate and confident Captain Zondi who has been there for just more than a year, and his staff of 30 police officers. Eight of these police officers are detectives and the remaining 22 are deployed for 'proactive' or 'visible policing' duties.

According to an assessment by the SAPS's management services, Tugela Ferry should be policed by 60 police officers — the station is therefore underresourced, at least in terms of this

assessment, by 50%.[4]

However, according to the SAPS deputy provincial commissioner for KwaZulu-Natal, assistant commissioner Ngidi, national criteria set by SAPS head office in Pretoria aim at a police-citizen ratio of 2.4 per 1 000. Understaffed KwaZulu-Natal is currently policed at a ratio of 1.9 per 1 000.[5] In rural KwaZulu-Natal, however, the situation is far worse. Indeed, the concentration of police stations in and around the Durban metropolitan area makes the average figure for policing in the province almost meaningless for rural police stations.

For instance, the total police presence in Tugela Ferry is equal to one police officer per 50 000 residents spread over 46.6 square kilometres. This calculation, of course, does not factor in the shift system, authorised vacation and sick leave, unauthorised absenteeism and disciplinary suspensions. Together, these would account for more than one-third of the staff at any one time. Therefore, in terms of actual operational policing, a more accurate ratio would probably be closer to one police officer per 75 000 residents, spread over 70 square kilometres of rough terrain.

Nevertheless, the staff complement is more fortunate than most in the rural areas — the eight detectives at the station have been trained for their functions and just two or three members are not fully literate. (According to the minister for safety and security, 37 841 of the 126 500 members of the SAPS are considered to be functionally illiterate — 29.9%).[6]

The police station has ten vehicles — two 4X4s and eight light vans. However, not only is the appropriateness of the light vans for the local topography questionable, just four members of staff have driver's licences. (Overall in KwaZulu-Natal, some 4 000 of the province's 17 500 police officers are not licenced to drive — 23%).[7] In practice, this means that one of these four officers needs to be on duty at all times, which affects their standby and rest periods.

The station's information systems are computerised, but, given the lack of personnel trained to use them and inadequate maintenance and support systems, the computers are mainly offline. The intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities of the station are therefore very limited.

This clear lack of required resources saps motivation as police staff are able to provide only the most basic reactive services, and they know it. Just how basic these services can be, is illustrated by the manner in which the police are forced to deal with murder victims in the outlying areas.

Captain Zondi provides an example of a violent faction fight in a mountainous area which resulted in a number of deaths.[8] The incident was reported at the police station two days after the event. After allowing the person reporting the incident to rest a little, the police drove as far as was possible in their light van, accompanied by other police officers in a flatbed pickup as there was no mortuary van. They walked the rest of the way and arrived at the site of the incident the following day. After some initial questioning and taking statements, the police had to carry the corpses down the mountain on their shoulders, and on returning to their vehicles, had to bend and break the bodies, as rigour mortis had set in, to fit them into the pickup. The bodies were then transported to town, in the back of the open pickup, for examination. Not surprisingly, the police were accused by relatives of the deceased, and others who saw the pickup on its way to town, of lacking respect for the dead — an important cultural taboo. It apparently took considerable time and effort to repair relations with the community.

It appears that this was not an isolated event. Rather, it seems to be fairly standard practice.

Indeed, captain Zondi's predecessor pointed out, in an interview in 1998, that "we know it's against the rules and if you are caught you can be disciplined, but what can we do if we don't have mortuary vans?"[9]

Given these circumstances, the station battles with morale and discipline issues, evidenced by absenteeism and alcohol abuse. There is little captain Zondi can do — disciplinary matters, beyond that of issuing either verbal or written warnings, are dealt with at the area level of command. These matters can take up to two years to resolve, a period during which the police officer facing disciplinary procedures would remain on duty.[10]

Allied to this is the absence of systemic incentives for good performance — there is no systemic means of distinguishing between those constables who dedicate time and effort to serving those in need, and those who just go through the motions or, in some instances, simply do not. All will receive the same pay-cheque at the end of the month. Indeed, there are no incentives for police officers to serve in the rural areas at all. Often removed from family and friends, living in rough, sometimes squalid conditions away from the amenities and recreation offered in the cities, police officers in the rural areas receive the same benefits as those serving in more developed environments.

Six years after the *Interim constitution* first provided for the establishment of structured community participation in policing issues, and four years after the *South African Police Service Act* made it the responsibility of the police to ensure this, the station still does not have a functioning community police forum (CPF). The police at Tugela Ferry have done what they can to act on this — they have engaged community leaders, advertised the functions of the CPF and delegated liaison functions to a community police officer.

However, tension between rival political groups and the fear of victimisation caused by such tension prevent local church groups, youth and women's organisations from participating. Further, the logistic requirements to reach the station mean that community meetings are becoming increasingly infrequent. As captain Zondi says: "I'm on my own here."[11] This is compounded by the fact that only the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) provides support to police programmes aimed at preventing crime. In captain Zondi's experience, there has been no real participation from other government departments which "provide more lip service than action."[12]

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that Zondi finds the proactive and participatory community policing advocated by the SAPS's national and provincial command structures, "a fine abstract concept" and that he is a little bitter at being "showered with criticism for not showing successes."[13]

Given that the situation in Tugela Ferry is fairly typical, if not actually better than that experienced at many other rural police stations, the brief outline above raises some of the issues pertinent to policing in the rural areas. These issues beg the question of what 'successes' Captain Zondi, and other police station commissioners in similar or worse situations in the rural areas, can actually be expected to show.

