

THE ROLE OF FIREARMS IN CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF POLICE DOCKETS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTRIBUTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2

FIREARM-RELATED CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

Chapter 3

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENTS

Chapter 4

THE INVOLVEMENT OF VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS IN CRIME

Chapter 5

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF OFFENDERS

Chapter 6

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF VICTIMS

Chapter 7

WEAPONS

Chapter 8

INJURY

Chapter 9

LOSS OF PROPERTY

Chapter 10

ARMED ROBBERY

Chapter 11

COMMON ROBBERY

Chapter 12

HIJACKING

Chapter 13

THEFT OF FIREARM

Chapter 14

MURDER

Chapter 15

ATTEMPTED MURDER

Chapter 16

POINTING OF FIREARM

Chapter 17

DISCHARGING A FIREARM IN A BUILT-UP OR PUBLIC PLACE

Chapter 18

POSSESSION OF AN ILLEGAL FIREARM

Chapter 19

ASSAULT

Chapter 20

NEGLIGENT LOSS OF A FIREARM

Chapter 21

POSSESSION OR USE OF A FIREARM UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR ANY SUBSTANCE WITH A NARCOTIC EFFECT

Chapter 22

CONCLUSION

NOTES

Appendix 1

DOCKET SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix 2

FIREARMS-RELATED INFORMATION

ABBREVIATIONS

AMP - Arms Management Programme

CIAC - Crime Information Analysis Centre

FIUs -Firearm Investigation Units

IFIUs - Illegal Firearm Investigation Units

ISS - Institute for Security Studies

SAPS - South African Police Service

SANDF - South African National Defence Force

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Ettienne Hennop and Jakkie Potgieter undertook the fieldwork and analysis of the contents of the closed police case docket, as well as transcribing the information onto the docket questionnaire. The insight they brought to the analytic interpretation of the statistics was invaluable. In the section on the types of firearms used in crime, this report relies heavily on their practical experience and knowledge of firearms. Ettienne's experience as a detective in the SAPS also deepened the understanding of the circumstances surrounding the motive for, and role of firearms in incidents. Director James Oosthuizen, a senior SAPS official, accompanied the fieldworkers to Durban and Cape Town to oversee and verify the research process. Clare Jefferson managed the process of survey validation and data entry into the ISS database, as well as the statistical analyses reflected in this monograph.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Ettienne Hennop joined the ISS in October 1998 as a researcher in the Arms Management Programme (AMP). A member of the SAPS for 13 years, he held the rank of Detective Inspector. During his career, he served with different sections of the SAPS. From 1993 until 1998, he served in the head office and Pretoria branch of the FIUs as an investigating officer and a firearms expert. He has successfully completed several courses in ballistics, the identification of firearms and ammunition, the testing of firearms for court purposes and the identification and handling of explosives.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Police dockets provide one of the few comprehensive sources of information from which to draw

a broad range of data on firearm-related crimes. In this research, it was found that docket analysis as a source was limited by the incomplete evidence contained in police dockets. The challenge of the exercise became an attempt to understand the nature of firearm-related crime in South Africa, and to provide an acceptable conclusion of the debate on the interpretation of data within these constraints and the interpretation of data findings.

Firearm-related crime is increasing significantly in South Africa. The analysis of 787 police dockets demonstrated that both legal and illegal firearms are involved in firearm-related crime in South Africa. For more in-depth information on specific firearm-related crimes, summaries are provided in the second part of the monograph.

Robbery and theft cases are serious, since they result in a significant number of legal firearms entering the illegal pool of firearms. However, these police investigations usually do not result in the firearm being recovered:

- The majority of armed robberies occurred on business premises. Handguns are usually used in armed robberies, as well as in hijacking incidents. However, marginally more people are injured in hijackings than in armed robberies.
- Police detection of common robberies is low and the police have few leads to follow due to the element of surprise used by offenders when committing the crime. Firearms were the most prevalent items stolen in common robberies. In this sample, it was found that, for every ten incidents of common robbery, eight firearms moved from legal ownership to the illegal pool.
- The theft of a firearm often occurs as a result of inappropriate storage of firearms by victims. The recovery rate of stolen firearms is low due to the lack of leads and information on such firearms, as well as the low rates of reporting of stolen firearms

On the whole, firearm-related crime in South Africa is not investigated satisfactorily. Comparatively speaking, mostly murder and attempted murder cases are investigated. This is strongly influenced by the higher proportion of leads in these crimes, compared to other crimes:

- Firearms are the most significant tool used to commit murder in South Africa. Police detection of murder is high, as is the rate of conviction.
- Attempted murders are more predominant in residential areas and most attempted murders occur after hours or in the evenings. Significant proportions of attempted murders are detected, and equally significant numbers of cases are withdrawn by the state prosecutor.

In both the pointing of a firearm and the discharging of a firearm in a built-up or public place, people are injured, although this is not the intention of the crime:

- Incidents where a firearm is pointed are usually reported to the police. Injury sometimes results from these incidents with 21.2% of the victims being injured.
- The illegal discharge of a firearm in a built-up area or public place can result in the injury of innocent bystanders. It was found that 17.2% of victims were injured in these crimes.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1998, the ISS was approached by the Secretariat for Safety and Security to facilitate the drafting of policy on firearm ownership in South Africa. During negotiations the need for primary research was clearly identified. Internationally, the available literature on the role of firearms in crime is voluminous, especially those emanating from the United States, but the extent to which these are applicable to South Africa was questionable. Their value was further in doubt, in light of the historical circumstances surrounding firearm ownership, the problems experienced in the criminal justice system and the perceived rise in crime levels in South Africa.

While a few local studies on the role of firearms in crime have been commissioned,¹ it remains a grossly underresearched area. In addition, South African police statistics do not document sufficient detail on the role of firearms in crime.²

The information collected for this monograph dealt primarily with the nature and role of firearms in criminal incidents. The docket analysis was not intended to show the relationship between, or the proportion of firearm-related crimes in South Africa. Information on crime trends is available on a quarterly basis on the website of the Crime Information Analysis Centre³ of the SAPS. The Centre's Schedule contains detailed explanations of the kind of information collected on firearms in this country (see appendix 2).

The main shortcoming of published police statistics on firearm-related crime is that they do not capture as much detail as is available in case dockets. For instance, there is no information on whether or not the firearm was discharged, little or no information about firearm ownership, and its history. The capacity of the SAPS is limited and has an impact on the capture of firearm-related information in such great detail. In light of other operational policing issues and priorities, capacity limitations are linked both to time and budgetary constraints.

The primary aim of the research was to provide insight into the role played by firearms in crime, with the purpose of providing information and support in the formulation of new firearm legislation. In particular, the objective was to establish whether there is a need to tighten existing firearm legislation, and to what extent.

Definitions

The working definitions⁴ used in this study are mainly the same as those used by the ISS in earlier victim surveys. However, these definitions do not always translate adequately when confronted by reality. For example, during some armed robbery incidents, murders took place. The primary motive for the crime was therefore used as far as possible in defining the incident:

- *Robbery* includes the theft of any item from the person, where force or the threat of force is used.
- In the case of *armed robbery*, offenders are armed with a firearm, which they use to achieve compliance.
- In the case of *common robbery*, offenders do not necessarily have a firearm, and their swift action and the element of surprise usually ensure that they manage to take the victim's possessions.

- *Hijacking* is a specific form of robbery in which the type of property taken by force is a vehicle. Car-hijacking refers to an incident where a car is taken from a person using force or the threat of force. This form of robbery usually involves the use of a firearm.
- The *theft of a firearm* usually occurs without force (either implied or actual) being used against the owner or holder of the firearm. Where force is used, it would be classified as a robbery or mugging.
- *Burglary* is a form of theft that applies to the removal of property without the consent of the victim from his or her premises. This can refer either to residential or home premises, or work or employment premises.
- *Assault* refers to an incident when a victim was personally attacked or hurt. Weapons may or may not have been used, but no items were necessarily stolen.
- *Murder* occurs when a person is killed, either with or without premeditation.
- During a *sexual assault*, a person is forced, either through threats or the use of force, to perform sexual acts, for example, sexual intercourse. Sexual assault is associated with violence.
- The *Arms and Ammunition Act* (no 75 of 1969) governs the civilian use and control of firearms and ammunition. The following crimes are covered by the Act:
 - The *negligent loss of a firearm* refers to such a loss through the irresponsible behaviour of the licenced owner, through non-compliance to the licence conditions.
 - The *negligent use of a firearm* refers to the use of a firearm in an irresponsible manner in contravention of the *Arms and Ammunition Act* and its regulations governing the use of firearms in South Africa.
 - *Possession or use of a firearm while under the influence of alcohol or any substance that has a narcotic effect* refers to a person handling a firearm while under the influence of alcohol, or any substance that has a narcotic effect.
 - *Discharging a firearm in a built-up or public place* refers to the unlawful discharge of a firearm in a built-up or public place. The CIAC Schedule refers particularly to municipal areas in this regard (see appendix 2).
 - *Pointing of a firearm* refers to the unlawful pointing of a firearm.

Survey sample

In January 1999, the ISS undertook the analysis of 787 closed police docket of firearm-related crimes at three police stations. These stations were located in Pretoria (181 dockets), Durban (312 dockets) and Cape Town (294 dockets).

Table 1: Number of surveys completed at each sample point		
	Number of cases	Percentage

Pretoria	181	23
Durban	312	39.6
Cape Town	294	37.4
Total	787	100

The docket were classified into different types of incidents according to certain crime categories. Seven broad types of firearm-related docket were analysed. Throughout this monograph, the information will be considered within the following analytic clusters:

- 390 robbery docket (including armed robbery, common robbery and hijacking incidents);
- 150 murder docket (including both murder and attempted murder);
- 63 docket concerning the theft of a firearm;
- 92 docket concerning the pointing of a firearm;
- 62 docket of contraventions of the Arms and Ammunition Act (including discharging a firearm in a built up or public place; possession of illegal firearms; possession or use of a firearm under the influence of alcohol; and negligent loss of a firearm);
- 18 assault docket; and
- 12 other incidents (such as suicides, fraud, etc)

In the table below, the type of firearm-related crime investigated in the study is further classified in greater detail. The largest category of crime was robbery, followed by murder, the pointing of a firearm and theft of a firearm. The nature of the various crime types will be analysed in more detail in their respective sections.

Generic category	Crime type	Cases (n)	%
Robbery	Armed robbery	223	28.3
	Common robbery	87	11
	Hijacking	80	10.2
Murder	Murder	57	7.2
	Attempted murder	93	11.8
Theft of firearm	Theft of firearm	63	8
Pointing a firearm	Pointing a firearm	92	11.7
Contravention of the <i>Arms and Ammunition Act</i>	Discharging firearm in a public place	32	4.1
	Possession of illegal firearm	17	2.2
	Negligent loss of firearm	6	0.8
	Possession/use of firearm under influence of alcohol	7	0.9
Assault	Assault	18	2.3
Other	Other	12	1.5
Total		787	100.0

It was important to consider both violent crimes and other crimes involving a firearm. It is often difficult to reconcile the contravention of the *Arms and Ammunitions Act* with crimes such as robbery and murder. However, the negligent actions of people in possession of firearms, specifically those with licences, often result in firearms entering the pool of illegal weapons in South Africa.

Sample points

Three police stations in three different provinces were selected for the research project: Pretoria Central Police Station, Pretoria, Gauteng; CR Swart Square Police Station, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal; and Mitchells Plain Police Station, Cape Town, Western Cape.

The police stations that were selected for the study were in major urban areas. This was to ensure that a broad range of crime types could be sampled. The particular urban centres were selected to provide a diverse spectrum of contexts: the peculiar nature of the political tensions in KwaZulu-Natal; the gang and organised crime aspects of Mitchells Plain; and, compared to the other two cities, the relatively lower level of crime in Pretoria.

Fieldworkers spent five days at each sampling point. At some points more dockets could be surveyed as a result of various factors. The quality of the detective work impacted on the detail contained in the dockets. In some police stations, fieldworkers felt that the quality of police investigation was poor. However, this was not always the case. The lower number of dockets completed in Pretoria reflects the longer form of the survey the fieldworkers initially worked with (refer to table 1). After this sample point had been completed, some of the more detailed questions were removed from the original survey, as the specific information under investigation was not reflected in the dockets.

Survey procedures

The survey utilised a pro forma questionnaire, on which the details of various SAPS dockets were transcribed. The dockets were randomly selected from cases where a firearm was involved in a crime. The uses of firearms in the incidents varied, and no predetermined criteria were applied to determine what these should have been.

Fieldwork

Ettienne Hennop, Head of the Fire Component of AMP, in conjunction with Jakkie Potgieter, Senior Field Researcher and Head of the Operations Room of the Africa Security Analysis Programme, undertook the analysis of the police dockets. The content of the pro forma questionnaire required the involvement of people with a sound working knowledge of firearms and police investigations to ensure its proper completion.

Case dockets were read and the relevant information transferred to the questionnaire form ([see appendix 1](#)). Certain case dockets contained photographic evidence of the scene of the crime and injury information, while other dockets were less detailed.

Both fieldworkers were disappointed with the quality of the police dockets chosen for analysis. On numerous occasions, crucial pieces of information about the ownership of the firearm, the motive for the crime and the relationship between the victim and the offender were omitted from the docket. While the fieldworkers felt that, in the case of some dockets, inference on their part might have been used to complete the questionnaire, they carefully refrained from doing so.

Rather, omissions in the docket information were reflected as such on the pro forma questionnaire.

Docket selection

Upon arrival at the selected police stations, the fieldworkers were given access to all dockets on incidents in which a firearm had been involved. Dockets at these stations are filed in a separate room, according to case numbers and the date of the crime. The fieldworkers were shown the dockets room, after which police officials randomly selected dockets for analysis. The assistance of police officers at the stations was valuable, as they were able to draw out the dockets on incidents in which firearms had been used. Information reflected on the docket sleeves, such as the type of weapons employed and the type of crime perpetrated, was used by police officers to separate the firearm-related dockets from the general police dockets. If this information was absent from a docket sleeve, the docket was not selected.

The fieldworkers made further random selections from the piles they had been given. If upon inspection of each individual docket selected for analysis it was found that a firearm was mentioned, the analysis of the docket contents and the transfer of relevant information to the questionnaire went ahead, otherwise, the docket was omitted from the study.

The main limitation in this random selection of dockets was that certain crime types were not represented in a sufficiently large sample to allow significant deductions from the information. It was recommended that, in future docket analyses, a stratified random sampling method should be used, rather than a simple random selection method.

Methodological considerations

The following methodological considerations need to be borne in mind when using the data presented in the statistical tables.

Statistical limitations

As mentioned above, the sampling method meant that certain samples were too small to provide a valid size from which to draw conclusions. In these crime categories, the descriptive information is therefore presented as 'found', in order to provide an indication for future research. In such a case, information can only be regarded as descriptive and very few broader statistical deductions can be drawn. The specific docket count is reflected and used to describe findings, as opposed to the percentages used in the remainder of the text.

Questionnaire revision

After the docket analysis was completed at the Pretoria sample point, some of the questions were removed from the questionnaire. These included the question dealing with specific detail about the injury. There were a number of factors that necessitated the revision of the survey. It was too time-consuming to examine the various medical reports, autopsy reports and photographic evidence from the scene of the crime. A suitably qualified medical practitioner would have been necessary for an accurate interpretation of the type and level of injury. The entire injury question was not discarded, but was simplified to provide information relevant to a more basic level of interpretation.

Nature of the subject

The information in police dockets was found to be subjective. People reporting a crime naturally did so from their own perspective, thus providing one-sided accounts of the incident. The fieldworkers did not try to make assumptions on absent information, which would have been possible in some instances. If information was not contained in the docket, this lack of information was reflected in the pro forma questionnaire.

Classification of the crime in relationship to the role of the firearm

It is necessary to recognise that the role of a firearm in various firearm-related incidents can be multiple. From the outset, it is evident that both victim and offender may have been in possession of a firearm. In this case, the firearm can be a tool for self-defence or one of attack. In both cases, the firearm is a tool associated with the crime. Yet, the firearm itself can be the motive for the crime, which is the situation in most property crimes.

Chapter 2 FIREARM-RELATED CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1998, 175 742 new firearm licences were approved, bringing the existing pool of legal firearms to approximately 4.2 million firearms, owned by 3 527 035 registered firearm licence holders.⁵ Although this cannot be established definitively, the number of illegal firearms in circulation ranges from the official government estimate of 500 000 to those who conservatively estimate that, for every legal firearm in circulation in South Africa, there is one illegal firearm.⁶

The tables below provide a summary of the number of reported violent and firearm-related crimes in South Africa between 1994 and 1998. This is a useful barometer of the ratio of firearm-related to violent crimes in South Africa.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<i>Murder</i>	26 832	26 637	25 782	24 588	24 875
<i>Attempted murder</i>	27 300	26 512	28 516	28 148	29 418
<i>Robbery (aggravating circumstances)</i>	84 900	80 071	67 249	69 691	88 319
<i>Rape</i>	42 429	47 506	50 481	52 159	49 280
<i>Assault GBH (serious)</i>	210 250	220 990	230 425	234 554	234 056
<i>Common assault</i>	193 764	205 101	205 333	201 863	199 313
<i>Other robbery</i>	32 423	40 881	51 506	52 678	62 111
Total violent crimes	619 892	649 693	661 288	665 678	689 370
<i>Source: CIAC, SAPS</i>					

Murder

It is widely argued that murder is one of the most accurately reported crime types. Independent victim surveys provide rates similar to those released in police statistics.

