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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Policy implication</b>
<b><i>Crime recorded by SAPS</i></b>	
Hillbrow policing area has higher levels of recorded violent crime, but lower numbers of police than Johannesburg Central.	Resource allocations may need to be reviewed, especially with regard to uniformed street policing.
Recorded robbery and assault are on the increase while burglary and auto theft are in decline.	Shift to more direct means of acquisitive crime and increased violence suggest a link to crack cocaine. Targeting the drug may also curb this trend.
Personnel assigned to closed circuit television duty do not make more arrests than other street units.	Diversion of resources to this enforcement technique should be compared to the improvements in staff coverage that might alternately be achieved for the same money
<b><i>Demographics</i></b>	
The population of inner Johannesburg is largely transient: 68% of the 1 100 people polled said they had moved to their present household in the last five years and nearly a quarter identified themselves as a foreigner.	Official demographic estimates are unlikely to be accurate and should not be the basis of resource allocations or crime statistics. Measures should be taken to enhance community stability and cohesion, such as the creation of social housing.
Nearly a quarter of the households polled contained three or more people living in a single room.	As overcrowding is associated with crime, building owners should be compelled to limit occupancy.
<b><i>Public opinion</i></b>	
When asked whom they think commits most of the crime in their area, 63% mentioned "foreigners", including 39% of foreign nationals polled. Foreign nationals were more likely to be victims of crime in every category surveyed.	Immigrants need either to be recognised and integrated into the society or deported.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Policy implication</b>
75% said they would “definitely” permit the police to search their homes every month if this will reduce crime.	Community is tolerant of building raids as a crime prevention technique reflecting high levels of concern about crime.
<b>Drugs</b>	
70% said they had seen dagga smoked in their area and 30% knew where to buy it. 14% had seen Mandrax smoked and knew where to buy it. Over 10% had seen crack smoked and knew where to buy it. These figures were higher in the residential hotels. Over a fifth personally knew someone in their neighbourhood who needs drugs every day.	Drugs are openly sold and consumed in the area, so drug interdiction should be easy. ‘Buy and bust’ sting operations should be conducted routinely to turn open drug markets into closed ones. Residential hotels should be targeted.
81% said they believe drugs contribute to crime in their area, and one third supported the death penalty for drug dealers.	Community support for action against drugs is strong. Community can assist in drug interdiction efforts. Mechanisms should be established to make use of this resource.
<b>Robbery</b>	
30% of survey respondents were robbed in the last year in inner Johannesburg and about half of all robberies were committed on the street by groups of three or more.	Inner Johannesburg has the highest levels of robbery ever recorded in a South African victim survey. This offence is policeable – proactive patrols must target this street crime.
Only 36% of robbery victims reported this crime to the police, the lowest rate of reporting of this crime in South Africa.	Efforts should be made to improve this reporting rate, including appeals to civic duty and streamlined reporting services.
82% of robberies were committed with a gun or a knife. 22% of these crimes resulted in injuries, 60% of which required medical attention.	Robberies in inner Johannesburg are exceptionally violent. Members of the public should be advised to give property without resistance.
<b>Burglary</b>	
Residents were at home in 28% of cases and in 45% of these, violence or threats were used.	Many of these burglaries are actually home robberies, an especially traumatic crime type which requires special attention.
The front door was simply forced open in 30% of the cases.	Noisy entry points to the need to promote collective crime prevention among building residents, including target hardening.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Policy implication</b>
22% said they knew who burgled their home.	Victim and community knowledge of markets for stolen property need to be tapped for interdiction.
<b>Assault</b>	
While 77% of the domestic violence cases required medical attention for the injuries sustained, less than 40% were reported to the police.	'Policing' domestic violence is about improving access to services and confidence in the system.
Nearly a fifth of assaults took place in a bar while both parties were under the influence of alcohol.	Licensed owners should be held accountable for crime committed on their premises.
Over a third of assaults were attacks on the street by unknown groups of three or more assailants.	More research is needed to determine whether these attacks are due to inter-group conflict or other causes.
<b>Victims</b>	
Most victims were most interested in avoiding future victimisation and getting life back to normal, rather than punishing offenders.	Under-reporting can only be combated by appealing to victims' future interests.
Victims expressed interest in a range of correctional alternatives, including hard labour and victim/offender encounters, but levels of interest varied by crime type.	Alternatives to simple incarceration should be explored, with the victims' interests in mind.

# PREFACE

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## **The Criminal Justice Monitoring Project**

'Crime' is not one thing. People engage in antisocial and harmful behaviour for a wide range of reasons, some related to social conditions and some intimately personal. What motivates a man who steals to eat is very different from the motivation that leads an unsupervised but adequately nourished child to engage in gang activity. What drives a high level executive to embezzle corporate funds is very different from that which drives a serial killer to mutilate his victims. The forces that drive a man to drink too much and beat his wife are the not same as those that fuel transnational cocaine smuggling.

If the state wishes to reduce crime, the motivations of those who break the law must be addressed. While the law enforcement activities traditionally undertaken by the police are essential for a variety of reasons, not everyone responds to the 'deterrent' effect of threat of incarceration in the same way. Addressing the underlying dynamics of criminal activity therefore requires a detailed and highly localised understanding of what makes people tick in a particular area, and the state's response requires more than just the police to execute.

The nature of crime in an area is heavily dependent on the environment in which it occurs. Residential areas are subject to different sorts of crime than commercial areas. High-density settlements are vulnerable in different ways than rural farmlands. The places populated by poor people are more likely to report different kinds of offences than those occupied by the wealthy. Some areas simply seem to be inherently criminogenic, while others are highly resistant to crime.

Responding to these divergent crime profiles also requires different policing approaches, which are likewise influenced by the characteristics of the area in question. Police response in an area where settlements require several hours to reach overland will necessarily be different than that in areas where the population resides vertically, in high-rise tenement blocks. Patrol techniques will vary between areas crisscrossed by major highways and those inaccessi-



ble to motor vehicles. Communities highly motivated to cooperate with the police to protect their property require a different approach than those where the state is regarded as the enemy.

All this means that understanding crime and the appropriate response to it requires detailed knowledge of local conditions. Similarly, any police approach must be assessed at a local level. Helping the state achieve this level of knowledge and tactical sophistication is what the ISS Criminal Justice Monitoring Service (CJMS) is all about.

This monograph is the first in a series of localised assessments of crime and police response conducted as part of the CJMS sentinel sites programme. Coherent communities, which may exist at the trans-station or sub-station level, have been selected to profile the types of crime dynamics encountered in South Africa. The CJMS will look across departments to assess criminal justice system functioning in these areas across time.

With regard to the police, this will involve a detailed assessment of capacity, workload, and performance at a station level. The assessment involves the following components:

- a time use study, conducted by participant observation, whereby station outputs can be quantified and assessed;
- periodic exit polls of those receiving service at the station;
- an internal survey on knowledge and opinions of police members;
- an annual victim/public opinion survey.

This monograph summarises the findings of the last of these components: a 1,100 household victim survey conducted in Johannesburg Central and Hillbrow police station areas in March 2002 and a follow-up 201 household survey conducted in Hillbrow residential hotels in July 2002. Because these surveys contained a wide range of questions and different methodological implications apply to the different question types, discussion about the wording and approach taken is included in the chapters dealing with the various subject areas.

The follow-up was initiated because the initial survey did not touch on some of the most well-known crime hot-spots: the daily accommodation residential

hotels where drugs and sex are sold. For this more targeted survey, some of the original survey questions were omitted and some new questions were added. Due to the differences in time and format, these two data sets are generally not combined in the analysis. Unless otherwise indicated, all statistics and comments are limited to the initial survey.

Victim surveys have been done in Johannesburg in the past and social surveys have been done in the Hillbrow administrative area. These provide some statistics for comparison. But the present study is the first survey of its type to focus on this area, and it is hoped that future surveys will provide material for longitudinal comparison.

## CHAPTER 1

# WELCOME TO JOHANNESBURG

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In South Africa, housing for the poor takes many forms. International observers may regard famous townships like Soweto as emblematic of South Africa's remarkable income inequality, failing to recognise the diversity of lifestyles contained in these sprawling areas. Locals are more likely to call to mind our massive shack lands, where thousands of people live in *ad hoc* structures without access to the amenities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or rural settlements where subsistence agriculture is still the order of the day. But South Africa also has the kind of housing for the poor that persists in the first world, despite decades-long campaigns to eliminate it – inner-city slums.

While Hillbrow police station is responsible for a diverse area containing many types of housing, it is most notorious for the low-income tenements that most people refer to as 'Hillbrow'. Once the residential annex to the city centre, capital flight long ago sent the area down the slippery slope towards the marginal. For many years, the area tread water above the sleaze line, being both safe and risqué enough to attract the young and adventurous, as well as many African travellers on a budget. But post-1994, the area has finally crossed beyond the pale for all but the most desperate.

Today, it is said to have one of the highest population densities of any area in the country: an estimated 100,000 people in an area of 10.28 square kilometres.<sup>1</sup> The actual level of crowding is probably much worse, however, because a substantial portion of the residents are squatters and undocumented migrants, both groups likely to evade official head counts. Many of the buildings, owned by absentee landlords, teeter on the edge of collapse. Their interiors range from quaintly tatty to positively post-apocalyptic.

Among South Africans, Hillbrow is renowned for two things: immigrants and crime. It is arguably the most feared neighbourhood in the country, edging out rivals like Mannenburg and Mitchell's Plain in the Western Cape. Whether this reputation is deserved is debatable, as is the relationship between the immigrant population and the crime problem, and this monograph represents one step in an attempt to probe the validity of popular prejudice.

Hillbrow is also well known for being the epicentre of drug activity in the country, and both retailers and consumers will travel considerable distances to purchase their drugs at source. With drugs, particularly crack cocaine, comes prostitution, and many residential hotels in the area are, essentially, high-rise brothels. These residential hotels provide the anonymity and flexibility required for all sorts of criminal commerce. Drug addicts don't always have cash but they will always find something to trade, so Hillbrow has become a prime conduit for stolen property. Drug couriers need travel documents, and this leads to a broadening web of forgery and fraud. And, as is the case in most communities of this sort, the marginalised prey on their own, first and most consistently.

Drugs also mean corruption, here as everywhere. The demand is such that the cost of bribes can easily be passed on to the consumer, and the profits provide plenty of fat for market shocks. Policing drug areas poses a major challenge to traditional law enforcement techniques, and demands that as much effort be spent watching the watchers as patrolling the streets.

The area administratively defined as Hillbrow is small, and most people use the name to refer to a larger area, embracing parts of Berea and Joubert Park. For the local residents, 'Hillbrow' has more to do with the character of the place than arbitrary boundaries. The Hillbrow police station area is more expansive still, involving very different sorts of neighbourhoods, such as Killarney, a largely white suburb to the north.

Immediately to the south of this station area is another police station area, prosaically dubbed Johannesburg Central. The station is housed in a building of considerable apartheid-era infamy, then known as John Vorster Square. The station area contains some of the most important public buildings in the country in its 13.19 square kilometres, including the Reserve Bank, the Gauteng parliament and executive offices, the ANC national headquarters, and many others. This means that marches aimed at protesting provincial and national policy tend to become the responsibility of Johannesburg Central. The area also contains the headquarters of many of the largest banks in the country. Despite all this, it is scarcely in better repair than Hillbrow, with many large buildings standing vacant, and squatters and tenants residing in crumbling office blocks. The crime situation, tied more to alcohol than drugs, is comparable nonetheless.

## Crimes recorded by the police

The number of crimes recorded by the police in these two station areas has varied quite a bit over the years, but some trends are clear. In Hillbrow, robberies with firearms nearly doubled between 1996 and 2000, and, as will be discussed, armed robbery is one of the biggest problems confronting the area. Assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm has also sharply increased. On the other hand, theft of vehicles and residential burglary have just as radically declined over the same period (Figure 1.1). A similar trend is seen in Johannesburg Central (Figure 1.2). This suggests a shift from stealthy acquisitive crime to violent crime, acquisitive and otherwise. The reasons for this shift may be linked to increasing drug use and will be discussed in Chapter 6.

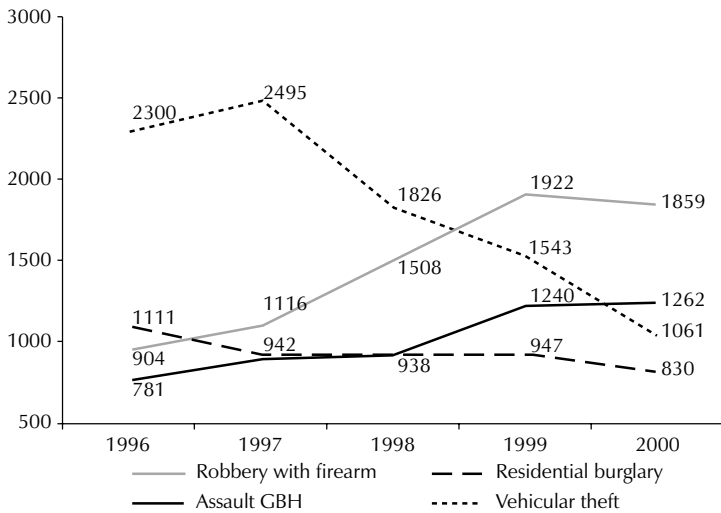
Comparing the crime scenes in these two areas to other parts of the country and the world poses something of a problem. Crime comparisons are usually done in terms of crime rates, most often expressed as crimes per 100,000 residents per annum. The problem is, as mentioned above, it is very difficult to come up with reliable population estimates for these areas. The official 1999 population totals, extrapolated from the 1996 Census data, are 96,862 for Hillbrow and 22,707 for Johannesburg Central.<sup>2</sup> Given the number of illegal immigrants in the area, many residing in blocks not zoned for residence, these figures may be serious underestimates.

In addition, both of these policing areas experience large commuter inflows. Surveys done at the major nodal interchanges show massive numbers of people transiting the area. The Metro Mall transportation node experiences an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 commuters per working day, while the Joubert Park taxi rank has an additional 100,000. Some of these people work in the area while some go on to destinations in Sandton and Randburg, but all are potential crime victims for as long as they are in the jurisdictional boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

A quick look at the crime figures highlights how difficult it is to calculate crime statistics based on the official figures. Johannesburg Central experienced 219 murders in 1999, or over 1,000 murders per 100,000 residents. This is entirely off the scale of international comparison, and suggests that 1% of the population is murdered each year. If this rate of homicide were indeed the case, everyone in the area would be dead by the end of the century.

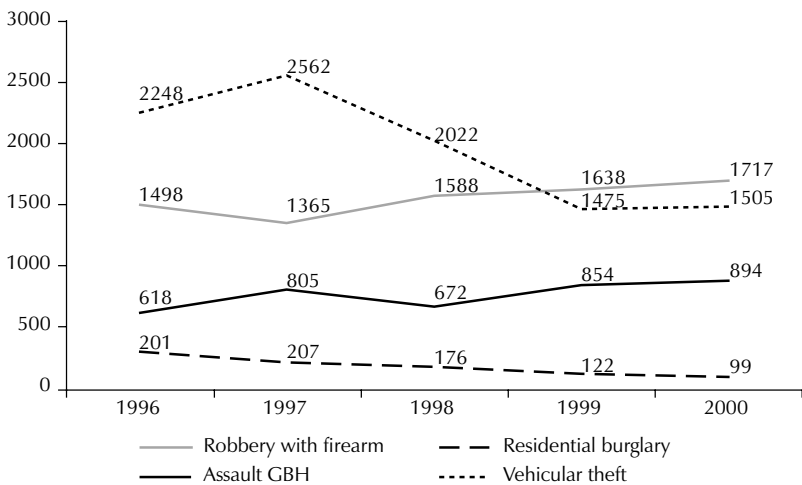
Looking at Figures 1.1 and 1.2, it becomes clear that, with the exception of residential burglary, the number of crime incidents in the two areas is fairly

**Figure 1.1: Incidents of crime recorded by police in Hillbrow**



Source: SAPS CIAC

**Figure 1.2: Incidents of crime recorded by police in Johannesburg Central**

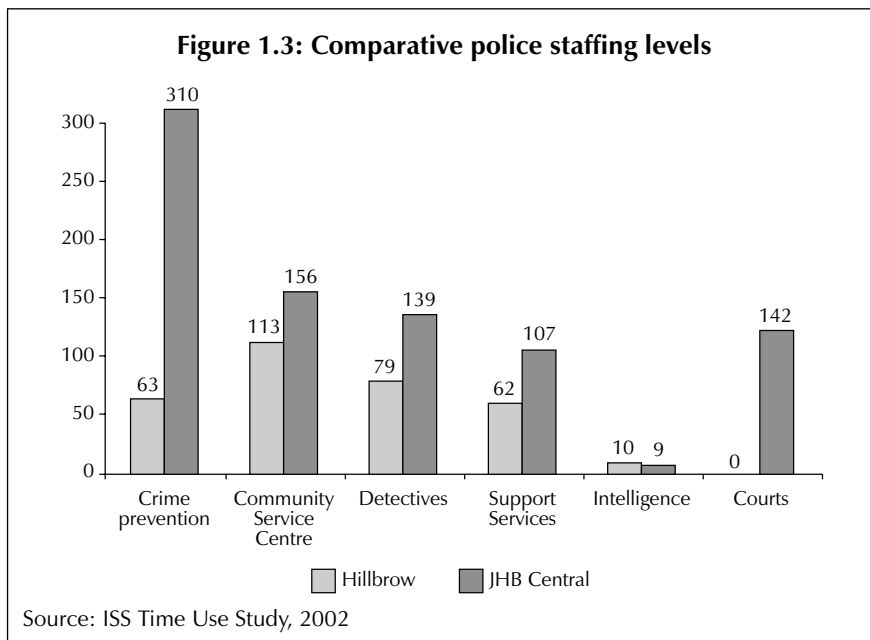


Source: SAPS CIAC

comparable. Johannesburg Central experienced about 30% fewer serious assaults and about 30% more vehicle thefts than did Hillbrow, while robberies were about the same. But, according to Census projections, the population of Johannesburg Central is just over a fifth of that of Hillbrow. That would mean the crime rate in Johannesburg Central is five times worse than that in its more notorious northern neighbour, a picture that does not gel with popular experience.

## Policing

The notion that Johannesburg Central presents a greater crime problem than Hillbrow seems to be supported by the national police authorities, judging by the level of police station staffing. According to station figures gathered in the ISS' time use study of the area in 2002, Johannesburg Central has over two-and-a half times the staff of Hillbrow, with 863 employees to Hillbrow's 327. This is despite the fact that, according to the Census, Johannesburg Central has a quarter of the resident population and a land area just over 20% larger. This means that there are 296 members of the public to each Hillbrow station

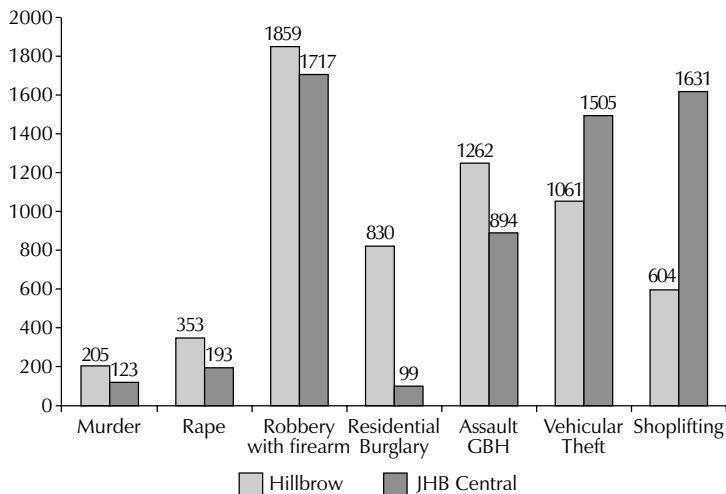


member and only 26 citizens per member of Johannesburg Central. However, about 15% of Johannesburg Central’s staff is assigned to guarding the local courts, a task that Hillbrow does not have to do, and Johannesburg Central also has a higher general administrative burden. Setting all this aside, Johannesburg Central still fields about 300 uniformed crime prevention members, while the equivalent division in Hillbrow has just over 60 staff (Figures 1.3).

The number of crimes recorded at each station is similar, with Hillbrow generally recording more serious violent crime and Johannesburg Central more property crime (except for burglary) (Figure 1.4).

One likely reason for this division of resources is the need for a large uniformed standby force in Johannesburg Central in case of a major public march. Johannesburg Central contains a number of important buildings housing a number of important people, and remains very much in the public eye. Hillbrow, on the other hand, is populated by a far more marginal community, without the collective voice to demand more protection.