In other words, what, exactly, would constitute successful policing in these areas and how would it be measured?

These, clearly, are the two critical questions that would need to be addressed in any meaningful policy aimed at enhancing policing in the rural areas.

The police in the rural areas

South Africa's history of racially biased policing is well documented.[14] Perhaps the most telling statistic is that used in the white paper on safety and security which notes that, in 1994, "74% of the country's police stations were situated in the white suburbs or business districts."[15] These, of course, were and are predominantly urban.

For much of South Africa's rural population, policing prior to 1994 was the responsibility of one or another of the former homeland police agencies. Cawthra's succinct analysis is appropriate here:

> "The bantustans were designed as apartheid's final solution — eventually there would be no more black South Africans, only citizens of 'independent states' who would come to white South Africa to sell their labour. It was a fantasy of social engineering that like so many grand experiments with human societies became a nightmare."[16]

These nominally autonomous police agencies, set up along with military structures when the homelands were established in the mid-1970s and early 1980s, functioned primarily as extensions of the former South African Police (SAP) for controlling political dissent and opposition. Initially set up and managed by white SAP officers, usually senior security branch officers, the homeland police were reliant on the SAP for their budgets, training, equipment, standing orders, forensics and criminal records.

However, in line with the ideology underlying their formation, formal managerial control of these police forces was gradually handed to black SAP members of the appropriate ethnic group. An additional criteria, of course, was that of political reliability — measured usually by the experience of these officers in the SAP's security branch.[17]

The rewards for the new command echelon were great. Drawn from an organisation which systematically discriminated against them, the chosen were very quickly promoted up the ranks to positions they could not hope to fill in the SAP. Indeed, such was the speed of these promotions that some, ironically, were opposed by the very SAP officers who were meant to ensure them.[18] Nevertheless, these promotions meant that few of the new commanders were actually qualified for their jobs.

The same may be said of the more junior police officers in these agencies. While most received some level of basic training and many received riot and counterinsurgency training by the SAP, it was as late as 1989 that limited in-service training and management capacity-building programmes were provided for the junior, middle and senior management echelons.

By the early 1990s, this dearth of management capacity had resulted in widespread discontent with the poor leadership in the homeland police forces.[19]

Necessarily aligned to and supportive of the ruling élite in the homelands, the legitimacy of these police agencies was fundamentally affected by the perceived legitimacy, or, in most instances, the thorough illegitimacy, of the homeland administrations. Caught up in the machinations characteristic of homeland politics, these police agencies quickly became embroiled in and associated with the corruption and nepotism so pervasive in the homeland administrations.

As indicated by the findings of the Judge White commission — which was set up by former president Nelson Mandela to review promotions in the homelands in February 1995 — this appears to have reached its nadir in the year immediately before and six months after the May 1994 election. During this period, at least 16 650 employees of the homeland administrations were irregularly promoted or otherwise rewarded.[20] Some 7 431 homeland police officers were irregularly promoted during this period. These figures are conservative, however, as in 7 452 cases — 2 393 of which concerned police officers — no finding could be made (because the individual concerned could not be traced or had died, no records could be found or the promotion fell outside the jurisdiction of the commission).[21]

For the SAPS, the ramifications of these findings for confidence in its new management can only be severe. However, there are encouraging signs that the organisation is taking the matter seriously. On 7 November 1999, the police announced that 500 officers in the Northern Province who had been irregularly promoted by their former homeland agencies and integrated into the SAPS at these inflated ranks, had been demoted.[22]

For policing in the rural areas, however, this points to a problematic dynamic. The creation of the SAPS as South Africa's unified police service was conceptualised as a three phase process. First was the technical amalgamation of 11 police agencies — no mean undertaking, given that each had developed their own operating procedures and systems. Second was the rationalisation of the organisational structure and resource allocation — primarily to ensure a more equitable distribution of police resources. Parallel to this was the third phase, the 'transformation' of the new SAPS into an effective, representative, responsive and accountable police service.

The former police agencies have long since been amalgamated, but cost and other constraints — like the lack of incentives and the resistance of many police officers — have inhibited the rationalisation and redistribution of the SAPS's human resources. In practice, these constraints have meant that the original deployment of police personnel, to a large degree, has been maintained. For instance, of the roughly 18 000 police officers in the Eastern Cape, some 10 000 or 55.5% were members of the former homeland police forces.[23]

It is arguable therefore that, while changes in the nature and style of policing in South Africa have occurred, at least at the policy and symbolic levels, many of the inhabitants of South Africa's rural areas are being policed much as they used to be. For many in the rural areas, not much about policing has actually changed in the five years since democratisation.

The nature of policing in the rural areas

It is therefore no surprise that almost half of the respondents to the survey (48.2%) expressed their perception that the quality of policing in their areas had not changed at all over the past few years. However, 36.5% of the respondents believed that the service they received from the police had declined. Just 15.3% believed that policing had improved in their areas.

This response, while surely indicative of the lack of change in policing the rural areas, may also be explained by the high rate of victimisation found in the sample population. Given that 56.9% of the respondents indicated that they had been victims of crime, it is highly unlikely that they would believe that the standard of policing had improved.

This high rate of victimisation may also help to explain the respondents' general lack of confidence in the ability of the police to curb South Africa's high crime rates. While 33.7% were

non-committal, 43.4% of the respondents believed that the police were ineffective in curbing crime in their areas. Just 22.9% of the respondents believed that the police were effectively dealing with crime.