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Car-hijacking	6 683	12 860	13 011	15 111
Hijacking of trucks	1 695	3 694	4 296	5 773

Robbery of cash-in-transit	123	410	120	214
Bank robberies	646	642	497	476
Source: CIAC, SAPS				

Crime category	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Murder with firearm	11 134	11 056	11 394	11 215	12 267
Attempted murder with firearm	23 682	22 035	22 387	20 937	22 001
Robbery with firearm	–	–	51 005	54 250	69 501
Attempted robbery with firearm	–	–	2 014	4 237	4 703
Theft of firearm	7 285	7 456	9 085	12 141	11 391
Negligent loss of firearm	–	–	4 729	4 964	6 231
Illegal possession of firearm/ammunition	–	–	13 413	13 036	14 554
Negligent handling of firearm	–	–	2 895	3 362	3 384
Firing of firearm in municipal area	–	–	2 791	2 983	3 098
Pointing of firearm	–	–	22 742	23 655	25 375
Other transgressions of the <i>Arms and Ammunition Act</i>	–	–	1 333	765	909
Source: CIAC, SAPS					

Murder as a proportion of violent crime in South Africa remained relatively constant between 1995 and 1998, although the absolute number of murders decreased by 1 762 cases from 26 637 in 1995 to 24 875 in 1998. The stabilisation in murder rates provides a comparative base against which to examine the increased use of firearms as instruments of murder in South Africa.

Of the total murders committed annually, the proportion of murders committed with a firearm has shown a marked increase between 1995 and 1998. In 1995, 41.5% of all murders were committed with firearms, which increased to 49.3% in 1998. Other studies have shown that there are significant variations between one region of South Africa and another. The Medical Research Council showed that, at one of the largest hospitals in South Africa, Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town, the percentage of people killed with firearms increased from 48% in 1995/96 to 63% in 1998.^z

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Murder	26 637	25 782	24 588	24 875
Murder with firearm	11 056	11 394	11 215	12 267
Total violent crimes in South Africa	649 693	661 288	665 678	689 370
Proportion of murders committed with a firearm	41.50%	44.20%	45.60%	49.30%
Murder as a proportion of violent crime	4.10%	3.90%	3.70%	3.60%

The increase in the proportion of firearm murders can be interpreted as reflecting various factors. It shows that more criminals are arming themselves; access to firearms has become

easier compared to previous years; and the criminals of today know that, in light of the backlog in the criminal justice system, there is an increased chance of escaping justice, or receiving a short sentence. These sentiments are reinforced by research undertaken to examine the nature of firearm-related crime in South Africa.

Attempted murder

Seen as a proportion of violent crime in South Africa, attempted murder has remained relatively stable from 1995 to 1998. The number of cases of attempted murder increased by 2 906 cases between 1995 and 1998, even though the number of attempted murders with a firearm has remained unchanged (at 22 035 in 1995 and 22 001 in 1998).

The fact that the proportion of attempted murders with a firearm has decreased in comparison to overall attempted murders should not be seen in isolation from the murder data, which shows an increase in the proportion of murder with firearms.

	1995	1996	1997	1998
<i>Attempted murder</i>	26 512	28 516	28 148	29 418
<i>Attempted murder with firearm</i>	22 035	22 387	20 937	22001
<i>Total violent crimes in South Africa</i>	649 693	661 288	665 678	689 370
<i>Proportion of attempted murders committed with a firearm</i>	83.1	78.5	74.4	74.8
<i>Attempted murder as a proportion of all violent crime</i>	4.10%	3.90%	3.70%	3.60%

Robbery with aggravating circumstances

Robbery with aggravating circumstances includes crimes such as car-hijacking, hijacking of trucks, robbery of cash-in-transit and bank robberies. From these incidents, it is evident that firearms play a significant role in robbery with aggravating circumstances. It was found that, in 1995, 75.8% of all reported cases of robbery with aggravating circumstances were committed with a firearm. This increased to 78.7% in 1998, and a substantial decrease was evident between 1995 and 1996.

Transgressions of the Arms and Ammunitions Act

In South Africa, firearm and ammunition use and possession are regulated by the *Arms and Ammunition Act* (no 75 of 1969). This legislation is currently under review.

The negligent use of a firearm refers to the use of a firearm in an irresponsible manner, and against the regulations and laws governing the use of firearms in South Africa. In 1995, there were 2 895 incidents which increased to 3 384 in 1998. For example, the possession or use of a firearm while under the influence of alcohol is a crime considered to be part of this category.

	1995	1996	1997	1998

Robbery with aggravating circumstances (including car-hijacking; hijacking of rucks; robbery of cash-in-transit; bank robberies).	80 071	67 249	69 691	88 319
Robbery with firearm	Data unavailable	51 005	54 250	69501
Proportion of robbery with aggravating circumstances committed with a firearm	Data unavailable	75.80%	77.80%	78.70%

Discharging a firearm in a built-up, or public place, or municipal area refers to the unlawful discharge of a firearm in such surroundings. In 1996, there were 2 791 incidents, increasing to 3 098 in 1998.

Pointing a firearm refers to the unlawful pointing of a firearm by one person at another. In this crime and the previous one, this action not only serves to intimidate, but also places another person at risk of injury through the use of such a firearm. It is interesting to note that, in 1996, there were 22 742 incidents of pointing of firearms, increasing to 25 375 in 1998 (representing a 10.4% increase). In addition, the transgression of pointing a firearm was as significant in absolute terms as the incidence of murder.

The entry of legal firearms into the illegal pool of weapons in South Africa occurs in many ways. Some legal firearms are particularly targeted by criminals as a source of weapons, and would be recorded as theft of firearm incidents (which increased from 9 085 in 1996 to 12 141 in 1997, and 11 391 in 1998). It has been found that almost half of all firearms lost by licenced owners and finding their way into the illegal firearm pool, are through negligent loss. In 1996, 4 729 incidents were reported, with an increase to 6 231 in 1998.

The illegal possession of firearms and ammunition is also a serious transgression of the *Arms and Ammunition Act*. This can apply to a number of different circumstances. It implies the possession of a firearm without the necessary licence or permit that authorises its possession. In 1998, there were 14 554 reported cases of the illegal possession of firearms and ammunition.

Limitations of information on crime trends in South Africa

It is widely recognised that crime statistics have limitations. These include, among others, the fact that police statistics often rely on people voluntarily reporting crime, and that the police sometimes do not record the crimes reported.^g In addition, the punitive action taken against people reporting crime, especially in terms of the negligent use of firearms, often discourages reporting. In the docket survey, it was found that crimes such as those in contravention of the *Arms and Ammunition Act*, were usually reported by the police or another concerned intervening third party, and not by the victim.

As cited by Louw,^g the reliability of police crime statistics is limited by the following technical problems:

- The capturing system is too complex to be user-friendly without proper training. As a result, much of the data is inconsistent or incomplete.
- The extent of the CAS database is overwhelming, since historical data is not archived.
- Delays are experienced in obtaining statistics from non-computerised stations (which amount to less than a quarter of all stations).

- Other problems include network downtime, faulty programmes and the inadequate validation of data when incorrect variables are entered.

Sources of human error include:

- the lack of an information culture in the SAPS;
- insufficient training (no curricula for, or national standard of training currently exists);
- inadequate physical and human resources, as well as computer support at station level; and
- a high turnover of skilled personnel.

The police data on firearm-related crime is hamstrung by the same limitations as other crime data. It was (and still is) not sufficiently detailed to provide information on the role of firearms in crimes, the relationship of the firearm to the victim and perpetrator, or how the presence of a firearm influenced the outcome of the incident. These primary research questions required answers that could inform government on the need for improved control measures over firearms.

There are problems with information on crime trends in South Africa that make it difficult to quantify the changing role of firearms in crime over the last few decades. According to Schönsteich,¹⁰ the dramatic increases in statistics on crime levels in South Africa during 1994 appear to be linked to the reincorporation of the homelands and the independent territories into the rest of South Africa. Firstly, the crimes committed in these areas were captured by the SAPS in 1994 for the first time. Secondly, many police stations in the former homelands failed to provide adequate crime statistics for 1995 and 1996. For example, the 35% upsurge in robbery between 1993 and 1994 might be attributed to the exclusions of all crimes committed in the ten homelands, comprising a population of 17.8 million people.

Schönsteich further argues that the levels of reported crime are stabilising, even decreasing, for certain crime categories in South Africa. Given this insight, the extent to which the national figures are accurate is still questionable, since these only reflect crime that is reported to the police. Many crimes go undetected and/or are never reported.

Most scholars in South Africa choose not to make deductions about crime trends in South Africa. Although crime trend information is available, the reliability of this information is questionable. The implication for the interpretation of South African crime statistics is that the more recent the data recorded, the more reliable the information. As a result, it is useful to look at firearm-related crime data for a more recent period only.

Chapter 3 **DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENTS**

The majority of crimes analysed for this research had been committed in the past six years. Different firearm-related crimes are more likely to occur at certain times of the day. The majority of crimes occurred in inner city areas. This reflects the fact that two inner city police stations were used as sampling points, and that a crime is usually reported to the police station closest to where it occurred.

With the exception of murder incidents, the police did not detect the majority of crimes recorded in firearm-related dockets. Among those dockets that are detected, a substantial proportion were withdrawn — either by the Department of Justice, or by the victim him/herself.

Given the fact that a high proportion of crimes that were reported are undetected, it is difficult to estimate the level of impunity attached to firearm-related crimes. By all indications, firearm-related transgressions are not sufficiently penalised. Among those crimes directly in contravention of the *Arms and Ammunitions Act*, it was found that the penalties were negligible, both in terms of the amount of the fine and the length of imprisonment. Only in rare cases was the offender declared unfit to possess a firearm in the future.

Year of incident

Where possible, only dockets reflecting crime which occurred in the past six years were selected. However, in some cases, earlier years also formed part of the sample. Overall, there was a relatively even distribution of dockets opened between 1993 and 1998.

Table 9: Proportion of crimes recorded for a particular year

Year	Armed Robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted Murder	Theft of Firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging firearm in Built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault
Prior to 1993	3.1	2.3	3.8	7	0	12.7	1.1	0	0	0
1993	23.3	6.9	3.8	21.1	2.2	9.5	16.3	12.5	35.3	11.1
1994	17.5	16.1	11.3	15.8	17.2	22.2	15.2	9.4	29.4	22.2
1995	23.3	17.2	21.3	22.8	6.5	22.2	28.3	12.5	11.8	0
1996	9	17.2	13.8	19.3	3.2	6.3	5.4	6.3	0	27.8
1997	9.9	20.7	6.3	12.3	22.6	17.5	12	21.9	5.9	5.6
1998	12.1	19.5	37.5	1.8	45.2	7.9	21.7	37.5	17.6	27.8
1999/11	1.8	0	2.5	0	3.2	1.6	0	0	0	5.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18

Among the random selection of firearm-related dockets, the growth of hijacking as a form of robbery is demonstrated when considered per year when the incident occurred. Of the 80 hijacking dockets analysed, 37.5% occurred in 1998. During a similar period, this can be contrasted to the 12.1% of armed robbery incidents that occurred and the 19.5% of common robbery incidents. Common robbery did not show significant fluctuations over time. There was a marginal increase in the number of cases of common robbery from 16.1% in 1994 to 19.5% in 1998.

Among the remaining crimes analysed, the year when the incident occurred did not provide significant information on trends. This could be informed by the relatively few dockets available from which to draw such information across the five-year period represented by the sample.

Time of the incident

Although crime is often described as unpredictable in South Africa, there are certain periods when it is more likely to occur. Certain firearm-related crimes were more prevalent during the day, while others peaked at night. Discharging a firearm in a built-up place most commonly occurred between 00h00 and 04h00 in the morning (34.4%). The theft of a firearm appears to be a daytime crime, which is more likely to occur between 08h00 in the morning and 16h00 in the

afternoon (63.6%). This is an ideal time for home burglaries to occur since the occupants are at work. Hijacking is most likely to occur between 12h00 and 20h00 in the evening (51.3%), while armed robbery occurs mostly between 08h00 in the morning and 20h00 in the evening (67.7%).

Table 10: Time of incident (percentage)

Year	Armed Robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault
00h00-03h59	6.6	12.9	5.1	8.9	20.7	5.5	11.1	34.4	0	22.2
04h00-07h59	8.5	8.2	9	10.7	6.5	12.7	6.7	6.3	7.7	5.6
08h00-11h59	20.7	20	12.8	12.5	7.6	32.7	20	3.1	23.1	0
12h00-15h59	23.5	14.1	26.9	12.5	10.9	30.9	14.4	15.6	7.7	16.7
16h00-19h59	23.5	29.4	24.4	21.4	15.2	10.9	30	21.9	38.5	16.7
20h00-23h59	17.4	15.3	21.8	33.9	39.1	7.3	17.8	18.8	23.1	38.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	213	85	78	56	92	55	90	32	13	18

Location where incidents occurred

The place where the incident occurred largely coincides with the fact that a crime is usually reported to the police station in the area where the crime was committed. Hence, this aspect is reflected in the dockets selected at the three sampling points. Two of the three police stations were at inner city locations, while the third was in a residential area. However, the high incidence of the discharge of a firearm in a built-up area (54.8%), murder (35.1%) and attempted murder (35.6%) on private residential property (on the actual residential property, or in the residential building, such as the house or flat) is of concern. This is further exacerbated by the high incidence of specific firearm-related crimes in public residential areas (such as streets or parks within the residential area), for instance, the discharge of a firearm in a built-up area (16.1%), murder (26.3%) and attempted murder (33.3%) on private residential property. More specifically, these reflect crimes that occurred in an area where the firearms used were in the possession of individuals residing in the same area.

Table 11: Location where incident occurred by crime type (percentage)

Location	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault
Inner city/CBD	64.2	80.2	67.1	10.5	22.2	74.6	44.9	16.1	58.8	33.3
Residential property (priv)	5.5	4.7	2.5	35.1	35.6	9.5	15.7	54.8	5.9	27.8
Residential area (public)	7.3	7	19	26.3	33.3	3.2	19.1	16.1	35.3	0
Place of work/education	6.9	2.3	0	1.8	2.2	7.9	6.7	3.2	0	0
In transit – public/private	8.7	0	5.1	5.3	2.2	1.6	11.2	0	0	11.1
Place of entertainment/recreation	4.1	4.7	3.8	12.3	3.3	1.6	0	6.5	0	22.2
Commercial area	3.2	1.2	2.5	8.8	1.1	1.6	2.2	3.2	0	5.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	218	86	79	57	90	63	89	31	17	18

Crime reporting

The person reporting the crime differs across crime types. Property crimes were usually reported by the victim, as were certain crimes that contravened the Arms and Ammunition Act.

In these cases, the victim was clearly defined as the person against whom the crime was committed, and the need for restitution often appears to be the more obvious motive for reporting the crime. It appeared that reporting was linked to a strong sense of 'being wronged' or 'hard done by'.

It was found that 23.7% of attempted murder incidents were reported or recorded by a police officer. This would occur in cases where the victim was unable to report the crime, for example, if hospitalised as a result of the crime. It was found that in 3.5% of murders, the victim was able to report the incident before expiring.

In the case of discharging a firearm in a built-up area, such crimes are often reported anonymously to the police, who then follow-up on the lead. For example, a person from a neighbourhood might contact the police to complain about someone discharging a firearm in the vicinity. In these cases, there is not always a clear victim.

Table 12: People who reported crime (percentage)

Person	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault
Victim	91.9	97.7	95	3.5	68.8	92.1	84.8	31.3	17.6	77.8
SAPS	3.2	2.3	0	68.4	23.7	6.3	6.5	50	70.6	0
Family/friend/relative of victim	0	0	0	10.5	3.3	0	1.1	0	0	5.6
Bystander	0.4	0	0	7	1.1	0	0	6.3	0	0
State	0.4	0	0	5.3	0	0	0	6.3	5.9	0
Vehicle owner	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.2	3.1	0	5.6
Crime Stop/Neighbourhood Watch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5.9	0
Unknown	4.1	0	5	5.3	3.1	1.6	5.4	0	0	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	223	223	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18

Outcome of the incident

The outcome of the incident reflects the information recorded in the police docket. Murder cases were usually detected, while property crimes were not, as there are usually very few leads to investigate. The highest level of police investigation followed incidents of murder. It was found that only 25.5% of the murder cases were undetected or withdrawn.

The possession of an illegal firearm is a straightforward case to investigate and prosecute, since the retrieval of the illegal firearm occurs with the perpetrator present. What is alarming, is the high percentage of cases withdrawn that are supposed to be simple and clear-cut. It is recommended that further research should be undertaken to establish the dynamics underlying this trend. There were only 17 cases analysed, too few on which to base a valid conclusion.