**Figure 1.4: Comparative crime incidents recorded by police, 2000**



Source: SAPS CIAC



## Closed circuit television

The policing approaches of the two stations are fairly traditional, in keeping with the operational strategies of the national office, with one notable exception. The Johannesburg Central policing area is one of the few areas of the country to have extensive closed circuit television (CCTV) coverage, a programme initiated by Business Against Crime and the SAPS in April 2000. As of late 2001, there were 75 cameras covering large areas of the city centre, and there were plans to expand this number to 360 by June 2002. By December 2002, however, there were only 184 cameras active. The system in place has the capacity to handle 4000 cameras, which, while it would be enormously expensive, would surely provide blanket coverage of the entire policing area.

Various claims have been made as to the crime reducing qualities of the presence of cameras, both here and in Cape Town. Since complete crime statistics for the SAPS station area level for 2001 and 2002 have not yet been released, these claims are difficult to verify. Looking at the crime data for the first half of 2001, from six months to a year after the launch of the system, the broader policing area of Johannesburg remains first in the nation for most serious crime types. Thus, even if specific crime reductions were claimed for the areas where the cameras were focused, this crime may very well have been simply displaced to elsewhere in the policing area. Furthermore, looking specifically at the Johannesburg Central station area data for 2000 and the first half of 2001, no overall improvement is seen.

But using these figures to evaluate Johannesburg CCTV is probably unfair. It is very difficult to evaluate claims of crime prevention on the basis of official crime figures because these figures are inherently unreliable. This is because the police can only record those crimes which they witness or which are reported to them by the public. If the police do a good job, both the number of crimes they spot on the streets and the willingness of the public to report crimes should increase. The present survey shows that the majority of serious crimes in inner Johannesburg currently go unrecorded because the public does not report them, so there is plenty of room for improvement in this area. Furthermore, systems like CCTV should assist in detecting more crime, and so could cause an increase in the number of crimes recorded, not the contrary.

There are reasons to be sceptical of the crime preventative effect of CCTV, however. In the inner city context in particular, preventing crime through street surveillance would be limited in its potential, as most of the population at any

given time is situated vertically, in high rise apartment and office blocks. Studies in the US have shown that street-focused enforcement has driven criminal activity such as drug dealing indoors, increasing its negative impact on the local community.<sup>4</sup> And even with regard to street coverage, the cameras face serious challenges. Many of these buildings have concrete overhangs that shield the sidewalk from view. Hawkers use umbrellas to shade their stands and trees shade many areas. Coverage is therefore incomplete, and it would not be difficult for habitual criminals to adjust their behaviour accordingly.

Perhaps the fairest way to gauge the effectiveness of the CCTV system is to look at it from a more appropriate set of police performance indicators: responses to crime. We would expect that with the aid of millions of rands of high tech equipment, police members assigned to the CCTV response teams would show much higher arrest rates than those without this advantage. This proves not to be the case.

As of the time of going to press, there were 52 SAPS members assigned full time to CCTV duty. During the first 11 months of the year 2002, these members combined made between two and 27 arrests each month, with an average of 11 arrests monthly. That means each member made an average of about one arrest every six months, in a station area that suffers over 20,000 crimes a year. These members are backed by an even more numerous civilian monitoring staff and equipment estimated to cost over R100 million. 'Operating costs' are estimated at R2.5 million a year, enough to employ an army of 70 starting constables. The simple purchase cost of a single camera is R180,000, which would pay a constable to stand on that same corner for five years.

Thus, CCTV does not seem to be a cost-effective method of increasing the number of criminals taken off the streets. Whether it has effectively reduced crime in the areas that it covers and in the station area as a whole as a result of its deterrent effect is another question, and one that would require a detailed and independent study, with access to up-to-date crime statistics. Before public funds are invested in very costly projects of this sort, there should be some evidence that such a system actually works in the South African context.

## **The need for a victim survey**

In order to evaluate whether the overall approach taken by the two stations is proving effective in terms of real victimisation levels and public opinion, there

is no getting around the need for regular public surveys. As noted above, the official crime figures are not reliable indicators of the real crime situation, so the only way to find out how much the people of inner Johannesburg are suffering is to go to their homes and ask them. In addition, a good deal of attention has been paid in the SAPS to improving service delivery independent of crime prevention efforts, and this work also needs continual reassessment. The rest of this monograph is dedicated to laying out the responses of the over 1,300 people polled in both station areas in mid-2002.

## CHAPTER 2

# METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

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The data is derived from two surveys, one conducted in May 2002 throughout the Johannesburg Central and Hillbrow police station areas (n= 1,100), and a follow-up survey conducted in July 2002 that was limited to ten residential hotels in Hillbrow. The initial survey form included questions about criminal victimisation, opinions on safety and police performance, and questions geared to evaluate community cohesion. The follow-up survey omitted some questions and included an additional section.

Those who said that they had been victims of certain crimes were asked a more detailed schedule of questions on the specifics of this incident. If the individual respondent had been the victim of hijacking, assault, or robbery, the detailed interview schedule for those crimes was administered. If the respondent's household had been the victim of vehicular theft or burglary, or if anyone in the household had been murdered, then the appropriate questionnaire was used. This resulted in detailed accounts of more than 300 recent robberies, and over 100 burglaries and assaults, with factual and opinion information on criminal justice response to the incident. All this information is laid out in the chapters that follow.

Picking a sampling frame for these police station areas is something of a challenge. The most recent Census data stems from 1996, and no one would dispute that the area has changed radically since then. Both areas were projected to experience a population decrease of about 3% per annum from the 1996 estimates. If this projected decrease did occur, this would place the present population levels at about 91,000 for Hillbrow and about 21,000 for Johannesburg Central, for a total population of 112,000 for inner Johannesburg.

If these figures are indeed accurate, our initial survey of 1,100 respondents represents a 1% sample of the total population of the area. The final sample in the initial survey was 326 respondents in Johannesburg Central (30%) and 774 in Hillbrow (70%). The Census-derived population ratios are about 20% in Johannesburg Central and 80% in Hillbrow. This would suggest an over-

sampling of Johannesburg Central, assuming its resident population is really a fifth the size of that in Hillbrow.

But there are many reasons to believe the official estimates of population size and composition are not reliable, which would make using these figures to construct a sampling frame problematic. These issues are discussed below.

## **Immigration and ethnicity**

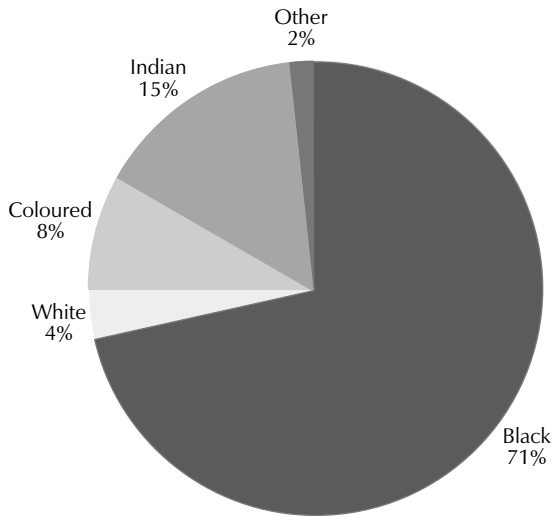
One does not need to spend much time in inner Johannesburg to realise that a significant portion of the population is foreign-born. Tours with the police, conducted as part of the time use study, reveal that a lot of these people are in South Africa illegally, although many have some form of 'documentation', much of it expired, fraudulently altered, or otherwise suspect. These people often live in buildings that are either not zoned for residential occupancy or which have been officially closed down. For this and other reasons, they are unlikely to have participated in the official headcounts. In addition, many are likely to have arrived in the area after the 1996 Census.

These hypotheses were born out in the survey data. In the main survey, nearly a quarter of the respondents identified themselves as foreign born, and 68% said they had moved to their present residence since the 1996 Census (although it was not clear how many moved there from within the policing area). In the follow-up residential hotel survey, an even greater share was found to be foreign born (38%). Eighty-nine percent of these people said they had arrived in this country in the last five years, after the 1996 Census.

According to the Census data, the 1996 ethnic breakdown of the two station areas is shown in Figures 2.1 and 2.2. Based on what we know about immigrant populations from other research<sup>5</sup>, today's inner Johannesburg is likely to be more black, younger, and more male than the Census projections would indicate.

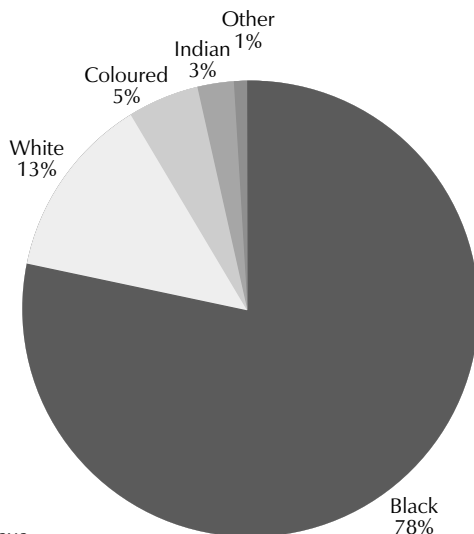
Indeed, the survey data revealed a population that conformed to all of these suppositions. The sample was 57% male. Most of the respondents were young adults: 83% were between the ages of 21 and 40 years. In terms of ethnicity and nationality, the sample in the initial survey was 92% black, 3% coloured, just over 2% Indian, and 3% white. In Johannesburg Central, the breakdown was 90% black, 5% coloured, 5% Indian, and no whites were interviewed. In Hillbrow, the breakdown was 93% black, 2% coloured, 1% Indian, and 4% white. The residential hotel sample was almost entirely black.

**Figure 2.1: Ethnic breakdown, Johannesburg Central**



Source: 1996 Census

**Figure 2.2: Ethnic breakdown, Hillbrow**



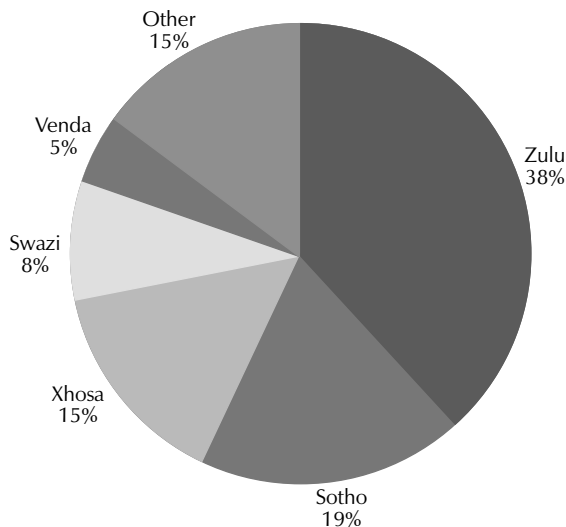
Source: 1996 Census

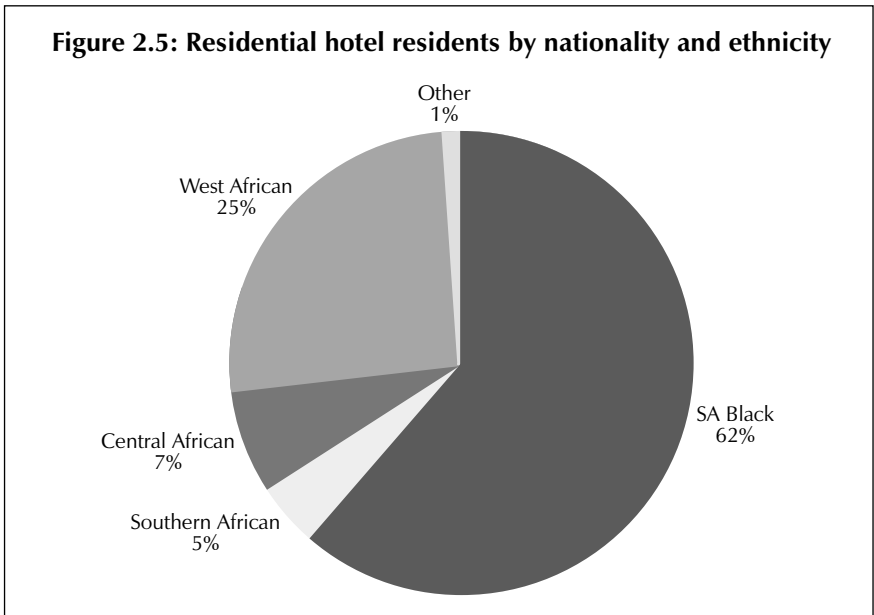
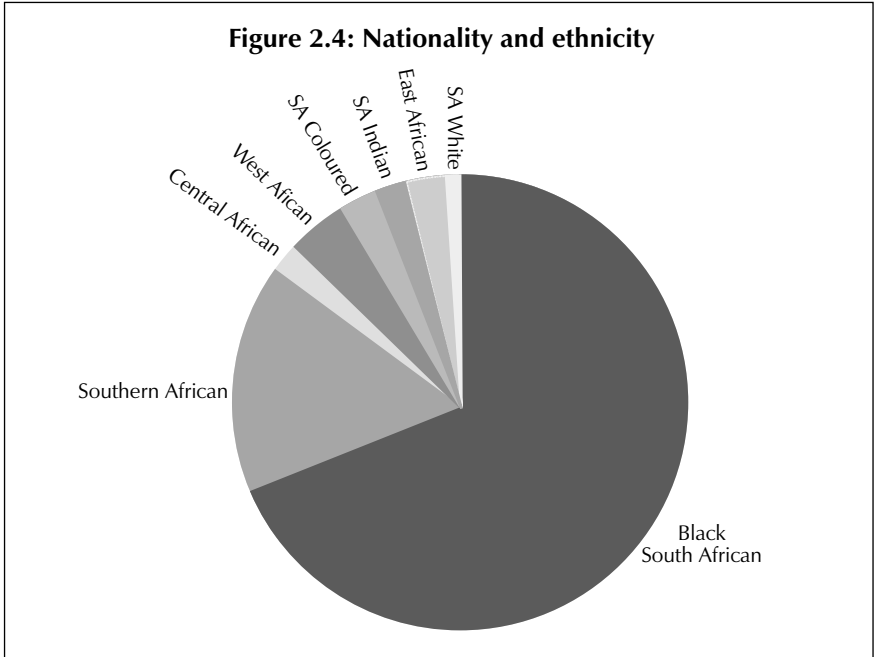
In the initial survey, 26% of the respondents were Zulu-speaking South Africans, 13% Sotho-speakers, and 10% Xhosa-speakers. Comparing language groups between the black South Africans to the national ratios determined in the 1996 Census shows that inner Johannesburg represents a kind of a micro-cosm of the overall black population, except for an overrepresentation of Sotho and Venda speakers (Figure 2.3).

Nearly a quarter of the sample in the initial survey were nationals of other African countries (271 individuals). A full 6% of the sample was Zimbabwean – 70 respondents. In addition, 26 Nigerians, 26 Basotho, 25 Mozambicans, ten Congolese, seven Ghanaians, and six Somalis were polled. Figure 2.4 shows the breakdown between South Africans and nationals from other parts of the continent in the initial survey.

The residential hotel poll (n=201), as expected based on the author’s earlier qualitative work, had a much higher share of foreign nationals (38%), most of who were Nigerian (45 respondents). In fact, 35% of all male residential hotel respondents were Nigerian and in some hotels, over 80% of all male respondents were Nigerian. Figure 2.5 shows the ethnic breakdown of the residential

**Figure 2.3: Black South Africans by language group**







hotel sample. The vast majority of these Nigerian hotel tenants (92%) classified themselves as Ibo, with most claiming their home area as Lagos (54%) or somewhere in the southeast portion of the country, including Port Harcourt and Calabar (32%). The significance of this finding will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Geographic sampling**

The inadequacy of the Census data leaves us with little choice but to base our sampling on something other than population demographics. Given the large size of the sample relative to the official population estimates (over 1%), the decision was taken to proceed geographically. Since this survey is about crime and policing, it seemed logical to select the sample from within the delineated police patrol areas, and this was done in Johannesburg Central. These areas were selected by police in large part to distribute workload evenly, and so each should represent an equivalent slice of the overall crime pie. For Hillbrow, where it was felt a more intensive sample was needed in an area of higher population density, smaller geographic units were used: the police Crime Analysis System data blocks.

Within these areas, a simple random sampling of households was done, and the interview conducted with the head of the household when available, or whoever answered the door if not, provided that person was able to speak on behalf of the household and was over the age of 18. All the questions were pre-coded and this information was transcribed into the SPSS data analysis software package.

The residential hotel poll was taken from hotels known to the author based on earlier research to be hot spots for the sale of drugs and sex. Clearly, this is not an unbiased sample, and this information should be treated as a set of case studies. The author was surprised to learn that many of these hotels had changed character in recent years, and no longer fit the model suggested by earlier qualitative work.<sup>6</sup>

## **Methodological limitations**

Because the survey was spread evenly over police patrol areas in Johannesburg Central, and the patrol areas are smaller where crime is more likely to be reported, low crime areas were sampled more sparsely than high crime areas in terms of questionnaires per square kilometre. This might result

in a slightly exaggerated crime picture. But it is also true that the smaller patrol areas corresponded to areas of higher population density, so this effect may not be significant.

It might be expected that our fieldworkers would encounter many of the same problems that Census workers would encounter in terms of locating and interviewing people who do not want to be recognised as residents. To determine national origin, respondents were simply asked “where do you come from?” The surveyors were all experienced black South African fieldworkers, many of whom had worked in Hillbrow before, and were encouraged to press the matter if the person did not appear to be local in origin (for example, if they showed an apparent lack of fluency in local languages). The high number of those who admitted to being foreign nationals suggests that this problem was largely overcome, but there remains the possibility that the immigrant population is even higher than a quarter of the total populace. If this is the case, the immigrant perspective was under-sampled.

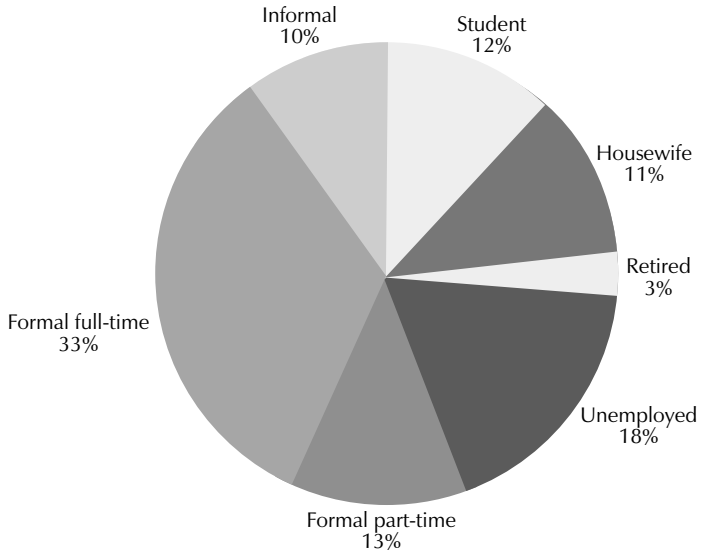
Despite the general willingness of migrants to talk, a high level of refusals was encountered in the residential hotel survey, and fieldworkers were barred from entering some of the most notorious hotels. Safety considerations also prompted the avoidance of certain hotels by fieldworkers. This would suggest an under-sampling of some of the most crime-prone areas.

Because the survey was conducted in daylight hours, only those at home during the day were polled. This common problem often results in what is sometimes termed a ‘housewife survey’, in which only those involved in the care of the home during business hours are contacted. However, given the employment status of the respondents (Figures 2.6 and 2.7), this might be less of a problem in inner Johannesburg than in other areas. Many are apparently involved in work that does not preclude their being at home during the day.

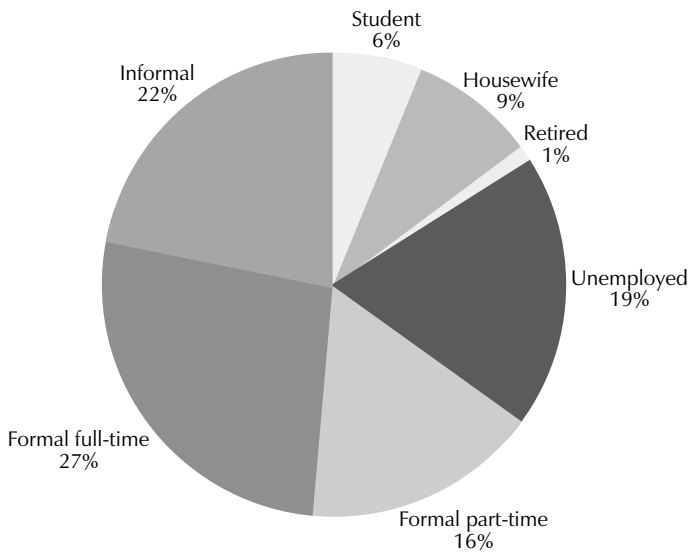
Indeed, only 11% of the locals and 9% of the foreign nationals described themselves as housewives. Just under a third said they were employed full time in the formal sector, meaning that they paid taxes on their earnings, even if self-employed, and 58% of the respondents identified themselves as the head of the household.