A number of practical factors pertinent to these perceptions are outlined below — factors like the level of visibility of the police, access to the police, the response of the police to reported crime and the level of satisfaction with the service provided by the police.

Visibility

A core element of policing policy in South Africa has been the attempt to shift policing from its prior focus on the management of specific incidents — that is, its reactive focus — towards a more proactive, participatory and preventive approach.[24] For the SAPS, generally, this has meant focusing on improving its investigative capacity, particularly its intelligence, detective and other specialised functions, enhancing visible policing and attempting to improve the service provided to victims of crime.

At local police station level, this translates into 'proactive' and 'reactive' functions. 'Proactive' functions are those associated with the uniformed branch: community policing, visible policing and those duties performed in the community service centre (or charge office). 'Reactive' functions refer to the detectives. Intelligence functions are meant to inform both. (The uniformed functions have here been deliberately split, as 'community policing' at station level is, more often than not, the specific function of a community police officer which revolves around the administrative requirements of the CPF). Thus, the 'proactive' functions refer primarily to ensuring visible policing through preventive patrol, directed patrol and the newer sector policing.

The purpose of such policing is two-fold — on the one hand, the presence of police officers, depending on the perceived integrity of the police, may fulfil a public reassurance role. As Altbeker puts it:

> "the visible presence of police officers may have an important bearing on the perception of members of the community that the state and justice system are alive and effective. This, in turn, may also have the sociological effect of giving citizens a social identity in which rights and duties play an important part. This process is basically a psychological one; the presence of police officers makes members of the public feel more confident and secure."[25]

On the other hand, police patrols may deter particular crimes like some opportunistic street and property crimes.

As already indicated, the problem for policing in the rural areas is that resources are sometimes so thinly spread, and the topography so unhelpful, that maintaining a visible police presence is practically impossible.

The reality of this problem is brought into sharp relief by the results of the survey. In response to the question, "How often do you see a police officer on duty in your village (or area)?", respondents were most likely to say that they never saw the police. The table below details this response.

Table 24: The visibility of the police in rural areas

Response	Number	Percentage
Never see a police officer	253	33.5
See a police officer less than once a month	241	31.9
See a police officer more than once a month	134	17.7
See a police officer at least once a week	78	10.3
See a police officer every day	50	6.6
Total	756	100

This experience appears to tally with that of operational police officers based in the rural areas. Noting that the greater the isolation from neighbours or neighbouring villages, the greater the reliance on the police, inspector Basi of Donnybrook police station says that these areas are the least accessible. People in these places, he says, are unlikely to see a police officer, "unless the police are there to attend to a complaint or to arrest a suspect."[26]

Further, it should be noted that, in some localities, complicity in crime or retribution for crimes committed in the locality translates into an open hostility towards the police which mitigates against visible patrol. For instance, the former SAPS head of crime prevention in the Umtata area of the Eastern Cape, director Louw, notes that, in some areas where stock theft and the cycles of revenge associated with it have become entrenched as a way of life, people prefer to "sort things out for themselves and often co-operate with each other against the police ... Many police officers are killed here."[27]

For safety reasons, patrols in these areas require a minimum of four to six highly armed and trained police personnel, as fewer would only endanger their lives. Thus, patrolling these areas is a task usually allocated to the public order policing units of the SAPS which, supported by members of the army, are deployed in numbers in response to sporadic 'instability'. Tactically, visible policing becomes a stabilisation or suppressive operation which, when 'completed', results in the withdrawal of the troops and the police.

The implications of the very limited and inconsistent police presence in the rural areas are outlined by assistant commissioner Ngidi, who says of proactive policing that:

> "This is about restoring confidence in our communities. We need to create the perception in the minds of the people that the police care, and with that, we can help in ensuring a safe environment."[28]

"How " he asks, "do you do this if you cannot be visible?"

Access

For people living in the rural areas, the limited presence of the police is compounded by a general lack of infrastructure which inhibits access to police services.

For instance, most of the sample population indicated that they lived some distance from their nearest police station. Table 25 below indicates the distances respondents need to travel to reach a police station.

Table 25: Distance to nearest police station

Response	Number	Percentage
Less than 10 kilometres	259	35.7
Between 11 kilometres and 30 kilometres	381	52.5
Between 31 kilometres and 50 kilometres	47	6.5

50 kilometres or more	39	5.3
Total	**726**	**100**

Furthermore, just 64 of the 756 respondents (8.5%) said they had a telephone in their homes, but only 52 (6.9%) could confirm that the telephone worked.

Practically, the limited police presence in the rural areas and the infrastructural constraints mean that most interaction between the police and those whom they serve, occurs at the police station when police assistance is sought.

Mini-bus taxis are the most common means of transport to reach the police as confirmed by 71.3% of respondents. Just 9.9% indicated that they used a bus, which is indicative of the very limited public transport available in the rural areas. Very few respondents (6.3%) said they were able to drive themselves in private transport.

Despite the relative remoteness of police stations in the rural areas, 74.9% of the respondents indicated that they could reach their nearest police station within an hour — which is suggestive perhaps of the ready availability of taxis. The remaining 25.1% of the respondents indicated that it would take between an hour and two hours to reach a police station.

The majority of respondents (73.3%) indicated that it cost between R2 and R5 to reach their nearest police station. A further 9% indicated that it cost between R5—50 and R10. Given that the survey was conducted in those provinces where unemployment is rife and where many of those who are employed earn less than R500 a month, the constraints of these costs should not be underestimated.[29]

Thus, the relative remoteness of some of the police stations and the lack of telephones and personal transportation mean that, for many in the rural areas, seeking help from the police can sometimes be a long and relatively expensive experience.