Table 13: Outcome of incident (percentage)

Outcome	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession/use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Guilty	5.9	7	5	42.1	4.3	9.7	3.3	0	29.4	5.6	15.8	14.3

Acquitted	1.4	0	2.5	35.1	4.3	0	3.3	0	5.9	0	0	14.3
Withdrawn	5	14	5	19.3	37.6	17.7	57.6	90	52.9	44.4	15.8	57.1
Undetected	87.7	79.1	87.5	3.5	53.8	72.6	35.9	10	11.8	50	68.4	14.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	219	86	80	57	93	62	92	30	17	18	6	7

There are practical reasons for the finding that such a high number of police dockets remain undetected. Certain crimes have fewer leads to investigate than other crimes. For example, in a murder case, there are leads such as spent cartridges, fingerprints, blood samples, witnesses, and many others. Detectives cannot investigate cases with no leads or spend too much time on cases where there are no substantial leads. Also, complainants or victims often cannot be traced by the investigating officer resulting in the closure of the dockets as 'undetected'.

Clearly, the lack of leads hampers police investigation. Improved information collection, as a result of greater involvement by the community, could help in addressing this situation. In addition, it was felt that greater effort by the investigating police officer could have led to better results in the investigation.

Amount of fines

The amounts of the fines imposed on offenders contravening the Arms and Ammunition Act were small. This does not serve as a deterrent to people using firearms negligently or in the commission of crime.

Outcome	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Possession of illegal firearm	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
>R1 000	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	3	0
R1 000-R1 999	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
R2 000-R2 999	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
R3 000-R3 999	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
R4 000-R4 999	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
R5 000< more	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	2	4	3	3	3	4	3	1

Duration of imprisonment

Very few offenders received a prison sentence for the crimes committed. Of the 671 offenders for whom information was available in the dockets, only 47 received prison sentences (7%).

Sentence duration	Armed robbery	Common Robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault
>1 year	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	0
1-2 years	2	2	0	0	0	0	0		1
3-4 years	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
5-9 years	2	1	2	5	2	0	0	0	0
10-14 years	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	1	0
15-19 years	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

20-25 years	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Total	11	5	4	17	3	1	2	3	1

Declaration of unfitness

Very few procedures were filed to declare a person unfit to possess a firearm. The numbers of dockets surveyed were insufficient to draw any valid conclusions. Of the entire sample of 787 dockets, there were only seven unfitness procedures instituted or filed.

Of these seven cases, one person was found not guilty, and three were found guilty. In the other three cases, there was no indication in the docket about the outcome of the procedures. The legislation should make this an automatic case for disqualification of the offender to possess a firearm.

Chapter 4

THE INVOLVEMENT OF VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS IN CRIME

Information on the involvement of victims and offenders in a crime incident provides valuable insight into the dynamics of the role of a firearm in a crime, the outcome of the crime and possible policy lessons on how the impact of the crime could be minimised or avoided.

It was found that, in some cases, victims and offenders knew one another prior to the crime. For example, it was found that 26.3% of the people involved in murder incidents and 22.2% of those involved in assault cases knew one another.

In some firearm-related cases, the offender was not armed before or during the crime, for example, in theft of a firearm, home burglaries and the negligent loss of a firearm.

In this section, the demographic profiles of victims and offenders involved in the various firearm-related incidents are described. For example, in those cases where the offender is unknown to the victim before the crime is committed, there is often partial information on the offender. In such an instance, the victim identifies only those aspects of the offender that he or she recalls visually.

Similarly, in the section on the weapon involved in the crime, information on the weapon of both the victim and the offender was not always available, not only because of human error on the part of the police officer completing the docket, but also because of the incomplete available offender profile. Within these statistical limitations, the data is presented as it was gathered from the police dockets and analysis is undertaken within these parameters.

The number of people involved in an incident

The number of people involved in an incident has a direct bearing on the outcome. For example, if the offenders outnumber the victim(s), the victim would more easily be overpowered. Or, if the offender is armed, the victim may be less inclined to try and escape from the situation.

In table 16, the number of people involved in each crime is provided. It shows the ratio of victims to offenders, the number of offenders per case, the numbers of victims per case, the number of other people per case, and finally, the average number of people involved in a case. What this clearly demonstrates, is that in different crime types the number of victims and offenders vary. For example, it was found that, for each victim involved in an armed robbery, there were 1.7

offenders on average.

Incidents of robbery usually involved a higher proportion of offenders than other crime categories. The following crimes were normally committed by a single offender: the negligent loss of a firearm; the possession or use of a firearm under the influence of alcohol; assault; murder; and the pointing of a firearm.

Table 16: Number of people involved in incident

	Armed Robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Pointing a firearm	Theft of firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Offenders (n)	455	179	190	71	101	107	3312	26	29	19	6	6
Victims (n)	267	101	89	73	103	99	60	29	6	19	13	4
Other people (n)	2	3	0	4	3	4	0	4	7	1	0	1
Total people involved	724	283	279	148	207	210	9313	59	42	39	19	11
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	92	63	32	17	18	6	7
Ratio victims: offenders	1.7	1.77	2.13	0.97	0.98	1.08	-	0.9	4.83	1	0.46	1.5
Offenders /case (ave)	2.04	2.06	2.38	1.25	1.09	1.16	-	0.81	1.71	1.06	1	0.86
Victims/case (ave)	1.2	1.16	1.11	1.28	1.11	1.08	-	0.91	0.35	1.06	2.1	0.57
Other people/case (ave)	0.01	0.03	0	0.07	0.03	0.04	-	0.13	0.41	0.06	0	0.14
People/case (ave)	3.25	3.25	3.49	2.6	2.23	2.28	-	1.84	2.47	2.17	3.16	1.57

Of the robbery incidents considered, 223 were armed robberies, 87 common robberies and 80 hijackings. There were more offenders for every one victim in the hijacking incidents (2.13 offenders for every 1 victim), than in common robbery (1.77) and armed robbery (1.7) incidents. Unlike the robbery incidents, in which the offenders usually outnumbered the victims, the ratio was even in murder incidents. In the 57 murder and 93 attempted murder incidents, there was usually one offender for every one victim.

Relationship between victim and offender

The relationship between the victim and the offender provides valuable insight into the nature of the crime and the role of the firearm employed in the crime. The fact that crime sometimes occurred among people who are acquainted with or know one another is significant. A crime involving a victim and an offender who know each other often raises questions whether the crime could have been prevented, or resolved differently. A crime involving a victim and an offender who are strangers complies more with conventional thinking about how crime occurs. It was found that 26.3% of the murder and 22.2% of the assault victims knew their offenders, while 21.9% of the victims of incidents involving the discharge of a firearm in public places and 15.2% of the victims of pointing a firearm knew the perpetrators.

Table 17: Relationship between victim and offender (percentage)

Person	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of	Pointing a	Discharging firearm in built-up	Possession of illegal	Assault
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	robbery	robbery			murder	firearm	firearm	built-up place	firearm	
Well-known	0.4	0	1.3	26.3	9.7	4.8	15.2	21.9	0	22.2
Unknown	97.8	98.9	97.5	54.4	74.2	90.5	76.1	68.8	100	72.2
Acquainted	1.8	1.1	1.3	19.3	16.1	4.8	8.7	9.4	0	5.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18

Table 18: Activity of victim prior to in incident (percentage)

	Armed Robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Pointing a firearm	Theft of firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
At home	8.2	4.7	5	42.1	31.9	8.5	20.7	51.6	6.7	22.2	15.8	16.7
Visiting friends/ relatives	0.5	4.7	8.8	7	13.2	10.2	2.2	0	0	5.6	0	16.7
Transit between place of work/education	7.7	8.1	11.3	1.8	5.5	3.4	6.5	0	0	11.1	0	0
Place of work/ education	45.9	23.3	30	1.8	8.8	52.5	27.2	19.4	33.3	11.1	21.1	0
At shops	11.8	12.8	7.5	8.8	4.4	5.1	6.5	0	0	5.6	15.8	0
Transit between entertainment/ recreation	2.7	8.1	7.5	0	1.1	0	0	0	6.7	5.6	0	0
At place of recreation/ entertainment	5.9	11.6	5	10.5	15.4	11.9	6.5	9.7	6.7	16.7	15.8	16.7
Transit to/ from home	9.5	11.6	15	8.8	7.7	1.7	8.7	3.2	0	22.2	15.8	16.7
Waiting in street /on foot	0.5	2.3	1.3	15.8	8.8	0	6.5	3.2	0	0	0	16.7
SAPS on patrol/ search	0	1.2	0	0	1.1	0	1.1	3.2	40	0	15.8	16.7
In transit	6.4	10.5	7.5	1.8	1.1	5.1	10.9	6.5	6.7	0	0	0
Other	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.8	1.1	1.7	3.3	3.2	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	220	86	80	57	91	59	92	31	15	18	6	6

Victims' activities prior to the crime

Since the sampling point largely determined the area where incidents occurred, greater insight into the nature of the crime is gained by considering what the victim was doing prior to the crime. Before the incident occurred, many victims were involved in activities at their place of work or education. It was found that the largest proportion of crimes occurred at the workplace or at educational institutions in the case of armed robbery (45.9%), common robbery (23.3%), hijacking (30%), theft of a firearm (52.5%), pointing of a firearm (27.2%) and negligent loss of a firearm (21.1%). Murder (42.1%), attempted murder (31.9%) and the discharge of a firearm in a built-up place (51.6%) are most commonly experienced in residences.

Table 19: Activity of offender prior to in incident (percentage)

	Armed robbery	Common robbery Hijacking	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Possession of firearm under influence of alcohol
Walking around	38.3	41.7	40	31.8	51	0	17.7	25	28.6	18.8	25

Standing/sitting	30.8	22.9	40	13.6	18.4	44.4	27.4	20	7.1	62.5	50
Entering business	11.7	10.4	0	0	2	11.1	4.8	0	0	0	0
In transit	6.7	8.3	6.7	11.4	6.1	11.1	24.2	15	21.4	6.3	0
Hiding out/surprised	5	10.4	11.1	0	2	0	0	0	7.1	0	0
At home	1.7	0	0	22.7	10.2	11.1	11.3	35	14.3	0	25
Other	5.8	6.3	2.2	20.5	10.2	22.2	14.5	5	21.4	12.5	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	120	48	45	44	49	9	62	20	14	16	4

Offenders' activities prior to the crime

The crux of a criminal incident is usually that a victim is taken by surprise. If the surprise element was absent, the victim could presumably take some action to avoid or prevent the crime. Thus, in many of the dockets, the person reporting the crime did not mention what the offender was doing prior to the crime, as he or she was not aware of the offender's actions.

What is interesting, is the high incidence of the pointing of a firearm that occurred on the road, while the offender was in transit (24.2%), and the high number of contraventions of the Arms and Ammunition Act that occurred at the victim's (and often the offender's) home.

Chapter 5 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF OFFENDERS

The following section provides an overview of details about offenders involved in the various crimes. It considers the main demographic information, including gender, race, age, vocation and employment. Detailed information on offenders is lacking in this study, because it is largely absent from dockets. It is self-evident that, in many cases, either the victim or the police simply did not have access to this information.

Gender

In most firearm-related crimes, offenders were male. It is interesting that women committed two out of the 25 offences by discharging a firearm in a built-up place.

Table 20: Gender profile of offenders (percentage)

Gender	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging a firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Male	98.9	97.7	98.4	97.1	98.9	95.2	97.2	92	95	100	100	100
Female	1.1	2.3	1.6	2.9	1.1	4.8	2.8	8	5	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Offenders (n)	443	173	183	70	87	21	106	25	20	17	6	6

Table 21: Race profile of offenders (percentage)

Race	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging a firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
African	78.7	88.9	77.5	8.8	12.7	72	18.7	21.7	50	33.3	0	0

Asian	4.3	1.8	0.5	0	8.9	4	29.9	13	0	22.2	50	0
Coloured	14.5	9.4	19.8	85.3	74.7	20	37.4	56.5	40	33.3	50	83.3
White	2.3	0	2.2	5.9	3.8	4	14	8.7	10	11.1	0	16.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Offenders (n)	441	171	182	68	79	25	107	23	20	18	6	5

Table 22: Age profile of offenders (percentage)

Race	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging a firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession-/use of firearm under influence of alcohol
>16 years	1.6	5.9	0	0	0	14.3	2.4	0	0	0	0	0
16-20 years	15.6	29.4	20	20	21.9	14.3	9.5	5	19	0	0	0
21-30 years	60.9	29.4	60	49.1	40.6	42.9	47.6	25	42.9	81.8	0	20
31-40 years	20.3	35.3	10	27.3	18.8	28.6	26.2	35	38.1	18.2	50	40
41-50 years	1.6	0	10	3.6	12.5	0	11.9	35	0	0	0	40
51-60 years	0	0	0	0	6.3	0	2.4	0	0	0	50	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Offenders (n)	64	17	10	55	32	7	42	20	21	11	6	5

Race

The information on the race of the offender provides little insight into the nature of firearm-related crime.

Age

The age of the offender was not always available for a number of reasons. Most notable was the fact that victims did not know their offenders, and often based their age on a broad estimate of what they saw, if they were present at the time of the incident, or in visual contact with the offenders. It is evident that most offenders were between the age of 16 to 30 years. The age of offenders contravening the Arms and Ammunition Act was usually higher than this average.

Vocational profile

Little information was available on the vocation of offenders in firearm-related crimes. Although the data does provide an indication of the offenders' vocations (given the high degree of missing information on their vocations), this information should be used illustratively rather than factually. What the data illustrates is that there are a significant number of offenders involved in firearm-related crimes who are employed in the formal sector, and that conventional thinking that an offender is an unemployed person, must be challenged. More especially, the fact that scholars, housewives and retired people also commit crimes is a fact that should not be overlooked.

Employment status

Taking into account the limitations (as mentioned above) of the available information on the

vocational profile of offenders, their employment status should be used for its descriptive value. Comparatively speaking, more offenders committing crimes in contravention of the Arms and Ammunition Act were employed than in other crime types.

Type of employment

Given the lack of information available in dockets on the offender's type of employment, very little can be deduced from the table below, which was intended to provide this information. What it clearly indicates, is that no group of offenders are involved in a distinct type of profession.

Table 23: Vocational profile of offenders (percentage)

Vocation	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging a firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Neg-ligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Attending school	5.9	16.7	0	1.7	0	16.7	0	0	20	0	0	0
School-going age, not attending	0	0	0	1.7	3.3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Full-time scholar/student	0	0	0	1.7	0	0	4.1	0	0	0	0	0
Housewife	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	4	0	0	0
Retired/pensioner	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Unemployed	41.2	55.6	50	34.5	43.3	33.3	22.4	10	56	0	50	20
Employed, formal sector	35.3	22.2	41.7	34.5	33.3	50	59.2	80	8	100	50	80
Employed, informal sector	11.8	0	0	6.9	0	0	0	5	4	0	0	0
Self-employed	2.9	0	8.3	17.2	16.7	0	8.2	0	8	0	0	0
Other	2.9	5.6	0	1.7	3.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Offenders (n)	34	18	12	58	30	6	49	20	25	9	6	5

Table 24: Employment status of offenders (percentage)

Status	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging a firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession- /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Not looking for employment (such as scholars, students, retired)	5.9	16.7	0	5.2	3.3	16.7	10.2	5	24	0	0	0
Unemployed	41.2	55.6	50	34.5	43.3	33.3	22.4	10	56	0	50	20
Employed	5	22.2	50	58.6	50	50	67.3	85	20	100	50	80
Other	2.9	5.6	0	1.7	3.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Offenders (n)	34	18	12	58	30	6	49	20	25	9	6	5

Table 25: Occupational profile of offenders

	Armed	Common	Hi		Attempted	Theft	Point-	Dis-	Pos-		Negligent	Possession /use of firearm
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Occupation	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Use of firearm	Carrying a firearm	Use of a firearm in built-up place	Use of illegal firearm	Assault	Loss of firearm	Use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Academic, Researcher, teacher	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bar/club owner	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Builder, contractor, foreman	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business person	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Civil servant	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Clerk	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Factory worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Hawker, vendor	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hotel industry worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Labourer	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Manager, assistant, supervisor	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medical profession employee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Messenger, office driver	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0
Pilot, radar operator	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prison warder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Private security guard	1	0	0	3	1	0	4	2	0	1	0	0
Sales rep – mobile	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
SANDF	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
SAPS	1	1	0	4	1	0	5	3	2	2	3	0
Secretary	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shop assistant, cashier	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0
Smuggler, drug dealer	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taxi driver owner	0	0	2	4	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
Technician, mechanic	1	0	1	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Trade, craft person	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Truck driver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Waiter/waitress	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	2	5	30	9	3	25	11	4	5	3	1

Chapter 6

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF VICTIMS

Everyone is vulnerable to crime, but certain people appear to be more at risk than others. The docket analysis provides some indication of the profile of people who are relatively more vulnerable to firearm-related crime. The profile of victims in terms of crime types is useful for the development of safety and crime prevention strategies. The following section provides an overview of the victims involved in the various crimes. It considers the main demographic information on victims: gender, race, age, vocation and employment. Victim information is usually more comprehensive than information available in dockets on offenders. This relates to

the fact that the victim usually lays the complaint, consequently providing more substantial information. The offender, on the other hand, is often unknown and, hence, only partial information can be obtained.