Only 18% of those polled described themselves as unemployed, with just over a quarter being full time formal employees, another quarter being occasional or informal sector workers, and another quarter being students, housewives, or pensioners. This profile varied for non-South Africans, with greater

**Figure 2.6: Employment status, South African citizens**



**Figure 2.7: Employment status, non-South African citizens**



participation in the informal sector and in casual, part-time work, and less in the formal sector, as students, and housewives. In the residential hotels, the employment profile was 44% informal self-employment and 7% formally employed full time, with only 10% describing themselves as unemployed. Among the Nigerian hotel residents, 74% described themselves as informally self-employed.

Levels of unemployment were about the same between locals and foreigners, which argues against the commonly held view that foreigners are here to sponge off the South African society. Questions about income were not asked, because this information is typically unreliable in areas where a large portion of the populace earns their living in informal or casual markets.

## CHAPTER 3

# VIEWS ON SAFETY, JUSTICE AND POLICING

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Most victim surveys ask a set of standard questions about perceptions of safety and impressions of the state response to crime. This is opinion data only, more likely to be influenced by yesterday's sensational headlines than a considered analysis of fact. But public opinion is highly important in a capitalist democracy: people vote and invest with their opinions, however uninformed and prejudiced these views might be. In addition, negative public opinion of the performance of the criminal justice system can lead to very real problems, such as vigilantism, underreporting of crime, and unwillingness to cooperate with the police as witnesses or informants. These questions also have value simply because they have been asked so many times, and are therefore comparable across jurisdictions and time periods.

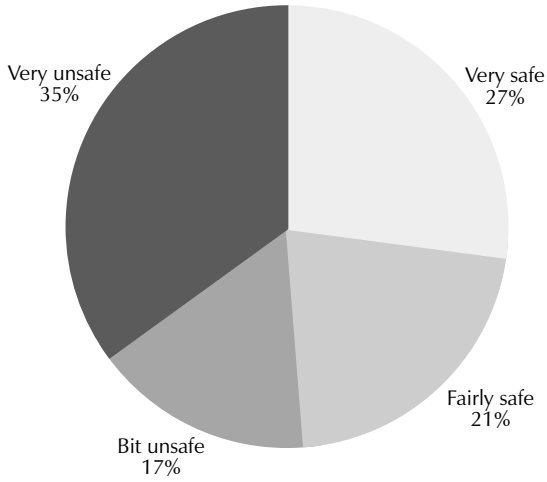
In weighing up these opinions, it is important to keep in mind that just under half of all the respondents said they had been victims of one of the specified serious crimes in the last year in inner Johannesburg (see chapter 4). As a result, much of this data is informed by some direct and recent experience. A remarkable 61% of victims claimed to have reported their experience to the police, which reflects a high level of confidence in the authorities overall, but this rate varied sharply by crime type: just over a third of all robberies were reported to the police, for example. These figures are discussed further in Chapter 4.

### Perceptions of safety

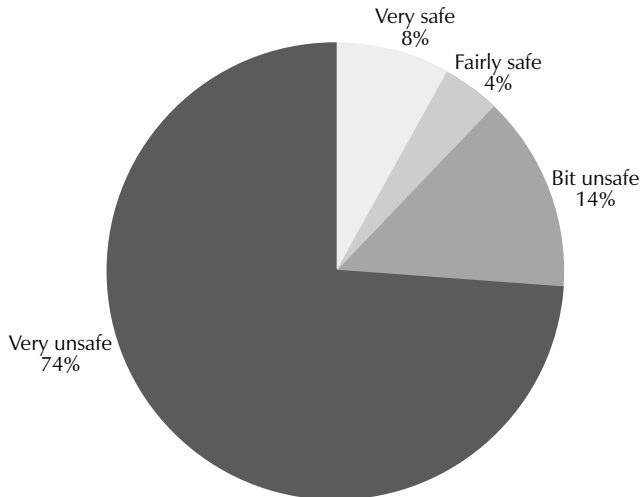
One of the most consistently asked questions in victim surveys is: How safe do you feel walking in the area where you live in the daytime and at night? The responses to these questions in our survey are graphed in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

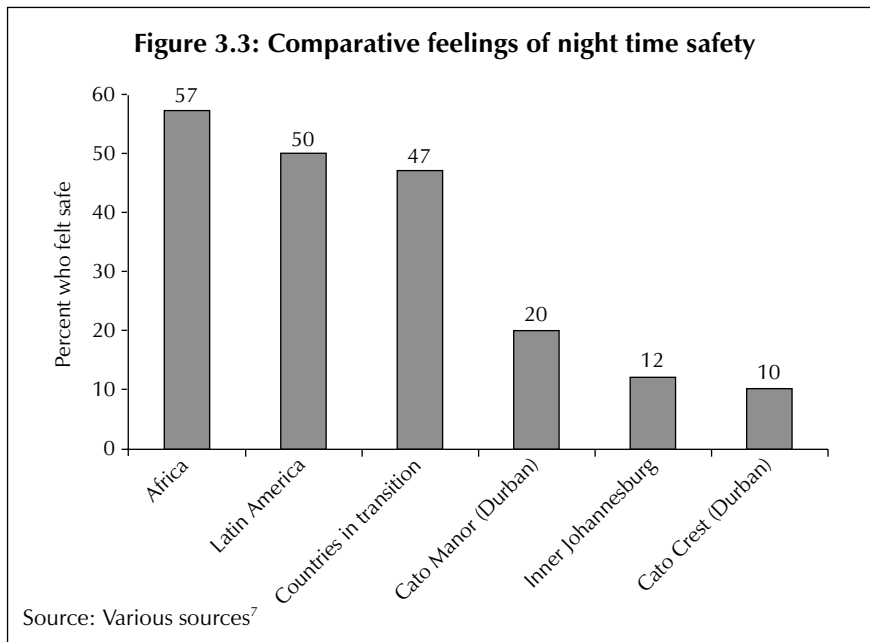
The *daytime* safety profile is fairly typical for an inner city area, with about half feeling safe and half not. The *night time* response is, however, quite extreme, with less than 20% of the people feeling safe on the streets at night, and nearly three quarters feeling very unsafe. Figure 3.3 compares the answer to this question to similar questions asked in surveys around the world and in South

**Figure 3.1: How safe do you feel walking in the area where you live during the day?**



**Figure 3.2: How safe do you feel walking in the area where you live at night?**





Africa. From this it is clear that feelings of safety at night are lower in inner Johannesburg than just about any comparable place in the world where similar studies have been done.

But there was considerable variation within the survey area in this regard. In some, upwards of 90% felt unsafe at night, while in one area, 36% felt very safe. In the residential hotels, only 35% felt safe during the day, and 7% safe at night.

Despite this fear, 30% of the people polled felt that crime in their area had actually decreased since 1994, with 55% saying they felt it had increased either a little or a lot, and 15% saying it had stayed the same. Again, this figure varied quite a bit by survey area: in one area, 67% felt crime increased a lot and in another, 40% though it had decreased either a little or a lot. Twice as many Indian people, mainly concentrated in the suburbs south of Johannesburg Central station, felt crime had decreased as increased. But these decreases may have been off a very poor base. Almost half of the people who said they thought crime had decreased a lot said they nonetheless felt very unsafe walking at night.

## Role of the state

Overall, 86% of the people held the government responsible for changes in the crime rate, in whole or in part, whether positive or negative. Of those who thought that crime had increased “a lot” since 1994, 87% felt the government was at least partially responsible for this increase. Of those who felt that crime had decreased a lot, 81% gave the government at least partial credit for this improvement. This suggests that the public believe that the government possesses the ability to control the crime rate, and that failure to do so represents a lack of service delivery.

As most people living in inner Johannesburg are afraid to walk the streets and feel the situation is getting worse, it is not surprising that many favour radical solutions to the problem. The majority of the people said they favoured the death penalty for murderers, and a third favoured it for drug dealers. White and Indian South Africans in particular favoured the death penalty for both crimes, with Southern Africans, Central Africans, West Africans, and coloured South Africans being less likely to favour this brutal approach for drug dealers.

Three quarters of the people said they would “definitely” be willing to have their home searched by the police once a month if this would reduce crime, with West, East, and Central Africans, and whites being less enthusiastic about this prospect. Adding in those who said they “might” be willing to allow monthly searches, nearly 81% said they would open their doors to law enforcement, with only 16% expressing dissent. Surprisingly, those polled in residential hotels were slightly more in favour of this kind of law enforcement intervention.

These attitudes towards punishment and law enforcement suggest that the residents of inner Johannesburg do not think much of constitutional protections, either for the criminals or, indeed, for themselves. This reflects a sense of desperation in the face of crime that many feel makes the streets unsafe to walk and against which the state is losing its battle to assert control.

It is not surprising that foreign nationals are less enthusiastic about radical solutions to the crime problem because, if public opinion is anything to go by, they would likely be on the receiving end of these measures. When asked who commits most of the crime in their area, 63% mentioned “foreigners”. This is particularly remarkable given that nearly a quarter of the sample was foreign. In fact, 39% of foreign nationals said, among other things, that foreigners were responsible for crime. Unemployment, however, a cause particularly favoured



by the black community when discussing the causes of crime in other polls<sup>8</sup>, emerged again as the most prevalent explanation: 70% mentioned unemployed people as the source of crime.

## Perceptions of policing

With 70% of the people saying that the crime situation had not got better despite government efforts, and most blaming the government for this lack of progress, it might be expected that public opinion about the police would be poor. But most of the respondents who had been to the local stations said their visit had either improved their opinion of the police (39%) or that it had stayed the same (36%). Further, most people felt the local police were doing a good (20%) or fair (41%) job, with the remaining 38% feeling they were doing poorly.

Those with a negative opinion were most likely to blame this on corruption (63%), or laziness (17%), with very few mentioning racism, brutality, or lack of resources. In the Johannesburg Central station area, people were less likely to think the police corrupt (58%) and more likely to think them lazy (20%), an opinion that may be due in part to the drug trade in Hillbrow.

The vast majority (77%) of the respondents said they saw a police member in uniform at least once a day, and 92% said they knew the location of their local police station. Of these, 62% had actually been to this station. Most people (84%) knew to call 10111 if they had an emergency, and only 6% did not know a number to call. This level of public awareness is remarkable, but may be due in part to the high level of population density and crime in the area.

An impressive 22% knew the name of a police member they could approach with a problem. This single fact is very reassuring with regard to the implementation of community-oriented policing in the area. One of the key tenets of community-oriented policing is that police members should establish personal relationships with community members, getting out of their cars and into the neighbourhoods for more contact with the people they serve. While there is plenty of room to improve this picture, the fact that over a fifth of those polled knew a local cop by name is quite positive.

Hillbrow was one of the areas where the high-density policing operations conducted under the geographic focus of the National Crime Combating

Strategy (popularly known as 'Operation Crackdown') were premiered. These operations generally involve both police and military personnel conducting building searches, cordon and search operations, and roadblocks in the most crime-prone station areas in the country. Sixty-one percent said there had been a Crackdown operation in their area in the last two years, and 70% of these people felt that it had helped to reduce crime in their area. This police policy initiative has apparently caught the public imagination and garnered its support, even in areas hit as hard by operations as Hillbrow.

Residential hotel residents, often the targets of these raids, were not as convinced of their efficacy. Eighty percent said they knew of an operation in their area, but only 36% felt that it was worthwhile. This is despite the fact that residents of these hotels were just as likely to say they would allow monthly searches of their homes if this would reduce crime.

Unfortunately, other crime prevention initiatives were not as well-known or popular. Very few people understood the Community Police Forum concept and only 17% said they understood the concept. Of these, the most popular response when asked about its purpose was "to give the police information". Only 2% (20 people) said that they knew of a CPF in their area, and of these, only 11 people said they had ever attended a meeting. Five out of the six that regularly attended the meetings said the CPF was working, while those who occasionally or never attended were split three to three on the issue.

This level of awareness falls far short of what the government hopes to achieve with the CPF programme. Every citizen should have access to a CPF, yet only 2% of the inner Johannesburg sample was aware that a CPF was operating in their area.

The overall public evaluation of police performance is therefore mixed. The police get top marks for visibility, seem to be doing well in terms of community contact, and are not often accused of brutality and racism. On the other hand, there is a very widespread view that the police are corrupt, especially in Hillbrow. The CPFs do not seem to be widely known, which is a shame given, as will be discussed, that the public has a great deal of knowledge about crime in the area. The public seems to prefer, and to be open to, massive raids and searches of the 'Crackdown' variety. The willingness to give up basic privacy rights for some modicum of protection reflects the desperation felt by a community where 88% of the people do not feel safe walking the streets at night.

## Self-protection

Given that fear of crime is great and confidence in government not what it could be, it might be expected that the residents would turn to other means of protecting themselves. In general, non-state policing means the hiring of private security by the wealthier classes, and the formation of self-protection groups (ranging from neighbourhood watches to vigilante groups) for the less affluent. About a third of the households polled said they were protected by a security guard, but 88% responded “no” when asked if their community formed groups or hired people for mutual protection. Only 41 people (4%) said their community had a neighbourhood watch.

One exceptional means of self-protection is the system of building committees formed by the Nigerian tenants of the residential hotels. Over half of the Nigerians polled said they belonged to these committees, and another third said they belonged to some other association of local Nigerian nationals. These mechanisms seem to fulfil an important self-protection function for a community especially prone to victimisation, as will be discussed in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 4

# CRIMINAL VICTIMISATION

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While victim surveys gather a variety of opinion data, their core purpose is to determine real rates of criminal victimisation. Only a fraction of all crime is reported to the police, and thus police crime statistics are inherently inaccurate. Some types of crimes are more under reported than others. Crimes for which a case number is required in order to enter an insurance claim, such as auto theft, are more likely to be reported, as are any property crimes in which there is some hope of the police recovering the stolen goods. For crimes where the likelihood of property recovery is viewed as quite low, such as robberies involving small amounts of cash, reporting levels are also low.

Surveys have found that interpersonal crimes, especially sex crimes and domestic violence, are also less likely to be reported, although many people are just as reluctant to discuss these matters with a pollster at the door as they are to report them to the police. The exception, of course, is murder, which is nearly always reported because disposal of the body requires official sanction.

### **Levels of victimisation**

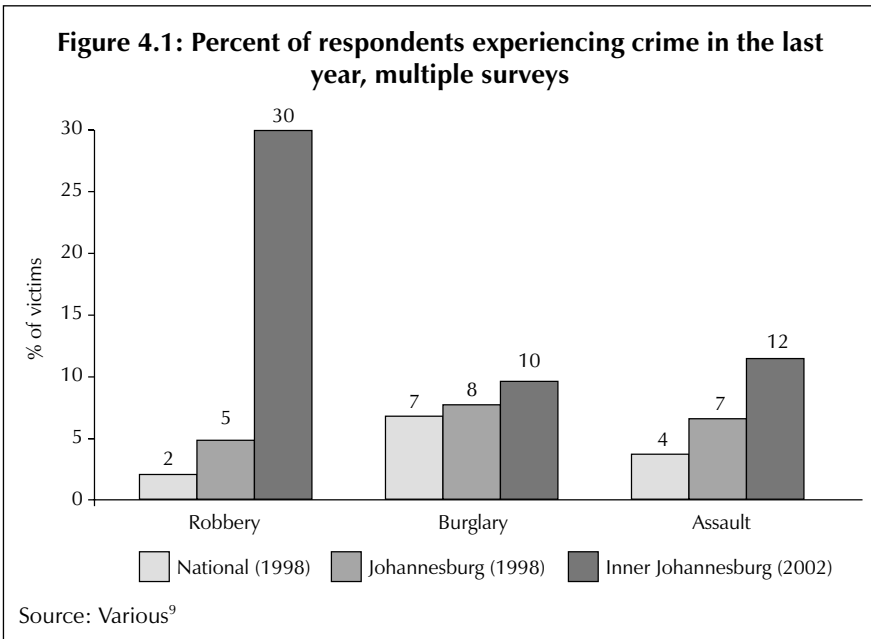
In the present survey, respondents were asked about experiences of crime in inner Johannesburg since 1994 and then experiences in the last year. Because the survey was done close to Easter, the previous Easter was used as a cut off point for the last year's experiences. Survey respondents generally like to report crime and often have a faulty sense of when events occurred. Past surveys have found that victims tend to 'telescope' the events of past years into the most recent one if only asked about recent victimisation. It is for this reason that experiences since 1994 were queried, although this data was not used for analysis. Because a large percentage of the respondents were new to the area in any case, most of the crime reported occurred in the last year.

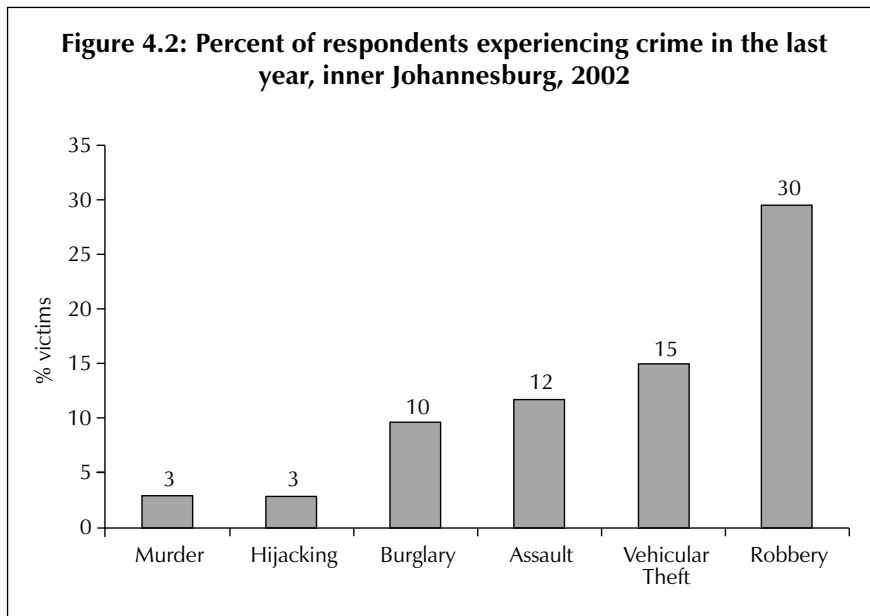
As is standard methodology, certain crimes were considered 'household crimes' and certain crimes 'individual' crimes. Household crimes include those that any member of the household could be expected to report on reliably,

such as burglary or theft of a vehicle. Murder, of course, is a household crime – one cannot speak to the victim personally. Individual crimes include those that only the individual can be expected to report on reliably, such as robbery and assault. In the present survey, respondents were questioned about the household crimes of murder, burglary and vehicular theft, and the individual crimes of robbery, assault, and car hijacking. As was mentioned above, due to ethical issues and low levels of success in past victim surveys, sex crimes were excluded from the survey.

Figure 4.1 shows the victimisation rates found in the 1999 Johannesburg survey done as part of the International Crime Victim Survey of the United Nations; the national survey done by Stats SA and the Secretariat for Safety and Security in 1998; and the present survey. There are methodological differences between these surveys, of course, but the figures do give some basis for comparison.

As might be expected, the survey results echo the official statistics in labelling inner Johannesburg as one of the most dangerous parts of the city and, indeed, of the nation as a whole. Most striking is the extremely high level of robbery, a





phenomenon that will be explored further in Chapter 7. Murder is not covered in all victim surveys, and vehicular crimes are generally cited without regard to the percentage of the population that owns a vehicle. Figure 4.2 shows the victimisation levels found in this survey across crime categories, with the vehicular theft rates calculated only for those households owning a vehicle. Hijacking, which can occur in any vehicle and was deemed an individual crime like other robberies, is calculated for the sample as a whole. Remarkably, nearly as many hijackings (32) were recorded in this survey as vehicular thefts (48), a phenomenon that will be discussed further in Chapter 10.

### Reporting rates

Variation in reporting levels between surveys is to be expected, since different areas have different relationships with the police and these attitudes vary over time. People with easy access to the police are generally more likely to report. Access is determined by a variety of factors, including:

- economic factors, which influence the rates of insurance and ability to absorb the costs of reporting;

- cultural factors, including the availability and popularity of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms;
- police-public relations, including trust of the police and a sense of civic duty;
- the resources given to the local police, which can determine, for example, the likelihood and promptness of a field response or the length of queues at the charge desk;
- the proximity of the police station to the scene of the crime, which is influenced by the geographic area serviced by each station;
- public access to reporting aids, such as telephones and transport: and,
- the time use profile of the public, as busy people are less likely to take the trouble to report minor offences.