Reporting

Despite these constraints, the levels of crime that are actually reported, and especially reported to the police, appear relatively high.

The level of reporting by victims of the four major types of crime is indicated in table 26 below.

Table 26 Reporting patterns by crime type

	Stock theft %	Violent crime %	Burglary %	Damage to property %
Crimes reported by victims	80.2	71.0	66.4	73.0
– Incident reported to SAPS	69.3	84.2	72.4	47.4
– Incident reported to traditional authority	29.7	10.9	24.1	31.6
– Incident reported to community structure	1.0	4.9	3.4	21.0

It is clear from these statistics that, despite the severe limitations of policing in the rural areas and the negative perceptions regarding their abilities, the police are still viewed by the majority of victims as the primary authorities for dealing with crime. Thus, the disillusionment, cynicism and loss of faith characteristic of many urban areas and indicated there by the spread of vigilante groups and the exponential growth of private security in the wealthier areas, have

seemingly not developed to the same extent in South Africa's rural areas.

Indeed, most victims of crime — for example, 86.7% of the victims of stock theft and 80.6% of burglary — indicated their willingness to assist the police in their investigations. This held true, but to a lesser extent, for victims of violent crimes — 63.4% of the victims of such crimes indicated that they had and would continue to assist the police.

Further, the levels of reporting to the police may actually be higher than revealed in the table above. In some instances, there is dual reporting in that victims first report the crime to the traditional authorities or community structures which, if unable to resolve the matter, would report it to the police. For director Louw, this occurs often, with the exception of domestic violence which, he says, is more often "sorted out in the community."[30]

It may also be assumed that this dual reporting would be more prevalent in those localities where 'traditional' or 'tribal' police are operative. These 'policemen' — and they are men — would either deal with the complaint at hand, or refer it to the SAPS. Supported by and reporting to the local chief, these policemen often provide an additional source of security and conflict resolution for inhabitants of rural localities.

Almost a third of the respondents (31.9%) lived in areas where traditional police were functional. More respondents (48.1%) were satisfied with the service they received than those who were not (37%), citing respect, responsiveness and problem-solving as the reasons.

Interestingly, the main criticism was the same as that levelled at the SAPS — a limited presence and lack of visibility was referred to by 18.4% of these respondents, while 10.7% of the respondents who were dissatisfied with the service they received from the traditional police cited corruption and patronage as the reasons.

The one crime type which most victims appear to have reported more to authorities other than the police was that of damage to property or vandalism. Of the victims of this crime, 53.6% indicated that they had reported it either to the traditional authorities or to community structures in their area. One explanation for this may be that they believed these authorities or structures were more likely to ensure the desired outcome, in this case restoration — that is, the replacement or repair of the damaged property — and that this was preferred to retribution or the punishment of the perpetrator.

This may also help to explain the relatively high rate of reporting to the police for violent crime. Of the 71% of the victims of violent crime who reported the incident, 84.2% reported it to the police. Here, the need for protection — that is, the desire to see the perpetrator arrested and then removed from the vicinity through imprisonment — may well override the short-term retribution or mediation offered by traditional authorities or community structures.

Community structures may take a variety of forms in rural areas, ranging from civic organisations focused on development issues, small self-employment initiatives, self-policing groups or the more formal CPFs. These CPFs were to be established at all police stations primarily as a means of ensuring greater communication and co-operation between the police and those whom they served. It appears from the responses gained in the survey that the more openly safety-oriented organisations have little profile and less impact. For instance, when asked whether a CPF had been established in their area, most respondents said no. Figure 18 below shows details this response.

Figure 18: Respondent's awareness of community police forums
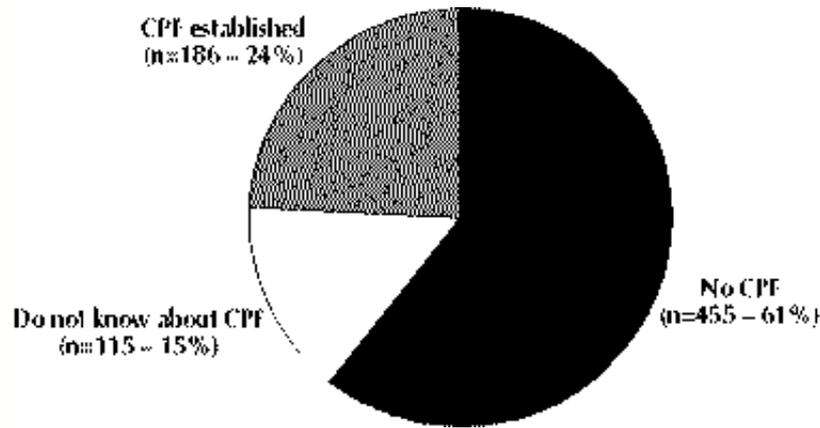
Thus, it appears as though little actual implementation has occurred since the publication in 1995 of the *South African Police Service Act*, the 1997 department of safety and security's *Community policing policy and guidelines*, or the government's *Rural development framework* which noted that, while many CPFs in the urban areas had already become effective in breaking down distrust and ensuring wider participation, "CPFs are not widely established in the rural areas."[31]

This is indicative of the many problematic issues related to the functioning of CPFs, many of which are amplified in the rural context.[32]