Gender

There were more male than female victims. Comparatively speaking, the proportion of female victims was greater in those crimes with which violence against women is usually associated. These included 42.1% of assault victims, 27.6% of victims in incidences where a firearm was discharged in a built-up place and 25% of victims of the crime of possession or using a firearm while under the influence of alcohol.

Race

What is interesting is that particular race groups suffer a disproportionately greater level of victimisation in certain crimes than others. For example, an extremely high number of murders (90.3%) and attempted murders (76.5%) occur among the coloured sample. This could be as a result of the gang violence in the Mitchell's Plain area.

Age

The age of victims varied across firearm-related incidents. In property crimes (armed robbery, common robbery and hijacking), ages were marginally higher than in the case of murders and attempted murders. This is attributed both to the high level of property ownership and the value of property among victims over the age of 30 years.

Table 26: Gender profile of victims (percentage)

Gender	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging a firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Neg-ligent loss of firearm	Pos-session /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Male	77.3	92.1	89.9	87.5	78.4	76.7	82.8	72.4	100	57.9	100	75
Female	22.7	7.9	10.1	12.5	21.6	23.3	17.2	27.6	0	42.1	0	25
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Victims (n)	264	101	89	72	102	60	99	29	5	19	13	4

Table 27: Race profile of victims (percentage)

Race	Armed robbery	Com-mon robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging a firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Neg-ligent loss of firearm	Pos-session /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
African	36.5	47.5	44.3	5.6	13.7	24.6	27.6	14.8	20	42.1	0	0
Asian	28.9	9.9	14.8	1.4	5.9	7	17.3	14.8	0	5.3	0	0
Coloured	18.3	13.9	30.7	90.3	76.5	14	37.8	55.6	20	47.4	0	100
White	16.3	28.7	10.2	2.8	3.9	54.4	17.3	14.8	60	5.3	100	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Victims (n)	263	101	88	72	102	57	98	27	5	19	13	4

Age	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging a firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
>16 years	0.8	2.1	1.2	3	4.5	1.8	2.1	3.7	0	11.8	0	0
16-20 years	5	5.3	8.5	21.2	22.5	7.3	14.4	3.7	25	17.6	0	0
21-30 years	37.8	38.3	42.7	43.9	29.2	25.5	47.4	55.6	25	41.2	0	50
31-40 years	28.6	25.5	22	18.2	28.1	40	24.7	18.5	0	23.5	53.8	25
41-50 years	18.5	13.8	13.4	9.1	14.6	16.4	7.2	14.8	0	5.9	0	25
51-60 years	9.3	6.4	11.2	4.5	1.1	9.1	4.1	3.7	50	0	46.2	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Victims (n)	238	94	82	66	89	55	57	27	4	17	13	4

Vocational profile

The vocation of victims provides insight about activities that take up most of their time. Clearly, this would affect the type of crime that the victim is most at risk of experiencing. For example, a housewife has a lesser geographic mobility than a person employed in the formal sector. Yet, a housewife may be more fixed and predictable in terms of movement patterns, which make her a softer target for certain types of crimes. It was found that housewives comprised 19.2% of the victims or complainants in incidents involving the discharge of a firearm in a built-up place and 10.2% of attempted murder victims.

Employment status

As informed by the vocation of the victim, the following table provides a summary of the difference in employment status of victims. The vast majority of victims were employed, with the exception of victims of murder and attempted murder.

Vocation	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging a firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Child/baby	0.4	3.2	0	1.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attending school	0.4	0	4.9	5.3	12.5	1.7	4.2	3.8	0	20	0	0
School-going age, not attending	0	0	0	1.8	1.1	0	0	0	0	13.3	0	0
Full-time scholar, student	0.9	2.2	3.7	5.3	2.3	3.4	7.3	0	0	0	0	0
Housewife	1.3	1.1	0	3.5	10.2	1.7	5.2	19.2	0	0	0	0
Domestic worker	0.9	1.1	0	0	0	3.4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Bank teller	1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bar/club owner	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Builder, contractor, foreman	2.5	5.1	0	0	4	8.9	0	0	0	12.5	0	0
bus driver, conductor	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.1	0	0	0	0	0
Business person	1.3	0	1.7	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chef	0.6	1.7	0	0	0	2.2	0	8.3	0	12.5	0	0
Civil servant	1.3	0	0	0	0	2.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cleaner, domestic worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Clerk	6.3	3.4	1.7	0	8	6.7	0	16.7	0	0	0	0
Debit collector	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farm manager	0.6	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hairdresser, beautician	0	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hawker, vendor	0	0	0	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imports /exports	1.3	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labourer	0	0	0	16.7	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Manager, assistant, supervisor	0	5.1	6.9	0	4	2.2	4.1	0	25	0	0	33.3
Medical profession	2.5	0	0	0	0	2.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Messenger, office driver	10.0	3.4	17.2	0	4.0	2.2	6.1	0	0	0	12.5	0
Peace officer	0	0	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Petrol attendant station owner	0	0	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prison warder	0	0	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private security guard	10.6	20.3	0	0	20.0	2.2	16.3	16.7	0	12.5	40.0	0
Religious person	0	0	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reporter	0	0	0	0	0	2.2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sailor	0	0	0	0	4.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sales rep – mobile	5.3	13.6	6.9	16.7	8.0	4.4	4.1	0	0	0	0	0
SANDF	0.6	11.9	1.7	8.3	4.0	4.4	4.1	16.7	0	0	30.0	0
SAPS	3.1	6.8	12.1	0	4.0	15.6	10.2	25.0	78.0	12.5	0	0
Secretary	0	3.4	0	8.3	0	6.7	2.0	0	0	0	0	0
Sex worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.5	0	0
Shop assistant, cashier	37.5	8.5	12.1	0	8.0	6.7	10.2	0	0	12.5	0	0
Smuggler, drug dealer	0	0	0	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Snake park owner	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.3	0	0	0	0
Taxi driver/owner	6.9	1.7	22.4	8.3	16.0	8.9	18.4	0	0	0	0	0
Technician, mechanic	3.1	3.4	5.2	0	4.0	4.4	4.1	0	0	0	0	33.3
Trade, craft person	0	5.1	0	8.3	0	6.7	2.0	8.3	0	0	0	0
Travel agent	0	0	0	0	0	2.2	6.1	0	0	0	0	0

Truck driver	0.6	0	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waiter /waitress	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Victims (n)	160	59	58	12	25	45	49	12	4	8	10	3

Chapter 7 **WEAPONS**

The aim of this section is to provide a profile of the firearms in the possession of victims and offenders across crime types. Such information can lead to a better understanding of firearm-related crime. Firstly, knowing which weapon is used in an incident is useful. Secondly, an understanding of the dynamics of firearm-related crime provides insight based on which relevant crime prevention strategies may be designed and implemented. Thirdly, an exploration of the relationship between the type of firearm and the crime is of significance.

Crimes committed with firearms are markedly different from those committed with other weapons or instruments, such as knives, fists, clubs, and others. An offender with a firearm does not need to be in close proximity of his/her victim to commit a crime. The offender may threaten or intimidate the victim from a safe distance, in this way ensuring compliance. Offenders with other weapons (such as those mentioned above) need to be within the immediate proximity of their victims to achieve similar compliance. In comparison with other weapons, the impact of a firearm is greater, affecting more than just its immediate area, while there is a heightened chance of unpremeditated consequences as a result. For example, a stray bullet can injure a person at some distance from the actual criminal incident.

In the docket survey, every attempt was made to collect a comprehensive list of descriptive information on firearms used in the incidents, but the information was not always available in the docket. The information that the survey aimed to collect included the following:

- type of weapon used;
- whether or not a firearm was present;
- type of firearm used;
- calibre of firearm;
- make of firearm; and
- licence condition or status of firearm.

Limitations of the data

The main limitation of the data results from the absence of much of the required information in the police dockets, and more specifically, certain types of information. However, given the fact that details are often unknown when a crime is reported, this was to be expected.

It was found that some of the information was superfluous, in terms of its analytic contribution to the understanding of firearm-related crime, while other information proved of greater value. The information provided on the type of firearm and whether it was licenced was extremely useful, while the information on the type of action, calibre and make of firearm was of less significance. The latter type of information needs to be assessed critically in terms of its usefulness for understanding firearm-related crime. It is unlikely that criminals in South Africa choose the type of firearm they use in crime, either in terms of make or calibre. It is more likely that they use whatever firearm is accessible to them.

Further research into the proportion of firearm use in relation to overall weapons use would also provide valuable insight into the role of firearms in perpetrating crime.

Table 32: Total number and proportion of weapons involved in incidents

Type	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging a firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession /use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Other weapons (eg knife, panga) (n)	21	33	6	2	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Other weapons (%)	2.9	11.7	2.2	1.6	1.4	0	0.5	1.7	0	0	0	0
Firearms (n)	328	119	127	68	103	63	106	37	24	20	19	8
Firearms (%)	45.3	42	45.5	45.9	49.8	67.7	50.1	62.7	57.1	51.3	100	72.7
No weapons	375	131	146	78	101	30	103	21	18	19	0	3
No weapons (%)	51.8	46.3	52.3	52.7	48.8	32.3	49	35.6	42.9	48.7	0	27.3
Total n	724	283	279	148	207	93	210	59	42	39	19	11
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18	6	7
People involved (n)	724	283	279	148	207	9314	210	59	42	39	19	11

Number of weapons involved in the incident

It was often felt that all the relevant information about all the weapons used in the incident was not recorded in the docket. For example, it often occurred that only those weapons that were actually actively used in the incident and were identified or seized as evidence were mentioned. Yet, the nature of the crime would suggest that, the other offenders had also frequently been in possession of weapons, thus enabling them to obtain compliance from their victims. The table below outlines the total number of weapons involved in an incident.

Table 33: Number of weapons in possession of victims, offenders and other intervening parties

Type	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging a firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession/ use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Offender												
Other weapons (eg knife, panga)	21	32	6	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Firearms	290	45	114	55	77	7	88	22	19	17	6	6
No weapons	144	102	70	15	22	26	18	4	10	2	0	0
Total	455	179	190	71	101	33	107	26	29	19	6	6
Victim												
Other												
weapons	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Firearms	34	72	13	9	14	56	15	13	4	2	13	1
No weapons	233	28	76	63	88	4	84	15	2	17	0	3
Total	267	101	89	73	103	60	99	29	6	19	13	4
Other												
Other weapons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Firearms	1	2	0	4	1	0	3	2	1	0	0	1
No weapons	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	2	6	1	0	0
Total	2	3	0	4	3	0	4	4	7	1	0	1
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18	6	7
People (n)	724	283	279	148	207	93	210	59	42	39	19	11

Since it was difficult to ascertain why there were omissions in the dockets in terms of the weapon used, it was assumed that no weapon was used. There is a high probability that offenders in these cases, in actual fact, did not carry a weapon and that no information was contained in the docket for this reason.

The information on weapons proves more significant when stratified by the profile of the victim in terms of the type of weapon in the possession of victims, offenders and intervening third parties (as indicated in table 33).

Weapon used by offender

Proportion of offenders using a weapon

The survey methodology required that only firearm-related dockets should be selected. It was interesting that very few other types of weapons were used in combination with firearms. It was only in 4.7% of the armed robberies and 7.2% of the common robberies that other weapons featured.

The relatively high proportion of offenders who were without a weapon in two firearm-related crimes helped to distinguish them from the others. It was found that 57% of offenders involved in common robberies and 81.8% involved in firearm theft had no weapon during the crime. Both of these crime types rely on surprise and opportunity-based techniques.

In a consideration of crimes of a similar nature, a comparison of the level of firearm possession across crime types is significant. For instance, it was found that the level of firearm possession among offenders was higher in murders (74.6%) than in attempted murders (64.4%). The level of firearm possession among offenders proved to be slightly higher in armed robberies (61.6%) than in hijacking incidents (58.4%).

The proportion of offenders with firearms differed across crime type. In the negligent loss of a firearm (100%) and the illegal discharge of a firearm in a built-up or public place (100%), all offenders were armed. Even though the sample was very small in these cases, such crimes are by definition dependent upon the use of a firearm.

Table 34: Proportion of weapons used by offender by crime type

Type	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging a firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession/use of firearm under influence
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firearm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toy firearm	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.2	0	0	0	0	0
Knobkierie	0	2.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other blunt object	0	1.3	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hand grenade	0	0	0	0	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knife, panga	7.1	35.1	4.2	1.9	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other sharp object	0	2.6	0	0	0	0	1.2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18	6	7
Offenders (n)	455	179	190	71	101	33	107	26	29	19	6	6
Weapons (n)	311	77	120	56	79	7	89	22	19	17	6	6
Responses (n)	297	77	118	54	67	6	83	22	19	16	6	6

Table 36: Proportion of firearm types in possession of offender

Type	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging a firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Pos-session/ use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Pistol	84.7	97.1	85.5	76.7	78.8	66.7	76.3	75	64.7	72.7	100	83.3
Revolver	14.8	2.9	7.2	20.9	15.2	33.3	18.6	20	11.8	18.2	0	16.7
Shotgun	0.6	0	1.2	2.3	6.1	0	3.4	0	11.8	0	0	0
Rifle	0	0	6	0	0	0	1.7	5	5.9	9.1	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5.9	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18	6	7
Offenders (n)	455	179	190	71	101	33	107	26	29	19	6	6
Weapons (n)	311	77	120	56	79	7	89	22	19	17	6	6
Responses (n)	176	34	83	43	33	6	59	20	17	11	6	6

Table 37: Calibre of firearms used by offenders across all crime types

Calibre	Number of responses	Percentage
9 mm	74	50
.38 Special	27	18.2
7.65	19	12.9
0.375	7	4.7
.45 Auto	6	4.1
7.62	5	3.4
0.22	3	2
12 Gauge	3	2
5.56	2	1.4
6.35	1	0.7
0.32	1	0.7
Total	148	100

weapons (%)	87.3	27.7	85.4	86.3	85.4	6.7	84.8	51.7	33.3	89.5	0	75
Total	267	101	89	73	103	60	99	29	6	19	13	4
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18	6	7
Victims (n)	267	101	89	73	103	60	99	29	6	19	13	4

Weapons used by victims

Proportion of weapons used by victims

Overall, victims had a smaller range of weapons in their possession. Most victims were not in possession of a weapon. The largest category of unarmed victims included armed robbery victims (85.3%), murder victims (83.3%), hijacking victims (81.7%), and victims of incidents where a firearm was pointed (80.5%). The smallest category of unarmed victims were those subjected to common robbery (32.8%) and the theft of a firearm (7.4%).

Type of weapons in victims' possession

Usually, the type of weapon in the possession of the victim was a pistol or a revolver. There were also a few shotguns in the possession of victims.

Type	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging a firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Pos-session/ use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Handgun	25	38	8	7	11	25	11	11	2	1	7	1
Shotgun	2	2	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Service pistol	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
Knife/panga	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	27	41	11	8	13	25	15	13	4	1	7	1
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18	6	7
Victims (n)	267	101	89	73	103	60	99	29	6	19	13	4
Firearms (n)	34	73	13	10	15	56	15	14	4	2	13	1
Responses (n)	27	41	11	8	13	25	15	13	4	1	7	1

Type	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm
Pistol	24	52	9	8	9	39	7
Revolver	6	15	0	0	0	15	4
Shotgun	1	3	1	0	0	1	0
Total	31	70	10	8	9	55	11

Type of firearms in victims' possession

There were three types of firearms in the possession of victims, including pistols, revolvers and

shotguns.

Calibre of victims' firearms

There was a range of different calibre weapons in possession of the victims.

In the tables presented on the calibre and make of the offender's weapon, the consolidated information shows only the total for all crimes analysed, as a result of insufficient data.

Calibre	Number of responses	Percentage
9 mm	89	53.3
.38 Special	29	17.4
7.65	22	13.2
6.35	8	4.8
.45 Auto	4	2.4
12 Gauge	3	1.8
0.22	2	1.2
7.62	1	0.6
0.32	1	0.6
0.375		4.8
Total	167	100

Make of victims' firearms

Victims had a number of different makes of weapons in their possession. There were 31 different makes of firearms recorded in 145 surveys.

Licence status of victims' firearms

A greater proportion of victims' firearms were licenced, than was the case with offenders' firearms.

Type	Armed robbery	Common robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted murder	Theft of firearm	Pointing a firearm
Licenced	52.9	87.7	53.8	55.6	26.7	92.9	26.7
Unlicenced	47.1	12.3	46.2	44.4	73.3	7.1	73.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92
Victims (n)	267	101	89	73	103	60	99
Firearms (n)	34	73	13	9	15	56	15

Chapter 8 INJURY

Injuries that occurred as a result of an incident were recorded in the survey for both victims and offenders. Injuries were broadly categorised, as indicated in the tables below, ranging from emotional to fatal injuries. Five categories of injury were measured: none, emotional, slight, fatal and firearm injury.