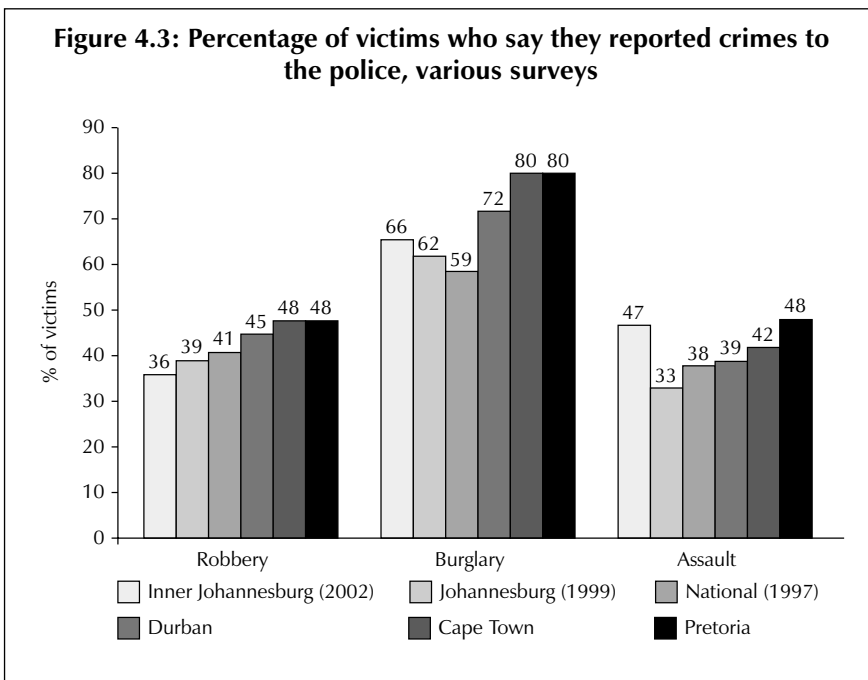
All other factors being equal, then, high rates of reporting could be expected of poor urban areas like inner Johannesburg, where 92% of the people polled know where the local police station is situated. While rates of insurance are likely to be lower in these areas, the police stations servicing these areas are within walking distance of most of their jurisdiction. In the present case, these stations are supplemented by several 'contact points' (satellite sites where crime can be reported). Telephones and public transport are readily available for the less mobile. While the necessity of paying cash for accommodation and the lack of access to subsistence agriculture requires some cash income, many people are engaged in informal enterprises and have some flexibility to their working hours. Poverty means that loss of property is of major importance, and hopes of recovery may prompt reporting. Diversity and the lack of community cohesion mean informal methods of dispute resolution may be lacking. This may promote reliance on more impersonal means of dispute resolution – the services of the state criminal justice system.

Figure 4.3 shows reporting rates for major crime types found in several polls. The methods used by these studies varied quite a bit (the ISS surveys were street surveys, for example), but while this might affect victimisation rates, there is little reason to expect it would affect reporting rates. Respondents are asked if they have been the victims of these crimes and then asked if they reported this crime to the police. These figures show some consistency in under-reporting patterns by crime type, with between 36% and 48% of robberies and 33% and

48% of assaults being reported. Burglaries are more of a wild card, with 59% and 80% of cases being reported.

For most surveys, assaults are the least reported, robberies next, and burglaries the most reported of the three crime types. The present survey is remarkable in bucking this trend: assaults were more likely to be reported than robberies. In fact, the inner Johannesburg residents reported a lower percentage of robberies than any other area surveyed. This may be tied to the fact that robberies are far more common here than in any other area. Assault reporting was actually higher in inner Johannesburg than in any other site besides Pretoria. This may have to do with what is considered an ‘assault’ in this highly violent area; most of the assaults described to the fieldworkers in this study involved weapons and injuries requiring medical attention. If the case involved hospitalisation, there may have been little choice as to whether it was reported to the police.

The present survey also asks whether the victim received a case number. This is important for two reasons. First, as discussed in Chapter 3, this is an important





police performance indicator, because improved public trust in the police should lead to a greater percentage of cases being reported. Second, it gives some indication of the difference between the number of crimes reported to the police and the number of crimes recorded by the police. Police members may elect not to start an official police docket on a case for a number of reasons, from suspicions that the claim is fraudulent to a desire to keep crime statistics low and clearance rates high by only recording cases in which a good chance of arrest exists.

## CHAPTER 5

# MIGRATION AND COMMUNITY COHESION

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The relationship between crime and migration is complex, and is the subject of an upcoming ISS monograph.<sup>10</sup> The topic is likely to receive more attention as political instability and food shortages in other countries in the region result in increased immigration, most of which will occur under duress and without much planning.

As the monograph argues and this survey suggests, new migrants, both domestic and international, may be especially vulnerable to becoming both victims and perpetrators of crime. People new to an area are, at least initially, seen as 'outsiders', and their struggle to make a living and find a place for themselves in their new home often brings them into conflict with the locals. Some new migrants, especially young men, seem willing to take risks and engage in behaviour that they would never undertake in their places of origin, particularly if they see their stay as temporary. As these people find a place for themselves in the local structures of power and the economy, the period of transition can be quite volatile for all concerned.

Many parts of inner Johannesburg show rapid turnover of residents, and this flow of people can be expected to create a kind of chronic community instability. Of those households polled, 68% said they had been living in their present location for less than five years. The period of residency varied quite a bit by the sampling area – in some areas, as much as 42% of all residents polled had lived in the household less than one year. Aggravating this condition was the fact that most were tenants, without long-term property interests in the area. Less than a quarter of the respondents reported owning the place where they were living. Those that posit social cohesion as a major factor in preventing crime<sup>11</sup> would see this as key to the area's crime problem.

As was discussed above, the area is also home to a large number of foreign nationals of dubious immigration status. Tours with the local police reveal that many immigrants carry Section 41 refugee visas, granted to those who are lodging a claim of political persecution in their home country, regardless of their country of origin. While these visas allow residence they do not allow

the recipient to legally seek work, a paradox that seems to necessarily lead to illegal conduct for all but the most affluent. These documents are often crudely altered and forged, and those who have looked into the issue closely find that most of the immigrants are economic, rather than political, refugees.<sup>12</sup> Knowing that their very presence here may be deemed illegal by authorities at any time keeps these migrants marginal, and may facilitate their entry into other forms of criminality. Xenophobic violence against, and criminal targeting of, illegal migrants (who are unlikely to report the offence to the police) has been reported in many studies.<sup>13</sup>

This situation was even more extreme in the residential hotels polled in the follow-up survey. Fifty-eight percent had been in their present household less than a year and 93% less than five years. Thirty-six percent were foreign nationals, and 66% had only arrived in the country in the last two years. For most, Hillbrow is seen as a launching pad for immigration to other parts of South Africa, with 83% stating their desire to move elsewhere in the country. Thus, residential hotel residents are even more transient and less stable than the rest of the area's population.

The tensions between all these recent arrivals and longer-term residents may be aggravated by the extremely cramped conditions in which many residents live. Respondents were interviewed in a variety of housing types, but most were flat dwellers: 37% lived in single room flats, and 56% in multiple room flats. A quarter of the households contained only one or two people, while nearly half contained four or more residents, and 13% contained six residents or more. Of single room residences polled, 64% housed three or more people. Thus, nearly a quarter of the households polled contained three or more people living in a single room.

This is, indeed, high density housing, and it can be extremely difficult to ignore cultural differences under such conditions. The cuisine, hygiene, musical tastes, business practices, religious rituals, and romantic behaviour of new migrants can clash with local conditions.

## **Community cohesion**

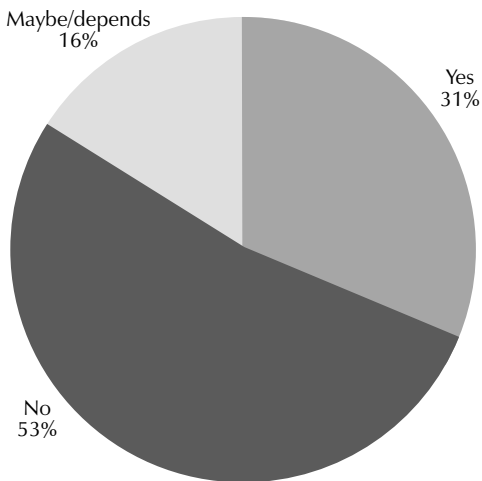
As indicated above, theorists have hypothesised that it is community pressures, rather than the threat of incarceration, that keeps most people within the bounds of the law. Of course, this pressure is lacking where there is very little sense of community identity and where most people live in a state of

anonymity. Community cohesion also allows collective action to prevent crime in both formal and informal ways. For example, if neighbours do not know one another well, then they cannot tell whether the person seen entering next door is likely to be authorised or not.

Despite the high level of transience in the area, a surprisingly positive response was had to questions aimed at gauging community cohesion. One possible explanation lies in the high levels of unemployment and the need for cooperation to survive in an otherwise hostile environment. Most people (79%) could name at least one other person living next door to them, a figure that many affluent suburbs might find hard to beat. This figure varied quite a bit between survey areas, however, from 98% to 67%.

While many people may be on a first name basis with the people next door, they were fairly evenly divided in their response to the question “If you had children under ten in your household, would you leave them with your neighbours overnight?” (Figure 5.1). This figure also varied sharply by survey area, from 14% answering “yes” in one area, to a high of 53% in another.

**Figure 5.1: If you had children under 10 in your household, would you leave them with your neighbours overnight?**



This may reflect a general concern with the safety of children, rather than a direct mistrust of neighbours. Most people think no children under the age of 12 should be allowed to play unsupervised in the neighbourhood (75%), and 88% felt that no child under the age of 17 should be allowed to go out at night with friends. Taking the trust issue out of the child context, nearly two-thirds (65%) said that they knew someone in their neighbourhood who was not a relative who could lend them R100 without interest. This suggests that the inner Johannesburg community is viable and does provide a safety net for its members.

One bastion of community cohesion internationally is religious and volunteer groups. These groupings bring together neighbours of diverse backgrounds, provide social and even financial support, and create a sounding board for issues of concern to the community. In inner Johannesburg, the majority of those polled said they attend a religious or volunteer group in their area at least once a week.

It is possible that these lines of trust could be used for crime prevention purposes but this approach is not presently being utilised. Where people are willing to lend each other money and volunteer their time, there is great potential for collective security action. Recall that 88% responded “no” when asked if their community formed groups or hired people for mutual protection. Only 41 people said their community had a neighbourhood watch, and only 2% had heard of the local community policing forum. That the public could provide a useful source of information to the police is indicated by the remarkable 27% of those polled who said they could name someone in their neighbourhood who makes their living off crime.

## **Perpetrators or victims?**

Recall that when asked who they think commits most of the crime in their area, 63% of the overall sample mentioned “foreigners”, as did 39% of foreign nationals. What is interesting is that the victims of crime also appear to be, disproportionately, international immigrants.

Figure 5.2 compares the levels of criminal victimisation experienced in the last year in inner Johannesburg as reported by the survey respondents. Note that foreign nationals are more likely than average to experience victimisation in every crime category, especially robbery.

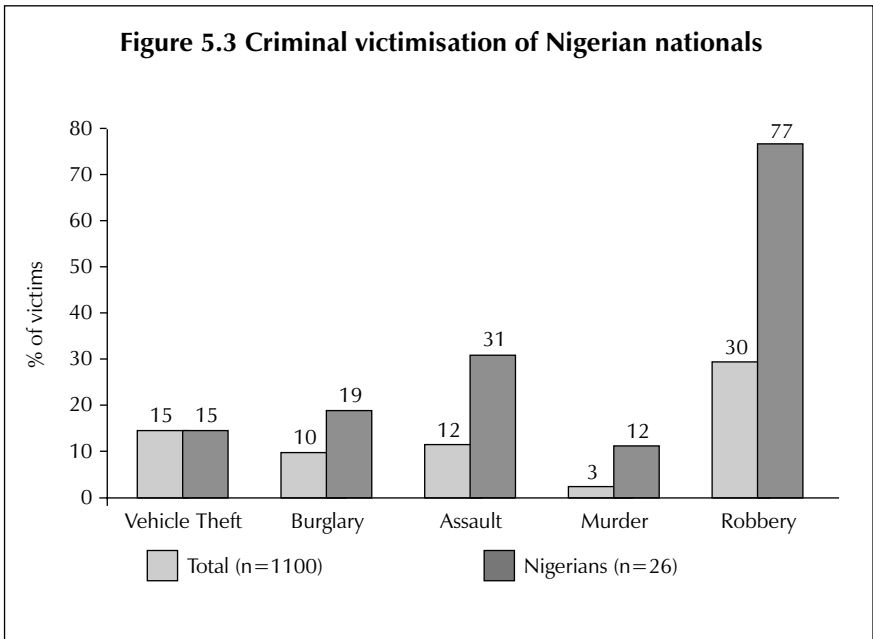
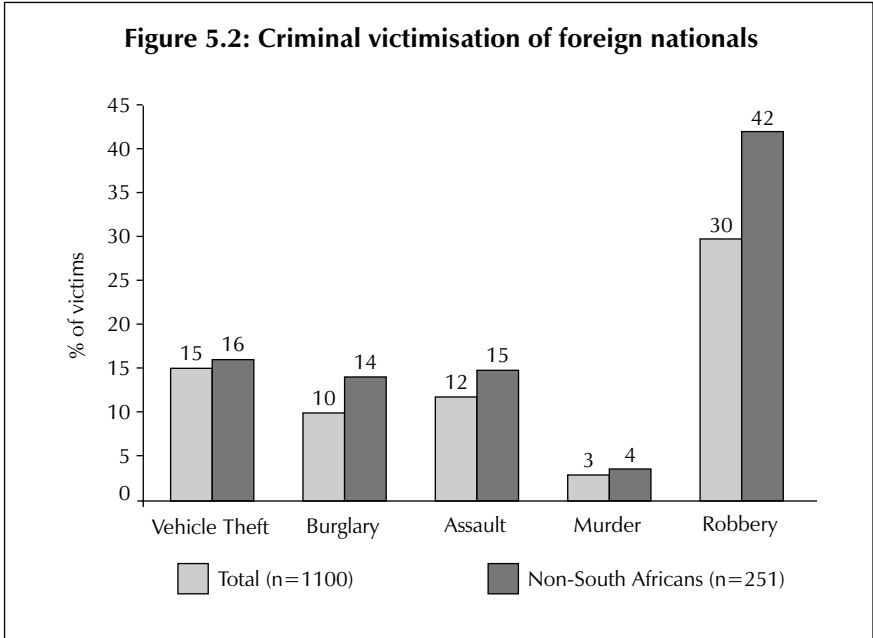


Figure 5.3 shows victimisation levels for one of the most stigmatised national groupings, Nigerian nationals. While there were only 26 Nigerians in the initial survey sample, more than three quarters of them reported being robbed in the last year, and they were more than twice as likely to be assaulted than average. Ninety-two percent said they felt very unsafe walking during the night, and 81% felt a bit or very unsafe during the day, compared to 48% of the population as a whole. Contrary to what many might expect, 20 of the 26 said they would be willing to have their homes searched once a month if this would reduce crime.

## **Residential hotels: the follow-up survey**

Many new migrants to inner Johannesburg (including students at the nearby educational institutions) find their first accommodation in Hillbrow's residential hotels, where medium-term rates can be negotiated without long-term commitments. For this reason, the hotels give special insight into the problems of areas of rapid turnover. Because previous qualitative research indicated that the residential hotels contained a large proportion of foreign migrants (in the survey, 36% of respondents reported being foreign), special interview schedules were devised for them, and an extra set of questions was generated for Nigerian nationals in particular (who comprised 22% of respondents). Additionally, as many of the residential hotels are well known for prostitution, questions aimed at this group were asked of all female residents (35% of respondents, 27% of whom admitted engaging in prostitution).

When asked why they chose to reside in a residential hotel, most residents mentioned factors related to Hillbrow, with 20% saying "location" was the deciding factor, 21% citing their social connections to the hotel, and 8% reporting opportunities for prostitution as their main motivation. A large chunk complained of nowhere else to go (17%), but few cited price as a deciding factor. Most residents pay by the month, with 57% saying the monthly rental was less than R1,000, and 17% between R1,000 and R2,000. None cited prices of over R2,000 a month. Less than a third were compelled to pay all of this, with 55% paying between 10% and 50%, with the rest being covered by roommates. Just over a quarter of hotel residents lacked cooking facilities in their rooms, although nearly all had their own bathrooms.

A quarter of all residents polled claimed that drugs were sold in their building, and every hotel in which surveys were done contained some respondents who said they knew drugs were available. Of these 50 people, 12 respondents

claimed any drug could be bought in their building, 28 specified dagga, 30 specified Mandrax, 27 specified crack cocaine, and one specified ecstasy. Ninety-one percent of the respondents said they thought that the legalisation of drugs would not improve the situation in Hillbrow.

With regard to prostitution, 75% said that women sold sex in their building. As was revealed in later questions, few of these women were responsible for small children, and less than a fifth of respondents (17%) said that children under 12 were left unsupervised in the hotel. It seems that the majority of hotel residents were willing to concede that some illegal activity takes place in their building.

The majority of people in every building had been present during at least one police raid. A third of these people felt the raid had achieved its objectives, but 15% cited various forms of corruption as responsible for limited success. Eighty percent said there had been a Crackdown operation in their area, and 36% felt this had been successful. Sixteen percent of respondents admitted to having been arrested at some point themselves, and 21% claimed that the police had asked them for money in the past. It appears that most residents feel that police efforts to reduce criminal activity have had limited success, and a number have had direct experience of the corruption some blame for this failure.

### ***Foreign hotel dwellers***

A wide range of foreigners were found in the hotels, although young Nigerian men made up by far the single largest grouping (62%), and 92% of these Nigerians described themselves as belonging to the Ibo ethnic group. Ninety percent of all foreign nationals were male, including all of the Nigerians. Two thirds arrived in this country some time within the last two years, with over a third being here less than a year. Only 10% had been to South Africa prior to moving to Hillbrow, but 70% knew someone who was residing here at the time.

These people were drawn to South Africa by a variety of factors, but most related to business or job opportunities. While 14 of the 72 foreign residential hotel residents polled said they would be arrested or killed if they returned to their country of origin, this response might have been motivated by a desire to remain consistent with claims to political asylum. Ten of 45 Nigerians, two of four DRC nationals, and one of two Sierra Leone expatriates made this claim.



Despite many gripes, most of these foreigners were quite happy with what they had found in South Africa. In fact, 43% said their opinion of their prospects here had improved since they had arrived, compared to 33% who said it had stayed the same and only 22% who said it had got worse. A surprising 73% said they would recommend South Africa to their countrymen as a good place to stay, and a quarter said they intended bringing members of their family over. While 11% wanted to leave the country as soon as possible, the majority (58%) wanted to stay in South Africa for as long as they could, but were not sure how they would achieve this goal. Only 5% said they had the intention of applying for citizenship or permanent residency, but 75% said they were, or intended to become, married to a South African.

This is not to say immigration does not have its down sides. A remarkable 62% said they had been physically attacked by South Africans for being a foreigner, and 43% said they had been asked for bribes by South African authorities. Only two people admitted to having been deported. Two thirds claimed they possessed a tertiary qualification, and nearly three quarters felt they had job skills that were not being utilised in South Africa.

This picture of foreign migrants supports previous research findings in many ways while challenging them in others. The group is indeed largely young and male, motivated primarily by an interest in economic gain. But, contrary to previous studies that suggested most immigrants are here for short-term income generation,<sup>14</sup> most of the Hillbrow respondents wanted to forge long-term ties with South Africa. And while they are subject to a wide range of abuses, the bulk of the immigrants were positive about their experience in this country.

### ***Women in the residential hotels***

Hillbrow is a dangerous place, and, given that most people are recent arrivals to the area, it is hard to fathom why women would chose to reside there. Twenty percent of the hotel residents polled cited business or job opportunities, but 27% candidly admitted to engaging in prostitution. These sex workers appear to have been motivated primarily by prospects for economic gain, as 47% said being unemployed and staying at home prompted them to take up streetwalking. An additional 21% said they had been abandoned by a man and left with small children. None said they had been addicted to drugs prior to taking up sex work. Despite an element of choice in taking up sex work, 79% said they would give up sex work if offered a job in a fast food restaurant.

A surprising 87% of the female hotel residents said they had a home elsewhere that they could return to at will. Twenty-one women said they kept their children in a household they maintained outside Hillbrow, while only four said they kept their children with them in the hotel. The majority of the women (61%) had someone else pay their rent, with nine women citing a Nigerian as their keeper. This confirms a trend noted by the author in previous qualitative work.<sup>15</sup>

The vast majority (86%) claimed to have a boyfriend or husband, about a quarter of who were foreign nationals. Nearly all claimed to love this person, although over a third admitted at least occasional beatings by their intimate partner, and nearly a fifth claimed that this abuse was regular.

Thirty percent said they would simply return home if their present building were to be shut down, with just under a quarter saying they would seek another form of accommodation in Hillbrow and 14% saying they would simply go to another residential hotel nearby.

While the sample size is small, the trends are striking. In contrast to its reputation for turning runaways into sex workers, this survey suggests that many of the women living in Hillbrow are, in fact, here by choice. They have homes and families to return to, but have chosen to brave the dangers of inner Johannesburg as an alternative to unemployment.