As inspector Basi put it, "convincing the unemployed and people living in poverty that by participating in the CPFs they would be improving their lives is not an easy task."[33]

Further, the participatory nature of such structures has often been interpreted as a threat to traditional authority or has resulted in the 'taking' of such structures by interest groups with overt political motivations. As the former station commissioner of Tugela Ferry police station observed:

> "Our relationship with the *amaKhosi* was not bad, but once we start initiating CPFs, it became a problem. Initially the *amaKhosi* claimed they were not consulted, but later it became clear that two chiefs belonging to different political organisations did not want to work together. *AmaKhosi* do not want to work with anybody and once you involve the ANC they will withdraw from the Forum."[34]

This is a familiar tune for director Louw in Umtata, who says that, although the SAPS has often tried to clarify issues:

> "there is a perception that the CPFs work against the traditional leaders. This has not been helped by the hijacking of some of the CPFs by SANCO [the South African National Civics Organisation] to be used a political platform."[35]

However, apart from these issues, some police officers have linked the CPFs to raising expectations that they would be unable to meet. As some police officers at Mondlo commented:

> "We sometimes lie on our reports and say we go to the CPF meetings while we don't. What would be the use of going out to the community to hear about their problems and what they want while you know there is nothing you can do about it.

We cannot go to the community and lie to them. They need what we cannot deliver. That's why the CPF is not working."[36]

Some police officers, though, have seen the potential in their responsibility to establish the CPFs. These officers have often used the CPFs as a tool to lobby for additional resources. Captain Cloete of Bulwer police station in KwaZulu-Natal, for instance, maintains that, while it took him some four years to establish the CPF and the 12 subforums in his station, it was worth it. This is because "now people understand what can and what cannot be done by the police and the CPF has been useful in getting more personnel allocated to the station."[37]

Others have also guided relations at the CPF to the point were policing is supplemented by residents of the area. As inspector Cira, the station commissioner at Dududu noted:

"Despite all the difficulty we have with the CPFs, we are finding it very useful to work with the community. The little progress we have made, makes me find it useful to share ideas with the public. We need to get closer to the public and some people are trying to get closer to us. Because of the Forums, we solve some of the cases sitting in the office. We get calls from CPF members, telling us not to worry about suspects because they will bring them to the police station."[38]

Thus, the experience of community participation through the formal structures of the CPFs has been diverse, but it seems clear from the above that few of these structures, even where they have been established and are functioning, have been used to their full potential.

To sum up, despite their reservations concerning the abilities of the police, it is clear that, in the majority of cases, it is to the police that victims of crime in the rural areas turn for assistance.

Those who indicated that they had not reported their victimisation to the police were reserved in providing reasons for this, and few provided details. However, the reasons given by those who were prepared to answer questions related to this varied mainly according to the nature of the incident, the ability to access the police and especially, to perceptions of the ability of the police to deal with it.

For instance, for cases of burglary — which appeared to be the least reported crime — victims who did not report the crime to the police and who provided reasons for this (47 respondents), attributed their response to:

a lack of confidence in the ability of the police to deal with the issue — 42.6%;

the insignificance of the incident in that it was only an attempted crime — 17.0%;

personal reasons (fear of retribution, personal blameworthiness or the desire to apprehend the perpetrators themselves) — 12.8%;

difficulties in accessing a police station — 12.8%;

reporting to traditional authorities — 12.8%; and

in one incident, the victim indicated that the alleged perpetrator had been arrested before the case had been reported.

Similar reasons were noted by the victims of stock theft for whom a lack of confidence in the

ability of the police to deal with the matter, a preference for reporting to traditional authorities and access to the police were the major issues. The victims who did not report the matter to the police and who provided reasons for this (37 respondents), attributed their response to:

   a lack of confidence in the ability of the police to deal with the issue — 59.4%;

   reporting to traditional authorities — 27.0%;

   difficulties in accessing a police station — 8.1%;

   the insignificance of the incident in that it was only an attempted crime — 2.7%;

   personal reasons (fear of retribution, personal blameworthiness or the desire to apprehend the perpetrators themselves) — 2.7%.

However, as expected, the picture differed for cases of violent crime. The sensitivity of victims of this crime, especially their insecurity, fear and their personal relationship with the offender were the major factors inhibiting reporting to the police. Thus, victims of violent crime who did not report the crime to the police and who provided reasons for this (30 respondents), attributed their response to:

   personal reasons (fear of retribution, personal blameworthiness, or the perpetrator was either a member of the family or a lover) — 53.3%;

   a lack of confidence in the ability of the police to deal with the issue — 23.3%;

   difficulties in accessing a police station — 6.7%;

   reporting to traditional authorities — 6.7%;

   the insignificance of the incident in that it was an attempted crime — 6.6%;

   in one incident, the victim indicated that the alleged perpetrator had been arrested before the case had been reported; and

   in another, the victim of assault indicated that the alleged offender had been punished in the community.

Thus, while relatively few victims of crime provided details on why they had not reported the matter to the police, the statistics above indicate that, with the exception of violent crime, and particularly sexual assault, a lack of confidence in the abilities of the police appears to be the predominant factor inhibiting reporting.

Unfortunately, the lack of communication and feedback from the police to the victims who report the crimes committed against them may well strengthen these negative perceptions.

Response

Table 27 below outlines the time it took, according to the victims of crime, for the police to reach the scene of the crime they had reported.