An injury was only recorded in the survey if it was mentioned in the docket. It was felt that the incidence of injury — as provided in the dockets — was much lower than in reality. Both emotional and slight injuries were underreported. Although substantial emotional injury would be

associated with most crimes, for instance, this was seldom mentioned in the docket, resulting in gross underreporting of emotional injury. In addition, slight injuries (such as bruising, spraining and grazing) were also underreported.

The dockets provided very detailed accounts of the more serious injuries, such as fatal and firearm injuries. Most of the murder, attempted murder and assault dockets provided police photographs and medical reports of injuries sustained as a result of the crime.

Based on the extent of the survey, it was decided not to record detailed information about the seriousness of injuries. Only the most serious injury was recorded. Thus, there was no information available on multiple injuries. This information was included in the case dockets, usually with photographic evidence, as well as medical reports detailing every aspect of the injury.

In this survey, the interest rather focused on whether or not an injury was sustained, and how severe it was. No attempt was made to itemise the nature of injuries in terms of where they occurred on the person, tools causing injuries, or the cost as a result of treating such injuries. All of these would provide useful information, and future research should be commissioned around this aspect.

The injury level as measured, provides an indicator of the outcome of the incident. The comparative experience of victims and offenders in possession of firearms, as opposed to those victims and offenders who were not in possession, especially in robbery incidents, provides important insights into the utility of a firearm for use in self-defence.

The findings on the robbery incidents were the most reliable. Comparatively speaking, significantly more victims than offenders were injured in robbery and theft incidents. Just fewer than 3% of robbery and theft offenders were injured, while between 8.3% and 31.7% of robbery and theft victims were injured. Most surprising was the finding that more injuries occurred in common robberies (31.7%), than in armed robberies (17.2%) and hijackings (22.5%). There is no clear reason for this anomaly. It might be expected that victims confronted by armed offenders have a greater chance of injury than when confronted by unarmed offenders, such as in the case of common robbery. Yet, a low level of injury occurred among offenders in robbery and theft incidents. The injuries can best be described as isolated and minor, while victims, on the other hand, experienced a wide range of injuries. Only a relatively small proportion of these victims experienced firearm injuries and only in one incident was this fatal. The low level of injury could be attributed to the high level of compliance shown by victims when confronted by armed offenders.

Nature of violence used in incident

Broadly speaking, the nature of the violence used in incidents was classified according to three types: those incidents where no violence or threats occurred; those where only threats were used; and those where only violence was used.

It is self-evident that, in those crimes where the victim was not present at the time the crime was committed, lower levels of violence and intimidation usually occurred. For example, during a home burglary, the victim is not present and therefore has a low chance of injury. On the other hand, the type of intimidation and violence used is more pertinent to the analysis of those crime types in which the victim and perpetrator interface, such as in armed robbery, murder and assault cases.

The extent to which threats were used in armed robberies and hijackings was similar, at 73.8% of armed robbery incidents and 74.4% of hijacking incidents, while the use of threats in common robbery was lower (32.5%). It is probable that higher levels of compliance are achieved from victims in armed robberies and hijackings because of the presence of a firearm, while the victim in a common robbery may feel more able to challenge the offender. Half of the common robbery incidents involved violence, raising interesting questions about the common perception that armed robbery and hijacking are more violent crime types than common robbery.

Table 44: Type of threats and violence used in incidents (percentage)

Category	Armed robbery	Common Robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted Murder	Theft of a firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Pos-session/ use of firearm under influence of alcohol
No violence/ threats	2.3	16.9	0	0	3.4	88.7	4.6	32.1	93.8	0	100	60
Only threats	73.8	32.5	74.4	5.3	2.3	6.5	82.8	17.9	0	23.5	0	20
Violence used	23.8	50.6	25.6	94.7	94.3	4.8	12.6	50	6.3	76.5	0	20
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cases (n)	214	83	78	57	88	62	87	28	16	17	6	5

Table 45: Level of injuries experienced by offenders (percentage)

Injuries	Armed robbery	Common Robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted Murder	Theft of a firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Pos-session/ use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Yes	2.9	2.8	0	8.5	6.9	3	3.7	3.8	0	5.3	0	0
No	97.1	97.2	100	91.5	93.1	97	96.3	95.2	100	94.7	100	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Offenders (n)	455	179	190	71	101	33	107	26	29	19	6	6

Injuries experienced by the offender

Offenders experienced relatively low levels of injury. The greatest injury that an offender sustained was recorded for murder (8.5%) and attempted murder (6.9%) incidents. The high level of resistance by the victim against the actions of the offender would account for this. In fact, it appears that, in light of the severity of the crime committed, the level of injury experienced by the offender still remains low.

Table 46: Nature of injury sustained by offenders (percentage)

Injury	Armed robbery	Common Robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted Murder	Theft of a firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Pos-session/ use of firearm under influence of alcohol
None	97.1	97.2	100	91.5	93.1	97	96.3	95.2	100	94.7	100	100

Emotional	0.4	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	2	1.1	0	1.4	6.9	3	0	3.8	0	5.3	0	0
Fatal	0	0.6	0	5.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Firearm	0.4	0	0	1.4	0	0	3.7	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Offenders (n)	455	179	190	71	101	33	107	26	29	19	6	6
Cases (n)	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	17	18	6	7

With regard to injuries experienced by offenders, it is likely that the information represented in the dockets is more accurate for crimes in which the victim and the offender interface, than in other crime types. Across all crime types, the level of fatal injury sustained by offenders as a result of the use of a firearm was low. Firearms do not significantly impact on, or pose resistance to the intended actions of offenders. Regardless of whether the victim was armed or not, the offender is, in the vast majority of the cases, not injured, specifically not by a firearm. This finding raises interesting questions about whether the possession of a firearm is a useful deterrent in crime, in terms of neutralising the threat of an offender to inflict an injury.

In surveyed armed robbery incidents, two offenders were injured with a firearm. The level of injury experienced by offenders in armed robberies, common robberies and hijackings was negligible.

Table 47: Total injuries sustained by victims (percentage)

Injury	Armed robbery	Common Robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted Murder	Theft of a firearm	Pointing a firearm	Dis-charging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Pos-session/ use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Yes	17.2	31.7	22.5	89	56.3	8.3	21.2	24.1	33.3	78.9	0	25
No	82.8	68.3	77.5	11	43.7	91.7	78.8	75.9	66.7	21.1	100	75
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Victims (n)	267	101	89	73	103	60	99	29	6	19	13	4

In the murder dockets, 8.5% of offenders (4) involved in the incidents were killed. In each case, this occurred as a result of the use of a firearm. In murder incidents, one offender was injured with a firearm (in addition to the four offenders killed with a firearm).

In the pointing of a firearm, three offenders were injured, while one offender was *slightly* injured in the assault incidents.

Injuries experienced by victims

With regard to the number of injuries, higher proportions of victims were usually slightly rather than seriously injured. By definition, those crimes that are physical in nature (such as murder, attempted murder and assault) represent the highest proportion of injury to victims.

Greater proportions of common robbery victims (31.7%) were injured as opposed to victims of armed robbery (17.2%) and hijacking (22.5%). The majority of these injuries were categorised as slight injuries. This challenges conventional thinking that armed robbery and hijacking claim more injury to victims. In addition, the seriousness of the injuries is also relatively higher in common robberies. It was found that 5% of the victims in common robberies were seriously injured and 3% were injured with a firearm. Perhaps the absence of a firearm in common

robbery incidents, among other factors, increases the willingness of the victim to resist the offender. Other factors that also impact on the willingness of the victim to resist could include the number of victims and offenders involved in the incident, the number of other weapons, the location where the crime occurred and the value of, or sentiment attached to property being stolen.

The highest proportion of injury to victims occurred in murder and attempted murder incidents. More specifically, 73 victims and 70 offenders were involved in the 57 murder incidents surveyed. Of the 73 victims, 57 were fatally wounded (78.1%), six were injured with a firearm (8.2%), one victim was slightly injured, another emotionally injured and eight victims were not injured. In attempted murder incidents, 56.3% of the victims were injured.

The motive for pointing a firearm varies from case to case. In the dockets analysed in this survey, the motive was usually intimidation, threat and in reaction to an event that excited rage. However, the motive was never directly to cause injury to the victim, or to steal property from the victim. Despite this, 21.2% of victims in these incidents were injured. In terms of the impact of the injury on the victim, the outcome is at similar levels to those of hijacking. Yet, the penalties to the offender pointing a firearm are significantly lower. Usually, they are fined, and such fines are significantly reduced if the offender pleads guilty.

Table 48: Nature of injury sustained by victims (percentage)

Injury	Armed robbery	Common Robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted Murder	Theft of a firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Possession of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Possession/use of firearm under influence of alcohol
None	82.8	68.3	77.5	11	43.7	91.7	78.8	75.9	66.7	21.1	100	75
Emotional	0.7	3	1.1	1.4	1.9	3.3	2	3.4	16.7	5.3	0	0
Slight	13.1	20.8	18	1.4	11.7	3.3	18.2	0	16.7	57.9	0	25
Serious	0.4	5	1.1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5.3	0	0
Fatal	1.9	0	0	78.1	0	1.7	0	3.4	0	5.3	0	0
Firearm	1.1	3	2.2	8.2	42.7	0	0	17.2	0	5.3	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Victims (n)</i>	267	101	89	73	103	60	99	29	6	19	13	4

There is an inconsistency in terms of sentences handed down by the court: these do not always tally with the injury suffered by the victim. Some of the firearm-related crimes show injury levels similar to, or even in excess of the more violent robbery crimes. For instance, of the 29 victims involved in discharging a firearm in a built-up or public place, seven (24.1%) of the victims were injured. The qualitative evidence suggests that a similar trend could be demonstrated in the other crimes that transgress the *Arms and Ammunition Act*. For instance, of the four victims involved in incidents of the possession of a firearm under the influence of alcohol, one of them was injured. In the incidents of possession of an illegal firearm, two of the six victims involved in the incident were injured.

It is problematic that there is no correlation between the level of injury that was sustained and the level of punishment meted out to the offender. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that it is difficult to assess or measure injury and how this would translate into victim compensation.

Chapter 9

LOSS OF PROPERTY

The following section considers whether or not the victim's property was stolen during the incident. The level of reporting on the loss of property in the dockets is usually accurate, as people are expected to report all serious crimes to the police, especially in the case of property crimes for insurance purposes. Other victim surveys have also shown a high degree of accuracy in the reporting of property crimes.¹⁴

Table 49: Items stolen from victims during incidents (percentage)

Injury	Armed robbery	Common Robbery	Hi-jacking	Murder	Attempted Murder	Theft of a firearm	Pointing a firearm	Discharging firearm in built-up place	Pos-session of illegal firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm	Pos-session/ use of firearm under influence of alcohol
Yes	61	17.8	46.1	4.1	1	-	2	0	0	15.8	46.2	0
No	39	82.2	53.9	95.9	99	-	98	100	100	84.2	53.8	100
Total	100	100	100	100	100	-	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Victims (n)</i>	267	101	89	73	103	99	29	6	19	13	4	

The greatest incidence of having property stolen occurred in armed robberies. It was found that in 61% of armed robbery incidents property was stolen. Compared to armed robbery, less property was stolen in common robberies and hijackings, at 17.8% and 46.1%, respectively. However, the 46.1% incidence rate of property stolen in hijackings is of serious concern. The smaller rate of items stolen in hijackings, as compared to armed robbery, is broadly attributed to the fact that victims involved in armed robberies are not protecting their own property. Usually, the property of the store, bank or facility where they are employed is stolen. In addition, victims could well make the assessment that they have less chance of escaping, because they would usually be on foot and/or cornered in a building. Victims are less likely to risk their lives to protect someone else's property. In contrast, victims of hijackings are usually in their own car, or that of a family member, and a higher value is attached to the property as a result.

From the offender's perspective, hijackings are more arbitrary or random than armed robberies. Usually, in an armed robbery, the target is predetermined and timing is essential, for instance, the case of a cash transfer in a shop. The offender in a hijacking, on the other hand, if met with resistance, can always find another vehicle to steal. Although hijackers appear to target predetermined vehicle types, there is often a greater range of choice than in armed robberies.

In common robberies, offenders do not have the use of a firearm. Victims may calculate their risk on this assumption, and put up more resistance to the theft of their property, thus accounting for the property loss levels in common robberies.

In 46.2% of incidents of the negligent loss of a firearm, victims lost firearms. However, this finding should be utilised for its qualitative contribution as it should be borne in mind that only six dockets recording the negligent loss of a firearm were analysed. It would be useful to compare the loss of a firearm through negligence to the loss of a firearm in robbery incidents. Although the items were negligently lost through the irresponsible management of the weapon by the victim, equally high proportions of firearms leaked into circulation through the negligent loss of these arms in both armed and common robberies. Further research would be useful to verify this finding more firmly.

In other firearm-related crimes, the incidence of having items stolen was lower than in robberies. This can be ascribed to the fact that the primary motive of the crime was not to steal

anything. The intention or motive of a murder is not usually robbery, although robbery sometimes does occur. It was found that possessions were stolen in 4.1% of the murders and 1% of the attempted murders. In 15.8% of the assault cases, items were stolen. In three dockets, the type of property stolen was cited as cash.

In none of the incidents of the contravention of the Arms and Ammunitions Act, such as the discharging of a firearm in a built-up or public place, the possession of an illegal firearm, or the possession of a firearm under the influence of alcohol, was property stolen. In the case of pointing a firearm, only 2.2% of the cases involved the loss of property. Usually, the intention of pointing a firearm is to intimidate the victim, not to effect a robbery. However, should the opportunity arise for stealing the victim's possessions, this could occur. For example, when pointing a firearm at a victim, if his or her wallet or cellular phone dropped to the ground, the offender may take advantage of this opportunity.

Table 50: Type of property stolen (percentage)

Injury	Armed robbery	Common Robbery	Hijacking	Murder	Attempted Murder	Theft of a firearm	Pointing a firearm	Assault	Negligent loss of firearm
Firearm(s)	8.5	45.1	9.5	0	0	65.9	16.7	0	100
Ammunition	0	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bicycle	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building supplies	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camera	0	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cash	55.4	31.7	27.6	40	0	22	16.7	100	0
Cash card/credit card	0.3	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cellular phone	2.3	1.4	1.7	0	0	1.2	0	0	0
Clothing	7.2	2.1	4.3	20	0	3.7	0	0	0
Damage to building	0	0	0	20	71.4	0	0	0	0
Electric appliances	3.3	0	3.4	20	0	0	0	0	0
Food/liquor	2	0	2.6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Handbag/attaché case	1.6	4.9	0	0	0	3.7	0	0	0
Jewellery	10.5	10.6	3.4	0	0	3.7	0	0	0
Tool box	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trailer	0	0	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vehicle	7.2	2.1	45.7	0	28.6	0	66.7	0	0
Vehicle keys/yres	0.7	0	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Items (n)</i>	305	142	116	5	7	82	6	3	19
<i>Cases (n)</i>	223	87	80	57	93	63	92	32	6

Type of property stolen

Table 50 provides an outline of all items that were stolen according to each crime type. In the theft of firearm incidents, 65.9% of victims involved had a firearm stolen, while in common robbery incidents, 45.1% of the incidents involved the theft of a firearm.

In absolute numbers, the total number of firearms lost during crimes reflected in dockets that were surveyed numbered 190 out of 787 dockets. This implies that, in every 10 incidents, two legal firearms were lost to the illegal pool of firearms. Further research is required to establish how many of these firearms enter the illegal pool through the negligence of owners. It could be assumed that the loss of firearms in incidents of possession or use of a firearm under the influence of alcohol, the negligent loss of a firearm and the discharging of a firearm in a built-up

The remainder of the report provides a summary of the 12 firearm-related crime types explored in the docket research. The data presented below is largely drawn from the tables presented in the first part of this monograph. In those cases where new data is utilised, further statistics are presented in table format.