## CHAPTER 6

# GANGS, DRUGS, AND CRIMINAL MARKETS

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Inner Johannesburg is generally viewed as something more than just a highly unstable and violent area. Beneath the veneer of chaos lies another type of order, an order informed by the power of the underground economy. As this survey shows, the inner city remains the central business district of Johannesburg in more ways than one.

Where the organising principle of a community is organised crime, young men often find employment and identity in gangs of one sort or another. Gangsters earn their keep in a variety of ways, but the highest profits are to be found in the drug trade. Drugs mean drug addicts, most of whom do not hold down nine to-five-jobs. Instead, their need for ready money often drives them into acquisitive crime, but this crime does not always result in cash in hand. They also find themselves in possession of hot merchandise, so drug areas tend to also be areas where stolen goods are traded.

### **‘Gangs’**

The term ‘gang’ is used rather loosely in South Africa. In predominantly black areas like inner Johannesburg, gangs tend to be simply criminal groupings, dependent on the personalities of the individuals involved and without an independent institutional identity. This stands in contrast to coloured areas, where the gangs have adhered to many of the same names, patterns of conduct, and, in some instances, geographic territories since the Second World War.<sup>16</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that most people (71%) did not believe that there are gangs in their neighbourhood. Of those who thought there were gangs, the majority (62%) could not put a name to a gang. The inability to put a name to the criminal association is indicative that these gangs are groupings typical of other predominantly black areas. Twenty people said they felt there was a positive side to gangs in the area, with most mentioning either security or financial support provided to the community. Most of these felt the police were not reducing gang activity in the area.

## Drugs

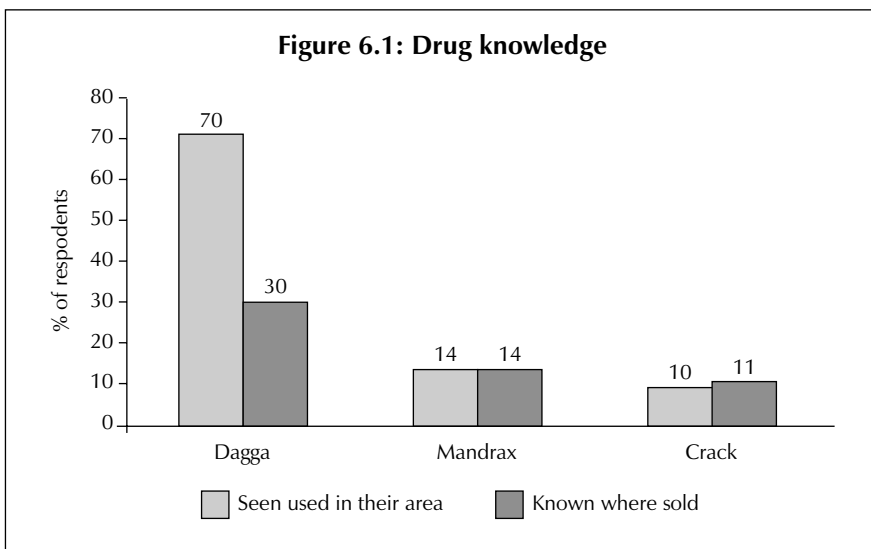
Gangs tend to be involved in a range of income generating criminal activities, typically including drug dealing. Respondents were asked two sets of questions about drugs in their area:

- whether they had personally seen certain drugs consumed; and
- whether they knew where certain drugs were sold in their area.

Respondents were not asked about their own drug use, because this sort of question does not generally yield good results in household surveys.

Those who claim to have seen certain drugs consumed came about this experience either because they themselves or their close acquaintances use the drugs, or because the drugs are openly consumed for all to see. Public consumption of drugs is indicative of the general prevalence of drug use, its 'normalisation' in the area concerned, as well as disregard for law enforcement.

Knowledge of the location of drug markets is also indicative of prevalence, as well as indicating that the markets are 'open', meaning that anyone can buy in the area, without personal connections to drug vendors. Open markets are



also indicative of disregard for enforcement. Drugs can only be readily sold to unknown buyers if there is little fear of undercover stings, and if purchase sites are well known to the general public, this calls into question the commitment of the police to drug interdiction.

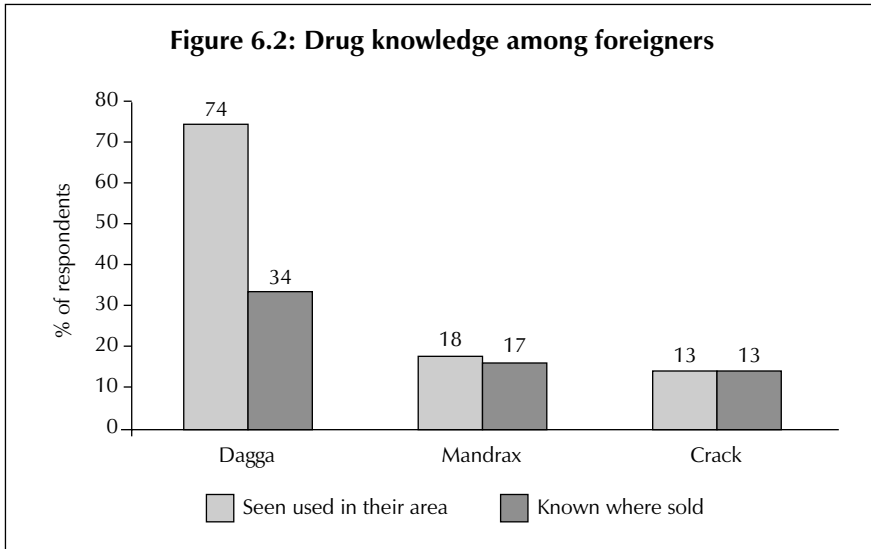
Most people (70%) said they had personally seen dagga smoked in their area, and 30% said they knew where it was sold (Figure 6.1). Aside from indicating its prevalence in the area, it is remarkable that 70% of the community is capable of identifying the behaviour of consuming an illicit drug. That nearly one in three inner city residents can tell you where to buy a prohibited substance shows just how lawless an area inner Johannesburg really is. Most people mentioned the streets (75%) or private flats (19%) as the source of this drug. This also indicates that cannabis is dealt openly in public spaces, accessible to any passers-by.

Although only 14% said they had seen Mandrax smoked, nearly all of these also knew where it was sold. Given the dangerousness and addictive quality of this bootleg sedative, this level of knowledge is frighteningly high. Furthermore, Mandrax is not a drug commonly used in public spaces, since consumption generally results in a period of incapacitation. This, teamed with the fact that most who had seen it consumed knew where to buy it, suggests a more intimate knowledge of the drug and its users. Public spaces again led the list of market sites, with about half mentioning the streets, 18% mentioning certain hotels and 29% mentioning private flats.

Just under 10% had seen crack smoked, and an even greater number knew where it was sold. This suggests that the sales locations for this drug have achieved a sort of local notoriety. When asked about these locations, 27% mentioned residential hotels, with 47% pointing to the streets and a quarter saying private flats. Once again, it is remarkable how widespread the drug is in the area: one in ten inner Johannesburg residents have actually seen crack cocaine consumed. This in a country where the drug was only seized by the police for the first time in 1995.

There is also a commonly held view that drugs are primarily controlled by foreign nationals.<sup>17</sup> This assertion is supported by the higher levels of knowledge claimed by foreigners in the survey. Across drug categories and questions, foreigners were slightly more knowledgeable than average (Figure 6.2).

Not surprisingly, those surveyed in the residential hotel follow-up had considerably higher levels of drug knowledge. Ironically, given the reputation of



the Ibos in the area,<sup>18</sup> if the Nigerian residents are removed from the sample, levels of drug knowledge are higher still. In addition, hotel respondents were much more likely to name hotels as the place to buy drugs, including dagga (30%), Mandrax (72%) and crack (68%).

## Impact of drug use

Crack is a drug that is highly associated with robbery, because of the nature of the addiction. Crack is consumed in binges, with doses being closely spaced, rarely more than an hour apart. Priced at an average of R50 a rock, a single user can consume crack non-stop for upwards of 40 hours, desperately trying to recapture the high of the first rock and to avoid the 'crash' of coming down off the drug. Between rocks, users need to gather funds for the next hit quickly. For women, this tends to mean trading sex for the drug. For men, it often means getting cash or a highly negotiable commodity (such as a cell phone) in the quickest way possible – by taking it directly from someone else. It is therefore possible that the high prevalence of robbery and crack use in inner Johannesburg are connected.

This assertion was somewhat supported in an earlier study done by the ISS and the Medical Research Council in which arrestees had their urine tested

for drugs (the SA-ADAM study). Those arrested for all forms of robbery were more likely than average to test positive for cocaine.<sup>19</sup>

The drugs – crime link is also backed by public opinion: in the initial survey, 81% said they believe drugs contribute to crime in their area, and over a fifth said they personally knew someone who needs drugs every day. These facts underscore the commonly held view that substance abuse is at the core of the area's crime problem.

## **Markets**

There were also high levels of knowledge about the locations of other markets for illicit goods. About 6% of the respondents said they knew where to buy illegal guns, most mentioning private flats. Thirteen percent said they knew where other stolen property could be bought, with over half mentioning the streets as the source. This again suggests that criminal activity is not terribly hidden in inner Johannesburg, that the community has the knowledge to help law enforcement if they are made to feel comfortable doing so, and that fear of apprehension is not great in the minds of those who deal in illicit goods.

## CHAPTER 7

# EXPERIENCES OF ROBBERY

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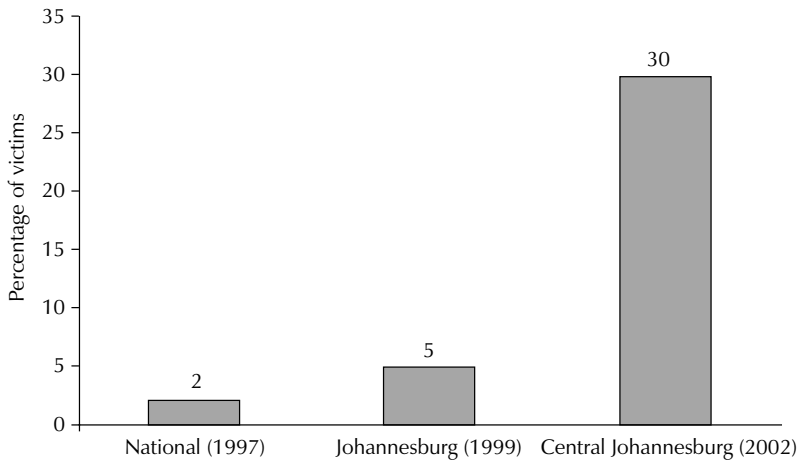
The most commonly reported crime experienced was robbery, which was defined for the respondents as “the taking of property by force or threat of force.” A remarkable 30% of those polled in the initial survey (325 cases) had personally been robbed in the last year in inner Johannesburg. This level of robbery is unparalleled anywhere else in the world, and past surveys of Johannesburg in general have failed to detect such high levels (Figure 7.1). If the Census population figures are correct, this means that 33,600 robberies took place in the 23.5 square kilometres that make up the two station areas over the course of a year. It suggests that those who live in inner Johannesburg for three years are virtually assured of being violently relieved of their property at some point.

These figures almost defy belief until the police figures and the rate of under-reporting are taken into consideration. Based on the number of robberies reported in the past, the two stations could be projected to record nearly 10,000 robberies during the period covered by the survey. If, as the survey indicates, only 36% of these robberies are reported to the police, the survey estimates gel with the police statistics, although problems with the Census figures and non-resident reporting complicate this analysis.

### **Nature of the offence**

Also remarkable was the high level of violence associated with these crimes. Guns were used in over half (56%) of the cases reported, with knives featuring in another 26%. These are not simple purse snatchings, but robberies that would be classed as ‘aggravated’ had charges been filed. Over a fifth (22%) of the cases resulted in injury, and 60% of these injuries required medical attention. This means that in a shocking 13% of the cases, these robberies were accompanied by assault serious enough to result in substantial injury. In three cases, the victims reported that someone died. Either robberies in inner Johannesburg are uncommonly violent, or only the most serious offences were reported to the fieldworkers.



**Figure 7.1: Comparative robbery victimisation rates, one year period**

Sources: Stats SA, UNCRI

This suggests that getting the property was not all that the offenders were after, and that these crimes were somewhat 'expressive' in their nature. Robbery becomes the preferred method of acquiring stolen property (over simple theft or burglary) when there is a need for immediate cash (as with drug addicts) or where the violent confrontation is, to some extent, an end in itself, a means of expressing anger and frustration. Alternatively, given the rough qualities of the neighbourhood, it is possible that successful robbery in inner Johannesburg requires active violence to assure compliance.

Also frightening was the public nature of these offences, which indicates the brazenness with which they were committed. Nearly 80% of these incidents took place in some public place, including half that occurred on the street in a residential area. In 63% of the cases, the victim was alone, and over 90% of the robbers were in groups of two or more. In fact, in over 60% of the cases, the robbers numbered three or more. It is highly unlikely the victims attempted to resist under these circumstances, which makes the violence seem all the more gratuitous.

Because robbery is a crime in which the victim generally confronts the perpetrator face to face, it was possible to ask the victims about the identity of their

assailants. Just under a third felt that the perpetrators were locally based, although they did not know them. In 14% of the cases, the robbers were known to the victim. In two cases, the robbers were identified as police officials.

The people of inner Johannesburg live in a multi-national community, and this exposure made them confident enough to even identify the robbers by their national origin. If these identifications were accurate, Zimbabweans were over-represented among the robbers, with 38 cases against them, accounting for 12% of all robberies reported. Zimbabweans make up just 6% of the survey population. Mozambicans were held responsible for 4% of the crimes, South African coloureds for 4%, and South African blacks for 56%.

Of course, it is impossible to say whether these perceptions were substantiated or merely the result of popular prejudice. In 1999, the SAPS Brixton Murder and Robbery Squad publicly blamed 60% of all bank and serious house robberies in Johannesburg on Zimbabweans<sup>20</sup>, and this image may have endured in the public imagination.

During the ISS time use study, the local police indicated that a good deal of the street robberies are tied to people getting intoxicated after getting their monthly paycheque, and then being relieved of their funds when they are too inebriated to resist. It has also been postulated that the need for drugs may be a major factor driving robbery, particularly in Hillbrow.<sup>21</sup> The reports of the victims back up these contentions to a small degree. The victim reported believing that the criminal was under the influence of drugs or alcohol in 15% of the cases. Victims admitted to being under the influence of alcohol or drugs in 6% of the cases, but in another 3%, they weren't sure if they were intoxicated at the time or not.

Cash was taken in half of the robberies, followed in popularity by electronic equipment (48%), and jewellery (27%) (multiple items were often taken). According to assessments of the police gathered during the ISS time use study, most of the 'electronic equipment' was probably cell-phones, although this distinction was not made in the survey. Surprisingly, only one case of robbery of a firearm was reported by the respondents. Most of the property was uninsured (87%) and was recovered by the police in only 2% of the cases. This leaves most of the victims with little incentive to go to the police with the matter.

In seven of the eight cases in which property was recovered, it was recovered in inner Johannesburg. This suggests that property stolen in the area remains in the area, but caution is required in making this assumption. Recovery of

property is most likely if the offender is apprehended very close to the time of the offence. In these cases, there is simply not time for the booty to be relocated to another destination.

## Reporting

It is therefore not surprising that only 36% of these robberies were reported to the police. This figure is low in comparison to other surveys in South Africa, where the percentage reporting ranges between 40% and 50%, and low in comparison to the other two major crimes surveyed, burglary (66%) and assault (47%) (Figure 4.3).

Many of those who did not report said it was not important enough or necessary (46%), a common reason for not reporting, often reflected in international surveys. But over a quarter of the respondents said they did not report because they did not trust the police. This 25% is cause for concern.

Failure to report may also be tied to unpleasant experiences in the past. Only 42% of those who did report said they were happy with the initial police response, which was low in comparison to burglary (50%) and assault (55%). If past experiences were as bad as the present one, many could be expected not to report again.

Even those who did report the crime may not have had the incident recorded in the official police figures. As discussed in Chapter 4, a case number is given when a docket is opened for a complaint. Failure to open a docket means that the case will not be investigated further and will not be recorded in the official statistics. Having a case number is vital for the victim as well, because without it, it will be very difficult to track the progress of the case. Only 84% of victims of robbery polled reported receiving a case number, when, in theory, all of them should have. It is possible that they did receive the number but simply did not realise its significance, but this too could be considered a failing on the part of the police.

## Follow-up

Since the survey asked about crimes that occurred in the last year, it is possible that the police had not yet had the time to follow up on all of the cases reported by the respondents at the time of the poll. This applies to robbery as

well as the other crime types. In addition, the number of cases in which follow-up was reported was so small for most crime types that it becomes impossible to generalise. Nonetheless, the figures do have some value, as long as their importance is not overstated.

It may be that detectives had not yet had a chance to contact the victim, but unless there was a crime wave immediately before the survey, it does appear that reporting a crime does not guarantee that an investigation will follow. The respondents said detectives made contact with them in only 33% of the cases where the crime was reported. Of course, not all cases merit further investigation. In cases where victims report at the outset that they would not be able to identify the robbers, where there are no additional witnesses, and where the property taken is not unique (such as cash), there is very limited scope for follow-up. If victims have this explained to them by the police at the outset, it is possible satisfaction levels might be higher.

Only 11 of the 325 victims knew of an arrest being made. This represents an arrest rate of 3%, considerably lower than the 15% 'detection rate' (including all cases referred to court, declared unfounded, and withdrawn) claimed by the police for aggravated robbery based on recorded crimes.<sup>22</sup> It is possible that arrests were made and plea bargains entered without requiring notification of the victim, but failing to report this success to those who value it most represents a failure to truly complete the case.

Six of these 11 who knew of an arrest were required to attend court and four of these six were required to attend four times. This finding was not surprising – it was in keeping with what was discovered in the ISS survey for the National Prosecuting Authority in 2002.<sup>23</sup> But this represents a substantial incursion into the victim's time, whose input in most robbery cases is fairly straightforward.

Only half, three people, had testified at trial at the time of the survey, and there had been two convictions, both resulting in jail sentences. While more arrests may still be forthcoming, this represents a conviction rate of six out of every 1,000 robberies. However, three victims reported that the case was still pending, and if all three cases are won, it is possible that that this rate could be pumped up to 1.5%.

At the end of all of this, only 22% of those who reported the crime said they were happy with the way the authorities handled the case, with equal numbers blaming the uniformed police and the detectives. However, half of those

contacted by detectives were satisfied, which suggests that more follow-up would go a long way in improving client satisfaction. Of those contacted by a detective who were not satisfied, 60% blamed the detectives.

## Implications

The results provide some basic suggestions for policing robberies in inner Johannesburg:

- Half of these robberies are conducted on residential streets, most by groups of three or more, about half with at least one firearm. This would suggest that large and well-armed anti-robbery patrols, targeting and searching groups of local young men, would be an effective strategy.
- The public should be educated on how to respond to a robbery situation, so as to avoid unnecessary violence.
- All victims reporting should be given a case number, and the significance of this number should be impressed on the victim.
- When reporting, victims should be informed as to whether or not to expect detective follow-up, and detectives should follow up, at least by telephone, in as many cases as possible.
- An ongoing campaign to win public confidence should be conducted in order to win over the 25% of victims who do not report robberies because they “do not trust the police”.

## CHAPTER 8

# EXPERIENCES OF BURGLARY

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Burglary has a wide range of definitions internationally. It was defined for survey respondents as incidents in which “someone breaks into your home in order to take your property.” This definition is broader than many, and allowed respondents to include cases that better fit the definition of robbery than burglary.

Exactly 10% of the households said they had experienced burglary in the last year in inner Johannesburg, and two additional cases of attempted burglary were also reported. This rate compares favourably with that found in other victim surveys (Figure 4.1). This may be partially attributable to the superior security from break-ins found in blocks of flats: few burglars were able to secure access through windows. Another factor may be the high rate of robbery in the area: acquisitive criminals do not need to adopt stealthy methods when forceful ones will do.

### **Nature of the offence**

Unfortunately, a large portion of these ‘burglaries’ were quite forceful. The crime took place after dark in only 53% of the cases, so cover of night is clearly irrelevant to these offenders. People were at home in an alarming 28% of the incidents. Not surprisingly, violence or threats or both were used in 45% of the cases in which there was anyone at home to threaten. Guns were present in almost a third of these crimes, and injuries resulted in two cases.

Thus, about 13% of these incidents were, in fact, armed robberies in the home. This type of crime combines the threat to personal safety found in a robbery with the sense of invasion of private space of a burglary into a horrific new offence. Similar crimes were found to be common in a victim survey in Cato Manor, as the lack of security of informal structures lends itself to this sort of invasion.<sup>24</sup> The legislature may want to consider the possibility of statutorily defining this crime and singling it out for especially harsh punishment.