Table 27: Police response to reported crime

	Stock theft (%)	Violent crime (%)	Burglary (%)	Damage to property (%)
Under 2 hours	38.7	51.8	42.4	55.6
Under 5 hours	12.9	8.7	8.5	11.1
More than 5 hours	14.5	9.9	13.6	11.1
More than 2 days	8.1	13.6	22	–
Did not come at all	25.8	13.6	13.6	22.2

It is clear from this table that the police are most likely to respond to the majority of reported crimes within two hours. Given the considerable constraints under which the police function, this response time should be regarded as reasonable, if not adequate.

However, the table also indicates that, in a proportionally large number of cases when victims had reported the crime, they received no response at all. There could be a range of reasons for this, including:

the nature and seriousness of the incident — that is, whether or not the incident required follow-up at the actual scene of the crime;

the successful resolution or mediation of the issue at the police station, which would obviously not require further follow-up; and

simple negligence by the police.

Overall, though, these statistics appear indicative of a practical prioritisation in which the most serious cases are responded to as fast as possible, and the lesser cases either dealt with when time and resource constraints allow it or, alternatively, simply discarded. This appears to be particularly relevant to cases of stock theft and damage to property — in which the police seem most likely to respond within two hours or not at all — and a similar approach seems evident for violent crime and burglary.

What the data does not show, however, is the extent of feedback or informative communication from the police. While there can be little doubt that prioritisation is a necessary requirement for operational effectiveness, there can be less doubt that, if not explained and communicated adequately, such prioritisation will impact negatively on the perceptions of those victims whose cases were not prioritised. After all, the case of each and every victim who reports a crime would be a priority for the victim. This is especially the case when most have to travel for some time and at some expense to report the incident.

Such feedback seems to be particularly difficult for police officers serving in rural stations. This is indicated primarily by the number of victims who expressed dissatisfaction with the service they received from the police and the reasons given for this (see table 28).

Table 28: Levels of satisfaction with service received from police

	Stock theft (%)	Violent crime (%)	Burglary (%)
Satisfied	21.4	32.1	26.9
Non-committal	12.9	22.6	1 case
Dissatisfied	65.7	45.2	71.4
No follow-up/contact after crime reported	44.4	25.0	26.8

No investigation or arrest	51.1	43.7	56.1
Treated unprofessionally by police	1 case	18.7	9.7
Suspect arrested then released	1 case	12.6	7.3

Note: the number of victims of vandalism who answered this question in detail (9) was just small to use as an indicative result.

As is clear from table 28, the majority of victims of crime who reported the incident to the police were dissatisfied with the service or, in some instances, the complete lack of service provided by the police.

The comparatively few respondents who indicated that they were satisfied with the service they received, cited helpful and professional conduct, the arrest of the (alleged) perpetrators and the return of stolen property as the primary reasons.

However, it is clear from this table that most respondents were dissatisfied with what they perceived to be a lack of investigation and, therefore, a lack of arrests. This is likely to be indicative of two factors: firstly, severe weaknesses in the criminal investigation capacity of the police and, secondly, and just as important, the lack of follow-up, communication or feedback provided by the police.

The weaknesses in the investigative capacity of the police have been attributed to a number of issues, not least of which are severe resource limitations, insufficient training, a changing legal regime, weak management, loss of skills and morale and, particularly, increasing caseloads.[39]

A monthly report from Bulwer police station in KwaZulu-Natal provides a brief picture of the impact of some of these issues.[40] Captain Cloete, the station commissioner of Bulwer, together with his staff of 32 police officers are responsible for policing 250 000 people located in 76 settlements of various sizes spread over 876 square kilometres. Eight members of his staff are student constables, deployed there as a result of lobbying by the captain and the CPF and because the station was identified as one that would pilot the SAPS's new management methodology, called the service delivery improvement plan. There are six detectives — all trained — who report to captain Cloete who preferred it when they reported to a head of detectives, as "with little time, they are difficult to control."[41]

Indeed, control seems to be a major issue at the station as, in April 1999, absenteeism ran at an average of 11% across the three shifts and in October, there were eight staff members (25%) who faced disciplinary investigation related to absenteeism and other negligence.

The station's priority focus areas, for crimes reported at the station, are housebreaking, stock theft, assault with intent and murder. However, captain Cloete also focuses on crimes like rape and domestic violence which are not often reported, "because they are committed within the family, by uncles and stepfathers", and illegal possession of firearms, because "who would want to report that?"[42]

The station has three holding cells, built to accommodate 27 suspects. In April 1999, these cells held 71 men, either charged or being investigated on charges of armed robbery, carjacking, assault with intent and illegal immigration. Women and juvenile suspects were being transferred elsewhere.

Regarding investigations at Bulwer, in April 1999:

> A total of 162 new dockets were opened, and were divided among the six detectives — 27 dockets each. There were 478 'old' dockets in hand.

Some 35 people were arrested on various charges during the month.

A total of 44 dockets were closed — seven in court and 37 by the detectives.

The seven dockets closed in court were part of 150 cases taken to court in that month: in two cases, charges against the accused were withdrawn; in three cases, the accused were acquitted; and in two cases, the accused were convicted. The remaining 143 cases taken to court were postponed.

The conviction rate in terms of dockets closed was therefore 4.5%.

As Bulwer is one of the more resourced rural police stations, the situation there may be assumed to be better than that at many other stations. There can be little surprise then, at the general dissatisfaction of many victims of crime to the service they receive, particularly with regard to successful investigation — the sheer volume of cases, and related to this, the problematic resource and management issues all mitigate against satisfactory service.