Chapter 10

ARMED ROBBERY

- In armed robbery incidents, offenders are armed with a firearm, which they use to achieve compliance. Between 1996 and 1998, robbery with a firearm in South Africa increased by 26.6% from 51 005 to 69 501 reported incidents annually.
- In this study, conclusions are drawn from 223 incidents, which comprised 28.3% of the docket sample.
- It was found that 67.7% of armed robberies occurred between 08h00 and 20h00. Armed robberies were evenly distributed throughout this period. The majority of armed robberies involved the robbery of a business enterprise. For this reason, they usually occurred within working hours. However, 17.4% of armed robberies occurred between 20h00 and 24h00.
- In this sample, 64.2% of armed robberies occurred in the inner city or central business district. There were a number of other significant locations where armed robberies occurred, such as private residential properties (5.5%), public residential spaces (7.3%), places of work or education (6.9%) and transport nodes (8.7%).
- Armed robbery is a property crime and, as a result, it was usually the victim of the crime (91.9%) who reported it to the police.
- Police detection of armed robberies is low. It was found that 87.7% of all armed robberies are undetected. This implies that there are too few leads to investigate. However, if a firearm is discharged during the incident, the police officer has more information to initiate an investigation. If a bullet or cartridge is discovered on the scene of the crime, this can be sent for ballistic testing. In some cases, ballistic tests can match a firearm to existing records of firearms previously used in South African crimes. A ballistics match, however, has limited use as a result of the comparatively small database of records in existence. A ballistics match could either reveal links to previous crimes in which the firearm had been used, or links to the original owner. As in the rest of the world, police cannot determine ownership merely from ballistic test results (such as through the testing of the bullet or cartridge) as there is no central database on all firearms in South Africa.
- In the sample of armed robberies, 87.7% of cases were undetected and in only 5.9%, a guilty verdict was pronounced in one armed robbery. Of the remaining incidents, a fine was imposed (at a value of between R2 000-R2 999), in 11 cases, a prison sentence was imposed (evenly ranging from less than a year to a maximum of 19 years) and in three cases, offenders were acquitted of the crime.
- In the 223 armed robberies, 724 people were involved: 455 offenders, 267 victims and two intervening third parties. On average, 3.25 people were involved in each incident. For every one incident, 2.04 offenders and 1.2 victims were involved. The ratio of victims to

offenders is 1:1.7. In 97.8% of the incidents, victims and offenders did not know one another.

- In the 223 armed robberies, 325 firearms and 21 other weapons were involved. Of the firearms involved, 290 were held by offenders, 34 were held by victims and one was in the possession of a third party intervening in the incident.
- It was found that 98.9% of the offenders were male. The race profile of the sample of offenders was as follows: 2.3% white; 4.3% Asian; 14.5% coloured; and 78.7% African. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- It was found that 77.3% of armed robbery victims were male and 22.7% were female. The race profile of victims was as follows: 16.3% white; 36.5% African; 18.3% coloured; and 28.9% Asian. In terms of age, 37.8% were between the ages of 21 to 30 years, while 47.1% were between the ages of 31 to 50 years. Overall, 91.4% of victims were employed.
- It was found that 61.6% of offenders had firearms, 33.3% had no weapon and 4.7% had another type of weapon (such as a knife or panga). The majority of offenders carried handguns: 84.7% carried pistols and 14.8% carried revolvers. Only 0.6% of offenders carried shotguns. Five of the offenders used licenced firearms.
- It was found that 34 (12.7%) of the 267 victims carried firearms. These victims all carried handguns (24 pistols and 6 revolvers), with the exception of one victim with a shotgun.
- In 23.8% of cases, violence was used. In 73.8% of cases, only threats were made and, in 2.3% of cases, no violence or threats were necessary in perpetrating the armed robbery. Of the 267 victims, 46 (17.2%) were injured. Of the 455 offenders, 13 (2.9%) were injured. Two offenders were injured with a firearm. Three victims were injured with a firearm and five victims were killed with a firearm.
- In armed robberies, the levels of injury sustained by victims with or without a firearm were similar. However, offenders with firearms were more seriously injured (refer to table 54).
- In 61% of cases, items were stolen from victims. An average of 1.4 items were taken. Of all the items stolen, 55.4% of victims lost cash, 10.5% lost jewellery, and 8.5% had a firearm stolen in the armed robbery. Of these 223 armed robberies, 30 firearms leaked into criminal hands. Applying this ratio to the number of armed robberies in 1998 at 69 501 incidents, it can be estimated that 8 103 firearms landed in illegal circulation through armed robberies.

Table 54: Cross-tabulation of the possession of a firearm by victims and offenders and the outcome of injury in armed robberies

	Victim in possession of firearm		Victim not in possession of firearm		Offender in possession of firearm		Offender not in possession of firearm	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Injury	7	20.6	30	19.1	11	3.9	0	0
No injury	27	79.4	127	80.9	279	96.1	71	100
Total	34	100	157	100	290	100	71	100

Table 55: Cross-tabulation of victims in possession of a firearm

and items stolen in armed robberies				
	Victim in possession of firearm		Victim not in possession of firearm	
	Count	%	Count	%
No items stolen	22	64.7	51	32.5
Items stolen	12	35.3	106	67.5
Total	34	100	157	100

- As indicated in table 55, victims in possession of firearms had fewer items stolen than those not in possession of a firearm.

Chapter 11

COMMON ROBBERY

- In a common robbery incident, offenders usually do not have a firearm. In order to execute the robbery, they use swift action and the element of surprise to ensure that they manage to take the victim's possessions.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 87 incidents analysed, which comprised 11% of the docket sample.
- Common robberies, although prevalent throughout the day and night, occur most commonly between 16h00 and 20h00 (29.4%), although such incidents also occur often between 08h00 and 12h00 (20%).
- In this sample, 80.2% of common robberies occurred in the inner city or central business district. There were a number of other significant locations where common robberies occurred, such as private residential properties (4.7%), public residential spaces (7%) and places of entertainment (4.7%).
- Common robbery is a property crime and, as a result, the victim of the crime (97.7%) usually reported it to the police.
- Police detection of common robberies is low. It was found that 79.1% (68 out of 87 cases) of all common robberies are undetected. In addition, 14% of common robbery cases are withdrawn by the Department of Justice. A range of reasons could inform the withdrawal of cases, such as witnesses changing their testimony, insufficient evidence, and others.
- Of the 18 common robberies that were detected, the type of penalty imposed was low. In only seven dockets were sentences reflected: in two cases, a fine was imposed (at a value of between R1 000-R1 999 and R4 000-R4 999), and in five cases, a prison sentence was imposed (ranging from less than a year to a maximum of nine years).
- In the 87 common robberies, 283 people were involved: 179 offenders, 101 victims and three intervening third parties. On average, 3.25 people were involved in each incident. For every one incident, 2.06 offenders and 1.16 victims were involved. The ratio of victims to offenders is 1:1.77. In 98.9% of the incidents, victims and offenders did not know one another.
- In the 87 common robberies, 119 firearms and 33 other weapons were involved. Of the firearms involved, 45 were held by offenders, 72 were held by victims and two were in the

possession of a third party intervening.

- It was found that 97.7% of offenders were male. The race profile of the sample of offenders was as follows: 1.8% Asian; 9.4% coloured; and 88.9% African. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- It was found that 92.1% of common robbery victims were male and 7.9% were female. The race profile of victims was as follows: 28.7% white; 47.5% African; 13.9% coloured; and 9.9% Asian. In terms of age, 38.3% were between the ages of 21 to 30 years, while 39.3% were between the ages of 31 to 50 years. Overall, 78.5% of victims were employed.
- It was found that 25.1% of the offenders had firearms, 57.0% had no weapon and 17.9% had another type of weapon (such as a knife or panga). Considering the 45 firearms held by offenders, it was found that the majority of offenders carried handguns: 97.1% carried pistols and 2.9% carried revolvers. Three of the offenders used licenced firearms.
- It was found that 72 of the 101 victims (71.3%) in 267 cases carried firearms. Victims all carried handguns (52 pistols and 15 revolvers), except three victims who were in possession of a shotgun. It was found that 98.5% of these firearms were licenced.
- In 50.6% of cases, violence was used, in 32.5% threats were made and in 16.9% of cases, no violence or threats were necessary to perpetrate common robbery. Of the 101 victims, 31.7% were injured. Of the 179 offenders, 2.8% were injured. One offender was fatally injured with a firearm. Three victims were injured with a firearm.
- In common robberies, the levels of injury sustained by the victim with or without a firearm were similar, although there were marginally (a 3.1% difference) more injuries to those victims in possession of a firearm. There was no significant difference in the level of injury sustained by offenders with or without a firearm (see table 56 below).

Table 56: Cross-tabulation of victims and offenders in possession of a firearm and injuries in common robberies

	Victim in possession of firearm		Victim not in possession of firearm		Offender in possession of firearm		Offender not in possession of firearm	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Injury	25	34.7	6	31.6	1	2.2	2	3.5
No injury	47	65.3	13	68.4	44	97.8	55	96.5
Total	72	100	19	100	45	100	57	100

- In 17.8% of common robbery cases, items were stolen from victims. It was found that victims in possession of firearms had fewer items stolen than victims without firearms.

Table 57: Cross-tabulation of victims in possession of a firearm and items stolen in common robberies

	Victim in possession of firearm		Victim not in possession of firearm	
	Count	%	Count	%
No items stolen	57	79.2	17	89.5
Items stolen	15	20.8	2	10.5
Total	72	100	19	100

Chapter 12

HIJACKING

- Hijacking is a specific form of robbery in which the type of property taken by force or threat of force is a motor vehicle. In South Africa between 1995 and 1998, hijacking with a firearm increased by 55.7% from 6 683 to 15 111 reported incidents annually.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 80 incidents analysed, which comprised 10.2% of the docket sample.
- The majority of hijacking incidents occurred between 12h00 and 24h00. Hijacking incidents were evenly distributed throughout this period.
- The majority of hijacking incidents (80.2%) occurred in the inner city or central business district. Other significant locations where hijacking incidents occurred were private residential properties (4.7%) and public residential spaces (7.0%).
- Hijacking is a property crime and, as a result, the victim of the crime (95%) usually reported it to the police.
- Police detection of hijacking incidents is low. It was found that 87.5% of all hijacking incidents are undetected. This implies that there are insufficient leads to investigate such cases.
- Of the 80 hijacking incidents, it was found that 87.5% (70 incidents) were undetected and 5% (four incidents) were withdrawn. In those cases where action was taken against the offender, it was found that four offenders received a prison sentence (ranging from five to 14 years), and in two cases, the offenders were acquitted.
- In the 80 hijacking incidents, 279 people were involved: 190 offenders and 89 victims. On average, 3.49 people were involved in each incident. For every one incident, 2.38 offenders and 1.1 victims were involved. The ratio of victims to offenders is 1:2.13. In 97.5% of the incidents, victims and offenders did not know one another.
- In the 80 hijacking incidents, 127 firearms and six other weapons were involved. Of the firearms involved, 114 were held by offenders and 13 by victims.
- It was found that 98.4% of offenders were male. The race profile of the sample of offenders was as follows: 2.2% white; 0.5% Asian; 19.8% coloured; and 77.5% African. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- It was found that 89.9% of hijacking victims were male and 10.1% were female. The race profile of victims was as follows: 10.2% white; 44.3% African; 30.7% coloured; and 14.8% Asian. In terms of age, 42.7% were between the ages of 21 to 30 years, while 35.4% were between the ages of 31 to 50 years. Overall, 84.1% of victims were employed.
- It was found that 60% of offenders had firearms, 36.8% had no weapon and 3.2% had another type of weapon (such as a knife or panga). The majority of offenders carried handguns: 88.1% carried pistols and 4.2% carried revolvers. One offender used a licenced firearm.

- It was found that 13 (14.6%) of the 89 victims carried firearms. Victims carried the following firearms: eight handguns, two shotguns and one service pistol.
- In 25.6% of hijackings, violence was used and in 74.4%, only threats of violence were used. Of the 89 victims, 20 (22.5%) victims were injured. Two victims were injured with a firearm and one seriously injured in another manner. None of the 190 offenders were injured.
- In a hijacking, the levels of injury sustained by the victim with or without a firearm were similar. However, these results are of an exploratory value, since too few cases are recorded of victims in possession of firearms. Further research is required to verify this finding.

Table 58: Cross-tabulation of victims and offenders in possession of a firearm and injuries in hijackings

	Victim in possession of firearm		Victim not in possession of firearm		Offender in possession of firearm		Offender not in possession of firearm	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Injury	4	30.8	14	28.6	0	0	0	0
No injury	9	69.2	35	71.4	114	100	28	100

- In 46.1% of the cases, property was stolen from victims. On average, 0.5 items were taken. Of all the items stolen, 45.7% were vehicles, 27.6% were cash and 9.5% were firearms. As a result of these 80 hijacking incidents, six firearms leaked from civilian to criminal hands. Applying this ratio to the number of hijackings in 1998 of 15 111 incidents, it can be estimated that 1 133 firearms landed in illegal circulation as a result of hijackings.

Table 59: Cross-tabulation of victims in possession of a firearm and items stolen in hijackings

	Victim in possession of firearm		Victim not in possession of firearm	
	Count	%	Count	%
No items stolen	8	61.5	22	44.9
Items stolen	5	38.5	27	55.1
Total	13	100	49	100

- Victims in possession of a firearm had fewer items stolen (38.5%) than those not in possession of a firearm. However, these results are of an illustrative value as an insufficient number of cases of victims in possession of firearms were surveyed. Further research is required to verify this finding.

Chapter 13

THEFT OF FIREARM

- The theft of a firearm indicates that no force (either implied or actual) was used against the victim to steal the firearm. If force was used, the crime would be an incident of robbery or mugging. In South Africa, thefts of firearms are increasing. In 1995, 7 285 cases were reported increasing to 11 391 in 1998.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 63 incidents analysed, which comprised 8%

of the docket sample.

- It was found that 63.6% of incidents of the theft of a firearm occurred between 08h00 and 16h00.
- In this sample, 74.6% of incidents of the theft of a firearm occurred in the inner city or central business district. The other significant locations where the theft of firearms occurred were private residential properties (9.5%) and places of work or education (7.9%).
- Usually, the victim (92.1%) reported the crime to the police.
- Police detection of thefts of a firearm is low. It was found that 72.6% of all firearm theft incidents are undetected. In 17.7% of cases, complaints are withdrawn and, in 9.7% of cases, there is a guilty verdict. In three of these verdicts, a fine was imposed (at a value of less than R1 999) and in one case, a prison sentence was handed down of between three to four years.
- Different circumstances surrounded the incidents of the theft of a firearm. It was found that 27% of victims lost firearms stored in their offices, such as in drawers and briefcases. A further 19% of victims lost their firearms when these were stolen from their motor vehicles, and 19% of firearms were stolen from victims in general theft circumstances (the nature of the theft was not specified in the police docket). These are considered theft of firearm incidents, as the circumstances indicated that the firearm was stolen as a result of not being appropriately stored in a high proportion of the cases.

Circumstances	Number	Percentage
Theft of firearm from office	17	27
Theft of firearm left in vehicle & taken from vehicle	12	19
Theft of firearm general circumstances	12	19
Theft of firearm from bag (with firearm)	6	9.5
Theft of firearm taken from safe storage	5	7.9
Theft of firearm from home while stored in a safe	4	6.3
Lost firearm when left in toilet	2	3.2
Theft of firearm from bag from gym locker	2	3.2
Theft of firearm from home while not stored in a safe	2	3.2
Lost firearm from holster on person	1	1.6
Total	63	100

- In the 63 incidents of the theft of a firearm, 93 people were involved: 30 known offenders and 60 victims. The data on the total number of people involved in the incident is unreliable, since the number of offenders involved in incidents of the theft of a firearm cannot be established reliably.
- More specifically, the information on the number of offenders involved in the theft incident cannot be regarded confidently. In the theft of a firearm, offenders and victims do not

usually come face-to-face. Thus, when reporting the crime, it is doubtful whether the victim can provide accurate information on the number of offenders. As a result, this figure is accepted as an underrepresentation of the total number of offenders. It could be assumed that there is a minimum of one offender for every theft of a firearm that is committed. However, in this report, the existing figures are used as presented in the police dockets, even though the number of offenders was considered to be underreported.

- Of the 63 reported incidents of the theft of a firearm, information was recorded on only 59 firearms stolen. It was found that seven of the offenders and 56 victims had firearms. Of the victims' firearms in question, 92.9% were licenced. Evidence suggests that the distinction between victims and offenders was blurred. In dockets recording the theft of a firearm, the distinction between victims and offenders was subjective, especially as cases were often undetected. It is debatable whether victims whose firearms were stolen from their homes because they were left unattended and not stored in a safe place were victims of firearm theft or perpetrators of negligence.
- There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the age, vocation or employment status of offenders. In theft incidents, victims and offender seldom interfaced during the theft.
- It was found that 76.7% of victims of the theft of a firearm were male and 23.3% were female. The race profile of the victims was as follows: 54.4% white; 24.6% African; 14% coloured; and 7% Asian. In terms of age, 25.5% were between the ages of 21 to 30 years, while 56.4% were between the ages of 31 to 50 years. Overall, 84.7% of the victims were employed.
- As a result of the 63 incidents, one offender was slightly injured and five victims were injured (two emotionally, two slightly and one fatally).

Chapter 14

MURDER

- In 1998, 24 875 murders were committed in South Africa, of which 49.3% were committed with a firearm.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 57 incidents analysed, which comprised 7.2% of the docket sample.
- It was found that 55.3% of the murder incidents occurred between 16h00 and 24h00.
- The majority of murders occurred in residential areas: private residential properties (35.1%) and public residential spaces (26.3%). The other significant location where murders occurred was at places of entertainment or recreation (12.3%). More specifically, 42.1% of victims were at home prior to the incident, 10.2% were at places of entertainment or recreation, and 15.8% were waiting on the streets, at shops (8.8%) or were in transit to or from home (8.8%).
- The police (68.4%), friends or family (10.5%), or bystanders (7%) usually reported the crime to the police.
- Police detection of murder incidents is high — only 3.5% of all murder incidents are

undetected. There is also a high conviction rate for murder incidents. It was found that, in 42.1% of the murder cases, the accused was found guilty, 35.1% of suspects were acquitted, and 19.3% of cases were withdrawn.