As in Cato Manor, about 30% of the burglars in inner Johannesburg simply forced the front door open. This was probably made easier by the poor condition of many of the buildings in the area, but one wonders what the neighbours thought of what must have been a noisy entry down the passage. In 12% of the cases, a doorway that was usually locked was left open by mistake, clearly a fatal error in an area like inner Johannesburg. Most (72%) of the victims increased their security precautions after this incident, a wise decision given the deterrent effect of target hardening, but one limited by the fact that most of the respondents were tenants.

Twenty-two percent of the victims said they felt they knew who burgled their homes. This unusually high level of knowledge is attributable in part to the fact that many of these people were witnesses to the crime. Thirty percent of these knew the criminals by name, just over a quarter relied on community knowledge about their identities, and 22% relied on others who had witnessed the theft.

Based on this information, burglary seems to be a group activity, usually involving two or three people. Most were unsure of the ages of the perpetrators, but those who ventured a guess were as likely as not to place them over the age of 25. Almost twice as many people felt the criminals were part of an organised group as not. In three cases the burglars were identified as Zimbabwean, in four as Mozambican, and in 37 as South Africans.

## Reporting

Despite the fact that only 15% of the households were insured, two thirds reported this crime to the police, almost twice as many as reported robbery. This is in line with burglary reporting rates found in other surveys (Figure 4.3). Burglary reporting may be facilitated by the fact that the police can be expected to respond to the scene of the crime, which, after all, is the victim's home.

More than half of those who did not report said it was not important enough or necessary, but 26% said they did not trust the police. Almost exactly the same share cited distrust as the reason for not reporting robberies, which suggests a 'sceptical quarter' that may exist across crime victim types in inner Johannesburg.

Exactly half of those who did report were happy with the initial police response, and 83% said they received a case number. Comparing this to the

robbery data, this again suggests that a certain amount of under-recording may be built into the police statistics, perhaps as much as 15%.

## Follow-up

Just over half of those reporting the crime said they were contacted by a detective, a figure that, although higher than for robbery, is shamefully low given the nature of the offence, the potential for physical evidence, and the likelihood of witnesses. Despite this, the victims knew of arrests in ten cases (14%), which is nearly identical to the national clearance rate for this crime and might actually be higher given that, in all likelihood, not all victims were notified of arrests. These may be, in part, the result of rapid response to the crime scene.

Six of these ten victims who knew of an arrest were required to attend court, with half appearing four times. At the time of the survey, four had actually testified at trial and two cases had resulted in convictions, both carrying jail terms. The potential for reaching the national 5% conviction rate is still viable.

Property was recovered in just under 10% of the cases. Eighty percent of this was recovered in inner Johannesburg. While once again much of this may have been recovered in hot pursuit of the criminals, this does give some indication that stolen property may be retained in the inner Johannesburg area.

Despite all this, only 19% of victims were happy with the way their case was handled. Among those contacted by detectives, satisfaction was still only 38%. Most (61%) blamed the uniformed police, followed by a third blaming the detectives, and 4% blaming the prosecution. This breakdown is due in part to the fact that only half were contacted by a detective, and only a small number of cases went to trial. Among those contacted by a detective, 30% blamed the detectives, 24% the uniformed police, and 5% the prosecutors. Some of this discontent may be due to the fact that people often have unrealistic expectations of a burglary investigation, particularly with regard to dusting for fingerprints.

## Implications

The results provide some basic suggestions for dealing with burglaries in inner Johannesburg:



- In high-rise areas, ‘visible policing’ will not deter residential burglary, so crime prevention will require enhanced community involvement, target hardening, and market disruption.
- With regard to community involvement, the fact that burglars are entering through the front door by force and that 22% of the victims thought they knew who burgled them suggests that police structured cooperation between neighbours to improve building security could go a long way.
- Target hardening through household security assessments and ‘Operation ID’-type property marking could be helpful.
- Since 13% of respondents knew where to buy stolen property in their area, there is much scope for community cooperation in this regard, and market sites should be made forfeit to the state or administratively closed.
- A high level of dissatisfaction (81%) despite a 10% property recovery rate suggests that the public needs education about the nature of burglary investigation and the realistic chances of recovering property and making arrests.
- As with robbery, there is a need to win the trust of the ‘sceptical quarter’ and to improve detective follow-up rates.
- The alarming crime of household robbery needs to be addressed, possibly by enhanced penalties under statute.

## CHAPTER 9

# EXPERIENCES OF ASSAULT AND MURDER

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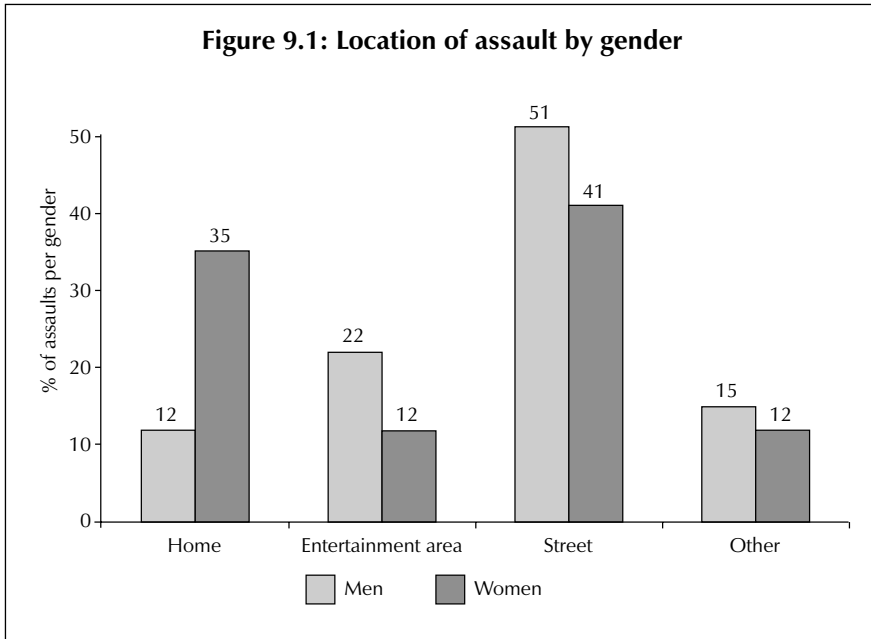
The motivation for robbery and burglary are easy to understand: inner Johannesburg is a poor area with a drug problem, and people need money. But the area also suffers from crimes whose motivation is more difficult to tease out in a quantitative questionnaire. Murders often occur in the commission of acquisitive crime, but much of the time the motivation is far more personal. The spark that sets off a serious assault is frequently financial, but the rage that follows has far deeper roots.

### **Assault**

Twelve percent of the respondents said they had experienced assault in the last year in inner Johannesburg, which means we have 132 cases of assault to analyse. These attacks were mostly very serious, with the majority involving guns (34%) or knives (31%) and 80% involving injuries so severe that they required medical attention. This means that, in the last year, six percent of the survey sample (and, by extension, the resident population of inner Johannesburg as a whole) required medical attention for wounds suffered in a criminal attack.

What is the cause of all this violence? It is impossible to get at all the nuance in a household survey, but trends in the data do suggest a typology of sorts. The identity of the victim, the identity of the perpetrator, the location of the attack, the presence of drugs or alcohol, and the victim's perception of motivation are all factors to consider in trying to distinguish one violent attack from another. This section will first look at assault, then the small number of murder cases.

Victims of assault were no more likely to be unemployed than average, but were more likely to be casual labourers. West Africans and coloureds were more likely than average to be victims. Residents of inner Johannesburg were disproportionately represented among the attacked. While gender has no impact on the likelihood of being a victim, women were far more likely to be

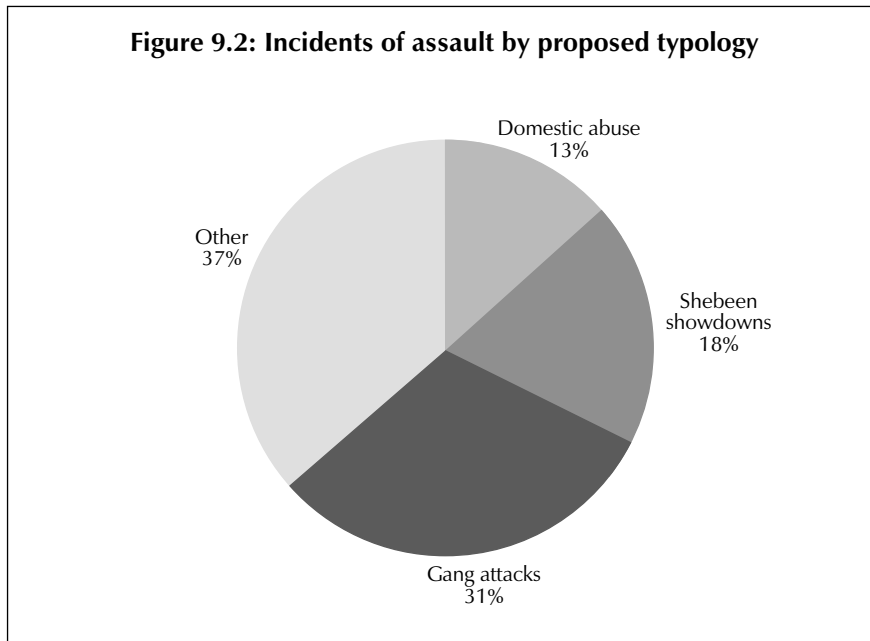


assaulted in the home than men. Men were more likely to be assaulted on the street or attacked in a shebeen than women (Figure 9.1).

## Nature of the offence

There are many different circumstances in which people attack one another. While the results and the criminal charge are the same, the circumstances and motivation behind them vary considerably. Before discussing prospects for policing and crime prevention, it is essential that some sort of typology be gleaned from the available data. This can be done by looking at the identity of the perpetrator and the location of the offence.

While a sizable minority remain unclassified, at least three distinct patterns can be discerned. Clearly, a good portion of the attacks on women in the home were incidents of domestic violence, while shebeen attacks form a genre of their own. These two combined constitute a minority of the crimes (32%), however. Attacks on the street involving unknown assailants were distressingly common, with 39 recorded incidents (30%) (Figure 9.2).



***Domestic abuse***

There were 17 cases of women attacked at home where the sole perpetrator was identified as the victim’s spouse or lover. These cases could fairly be categorised as domestic abuse cases. In 14 of these incidents, the victim described the perpetrator’s motive as jealousy. In 15, the victim said her partner was under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and in five cases, the victim admitted to being under the influence as well.

In seven cases (40%), the victim reported the crime to the police. It is unlikely that this represents the reporting rate for domestic abuse, because many victims who would not report to the police would not report to a survey-taker either because they do not regard the incident as assault or because they consider the matter personal. Three of the women who did not report said they were too embarrassed to do so, while four said they used other means to resolve the situation.

Twelve women (71%) said that the injuries they sustained as a result of this attack required medical attention, which indicates the level of seriousness of

the assault required before the victim chose to report the crime to the surveyor. Half of the women requiring medical attention reported the crime to the police, while only one woman who did not require medical attention reported. Of the seven women who reported the crime, five were satisfied with the police response, which is very reassuring. Four of these responses included an arrest and in two cases, there was a conviction and a prison sentence.

Five of the 17 women said they fought back, and four felt they had provoked the attack. Eight said they thought that their lover would attack them again.

There were an additional six attacks in the home in which the attacker was another relative or household member, including one attempted rape, one firearm assault and three stabbings.

### ***Shebeen showdowns***

Victims described the location of the attack as a 'shebeen or other entertainment area' in 24 cases (18% of all assault cases). In 18 of these incidents (75%), the victim admitted being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time. In 17 of these, the perpetrator was also believed to be under the influence and their motivation was sudden personal anger towards the victim. These incidents are likely some form of bar dispute gone bad.

In 13 of the 18 cases, the victims were men. Weapons were used in ten of the attacks, and in 11 cases the injuries required medical attention. Ten men and all five of the women said they tried to fight back during the assault. Only four felt they provoked the attack.

The fact the victims felt aggrieved is supported by the fact that the attack was reported to the police in eight cases. Of these, one conviction and jail term was secured, and two cases are still pending.

### ***Gang attacks***

In half the cases, the victim did not know the perpetrator. The 39 cases in which multiple, unknown people attacked the victim on the street or in some other open area represent a particularly distressing form of violence. Some of these crimes were reckoned by the victim to be botched rapes, robberies, or

other financially motivated attacks (35%), but they believed the rest involve a range of motives. Four of these were thought to be based in an ethnic or political motivation, while 19 involved unknown or undisclosed motives.

Local police commanders believe that alcohol plays a large roll in these attacks. They argue that even if the motive was not made explicit, most are attempted robberies where force was used in advance and only after was it discovered that the victim had nothing to steal. But in only 17% of the cases was the victim able to say that the attackers were under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

A gun was used in 40% of the cases, and a knife in another 28%. Thus, 68% were clearly assaults with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm. Nearly 90% involved more than one attacker. There were witnesses in two thirds of the cases, but they failed to help almost 60% of the time. Experience as either a victim or a witness to these crimes can be expected to leave residents with strong insecurity about their own safety, even in public places.

These group attacks were also seen in the overall sample, including cases where the victim knew the offenders. Only 28% of the cases overall involved one attacker, with another 27% involving two and nearly half involving three or more.

## Reporting

While the police are often accused of treating assaults as less serious crimes, particularly domestic violence, performance on assault cases in inner Johannesburg was impressive. In the overall sample, 47% said they reported this crime to the police. This is higher than most assault reporting rates seen elsewhere, but may be tied to the fact that these assaults were quite severe. In some cases, reporting may have been linked to seeking medical attention, as police investigate gunshot wounds and the like presenting at the local trauma units.

Of those who did report, 55% were satisfied with the initial police response, a rate higher than for robbery or burglary. Objective factors also point to exceptional police performance, as 92% received a case number. This is particularly good given that, unlike property crimes, case numbers are not required for insurance claims in assault cases.

All this may be tied to the likelihood of a conviction, however. Since 53% of the perpetrators were known by the victims prior to the assault, arrests were made considerably easier for these crimes than others.

## Follow-up

In 53% of the cases, detectives followed up, and in 39% of the cases, an arrest was made. Both of these figures are much higher than for robbery and burglary, and is no doubt due to the fact that the crime is interpersonal, with victims knowing the whereabouts of the perpetrators.

Fifty-eight percent of those whose assailant was arrested attended court, which is about the same as the other offences reviewed. Of these 14 victims, four attended twice, four attended three times, four attended four times, and two attended five times. The reasons for these multiple appearances are unclear, given that testimony in these cases should be straightforward, but the problem of multiple witness appearances was highlighted in a recent ISS survey of those attending court.<sup>25</sup>

There was a conviction in ten of 24 cases where an arrest was made, with nine acquittals and five cases still pending. This rather unimpressive record is difficult to explain with the present data. It is possible that the victims referred to cases as 'acquittals' that were withdrawn due to their own lack of cooperation. In nine of the ten convictions, the accused was sent to prison, which reflects the seriousness of the assaults.

Overall, 27% of the victims polled were satisfied with the final outcome of the case, which is higher than either robbery (22%) or burglary (19%). About half of those contacted by a detective were satisfied with the state's response to the case, while none of those who were not contacted by a detective were satisfied. About 40% of those who were contacted by a detective but were not satisfied blamed the detective and about 40% the uniformed police, with 13% blaming prosecutors and 7% the courts.

## Murder

While the sample size is much smaller, interesting insights can still be gleaned from those households that had experienced murder.

A total of 22 people said someone who slept in their household every night (a blood or marital relation in 90% of the cases) had been murdered in the last 12 months in inner Johannesburg. Because the number of cases is so small, raw numbers instead of percentages are used in the discussion below.

A similar typology can be seen for murder as for assault. Four were believed to be cases of spouses or lovers killing either their mate or another out of jealousy. Five apparent attempted robberies and one attempted rape resulted in the death of the victim. Alcohol or drugs were believed to have been involved in six killings. In four instances, the murder was thought to be the culmination of a problem that started outside inner Johannesburg. In six cases, the surviving household members did not know who killed their loved one, or why.

Alarmingly, more than half (14) of these incidents occurred on the streets, while five occurred in or in front of the home. Nineteen cases involved a gun, three involved a knife. These are noisy public killings, similar to many of the assaults, and, similarly, they must leave the community with a deep sense of insecurity.

Twelve people, more than half, said they thought they knew who committed the crime. Three actually witnessed the murder, three relied on police reports, four relied on the evidence of others who witnessed the killing, and two based their claim on general community knowledge. In nine cases, the murderer was believed to be from outside inner Johannesburg. In 11 cases, the murder was felt to be part of an ongoing problem in which more people are likely to die. Of course, the victim may have interpreted this to include the ongoing crime situation. In four cases, the death was seen as part of a problem originating outside inner Johannesburg.

## **Implications**

The survey results suggest a few ideas about assaults in inner Johannesburg and the appropriate police response:

- Since most of the assaults reported to the fieldworkers were very serious, it is likely that many lesser assaults are not even considered criminal matters in inner Johannesburg, and public education campaigns aimed at increasing awareness of, in particular, domestic abuse will likely raise reported assault levels.



- Given the important role alcohol appears to play in a variety of assaults, bars and shebeens that serve visibly intoxicated people should be treated as 'bad buildings' and shut down, either through asset forfeiture or administratively, while proprietors should have their licenses revoked.
- Enforcing the relatively minor offences of public intoxication and weapons possession could avert more serious incidents.
- The nature of the many gang attacks and unclassified assaults needs to be researched, as does possible faction fighting from outside the area (particularly from KwaZulu-Natal) that manifests itself in inner Johannesburg.

## CHAPTER 10

# EXPERIENCES OF VEHICULAR CRIMES

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Like murders, vehicular crimes are also represented by a rather small number of cases, due in part to the fact that only 28% of the households in inner Johannesburg own a motor vehicle. Working with a small number of cases limits the usefulness of the data, but some general statements can be made.

### **Car theft**

Forty-eight people reported having a vehicle stolen in the last year, out of the 309 households reporting having a vehicle. This means 15% of those owning vehicles in our sample had their car stolen in last year.

Just under half of these thefts occurred near the home, with another 42% elsewhere in inner Johannesburg. While details were not taken on the make and model of the vehicle, it is likely, given the poverty of the area, that many of these cars were older vehicles. Over a third of these vehicles had no security features, but 30% had an alarm and 19% had a gear lock.

The vast majority of victims (85%) reported the theft to the police (41 cases), despite the fact that two thirds of the vehicles were not insured. The police clearly understand the importance of giving case numbers in cases of vehicular theft, because all 41 who reported the crime said they had received a case number. Thus, two thirds of the victims did not need a case number for insurance purposes, but all of them recall receiving one nonetheless.

This supports the argument that, for other crime types, those who say they did not receive a case number indeed did not receive one. Whether the number was issued and not delivered remains unclear, but it is possible that reported cases are not always being recorded. The fact that many people say they did not receive a case number cannot be simply ascribed to faulty memory.

One reason for victims without insurance reporting the crime is the high level of police performance with regard to vehicle theft. Overall, 61% of those who

reported the theft said they had been contacted by a detective. The vehicle was recovered in 14 cases, or about 30% of the time. In half of these cases, the vehicle was found elsewhere in Johannesburg, and half outside the area. This indicates that a large portion of vehicles stolen in the area are moved elsewhere for sale.

Despite the fact that 14 vehicles out of 42 stolen were recovered, an arrest was made in only three cases, according to the respondents. This makes one wonder how the other 11 cars were recovered. It is possible that these vehicles were found in raids on large chop shops, or recovered from drivers who bought them from the thief, and no charges were brought on the individual theft our respondents suffered.

Although the number is small, it is alarming that, of the three cases in which an arrest was made and the victim called to court, two of the respondents said that they had been induced to change their testimony through bribes or threats. This suggests an organised activity in which witness intimidation or influencing is part of doing business.

## Hijacking

Thirty people (3%) reported having been the victim of a hijacking, and two people reported attempts, in inner Johannesburg in the previous year. This is an individual crime, rather than a household crime, because respondents could be hijacked while driving another person's vehicle.

Most of the hijackings occurred near home (41%) or elsewhere in inner Johannesburg (59%). Most (58%) reported that both threats and violence were used during the crime. With 97% of these cases involving a gun, it seems nearly impossible to commit this crime without one.

Hijacking is a particularly brutal form of robbery. Injuries were sustained in a surprising 34% of the cases, compared to 22% for other forms of robbery. Since nearly all of these crimes were committed with a firearm, it is not surprising that 91% of the injuries required medical attention. One death was reported, though clearly not that of the reporting victim. While the small number of cases makes it impossible to generalise, it seems your chances of being shot or otherwise seriously injured during an inner Johannesburg hijacking could be as great as one in three.