Nevertheless, some of the dissatisfaction can also be attributed to factors beyond the control of the police. Most obviously, the fact that there has not been an arrest in a particular case does not necessarily mean that there has been no investigation. Indeed, there may have been a thorough investigation, but due to a lack of witnesses, or those willing to give evidence, or a lack of other concrete evidence, the investigation remains inconclusive.

Further, the fact that some suspects are arrested and later released, is not necessarily the fault of the police — for instance, a suspect who has been identified by a victim may have a strong and supported alibi. In other instances, where the case goes to court, the court may often postpone the case, grant bail and release the accused.

Thus, for perceptions of police competence, informative communication or feedback on the process and progress of a reported case is crucial.

Implications for policing

In summary, the discussion above raises six main issues relevant to the improvement of policing in the rural areas.

Most obviously, it is clear that, without sufficient and adequate basic resources — which means both trained police personnel and the appropriate physical resources required to fulfil their functions — policing and public perceptions of its adequacy cannot be expected to improve. Indeed, without an infusion of such resources it is likely that the quality of policing and public perceptions will decline further as, continually frustrated by the lack of the basic resources required to provide an adequate service, police morale and discipline continue to decline.

Given the size, geographic isolation and dispersion of many of South Africa's rural areas, it is unlikely that a police strategy based on a consistent visible police presence, or community policing as it is now practiced by the SAPS, can be sustained to the point where it succeeds in curbing crime — even those crimes which can be combated effectively through visible policing in an urban environment — or in enhancing public confidence. Simply put, there can be little point in pursuing a strategy which is incompatible

with the conditions in which it is to be implemented. Clearly, the approach of the SAPS to proactive policing in these areas requires review.

Thus, if policing in the deep rural areas, for practical reasons, can really only be reactive in nature, then the 'proactive' functions of the SAPS should be structured in the form of support to upgrade the detective and investigative capacities of the rural police stations and the specialised units that operate in the vicinity. This means that, rather than being seen as a separate, generalist activity, proactive functions at these police stations should focus on enhancing information and intelligence gathering to support the detective functions and guide the operational deployment of station personnel and specialised units. This should be done together with substantial upgrades to the information and intelligence assessment and analysis systems at these stations.

This implies an improved and focused training programme for police personnel who are to be deployed in the rural areas. Such a training programme would need to focus on the basic requirements for those who lack them — like literacy, driving skills and basic police training — as well as more advanced information and evidence gathering techniques.

However, there would be little point in improving the training and abilities of these officers if the current and often justified reluctance to work in these areas is not overcome. This implies an incentive scheme in which periods of service in the deep rural areas could be rewarded. Such a scheme could take a number of forms in terms of both direct benefits — like improved career opportunities or an increased remuneration and pension package — or indirect benefits like bursaries for children in school.

Finally, these issues imply rethinking the current approach to performance assessment of police in the rural areas. Given the issues raised in the discussion above, how plausible is it to measure police performance here in terms of increasing or decreasing crime rates as is done by the SAPS's senior management structures? Given the motivation above for enhancing the reactive functions of the police in the rural areas, perhaps a more appropriate measure would be one aimed at assessing and improving the ratio of arrests to the incidence of priority crimes as reported by victims or detected by the police. In addition, this could be coupled with additional measures aimed at assessing and improving the ratio of these arrests to successful prosecution and the conviction of offenders. Added to docket analysis and public perception surveys, these performance measures are more likely to be indicative of actual police performance than the collation of statistics on crime rates.

Notes

1. KwaZulu-Natal department of safety and security, *Annual report*, Department of safety and security, Durban, 1998.

2. Department of safety and security, *In service of safety: White paper on safety and security*, 1999-2004, Department of safety and security, Pretoria, 1998, p ii.

3. Interview with captain Zulu, former station commissioner, Tugela Ferry, 22 May 1998.

4. Interview with captain Zondi, Tugela Ferry, 22 October 1999.

5. Interview with commissioner Ngidi and director Naidoo, Durban, 20 October 1999.

6. *The Citizen*, 17 February 2000.

7. Ibid.

8. Interview with captain Zondi, Tugela Ferry, 22 October 1999.

9. Interview with captain Zulu, Tugela Ferry, 22 May 1998.

10. Interview with captain Zondi, Tugela Ferry, 22 October 1999.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid..

13. Ibid.

14. See for, example, M Brogden & C Shearing, *Policing for a new South Africa*, Routledge, London, 1993; G Cawthra, *South Africa's police: From police state to democratic policing*?, Catholic Institute for International Relations, London, 1992; G Cawthra, *Policing South Africa*, Zed Books, London, 1993; E Marais, *Policing the periphery: Police and society in South Africa's 'homelands'*, paper presented to the 22nd congress of the Association for Sociology in South Africa, Pretoria, 30 June 1992; C Plasket, Sub-contracting the dirty work, in TWBennet, DJDevine,DB Hutchinson, I Leeman & D van Zyl Smit, *Policing and the law*, Juta, Cape Town, 1989.

15. *In service of safety*, op cit, p 4.

16. Cawthra, 1993, op cit, p 63.

17. See ibid; Marais, op cit.

18. See Marais, ibid.

19. Cawthra (which one 92/93??); Marais, op cit.

20. *Final report of the Judge White commission to review promotions of employees of the former states (including the RSA) which now constitute the Republic of South Africa*, November 1998.

21. Ibid.

22. *Business Day*, 8 December 1999.