- In terms of sentencing, fines were imposed in four murder cases (at a value of between less than R1 000 to R3 999), and in 17 cases a prison sentence was imposed (ranging from less than a year to a maximum of 25 years).
- Of the 57 murder incidents, 148 people were involved: 71 offenders, 73 victims and four intervening third parties. On average, 2.6 people were involved in each incident. For every one incident, 1.25 offenders and 1.28 victims were involved. The ratio of victims to offenders is 1:0.97.
- In 54.4% of incidents, victims and offenders did not know one another, in 19.3% of incidents, they were acquainted, and in 26.3% of cases, they knew one another well.
- Of the 57 murder incidents, 68 firearms and two other weapons were involved. Of the firearms involved, 55 were held by offenders, nine were in possession of victims and four were held by intervening third parties.
- It was found that 97.1% of offenders were male. The race profile of the sample of offenders was as follows: 5.9% white; 85.3% coloured; and 8.8% African. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- It was found that 87.5% of murder victims were male and 12.5% were female. The race profile of victims was as follows: 2.8% white; 5.6% African; 90.3% coloured; and 1.4% Asian. In terms of age, 21.2% were between the ages of 16 to 20 years, 43.9% between the ages of 21 to 30 years, and 27.3% between the ages of 31 to 50 years.
- Overall, 42.1% of victims were employed and 36.8% were unemployed. In addition, 5.3% were attending school, 5.3% were students and 3.5% were housewives.
- It was found that 77.5% of offenders had firearms, 21.1% had no weapon and 1.4% had another type of weapon (such as knife or panga). The majority of offenders carried handguns: 76.7% pistols, 20.9% revolvers, and 2.3% single barrel shotguns. It was found that 40% (22 of 55) of offenders used licenced firearms.
- It was found that nine (12.3%) of the 73 victims carried firearms. Victims all carried handguns.
- In 94.7% of cases, violence was used, and in 5.3% only threats were used. In the 60 murder incidents, there were 73 victims. Of the 73 victims, five (6.8%) victims were injured and died later, while 60 (82.2%) were fatally injured. Of the 71 offenders, 5.6% were fatally injured and 4% sustained firearm-related injuries.
- In only 4.1% of cases, property was reportedly stolen from victims. Only five items were stolen or damaged in murder incidents: cash (two cases), clothing (one case), food or liquor (one case) and damage to buildings (one case).

ATTEMPTED MURDER

- In 1998, 29 418 attempted murders occurred in South Africa, of which 74.7% were committed with a firearm.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 93 incidents analysed, which comprised 11.8% of the docket sample.
- The vast majority of attempted murders occurred 'after hours' or at night. It was found that 39.1% of attempted murder incidents occurred between 08h00 and 24h00, and a further 20.7% occurred between 00h00 and 08h00.
- The majority of attempted murders occurred in residential areas: private residential properties (35.6%), public residential spaces (33.3%), and the central business district or inner city area (22.2%). It is significant that few attempted murders (3.3%) occur at places of entertainment or recreation, as is the case with murder (12.3%).
- Usually, the victim of the crime (68.8%) reported it to the police, or alternatively, the police reported the crime (23.7%). For instance, if the victim is injured, the police will go to the hospital to record the victim's statement for the investigation.
- It was found that 53.8% of all attempted murder incidents are undetected and, in 37.6% of cases, the complaints were withdrawn.
- One fine was imposed to the value of less than R1 000 and two of R5 000 or more. Three prison sentences were handed down of between three to nine years each.
- Of the 93 attempted murder incidents, 207 people were involved: 101 offenders, 103 victims and three intervening third parties. On average, 2.6 people were involved in each incident. For every one incident, 1.09 offenders and 1.1 victims were involved. The ratio of victims to offenders is 1:0.98.
- In 74.2% of incidents, victims and offenders did not know one another, in 16.1% of cases, they were acquainted, and in 9.7% of incidents, they knew one another well.
- In the 93 attempted murders, 103 firearms and three other weapons were involved. Of the firearms involved, 77 were held by offenders, 14 by victims and one was in the possession of a third party intervening.
- It was found that 98.9% of offenders were male. The race profile of the sample of offenders was as follows: 3.8% white; 8.9% Asian; 74.7% coloured; and 12.7% African. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- It was found that 78.4% of attempted murder victims were male and 21.6% were female. The race profile of victims was as follows: 3.9% white; 13.7% African; 76.5% coloured; and 5.9% Asian. In terms of age, 22.5% were between the ages of 16 to 20 years, 29.2% between 21 to 30 years and 42.7% between 31 to 50 years.
- It was found that 76.2% of offenders had firearms, 21.8% had no weapon and 2% had another type of weapon (such as a knife or panga). The majority of offenders carried handguns: 78.8% carried pistols and 15.2% carried revolvers. It was found that 6.1% of

offenders carried shotguns. Twelve (out of 77) offenders used licenced firearms.

- It was found that 14 (13.6%) of the 103 victims carried firearms. Victims all carried handguns.
- In 94.3% of cases, violence was used, in 2.3% only threats were used and, in 3.4% of cases, no violence or threats were necessary to attempt te murder. Of the 103 victims, 56.3% were injured. It was found that 42.7% of injuries were inflicted by firearms, 11.7% of victims were slightly injured and 1.9% were emotionally injured. Of the 101 offenders, 6.9% of the offenders were slightly injured.
- In only 1% of cases were items reportedly stolen from victims of attempted murder incidents.

Chapter 16

POINTING OF FIREARM

- Incidents where a firearm is pointed by one person at another is a punishable offence in South Africa.
- Between 1996 and 1998, reported incidents of the pointing of a firearm increased from 22 742 to 25 375 annually.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 92 incidents analysed, which comprised 11.7% of the docket sample.
- It was found that 20% of the firearm-pointing of firearm incidents occurred between 08h00 and 24h00 with a peak recorded between 16h00 and 24h00 (47.8%).
- In this sample, 44.9% of the of firearm-pointing incidents occurred in the inner city or central business district. There were a number of other significant locations where firearm-pointing incidents occurred, such as private residential properties (15.7%) and public residential spaces (19.1%).
- The victim of the crime (84.8%) usually reported the crime to the police.
- It was found that 35.9% of all firearm-pointing incidents are undetected, representing an acceptable rate in comparison with the other major firearm-related crime types. What was significant, was that 57.6% of cases were withdrawn.
- Out of the 92 cases, a fine was imposed in three cases (at a value of less than R1 999) and two prison sentences were handed down (both for less than a year in duration).
- In the 92 firearm-pointing incidents, 210 people were involved: 107 offenders, 99 victims and four intervening third parties. On average, 2.28 people were involved in each incident. For every one incident, 1.16 offenders and 1.08 victims were involved. The ratio of victims to offenders is 1:08.
- In 76.1% of the incidents, victims and offenders did not know one another, while 15.2% knew one another well and 8.7% considered the other as acquaintances.
- Of the 92 firearm-pointing incidents, 106 firearms and one other weapon (referred to as

other sharp object) were involved. Of the firearms involved, 88 were held by offenders, 15 by victims and three was in the possession of a third party intervening.

- It was found that 97.2% of offenders were male. The race profile of the sample of offenders was as follows: 14% white; 29.9% Asian; 37.4% coloured; and 18.7% African. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- It was found that 82.8% of victims of firearm-pointing incidents were male and 17.2% were female. The race profile of victims was as follows: 17.3% white; 27.6% African; 37.8% coloured; and 17.3% Asian. In terms of age, 14.4% of victims were between the ages of 16 to 20 years, 47.4% between 21 to 30 years, while 24.7% were between the ages of 31 to 50 years. Overall, 71.9% of victims were employed.
- It was found that 82.2% of offenders had firearms and 16.8% had no weapon. Of those offenders with firearms, the majority carried handguns. The type of firearms included pistols (76.3%), revolvers (18.6%), shotguns (3.4%) and rifles (1.7%). It was found that 23.9% of offenders used licenced firearms.
- It was found that 15 (15.2%) of the 99 victims carried firearms. These firearms were all handguns.
- In 12.6% of cases, violence was used and, in 82.8%, of cases only threats were necessary to perpetrate the crime. Of the 99 victims, 21.2% were injured. Of the 107 offenders, 3.7% were injured. One offender sustained a firearm injury and one victim was seriously injured, while 18.2% of the victims were slightly injured.
- In 2% of firearm-pointing incidents, property was stolen.

Chapter 17

DISCHARGING A FIREARM IN A BUILT-UP OR PUBLIC PLACE

- Incidents where a firearm is discharged in a built-up or public place are against the law in South Africa.
- Between 1996 and 1998 reported incidents of the discharge of a firearm in a built-up or public place increased from 2 791 to 3 095 annually (referred to as *firing of firearms in municipal areas*).
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 32 incidents analysed, which comprised 4.1% of the docket sample.
- It was found that the majority of the incidents where a firearm was discharged in a built-up or public place occurred at night, between 16h00 and 04h00. Nine of the incidents were associated with acts of domestic violence.
- Only 16.1% of incidents of the discharge of a firearm in a built-up or public place occurred in the inner city or central business district — which strongly contrasts to the other firearm-related crimes analysed in this sample. The most significant locations where firearms were discharged in a built-up or public place occurred in private residential properties (54.8%) and public residential spaces (16.1%).

- A range of people reported the discharging of a firearm in a built-up or public place, such as the victim (31.3%), the police (50%) and bystanders (6.3%).
- It was found that 90% of the cases against persons who discharge a firearm in a built-up or public place were withdrawn.
- In the 32 cases where a firearm was discharged in a built-up or public place, 59 people were involved: 26 offenders, 29 victims and four intervening third parties. In 68.8% of incidents, victims and offenders were not known to one another and in 21.9% of cases, they knew one another well.
- In the 32 incidents where a firearm was discharged in a built-up or public place, 37 firearms and one other weapon were involved. Of the firearms involved, 22 were held by offenders, 13 by victims and two were in the possession of a third party intervening.
- It was found that 92% of offenders were male. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the race, age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- It was found that 72.4% of victims in incidents where a firearm in a built-up or public place were male and 27.6% were female. The race profile of victims was as follows: 14.8% white; 14.8% African; 55.6% coloured; and 14.8% Asian. In terms of age, 55.6% were between the ages of 21 to 30 years, while 18.5% were between the ages of 31 to 50 years. Overall, 61.5% of victims were employed.
- It was found that 84.6% of offenders had firearms and 15.4% had no weapon. The majority of offenders carried handguns (90.9%), of which 77.3% were licenced.
- It was found that 13 (44.8%) of the 29 victims carried firearms. Most of the victims carried handguns.
- In 50% of cases, violence was used, in 17% only threats were used and in 32.1% of cases, no violence or threats were necessary to discharge the firearm in a built-up or public place. Of the 26 victims, 24.1% were injured. It was found that 17.2% were injured with a firearm, one victim was fatally injured and another victim was emotionally injured. One offender was slightly injured.
- In none of the reported cases was property stolen.

Chapter 18

POSSESSION OF AN ILLEGAL FIREARM

- Under the *Arms and Ammunition Act* (no 75 of 1969), which governs the civilian use of firearms and ammunition, it is illegal to carry certain types of firearms, for example, an unlicenced or homemade firearm. The possession of these firearms is under discussion in this summary.
- Between 1996 and 1998, the possession of illegal firearms and ammunition increased in South Africa from 13 413 to 14 554 reported incidents annually. Police statistics on illegal firearm possession were the only data that was unavailable.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 17 incidents analysed, which comprised 2.2% of the docket sample.

- There were too few cases of the possession of an illegal firearm to determine peak activity times. It is probable that the *time of incident recorded* for the illegal possession of a firearm is more strongly linked to the time of the police intervention, than to the actual possession.
- As a result, it is usually the police (70.6%) who report the possession of illegal firearms.
- It was found that only 11.8% of all incidents of the possession of illegal firearms are undetected, 29.4% of the accused received a guilty verdict, and 52.9% of cases were withdrawn.
- In four cases of the possession of an illegal firearm, fines were imposed (one for less than R1 000, two for between R2 000-R2 999 and one for between R4 000-R4 999). In addition to these fines, three jail sentences were handed down (two for less than a year and one for between 10 to 14 years).
- In the 17 incidents of the possession of illegal firearms, 42 people were involved: 29 offenders, six victims and seven intervening third parties.
- In the 17 incidents involving the possession of illegal firearms, 24 firearms were recorded. Of the firearms involved, 19 were held by offenders, four by victims and one was in the possession of a third party intervening.
- It was found that 95% of offenders were male. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the race, age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- All of the victims of incidents of the possession of illegal firearm were male. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the race, age, vocation or employment status of the offender.
- There were too few incidents of the illegal possession of a firearm recorded to draw any binding conclusions on the level of firearm injury and items stolen. Usually, the detection of the illegal possession of a firearm arises from police action around another firearm-related crime.

Chapter 19 **ASSAULT**

- Assault implies that the respondent was personally attacked or hurt. Weapons may or may not have been used. The motive of the incident was not to steal any property.
- Between 1994 and 1998, serious assault with a firearm (intention to do grievous bodily harm) increased in South Africa from 210 250 to 234 056 reported incidents annually. Qualitative evidence suggests that a substantial proportion of these crimes are committed with firearms. However, further research is required to determine the role of firearms in serious assaults.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from 18 incidents analysed, which comprised 2.3% of the docket sample.
- From the qualitative evidence collected, assaults usually occur in the evenings. Three of the assaults were linked to acts of domestic violence.

- In this sample, 33.3% of assault incidents occurred in the inner city or central business district, 27.8% on private residential properties and 22.2% in places of entertainment or recreation.
- The victim of the assault (77.8%) usually reported the crime to the police.
- It was found that 50% of all assault incidents are undetected and 44.4% of complaints are withdrawn. There was only one guilty verdict (out of 18 cases), with the suspect receiving a jail sentence of between one and two years.
- In the 18 assault incidents, 39 people were involved: 19 offenders, 19 victims and one intervening third party. In 72.2% of the incidents, victims and offenders did not know one another and in 22.2% of cases, they knew one another well.
- In the 19 assault incidents, 20 firearms were involved. Of the firearms involved, 17 were held by offenders and two were involved by victims.
- It was found that all the offenders were male. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the race, age, vocation or employment status of offenders.
- It was found that 57.9% of assault victims were male and 42.1% were female. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the race, age, vocation or employment status of victims.
- Of the firearms used by offenders, most were handguns, although one automatic rifle was used. Two victims had handguns.
- One of the offenders was slightly injured and two victims were injured by firearms, of which one injury was fatal.
- A few items were stolen as a result of the assault.

Chapter 20

NEGLIGENT LOSS OF A FIREARM

- The negligent loss of a firearm refers to the loss of a firearm through irresponsible action by the licenced owner, and non-compliance with licence conditions.
- Between 1996 and 1998, the negligent loss of a firearm in South Africa increased from 4 729 to 6 231 reported incidents annually.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from six incidents analysed, which comprised 0.8% of the docket sample. It should be noted that the sample is too small to provide valid conclusions, but the information can be used for its illustrative value.
- Police detection of the negligent loss of a firearm is low. It was found that many negligent losses of firearms are undetected. Out of the six incidents, a fine of less than R1 000 was imposed in three cases.
- In the six cases of the negligent loss of a firearm, 19 people were involved: six offenders and 13 victims. Once more, this is an example where the distinction between victims and offenders is blurred.

- In the six cases of the negligent loss of a firearm, 13 firearms were involved.

Chapter 21

POSSESSION OR USE OF A FIREARM UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR ANY SUBSTANCE WITH A NARCOTIC EFFECT

- The possession or use of a firearm while under the influence of alcohol or any substance with a narcotic effect is a criminal offence in South Africa.
- Police data on the extent of the possession or use of a firearm while under the influence of alcohol is usually listed as other transgressions of the Arms and Ammunition Act. However, it is probable that many of the other firearm-related crimes are also alcohol-related. In the docket survey, it was found that, of the 787 police dockets, 35 incidents were alcohol-related.
- In this research, conclusions are drawn from seven incidents analysed, which comprised 0.9% of the docket sample. Due to the fact that so few police dockets were analysed, there is very little weight attached to the data presented on this crime type. The information provided should be used for its illustrative value.
- In the seven cases of the possession or use of a firearm while under the influence of alcohol, there was a range of outcomes.
- It was found that all offenders were male. There was insufficient information to provide a valid profile of the race, age, vocation or employment status of offenders.

Chapter 22

CONCLUSION

The primary function of the research reflected in this monograph was to provide insight into the role played by firearms in crime, in order to inform and support the formulation and revision of firearm legislation. More specifically, the aim was to establish whether there is a need to tighten existing firearm legislation. The extent to which the research achieved this objective is debatable. Clearly, the docket analysis provided a useful description of eleven crime types in which firearms played a dominant role. However, the utility of the information fell short of expectations. This was in part attributed to the lack of detailed information in the police dockets.