Hijacking seems to be a group activity. Most of these cases involve more than one assailant, with 31% involving two and 66% involving three or more. In contrast to the car theft cases, hijack victims always saw their perpetrators, and report a variety of ethnic types being involved. Eighty-eight percent of these hijackings were reported, despite the fact that only 38% of these vehicles were insured.

Once again, one reason for reporting was probably stellar police performance. All but one of the victims received a case number. Detectives followed up in just over half of the cases, but three arrests (10%) were made. Oddly, none of these victims were required to attend court, and so none were subject to the bribes or threats found in vehicular theft cases. The vehicle was recovered in a surprisingly high one third of the cases.

## Implications

While the numbers of cases are very small, possible implications of this data include:

- Recovery rates of about one in three vehicles stolen suggest good police performance in the way that matters most to the victims.
- Victims recall being given case numbers in the vast majority of cases, even when not insured, which suggests that, for other crime types, the suggestion that a case number was not given should be taken seriously.
- It appears that very few hijackings occur without the use of firearms, so gun control could have direct impacts on this crime type.
- More research is needed on the possibility that vehicle theft syndicates are involved in witness tampering.

## CHAPTER 11

# WHAT VICTIMS WANT

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The preceding chapters paint a rather depressing picture about the criminal vulnerability of the residents of inner Johannesburg. The remaining portion of this monograph is dedicated to finding solutions. This chapter deals with what the victims themselves say they most wanted after the crime. It is an attempt to gain guidance from those who have suffered as to how best the state and others might respond to their needs.

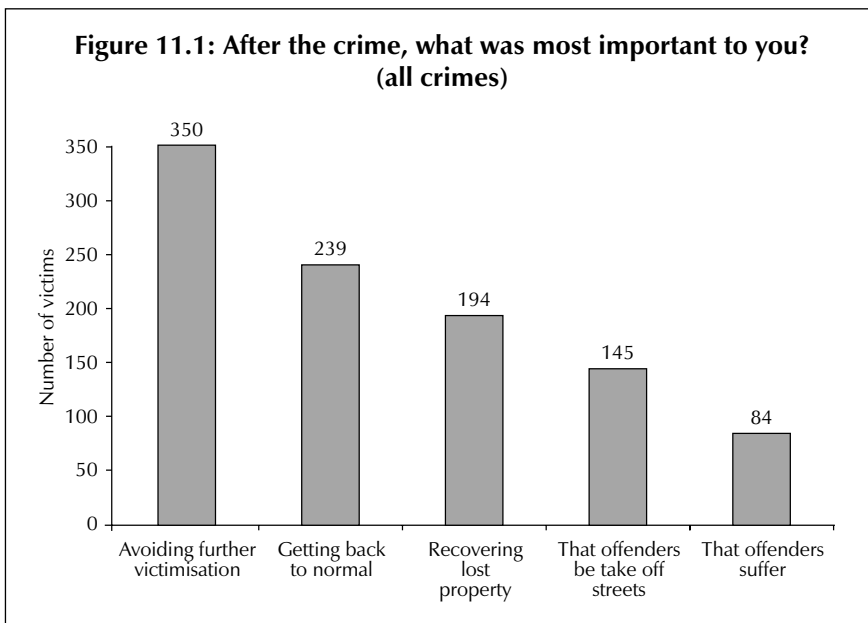
These questions were inspired in part by the recent interest, particularly on the part of an overextended Department of Correctional Services, in restorative justice options. Restorative justice is a radical departure from traditional notions of crime and punishment, which emphasize retribution: making criminals suffer because they have caused suffering. Instead, restorative justice advocates measures to reconcile victim and offender and to bring those who have strayed back into the fold. This is typically done through more creative sentencing or by circumventing the criminal justice process altogether in favour of arbitration. Sentencing options can include victim-offender mediation, community service including service directly to the victim, and payment of compensatory damages to the victim.

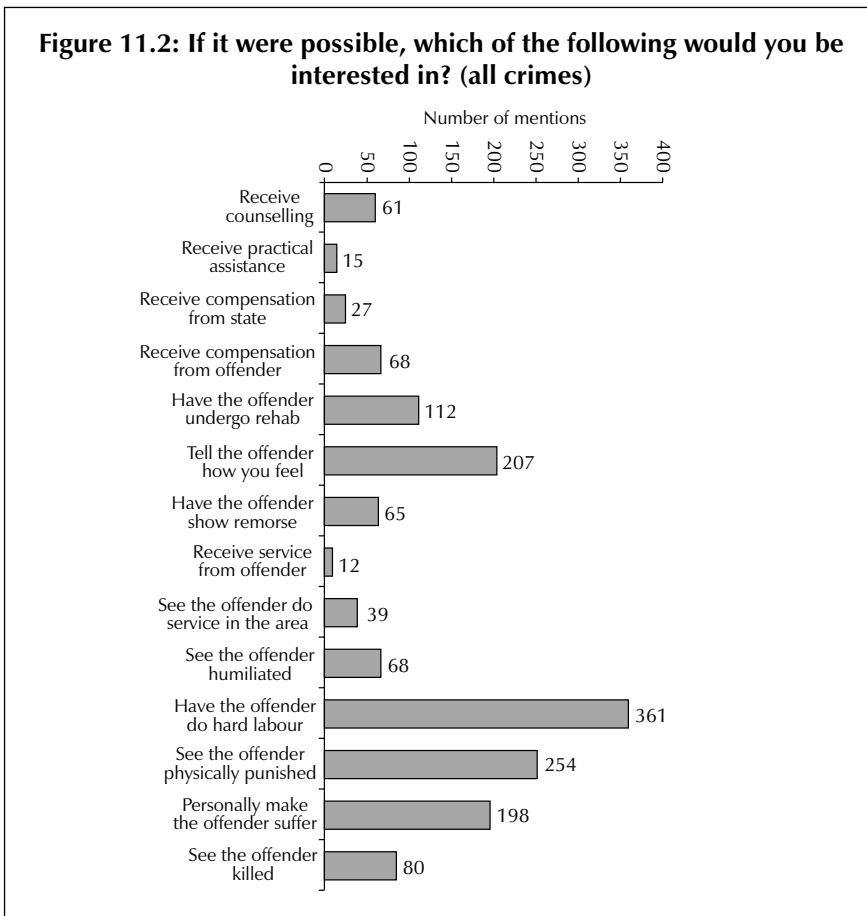
The question is: is South Africa ready for this innovative approach? Past surveys have indicated that most South Africans appreciate the need to rehabilitate offenders, but also strongly believe that prison should involve hard labour.<sup>26</sup> Supporters of the philosophy of restorative justice liken it to indigenous forms of dispute resolution, and see it more as a return to African ways than the adoption of a liberal Western paradigm. However, traditional forms of justice also included corporal punishment and could even involve the death penalty, two extremes not generally embraced by restorative justice advocates but recently resurfacing in vigilante movements. The questions in this survey are a pilot attempt to explore the attitudes of real crime victims in a disadvantaged community.

## Desired outcomes

After having had them describe the crime they had been the victims of in some detail, the respondents were asked what was most important to them immediately after the incident. In general, it was found that most victims simply wanted their lives restored to the state they were prior to the crime and wanted to avoid future incidents of this sort. Sometimes this involved recovering lost property, and occasionally the specific incapacitation of a particular offender, but rarely did it involve a paramount desire to see the offenders punished (Figure 11.1).

The final question in the crime-specific questionnaires gave victims a range of choices about possible outcomes to the case. The respondents were allowed multiple choices from a menu of options, ranging from receiving counselling themselves to having the offender receive the death penalty. The victims favoured a mix of retributive and restorative options, with the most popular choices being having the offender do hard labour (361 mentions), seeing the offender physically punished (254 mentions), telling the offender how the victim felt (207 mentions) and personally making the offender suffer (198 mentions) (Figure 11.2).



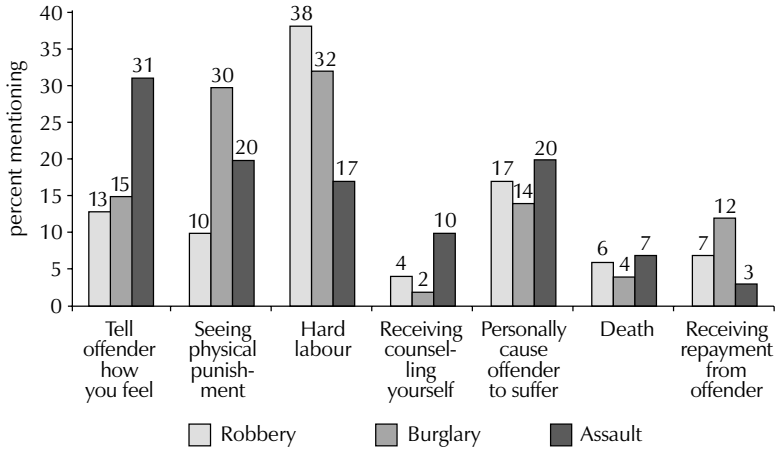


As might be expected, however, victims’ choices varied quite a bit by offence category. In general, while all were interested in avoiding future victimisation, victims of robbery were quite vindictive, victims of burglary strongly valued the return of their property, and victims of assault were either vindictive or interested in restoring relationships (Figure 11.3).

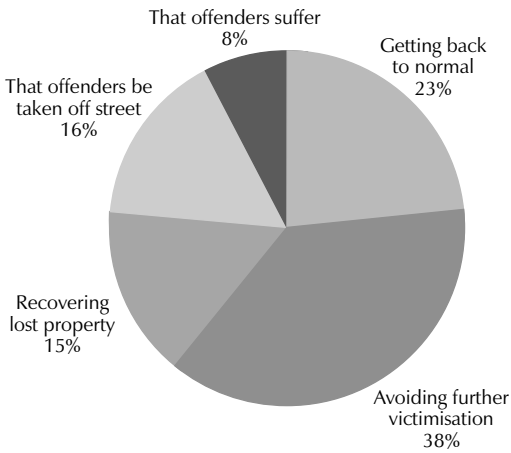
### **Robbery**

Although only a quarter of robbery victims prioritised getting the perpetrator

**Figure 11.3: Comparative preferred victim outcomes, selected crimes**



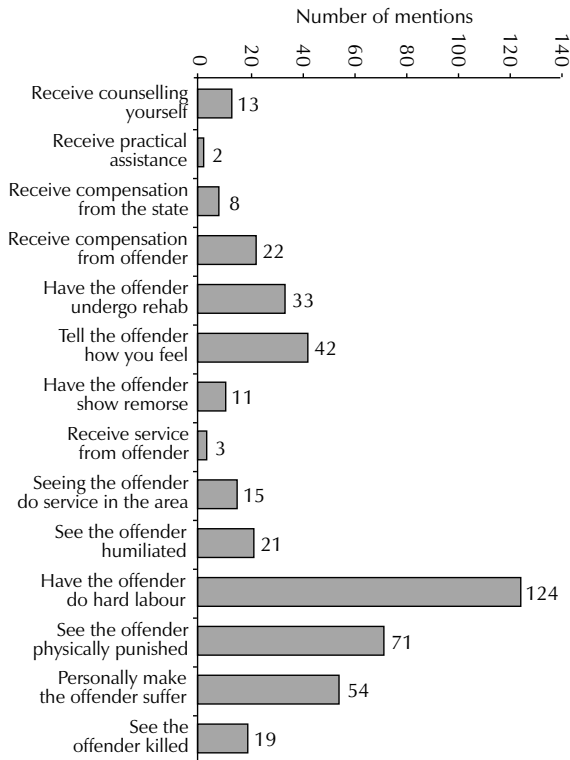
**Figure 11.4: Robbery victims' priorities**



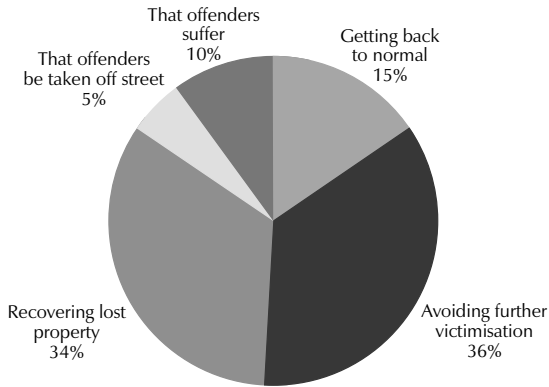


off the street and punished (Figure 11.4), most preferred strong retribution for the offender if caught. The three most popular choices were hard labour (124), physical punishment (71), and personally inflicting suffering (54). There were only 33 mentions of rehabilitation (Figure 11.5). Clearly, this is a crime that evokes strong feelings among victims, and few would be interested in restorative justice options.

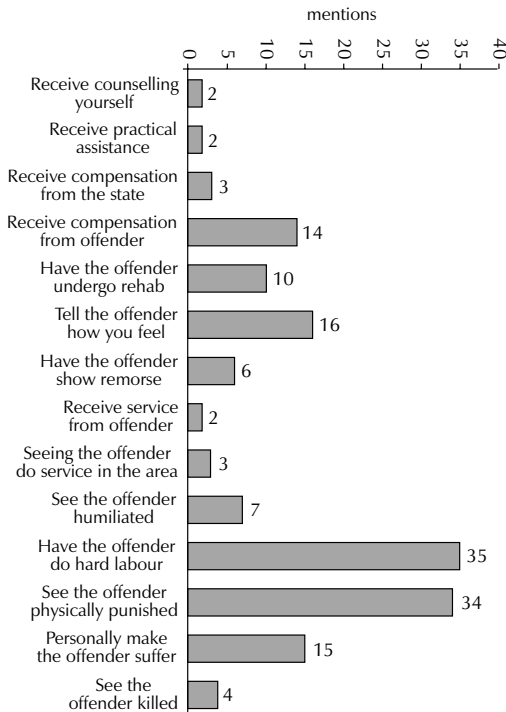
**Figure 11.5: Robbery victims' outcome preferences**



**Figure 11.6: Burglary victims' priorities**



**Figure 11.7: Burglary victims' outcome preferences**

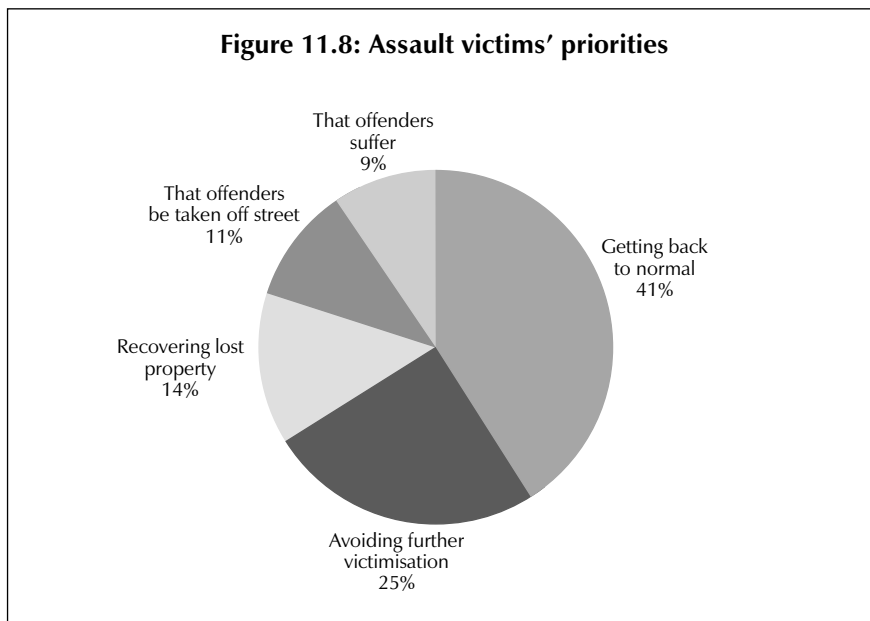


## ***Burglary***

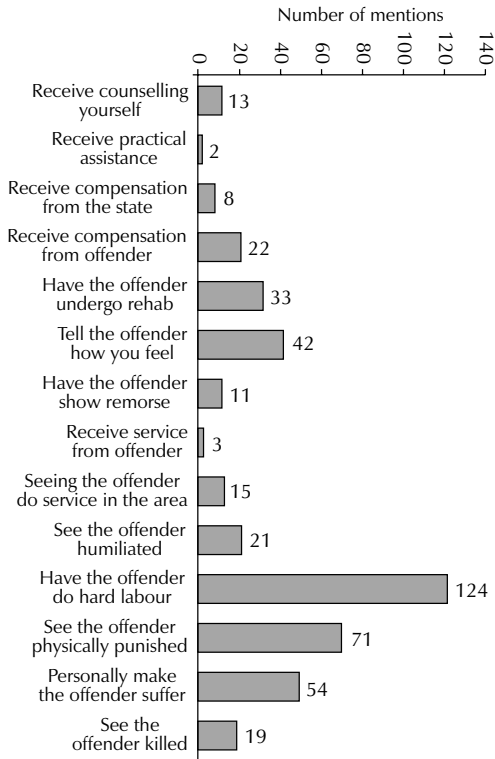
Immediately after victimisation, victims of burglary emphasised avoiding future victimisation (36%) and recovery of property (34%), while only 15% were concerned with offender. A disturbingly high portion of these victims was interested in physical punishment of the offender if caught, however. Nearly equal numbers were interested in compensation, telling the offender how they felt, and personally punishing the offender.

## ***Assault***

Assault is clearly a crime of extremes, which largely had to do with who the perpetrator was. More than for any other crime, getting life back to normal was the most selected priority, fuelled largely by those who were intimate with their attacker (Figure 11.8 ). None of the victims who identified the perpetrator as their spouse or lover wanted the assailant physically punished, but many others did. Telling the perpetrator how they felt received the most mentions by victims (41) with a range of violent responses trailing after (Figure 11.9).



**Figure 11.9: Assault victims' outcome preferences**



## CHAPTER 12

# CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR CRIME PREVENTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

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While inner Johannesburg is in several respects unique, it shares many of the problems experienced by depressed inner-city areas found around the world. It has become the temporary holding zone for people in transition: outsiders, outcasts, and others who have no permanent ties to the community. It contains residents from a range of origins, whose diverse values and traditions seem impossible to accommodate, so, in the end, a kind of normlessness, or at least norm-poverty, prevails. Many of these people are young men, informally or casually employed, who have yet to prove themselves in the world. The struggle to make good in a context where mainstream career paths seem blocked leads many to stray on to the dark side.

To live in inner Johannesburg, most people have to pay inflated rents to absentee landlords, who aim to squeeze as much income as possible from their properties before the buildings degenerate from depressing squalor to utter uninhabitability. Paying rent requires an income, legally or illegally derived, so the pressure is on all tenants to bring in the cash.

The upshot of all this is an area that appears to teeter on the edge of chaos, where outrageous things can happen and no one feels empowered to react. A Wild West atmosphere pervades. Everything seems permissible.

These sorts of areas generate crime and attract criminals. It seems paradoxical that people would flock to an area of poverty and crime, but, for many, it is this very lawlessness and desperation that spells commercial opportunity. Open drug sales and prostitution flourish where social and state controls seem lacking. Drugs generate dirty cash and goods, and this wealth generates corruption. Soon, many begin to wonder which side of the law the police are on. Guns are everywhere and no place, neither the public streets nor the private home, is safe from their reach.

Aside from these serious criminals, many lesser offenders migrate to the area as a refuge from the law, including those whose crime is being in the country without permission. These 'illegals' are seen, and many see themselves, as people without rights, made criminal by their country of birth, without legal

alternatives. They can be victimised without consequences, and it is not surprising that some choose to strike first.

Inner Johannesburg is, quite frankly, a mess, and one that will take some time to clean up. Normalising the situation will require reversing many of the trends spelled out above. While this may seem a mammoth task of social engineering, a few well-placed crime prevention and law enforcement initiatives could have lasting impact.

## **Crime prevention**

‘Crime prevention’ is a technology in its infancy. Its lessons are not easy to communicate between contexts, because they are strongly rooted in local cultural circumstances. What provides disincentives to crime for one group of outsiders may have little effect on a group that does not share their values.

That having been said, there are some basic principles that could be applied in inner Johannesburg. Quieting the chaos will require slowing the turnover of people flowing through the area. It will require revamping a decaying cityscape so that it looks like the authorities care about what goes on in the area. It will require dealing with the people who are illegal by their status – the immigrants and the prostitutes. While none of these objectives can be accomplished overnight, progress in any of these areas will pay incremental dividends in reducing disorder.

## ***Stabilising the population***

People need to be given the capacity and the incentives to remain and invest in the area in the long term. This is not likely when three quarters of the residents are tenants. Inner Johannesburg needs to be owned by the people who live there. Since most people are poor, realising this vision will require the assistance of the state.

The solution is what is called “social housing”.<sup>27</sup> The state buys buildings, renders them inhabitable, and sells flats to the people on terms they can afford. Two things make this an affordable option in inner Johannesburg.