23. Interview with Piet Biesheuvel, DFID Eastern Cape policing advisor, Queenstown, 26 October 1999.

24. See, for example, the *Interim constitution*, the 1996 *South African Police Service Act*, and *In service of safety*, op cit

25. A Altbeker, Solving crime: The state of the SAPS detective service, ISS Monograph 31,

Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, November 1998.

26. Interview with station commissioner, Donnybrook, 26 May 1998.

27. Interview, Umtata, 27 October 1999.

28. Interview, Durban, 20 October 1999.

29. See table 1 in the introduction.

30. Interview, Umtata, 27 October 1999.

31. Rural development task team, department of land affairs, *Rural development framework*, May 1997, p 47.

32. For a more detailed discussion on the origin and functioning of CPFs, see E Pelser, The challenges of community policing in South Africa, ISS Paper 42, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 1999.

33. Interview with station commissioner, Donnybrook, 26 May 1998.

34. Interview with captain Zulu, Tugela Ferry, 22 May 1998.

35. Interview, Umtata, 27 October 1999.

36. Interview, Mondlo police station, 21 May 1998.

37. Interview, Bulwer, 21 October 1999.

38. Interview, Dududu, 27 May 1998.

39. These issues are elaborated on at some depth in Albeker, op cit.

40. Bulwer police station, *Monthly report: SDIP*, April 1999.

41. Interview, Bulwer, 21 October 1999

42. Ibid.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The issues outlined above confirm the assessment, in the department of safety and security's white paper, that reducing crime in South Africa's rural areas requires an informed approach different to that practiced in the urban areas.

The primary focus of any new approach should be on enhancing policing in these areas as this, arguably, is likely to have the greatest impact in the short to medium term.

This is because any participatory crime reduction strategy — which could only be based on the assumptions that inform urban strategies, as these are the only models currently available — is

unlikely to make a significant difference to levels of safety in rural areas in the short to medium term.

Such strategies correctly aim at producing solutions broader than policing to particular problems, and typically involve the participation and co-ordination of the activities of several agencies. These agencies, acting on the basis of an informed analysis of particular crimes, aim to reduce the opportunities for such crime, the occurrence of the crime and the fear of crime. For example, the problem of sexual assault and rape at, or near urban schools would be an issue tackled jointly by the local police, prosecutors, magistrates, social workers, doctors and nurses, school principals, the local government departments of town planning and transport and members of local women's, youth and church groups.

The success of these strategies depend on several factors, including:

> a functioning and accessible criminal justice system;

> the ready availability of and access to appropriate resources for both government and non-governmental organisations;

> the ability of a wide range of government and non-governmental actors to work together;

> dedicated capacity in the lead agencies — which are usually government departments — for the planning, leadership, co-ordination and management of particular initiatives; and

> the capacity and ability of the affected community to innovate and contribute to appropriate interventions.

However, in the rural areas, many of these conditions are weakly developed, if they exist at all. For instance, despite the clear shortcomings of policing in the rural areas, the police are often the most developed state agency in these areas. Police officers are therefore often expected to play a variety of roles — like family counsellor, welfare agent or paramedic — which, in more developed environments, are the functions of other specialised professions.

Further, the 'absence of power', noted by May (and referred to above) as a defining characteristic of the poor, compounds the situation in rural areas. This is because people living in deep rural areas have limited options for making their concerns known and then for participating in and contributing to innovative initiatives. Their geographic dispersion, isolation, the very limited availability of social services and even more limited access to these services as well as the debilitating effects of poverty are important factors in this regard.

For instance, the data drawn from this research indicates a general lack of awareness of what individual or community action would be appropriate to reduce the occurrence of crime and a very limited ability to modify behaviour patterns to reduce vulnerability to crime. In addition, few people, it appears, are able to participate in community-based initiatives such as the CPFs or self-policing efforts.

Therefore, without concerted effort and a substantial infusion of resources and capacity from the more resourced and developed tiers of government to enable, drive and shape such participatory crime reduction strategies in rural areas, such strategies cannot be expected to succeed in the short to medium term. Indeed, without this dedicated support, it is unlikely that such projects would develop beyond the pilot phase.

Given this, the police are arguably the only agency in the rural areas able to provide some of the services required for enhancing safety and security in the short and medium term.

Further, the data suggests that improving policing is the intervention most sought by people living in these areas.

Thus, the role of the police in enhancing real safety and perceptions of security the rural areas should not be underestimated. As implied above, enhancing policing in these areas requires dedicated attention to those facets of policing most likely to impact positively on service delivered to the poor.

This implies upgrading the reactive functions of local police stations and structuring the proactive functions in support of this.

However, much of the investigative and intelligence capacity of the SAPS is currently invested in its specialised units. Operating within and reporting to a command structure outside of that of the stations, the skills acquired by these units remain underdeveloped at station level. Thus, to improve station level performance, the functions of some of the specialised units — like the stock theft and murder and robbery units — should perhaps be devolved to station level. The one exception would be sophisticated organised crime, which is best dealt with through a specialised national approach. It is clear, though, that some form of skills transfer, either through a dedicated programme, restructuring and redeployment, or both, is required.

Whatever the form it takes, it is clear that attention must be given to the intelligence and investigation capabilities of the local police in rural areas and that proactive strategies based on visible patrols should be driven by intelligence and geared to obtaining more.

Such interventions should focus on securing arrests and convictions, and, rather than the current focus on the rate of reported crime, measurement of these two indicators should become the key to performance assessment.