Comparing investigation levels in dockets from 1994 to 1998, a decline in the quality and thoroughness of investigations became evident, and the capturing of key information on case dockets and statements were often incomplete. The lack of thoroughness and the disappointing quality of investigations do not necessarily imply that detectives are not doing their work properly. These could also be attributed to the fact that the levels of experience among detectives have declined, as many experienced officers have left the SAPS.

Closed police dockets are a valuable source of information, among others, to determine crime patterns, predict future trends, profile offenders in crimes, profile victims and obtain other relevant information. However, the usefulness of police dockets hinges on the quality of the information contained in the dockets. Much valuable information is lost from police dockets due to the lack of proper care in completing the docket. The police need to prioritise the improved completion of dockets and, hence, would improve the usefulness of interpretations of factual

information contained in case dockets.

In considering the involvement of firearms in crime, it was clear that handguns were the preferred weapons of both victims and offenders, in defending or taking either property or life. This suggests that national firearm legislation needs to look at methods to control, or reduce the availability of handguns for criminals. This means tightening legislation on the possession of handguns, limiting the number of handguns a person may possess, and compelling people to be responsible towards the firearms in their possession. They should understand and have clarity about the reason for obtaining a handgun.

From the docket analysis, it was found that a great degree of impunity was exhibited by criminals involved in firearm offences. Many cases did not make it to court, and among those cases which did make it to court, the penalties against offenders appeared light in comparison to the seriousness of the crime.

The formulation of firearm legislation in South Africa must extend to include both criminals using illegal firearms and the legal firearm owners. This will ensure that both criminals and legal firearm owners know when they are transgressing the law, and that they will face the maximum penalty if they do not adhere to the laws and regulations governing firearms. This implies that sentencing and fines for transgressing firearm laws and regulations must be a deterrent to criminals for possessing or using illegal firearms. It must also be an incentive to legal firearm owners to be responsible in having or using their firearms. Although the law directly governs legal firearm users, it also extends to illegal firearm possession.

From the docket analysis, it was clearly identified that more research is needed to broaden the understanding of the nature and dynamics of firearms involved in specific crime types, as well as the legitimate use of firearms in self-defence. Throughout this monograph, areas for further research were indicated. Some of the more interesting research questions on the role of firearms that need to be answered in South Africa, would include:

- Why does the conviction rate appear so low in relatively straightforward prosecution cases, such as the possession of illegal firearms, and what are the dynamics informing this?
- What proportion of firearms are used in crime in relation to overall weapons used?
- What are the implications of where an injury occurred on the person, the tool causing the injury, or the cost of the injury?
- How does the loss of a firearm through negligence compare to a similar loss of a firearm in robbery incidents?
- How many legal firearms enter the illegal pool of firearms in South Africa, and what are the dynamics impacting on this?
- What proportion of firearms that are lost or stolen from legal gun owners have been recovered, and what are the dynamics impacting on this?
- What proportion of victims were able to retain their property through the use of a firearm, and what are the dynamics impacting on this?

Finally, one of the implications of drawing a random sample for this survey was that certain key firearm-related crimes were not of a sufficient quantity to be able to make any valid conclusions. However, the information collected did provide a qualitative glimpse into the nature of the crime described. The main crimes which warrant further research as a priority would include those crimes in contravention of the *Arms and Ammunition Act* such as:

- discharging a firearm in a built-up or public place;
- possession of illegal firearms;
- possession or use of a firearm under the influence of alcohol;
- negligent loss of a firearm;
- domestic violence;
- assault; and
- theft of a firearm.

The limitations of a docket analysis should be addressed in the methodology and, perhaps in future, researchers should undertake interviews with victims of crime — as identified in the dockets — to complete pro forma questionnaires comprehensively with regard to the information absent from the docket. However, this would increase the cost of research and would be extremely time-consuming. Perhaps an adjustment of the expectations of what can be achieved by docket analysis could assist police detectives in building their experience and expertise in completing docket statements. In addition, when trying to address highly contentious issues (such as the role of firearms in self-defence), alternative qualitative methodologies should be employed to complement the docket analysis. The golden rule of research should always apply: that the methodology should be chosen to suit the research hypothesis, and not any other means.

NOTES

1. See the report by A Altbeker, *Guns and public safety: Gun crime and self-defence in Alexandra and Bramley, January — April 1997*, research commissioned by Gun-Free SA, 1998.
2. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the statistics relating to firearms as collected by CIAC, SAPS.
3. See <www.saps.co.za>.
4. See the definitions on the ISS victim survey questionnaires.
5. C Jefferson & E Hennop, Illegal firearms in South Africa: Proliferation and problems of control, in VGamba (ed), *Society under siege: Managing arms in South Africa. TCP series volume III*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2000.
6. E Hennop, Illegal firearms in circulation in South Africa, in Gamba, *ibid*.
7. S Burrows, Firearms take a growing toll on SA, *Business Day*, 25 April 2000.
8. A Louw, *Crime in Pretoria: Results of a city victim survey*, Institute for Security Studies/Idasa, Halfway House/Pretoria, 1998.
9. A Louw, Looking forward: Using socio-economic data to determine crime trends, *Nedcor*

ISS Crime Index 2(3), 1998, pp 11-12.

10. M Schönteich, Crime increase partly a statistical quirk, *Fast Facts*, 1999, p 2.
11. Representing only one month, January 1999.
12. Little confidence is placed in the information on the number of offenders involved in incidents of the theft of a firearm. In these cases, the offender and victim do not usually come face-to-face. When reporting the crime, the victim usually cannot provide information on the offender. This figure is therefore an underrepresentation of the total number of offenders. It is estimated that there is a minimum of one offender for every theft of a firearm that is committed. However, in this report, the existing figures are used as presented in the police dockets — although the number of offenders is inaccurate.
13. The total number of people involved in the incident is unreliable, as indicated above. There is no way to determine the number of offenders involved in the theft of firearm incidents.
14. A Louw, MShaw, L Camerer & R Robertshaw, *Crime in Johannesburg: Results of a city victim survey*, ISS Monograph 18, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, February 1998.

Appendix 1

DOCKET SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

7 Profile of people involved		Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4
7.1 Type of profile	1-Primary victim 2-Secondary victims 3-Primary offender 4-Secondary offenders 1=Male 2=Female	5=Third party intervening - SAPS passer by 6=Third party intervening - neighbours 7=Third party intervening - specify 8=Third-party intervening - specify			
7.2 Gender	1-White 2-Black 3-Corotoc 4-Asian	5=Unknown 6-Unspecified			
7.3 Race	**Fill in row number / date of birth from ID number, or estimate age**				
7.4 Age	1-Child/ baby 2-Attending school 3-School going age, not attending school 4=Full time scholar / student 5=Housewife (unpaid) 6-Domestic worker (paid) 7=Retired / pensioner	8=Disabled - not working 9=Unemployed formal sector 10=Employed - informal sector 11=Employed - formal sector 12=Self-employed 13=Other specify			
7.5 Occupation	** Fill in details for category 10, 11, 12, 13 above **				
7.6 Describe occupation of employed people					
8 Weapon used					
8.1 Weapon used	1=Handgun 2=Shotgun 3=Blow-action rifle 4=Semi-automatic 1=Yes 2=No	5=Automatic rifle 6=Knife / pangsa 7=Cross-bow / bow 8=Other sharp object 9=Knobkierie 10=Other blunt object 11=None 12=Other specify 13=Do not know			
8.2 Did this person have a firearm during the incident?					
8.3 Type of firearm	1=Pistol 2=Revolver 3=Shotgun 4=Rifle 5=Commination rifle/shotgun 6=Single barrel 7=Double barrel 8=Pump action 9=Specify other types				
8.4 Action type	1=Pump action 2=Semi-automatic 3=Automatic 4=Blow 5=Lever 6=Cylinder 7=Black-powered/muske 8=Specify other types				
8.5 Calibre					
8.6 Calibre code					
8.7 Make					
8.8 Make number					
8.9 Model					
8.10 Was the firearm licensed?	1=Yes 2=No 3=Do not know				

-1=Respondent did not know -2=Not applicable to case -3=No information about this in docket

Codes:

Appendix 2

9 Status of firearm	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
9.1 Relationship of this person to the firearm	1=Own licensed firearm 2=Friend of friend / relative 3=Stolen firearm 4=Firearm picked up at crime scene	5=Section 8.1 possession 6=State firearm 7=Security company firearm 8=Other specify				
9.2 Status of firearm in incident—offence of person	1=Firearm in their possession used to defend themselves successfully 2=Firearm in their possession used to defend themselves unsuccessfully					
9.3 Status of firearm in incident—offence of property	1=Firearm in their possession used to defend property successfully 2=Firearm in their possession used to defend property unsuccessfully					
9.4 Role of firearm in incident (as defined by the docket)						
9.5 Motive for the crime (as defined by respondents)						
10 Type of injuries	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
10.1 Did this person sustain injuries as a result of the incident?	1=Yes 2=No	3=Do not know				
10.2 Type of injuries sustained	1=No injury 2=Emotional injury 3=Slightly injured 4=Seriously injured (general) 5=Killert/fatal 6=Unknown 7=Seriously injured with a gun shot					
11 Collateral damage / bank bookkeeping	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
11.1 Was any property damaged or stolen in the incident?	1=Yes, damages 2=Yes, stolen 2=No 3=Do not know					
11.2 What type of property was damaged or stolen?	1=Moveable property 2=Immovable / fixed property					
11.3 Property type stolen ** Multiple response **	1=Firearms 2=Cash 3=Vehicle 4=Clothing 5=Jewelry 6=Food/ liquor 7=Live stock 8=Electronic appliances 9=Cell phone 10=Handbag 11=Other specify 12=Unknown 13=None	Item 1 Item 2 Item 3				
11.4 Has any property been recovered?	1=No 2=Yes					
11.5 Firearm(s) stolen during the incident	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
11.6 Number of firearms stolen ...						
11.7 Has the firearms been recovered?	1=Yes 2=No 3=Do not know					

-1=Respondent did not know -2=Not applicable to case -3=No information about this in docket
Codes:

FIREARMS-RELATED INFORMATION

The availability of firearms related data in the South African Police Service (SAPS) and comparative statistics

1. It is apparent that some uncertainty exists regarding the availability of firearm related data in the South African Police Service, as well as with regard to the interpretation of the statistics obtained from various sources. In this document an indication will be given of the available sources and to whom enquiries with regard to such statistics should be directed. Comparative statistics pertaining to a selection of firearm related crimes are also provided.

2 AVAILABLE SOURCES OF STATISTICS WITH THE SAPS

2.1 SAP 6

The SAP 6 is the official crime data base of the SAPS. It should be borne in mind that SAP 6 data reflects cases and neither the number of firearms, nor the number of suspects, involved. Provision is made on the SAP 6 for the following crime categories involving firearms:

- **Murder and attempted murder**

Separate provision is made for categories pertaining to the type of weapon used to commit the act, eg handgun (pistol or revolver), commercial gun or shotgun, military gun (AK47, R1, LMG and similar guns) and unknown firearms. The code list furthermore makes provision for an indication of the age of the victim involved, eg younger than 12 years, 12 to 17 years, 18 to 49 years and 50 years or older. Provision is also made for the race group of both the suspect and the victim. No distinction is made between legal and illegal firearms involved.

- **Robbery and attempted robbery with a firearm**

The code list only refers to a firearm and not to any specific type of firearm. It also gives an indication of the status of the target, eg vehicles, firearms, banks and building societies, post offices, businesses, persons at ATMs, persons at businesses, person at residential premises, clients and other (person on person). No provision is made for an indication whether legal or illegal firearms are involved.

- **Theft of firearm**

No provision is made for any indication of the type of firearm stolen, whether it had been in legal or illegal possession or of the place or premises where the crime occurred. Only the number of theft of firearms cases reported to the SAPS is reflected.

- **Transgressions of the Firearms and Ammunition Act**

The number of cases pertaining to the following transgressions can be provided:

- Provision of firearms and ammunition
 - Provision of firearms to unauthorized persons.
 - Provision of machine guns or similar weapons to unauthorized persons.
 - Prohibition on the trade in firearms and ammunition without a license.
 - Prohibition on the unauthorized manufacturing of firearms and ammunition.

- Possession of firearms
 - Illegal possession of firearms.
 - Illegal possession of machine guns and similar weapons.
 - Illegal possession of ammunition by or provision to unauthorized persons.
- Other transgressions of the Act
 - Negligent loss of firearm.
 - Negligent handling of a firearm.
 - Firing of a firearm in a municipal area.
 - Other transgressions of the Act.
- Other crimes against the life or body of a person

The number of cases pertaining to the following transgression can be provided:

- Pointing of a firearm (all races)

2.2 SAP 13 Register

The SAP 13 Register is a property register (of all property, including firearms) kept at every police station. It should be noted that this is a hand system and that items are booked in as they are received. It is a time and manpower consuming task to procure statistics from the SAP 13 register, as the entire register/s has to be worked through. The SAP 13 register can provide the following information:

- The Crime Administration System (CAS) number.
- Reasons column (eg exhibit in murder case, illegal firearm, safekeeping, pending approval of firearm application, etc).
- Description of firearm, ammunition and serial number. If no serial number is available, this is noted.
- If the firearm is booked out, the reason is noted (eg to court, as exhibit).
- Disposal Order Instructions.

2.3 Illegal Firearms Unit

Provincial Serious Violent Crime Units submit data pertaining to all seizures of firearms to the Illegal Firearms Unit. The seizures referred to include confiscation of both legal and illegal firearms, as well as of exhibits (eg firearms used in crimes). However, these seizures are not reported to the Illegal Firearms Unit according to the categories outlined above, but as a total figure of all seizures. Data pertaining to the total number of firearms/explosives seized are available per type/item involved, namely:

- AK47 - Pistols
- R1 - Revolvers

- R4 - Ammunition
- R5 - Handgrenades
- Other rifles - Explosives

2.4 Forensic Science Laboratory (F.S.L.)

The F.S.L. has an Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS). The system is used to compare fired cartridges and bullets in order to determine whether they had been fired from the same weapon in outstanding cases. At the moment the F.S.L. does not receive all fired cartridges and bullets collected by the Police, but a directive has been issued to enforce this procedure. The following is available on the IBIS data base:

- Number of exhibits.
- Number of connections made.

2.5 Central Firearms Register

The Central Firearms register can provide on hand data pertaining to the number of unsuccessful firearm license applications. The following information can be obtained by means of an **ad hoc** service request:

- The number of firearms reported stolen.
- The number of firearms reported lost.
- The number of firearms reported found.
- The number of firearms registered.
- The number of unlicensed firearms found.

3 INTERPRETATION OF FIREARM RELATED DATA

As stated above, numerous sources of firearm related data exist within the SAPS. It should be noted however, that the data cannot be interpreted at face value alone, as some important facts have to be taken into consideration first. The statistics obtained from the SAP 6 on the one hand, for example only refer to the number of cases reported and not to the number of firearms involved. The statistics kept by the Central Firearms Register, on the other hand, refer to the number of firearms reported as either lost, stolen, found or registered within a specific period. The situation may also arise that a considerable number of firearms being reported stolen or lost by a State Department after an audit had been conducted. Although the theft or loss may have occurred over a period of time, the data pertaining to the theft or loss will be recorded on the date of the report to the Central Firearms Register.

To avoid any uncertainties which may lead to misinterpretations of firearms related data, it is important for the release of such data to be centralised. It is therefore requested that any future enquiries pertaining to the number of firearms lost, stolen or found, as well as the number of firearm related crimes reported, be directed to the Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) of the SAPS. Requests can be directed to the Head, CIAC, Crime Intelligence, at Private Bag X302, Pretoria or faxed to (012) 339 1871.

It has to be kept in mind that although numerous sources of firearm related data exist, in most cases the required information is not immediately available. It is therefore important to take processing time into consideration when requesting data.

4 COMPARATIVE STATISTICS: NUMBER OF REPORTED CASES: 1994 TO 1998

CRIME	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Murder with a firearm	11 134	11 056	11 394	11 215	12 267
Attempted murder with a firearms	23 682	22 035	22 387	20 937	22 001
Robbery with firearm*	-	-	51 005	54 250	69 501
Attempted robbery with firearms	-	-	2 014	4 237	4 703
Theft of firearm	7 285	7 456	9 085	12 141	11 391
Negligent loss of firearm*	-	-	4 729	4 964	6 231
Illegal possession of firearm/ammunition*	-	-	13 413	13 036	14 554
Negligent handling of firearm*	-	-	2 895	3 362	3 384
Firing of firearm in municipal area*	-	-	2 791	2 983	3 098
Pointing of firearm*	-	-	22 742	23 655	25 375
Other transgressions of the Firearms and Ammunition Act*	-	-	1 333	765	909

- Provision has either been made for statistics pertaining to these categories of crime since the implementation of a new crime code list during July 1995, or the availability of comparable statistics is affected due to concomitant changes to the Crime Code List.

COMPILED BY THE CRIME INFORMATION ANALYSIS CENTRE, CRIME INTELLIGENCE, SA POLICE SERVICE.