One is that the state needn’t actually purchase the buildings, because many are subject to seizure. Either the buildings are so far behind on their rates pay-

ments that foreclosure is an option, or the buildings are subject to asset forfeiture laws. Under the Prevention of Organised Crime Act of 1998, the state need merely prove on the balance of probabilities that the building is being used as an “instrumentality of crime” for the property to be forfeit to the state. The residential hotels that are essential to drug and prostitution operations in the area fit this definition snugly, and the National Prosecuting Authority has already initiated proceedings against one of the most notorious of these vice dens.

The second is that South African citizens are entitled to a land reallocation grant, which can be used to purchase residential property, including flats. Since the building was acquired by the state for free, this money could be applied to refurbish the premises. Non-governmental organisations could be employed to supervise the renovations and to manage the properties.

Social housing has seen some success in other parts of the world, where it was found that people are less likely to allow their public housing to go to pot if they actually own the place. For crime prevention in particular, having a stable resident population with a stake in the area creates a bulwark against criminals who thrive on anonymity and community apathy. If nothing else, having more permanent residents makes identification of offenders easier. Those on the inside can be identified by their neighbours, while outsiders are immediately recognised as out of place.

### ***Environmental design***

The new owners of inner Johannesburg should be assisted in making their homes liveable. Giving the area a fresh coat of paint will do more than just raise morale – many studies show that when residents demonstrate a commitment to keeping up an area, levels of crime are reduced.<sup>28</sup> This is the so-called ‘broken windows’ theory that a former New York City police commissioner credits for that city’s remarkable reduction in crime.

Many of the crimes described in this survey took place in public spaces. An effort should be made to identify these locations and take measures to address any environmental factors that contribute to them being hotspots. This can be as simple as improving street lighting or as involved as improving alternate routes for pedestrian traffic and commuters. One intriguing initiative that has gained popularity of late is the posting of street signs identifying high-risk areas. The question would be not where to place these signs but when to stop.

## ***Dealing with immigrants***

As shown in this survey, the prevailing prejudice in inner Johannesburg is that immigrants are responsible for crime in the area. Even if untrue, this sentiment underscores the vulnerability of foreign nationals in the area, and the survey shows they are more likely to be victims of crime than the locals. The situation has been brewing for some time and explosions of xenophobic violence, often in the guise of vigilante activity, are not unknown in South Africa. The situation requires resolution, one way or another.

The present system of granting visas to seekers of political asylum has opened a loophole through which masses of economic refugees have paraded. Delays and appeals allow legal residence for such an extended period of time that it is only the honest and the feeble minded who do not find a way of settling here for the long term. The document issued, a piece of paper on which termination dates are handwritten, actively promotes crude attempts at forgery and fraud. For the more sophisticated, every large-scale raid in Hillbrow unearths forged and fraudulently acquired South African and foreign identity documents. And migrants deported to other countries in the region often immediately re-enter through our eminently permeable borders. This situation is likely to be aggravated by political instability in the region and the wavering defence force support to South African border control operations.

Thus, at present, there seems to be no way of keeping out those foreigners who are determined to try their luck in the new South Africa. If they are illegal by status, they have few disincentives to stray into other areas of criminal activity. They are forced to reside next door to others who are hiding from the law for different reasons. While they are prevented from earning a legal living, they still need to eat. What they earn, they cannot put in banks, so they can accumulate only that wealth they can fit in their pockets. And, since the last people they want to see are the police, they are forced to protect what little they have with the strength of their own hands.

There are two alternatives for dealing with the problem, given resource constraints: targeted enforcement or tolerance.

Inner Johannesburg provides a haven for many illegal migrants who would not feel at home in a more rural setting. Making areas like this uncomfortable for undocumented immigrants would provide a significant deterrent to many. By focusing on these areas instead of the borders, limited resources could have maximal impact. If securing indoor accommodation is made difficult without



sufficient documentation, for example, word may get out that South Africa's cities are closed to chancers.

It is also true that focusing on certain criminal enterprises in which certain groups of immigrants are over represented, like the drug trade, would unearth a lot of illegal migrants. Rather than expending South African criminal justice resources incarcerating these people, they could simply be exported to their countries of origin. If bilateral agreements could be reached with source countries, it is possible that these individuals could be incarcerated in their home countries for their offences here. For example, in Nigeria those who commit offences abroad are jailed upon repatriation for bringing the country into disrepute. In order to identify the guilty immigrants and spare their innocent countrymen, the assistance of law enforcement from their country of origin would be essential.

If harsh tactics such as these are considered incompatible with the drive for greater African unity and cooperation, the alternative is to find a way of accommodating these people within the boundaries of the law. Immigrants could be allowed to enter the country legally to work in certain selected enterprises (as has been done in the past with mine and farm workers) or in certain geographic zones of tolerance (such as so-called 'enterprise zones'). Of course, the more constrained their alternatives, the greater the administrative burden and the more likely the immigrants will be to violate their visa conditions. But keeping them legal will go a long way toward keeping them out of other forms of criminality, and it will allow them to report the crimes they suffer, weakening the sense that they are easy targets.

The bottom line is that a significant portion of the inner city population is not South African. Whether or not these people are criminals is for us to decide.

## **Law enforcement**

While crime prevention is essential, this survey clearly demonstrates the need for more, and more effective, law enforcement:

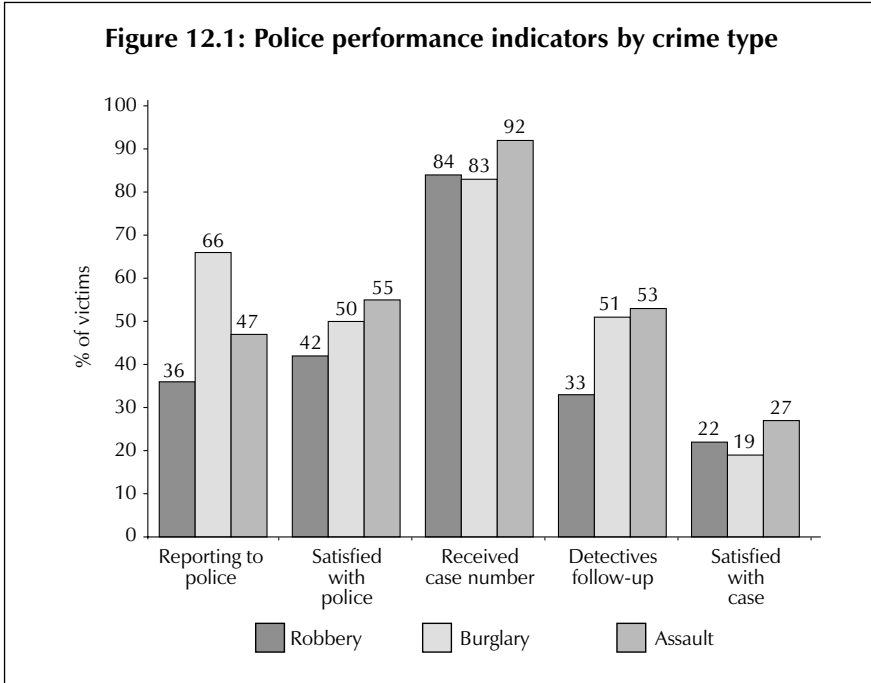
- While 77% of respondents see a cop every day, 88% feel unsafe walking in their area at night.
- A quarter of those who did not report key crimes like robbery and burglary said they did not do so because they did not trust the police, and

63% of those who felt the police were not doing a good job blamed corruption.

- Many crimes are committed in public, in front of witnesses.
- Drugs markets are wide open, with the vast majority of the people having seen drugs used in their area, and large numbers knowing where to buy these drugs.
- A robbery rate of 30% per year almost defies belief, but is supported by the police's recorded crime figures for the area, with weapons featuring in 82% of the cases and 22% resulting in injury.
- While 22% of burglary victims said they knew who stole their possessions, property was recovered in only 10% of cases, and 81% of the victims were not satisfied with the performance of the criminal justice system in their cases.
- In the last year, 6% of those polled had been assaulted so badly their injuries required medical attention.
- If population figures are accurate, 1% of the residents of Johannesburg Central police station area were murdered in the last year.

Despite these shocking figures, general public opinion of police performance is not bad. Most of the respondents felt the police were doing at least a fair job, and nearly 40% of those who had visited the local police station said it had improved their opinion of the police. A remarkable 22% said they knew a police member by name that they could approach with a problem, which shows high levels of community outreach. Opinions of 'Crackdown' (National Crime Combating Strategy) operations were also high, with 70% feeling that the operation in their area had helped to reduce crime, and 75% saying they would be willing to have their home searched once a month if it would reduce crime. Thus, it is with some measure of community good will that a new drive in enforcement could be launched.

This drive will have to overcome the inertia of some rather mediocre performance in the past. As Figure 12.1 shows, for the most common serious crimes, most victims were not satisfied with the way their cases were handled. This can be attributed in part to the fact that half or less of all cases received detective follow-up, while, in theory, all were entitled to it. If follow-up is not



necessary, victims need to be informed and have the facts of the case explained to them. It is also clear that not all reported cases are being recorded or, if they are, the case numbers are not being given to the victims in such a way that they understand their significance. Repeated experiences of this sort could be responsible for the low reporting rates, and could impact witness cooperation.

Aside from assessing whether each case gets the attention it deserves, the survey has provided some interesting insights in the nature of crime in inner Johannesburg, and suggests some ideas for more effective enforcement. The following discussion looks at some of the major serious crimes and explores the ways the police could be more effective in preventing and combating them.

**Drugs**

Making open drug markets (locations where anyone can buy) into closed drug markets (where buyers need a personal connection to sellers) is essential to

slowing the spread of drugs in this country. Buyers regularly travel to Hillbrow from as far as Pretoria just to purchase for personal consumption, and there are strong indications that drugs consumed throughout the country pass through Hillbrow before being distributed.<sup>29</sup> Thus, closing Hillbrow's open markets is a matter of provincial, and perhaps even national, importance.

The way to close drug markets is to do regular undercover buy and bust operations. When sellers can no longer be confident that their buyer is not a police member, they will no longer be able to sell to just anyone who comes along. Clearly, local station staff will soon be recognised by local vendors, so a scheme needs to be devised in which members from outside the area are regularly recruited for a series of carefully supervised buys. This could even become part of the training process for new recruits.

Converting the residential hotels into social housing will also have a devastating impact on local drug markets, because these anonymous and well fortified locations are pivotal in the distribution process. The message will be sent out that housing vice is a good way to lose your property, and the pressure will be on local landlords to ensure their buildings are drug free. One unfortunate side effect of this is likely to be that it will probably become difficult for even honest foreign migrants, especially Nigerians, to find housing in the area, but as was noted above, this may have a positive influence in reducing the number of illegal migrants in the inner city.

Drug enforcement in Hillbrow means focusing on Nigerian nationals: there is simply no way around it.<sup>30</sup> As has been argued, making sure that the right Nigerians are targeted will require assistance from Nigeria. Ibo agents, seconded from the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency, could easily infiltrate the loose networks that presently exist. Further intelligence could be gathered from interception and translation of cell phone transmissions made in the area.

However, before engaging in all out war on this grouping, it might make sense to try a little diplomacy. Building committees could provide a point of entry.<sup>31</sup> These could be addressed and used to identify offenders. If cooperation is forthcoming, there may be no reason to proceed to harsher measures. If it is not, and Nigerian residents continue to assert, as they have in this survey, that drugs are not an issue in the hotels, then the full weight of the law should be applied.

Targeting drugs does not just mean harassing the Nigerians, however. On the users side, many of the young whites found in Hillbrow are there for access to drugs, particularly crack. In fact, 12 out of 19 whites (63%) arrested in

Hillbrow during the SA-ADAM 3-Metros study for a variety of offences tested positive for cocaine, with 72% testing positive for drugs of one sort or another.<sup>32</sup> Many of the white women in particular are crack addicted sex workers. All of the Hillbrow women arrested for prostitution and “other sexual offences” in the 3-Metros study, both black and white, tested positive for cocaine, but these arrests indicate targeting of high drug use areas.<sup>33</sup> There are also hotels where prostitution is present but where hard drugs are not a major issue, and harassing these sex workers would serve little purpose. The key to focusing efforts is intelligence, and this can be gathered across crime types by befriending honest street prostitutes.

## ***Robbery***

As has been argued above, it is possible that escalating robbery rates are due to growing crack addiction, and drug enforcement may have some impact in this area. But whatever the cause, it is unreasonable to expect the citizens of inner Johannesburg to face another year knowing that their chances of having their property taken by violence, often quite serious violence, are almost one in three.

This survey suggests that 80% of these robberies take place on the streets or in other open places, which means that they are arguably subject to deterrence by visible policing, particularly given that the land area per population ratio is quite favourable. Unfortunately, this survey also shows that the police are highly visible in the area, yet the crime still continues. This suggests that it is perhaps time to start invisible policing.

Uniformed patrols only provide deterrence while they are actually visible, and there are not enough police to provide deterrence everywhere. Studies of robbery in other cities have shown that the number of robbers in any area is relatively small, with each committing many offences.<sup>34</sup> Actually arresting (and thus incapacitating) this small group, rather than just temporarily deterring them, is essential to reducing the number of incidents. For the most part, this means catching them in the act, because the property taken is often difficult to identify and levels of reporting are low.

The use of undercover tactical patrols in high crime areas could have an impact on this crime because the perpetrators rely on their speed to evade detection. Unlike burglary, rape, and many other offences, a robbery can take place in seconds, and targets are everywhere and always vulnerable. With no

start-up capital or expertise, the armed robber can stalk victims until opportunities present themselves. Robbers can watch police movements and time their attacks accordingly. That is, they can if they can see the police.

Inner Johannesburg is an area with an active street life, and, in some areas, strangers loitering are not given a second glance. This allows undercover patrol personnel to move freely and keep an eye on areas the crime figures show to be hot spots. If this survey is correct in estimating that over 30,000 such offences occur in this area every year, the police shouldn't have to wait long for an incident to occur. This survey indicates that robbers tend to be armed (82%) and travel in gangs of three or more (over 60%), so members should also move in numbers, with plenty of uniformed back-up.

The drawback of this approach is that members cannot be quickly redeployed to other assignments – for example, traffic duty – without a change of costume. The advantage is the sense of paranoia a few visible busts will produce. When the criminals think every vagrant is a potential cop, they will never feel safe again.

This technique has been employed to some degree in the area. For example, the Reaction Squad at Johannesburg Central uses plainclothes members to make arrests for minor violations and breaches of the liquor code. But a more extensive tactical patrol team could pay dividends in reducing the risk of walking the streets at night. It is also possible that 'sting' operations could be conducted in the worst affected areas, in which apparently easy targets are sent in to attract would-be predators. In either case, the idea is to catch armed robbers in the act, rather than relying on police presence to scare them away.

With regard to response after the fact, significant improvements could be made in this area. While it is always difficult to convince robbery victims to report in great numbers, these station areas have remarkably low rates of reporting. Low reporting levels make recognition of patterns difficult, and reduce the number of chances to apprehend repeat offenders. A public awareness campaign could be launched in which citizens are conscious of the fact that under-reporting leads directly to continued vulnerability. If the hot spot signage discussed above were to be deployed, these signs could include admonitions about the irresponsibility of failing to report.

If victims are failing to report because they do not want to become embroiled in a protracted litigation process (and the majority of those polled who did go to court on a robbery case had to do so at least four times), it is possible that

a form of anonymous reporting could be allowed. Using a confidential hot line, this would allow the gathering of criminal information for intelligence purposes without commitment on the part of the complainant. While clearly less desirable than a proper complaint, such a streamlined procedure would allow access to the details of the two thirds of cases that do not get reported.

## ***Burglary***

While this survey suggests that burglary is not egregiously common in inner Johannesburg, policing for this crime in a high-rise area is clearly a challenge. The point of entry in most cases is indoors, off the streets, and invisible to routine patrol. Preventing burglary requires increased community cohesion, so that neighbours feel empowered to keep an eye on their own buildings. This survey has shown that these are not generally crimes of stealth: 30% of the cases involved simply forcing the front door open, over half occurred during the daytime, and use of violence against residents was common. These are the sorts of incidents neighbours might be expected to notice.

To prevent burglaries, residents have to know who is and who is not allowed in the building, and who is and who is not authorised to be in any given flat. When people leave on holiday, they need to be able to trust their neighbours to collect their mail and watch their property. They need to be able to tell one another when they are having repairs done by outsiders, and when they are having furniture removed or delivered. Snoopily pensioners should be valued as the eyes and ears of the building, and building watch programmes could be developed to allow this intelligence to be disseminated. Building committees could meet to discuss issues like common security infrastructure and whether doormen or security guards should be employed. The police can assist in advising these efforts, but the responsibility ultimately rests with the residents themselves.

One area the police can improve on is their responsiveness after the crime has been committed. The vast majority (81%) of burglary victims were not happy with the service they received from the criminal justice system, which is the lowest satisfaction rating among victims of any crime type. Part of this may be due to inflated expectations – not every home can be dusted for fingerprints – so it is essential that victims be told exactly what level of service they can expect from the police. Cards or brochures could be printed detailing the steps that will be taken in handling their cases. But a good deal of dissatisfaction may be due to the fact that just over half experienced detective

follow-up, which is very low considering that burglary cases always provide a site to inspect. The local stations must also make efforts to reduce the 26% of people who do not report burglary because they “do not trust the police”.

Over a third of respondents said that recovering their lost property was their top priority following the crime, but only one in ten burglary victims had any of their property recovered. When property was recovered, 80% said it was found in inner Johannesburg, so these local markets are key. Knowledge of these markets exists in the community – 13% said they knew where to buy stolen property. In addition, 22% of the respondents felt they knew who had stolen their property, with 30% of these knowing the criminals by name. The police need to tap into this knowledge, using informants and undercover police to uproot the black market. One way to facilitate recovery of property is by indelibly marking it and keeping records of this information through an ‘Operation ID’-type programme, an area the police have championed in other countries.

The residents of inner Johannesburg have clearly indicated their willingness to have their homes searched, and the police should make use of this good will. Stolen property is just one of the many forms of contraband that could be uncovered. Anyone with more television sets or car radios than they can explain should be questioned.

But the number one priority of victims was making sure that they were not victimised again, and 72% increased their security precautions following the incident. The police can assist in advising on this matter, based on their experience of having visited many burglary sites over the years. Tenants are clearly less likely to invest than resident owners, but certain basic precautions are within the reach of all, and this survey indicates that 13% claimed to have no household security at all.

## ***Assault***

This survey has shown that there are several distinct types of assault, including domestic violence, barroom brawls, and street attacks by groups of strangers. Each has its own implications for policing.

It is often said that it is not possible to police domestic violence because it takes place behind closed doors. Dealing with incidents of domestic violence is often frustrating for police because of the high rate of withdrawn cases. This was illustrated in the present survey by the fact that domestic violence victims



were most concerned with reconciling with the assailant and getting life back to normal following the attack.

While it would be easy to write off these incidents, it must be kept in mind that these were serious cases of assault, in which 77% of the women required medical attention. The next call from this household could be a case of murder. Despite this, only 40% reported the crime to the police. Policing this crime type is mainly about improving on this figure. This is done by improving public confidence in the sensitivity and efficacy of the police.

Site-specific crimes like bar-related violence can be combated by a variety of means. Often, it is the same sites again and again that generate these problems, and there is plenty of scope for enforcement here. Unlicensed establishments must be shut down and licensed sources of trouble should have these licenses threatened. Orderliness in drinking establishments is the responsibility of the ownership, and can be promoted by a variety of means, like not serving the visibly intoxicated and bouncing belligerent individuals. Particularly problematic spots could even conceivably be threatened under asset forfeiture legislation.

The street attacks by groups of strangers documented in this survey are an area that requires further research. The questions asked in the present study were not sufficiently detailed to get to the core causes of this conflict. If this is inter-group violence of some sort, the police would need to look at various forms of conflict resolution. If these are just random acts of a violent population, all the social crime prevention measures listed above, aimed at restoring a sense of order, should be employed.

## **Conclusion**

Reducing crime in a high-rise, high-visibility, high poverty, and high crime area like inner Johannesburg will require a mix of innovative social crime prevention and law enforcement initiatives. On a very basic level, a sense of order must be restored. This survey has given some important clues as to where to start in this process. By pointing out the problems in both crime and law enforcement, studies of this sort can provide an important diagnostic tool in improving criminal justice performance.

It is hoped that this will not be the last of these surveys in this area, and there are plans for a follow-up in 2004. Regular checks of this sort can test the efficacy of

law enforcement initiatives objectively, without circular reference to police statistics. They can also track changes in the underworld of crime and criminal markets as they adjust to new conditions.

Researchers from the outside can only skim the surface of the conditions faced by policing agencies, and it is likely that this survey has missed some important considerations confronted by local authorities. It is also true that many of the questions asked were less successful than had been hoped. But it is anticipated that future polls of this and other communities will improve upon this work and continue to innovate in finding ways to better access the real experiences of criminal victims in this country.

## NOTES

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