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DOI: 10.18848/1833-1882/CGP/v03i03/52547

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INTERDISCIPLINARY
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Volume 3, Number 3

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Sustainable Governance in South Africa

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THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCES
<http://www.SocialSciences-Journal.com>

First published in 2008 in Melbourne, Australia by Common Ground Publishing Pty Ltd
www.CommonGroundPublishing.com.

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ISSN: 1833-1882
Publisher Site: <http://www.SocialSciences-Journal.com>

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCES is a peer refereed journal. Full papers submitted for publication are refereed by Associate Editors through anonymous referee processes.

Typeset in Common Ground Markup Language using CGCreator multichannel typesetting system
<http://www.CommonGroundSoftware.com>.

Analysis of Crime Prevention Strategies for Sustainable Governance in South Africa

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Abstract: Crime has a negative impact on the sustainable governance of any country. This paper examines the causes and impact of crime in South Africa, a new democratic state that is fighting to establish a moral society based on democratic values and social justice. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the cost-benefit approaches in South Africa to prevent crime. Crime pervades South African society through horrendous acts of murder, rape, armed robbery and heists, drug trafficking, corruption and white-collar criminal activities. The state has identified challenges such as lack of financial capacity and human skills to deal with crime, inadequate information regarding statistics of crime, backlog of cases, lack of institutional approaches, and strategies for planning and monitoring. To overcome these challenges the government has adopted an integrated justice system approach to develop cooperation and coordination between relevant departments. This approach may be significant in dealing with the pressure of severe impact of crime with variety of processes and interdependent links to achieve a common goal of combating crime. The country also has a National Crime Prevention Strategy that consists of four pillars namely: re-engineering the criminal justice system, reduction of crime through environmental design, promotion of community values and education, and trans-national crime for regional cooperation. The paper analytically reviews the pros and cons of the strategy and offers recommendations for improvement of existing challenges.

Keywords: Crime, Strategy, Sustainable Governance

Introduction

ACCORDING TO THE National Crime Prevention Strategy, high levels of crime pose a serious threat to South African's emergent democracy. Violence crime often leads to tragic loss of life and injury, the loss of possession and livelihood due to crime is incalculable. Crime results in the rights and dignity of citizens, and poses a threat to peaceful resolution of differences and rightful participation of all in the democratic process. Crime casts fear into the hearts of South Africans from all walks of life and prevents them from taking their rightful place in the development and growth of the country. It inhibits citizens from communicating with one another free, from engaging in economic activity and prevents entrepreneurs and investors from taking advantage of the opportunities that the country offers (South African National Crime Prevention Strategy, 1996). The next section explores the extent of crime in South Africa.

Crime in South Africa

Crime is among the most difficult of the many challenges facing South Africa in the post-apartheid era. The country's crime rates are among the highest in the world and no South African is insulated from its effects. Beyond the pain and loss suffered by crime victims, crime also has less direct costs. The treat of

crime diverts resources to protection efforts, exacts health costs through increased stress, and generally creates an environment unconducive to productive activity. Additionally, the widespread emigration of South African professionals in recent years is attributable in part to their desire to escape a high crime environment (Demombynes and Ozler, 2002)

South Africa has such a wide reputation for high crime that is useful to begin any serious discussion, by pointing out that the rates for most crime in South Africa are not outside international norms. Consider, for example, the overall rate of criminal victimization. The latest serious victimization study in South Africa, completed in 2003, shows a one-year victimization rate of 22.9 percent, down from 24.5% in 1998. This compares favorably with a victimization rate in England and Wales of 26.7% in 2003 (Clegg et al *in* Stone, 2006). Yes, a large fraction of South African households experience crime every year, but not any larger a fraction than in many rich countries. The distinctive feature of crime in South Africa is not its volume but its violence. The homicide rate presents the extent of violence most starkly. Although the rate has declined substantially since 1994 when South Africa recorded 67 murders per 100,000 people, it was last reported through March 2005 to be at 40.3 per 100,000, among the highest national rates in the world. There is some variation among provinces, but the murder rates across all of South



Africa are high (Stone, 2006). The statistics is reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Crime in the RSA from April to March 2001/2002 to 2006/2007

Crime Category	April 2001 to March 2002	April 2002 to March 2003	April 2003 to March 2004	April 2004 to March 2005	April 2005 to March 2006	April 2006 to March 2007
Murder	21,405	21,553	19,824	18,793	18,545	19,202
Attempted murder	31,293	35,861	30,073	24,516	20,553	20,142
Rape	54,293	52,425	52,733	55,114	54,926	52,617
Indecent assault	7,683	8,815	9,302	10,123	9,805	9,367
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	264,012	266,321	260,082	249,369	226,942	218,030
Common assault	261,886	282,526	280,942	267,857	227,553	210,057
Common robbery	90,205	101,537	95,551	90,825	74,723	71,156
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	116,736	126,905	133,658	126,789	119,726	126,558
General aggravated robbery (subcategory of aggravated robbery)	96,963	96,166	105,690	100,436	91,068	92,021
Carjacking (subcategory to aggravated robbery)	15,846	14,691	13,793	12,434	12,825	13,599
Truck hijacking (subcategory of aggravated robbery)	3,333	986	901	930	829	892
Robbery at residential premises(subcategory of aggravated robbery)	-	9,063	9,351	9,391	10,173	12,761
Robbery at business premises(subcategory of aggravated robbery)	-	5,498	3,677	33,20	4,387	6,689
Robbery of cash in transit (subcategory of aggravated robbery)	238	374	192	220	385	467
Bank robbery (subcategory of aggravated robbery)	356	127	54	58	59	129
Arson	8,739	9,186	8,806	8,184	7,622	7,858
Malicious damage to property	145,451	157,070	158,247	150,785	144,265	143,336
Burglary at residential premises	302,657	319,984	299,290	276,164	262,535	249,665
Burglary at business premises	87,114	73,975	64,629	56,048	54,367	58,438

Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	96,859	93,113	88,144	83,857	85,964	86,298
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	199,282	195,896	171,982	148,512	139,090	124,029
Stock-theft	41,635	46,680	41,273	32,675	28,742	28,828
Illegal possession of fire-arms and ammunition	15,494	15,839	16,839	15,497	13,453	14,354
Drug-related crime	52,900	53,810	62,689	84,001	95,690	104,689
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	24,553	22,144	24,886	29,927	33,116	38,261
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	576,676	620,240	606,460	536,281	432,629	415,163
Commercial crime	58,462	56,232	55,869	53,931	54,214	61,690
Shoplifting	68,404	69,005	71,888	66,525	64,491	65,489
Culpable homicide	10,944	11,202	11,096	11,995	12,415	12,871
Kidnapping	4,433	3,071	3,004	2,618	2,320	2,345
Abduction	3,132	4,210	4,044	3,880	3,345	3,217
Neglect and ill-treatment of children	2,648	4,798	6,504	5,568	4,828	4,258
Public violence	907	1,049	979	974	1,044	1,023
Crimen injuria	60,919	63,717	59,908	55,929	44,512	36,747
<i>Source: South African Police Service. 2008. Crime Statistics.</i>						

The statistics reveals that the common crimes in South Africa include contact crimes, contact-related crimes, property-related crimes, crimes heavily dependent on police action for detection, and other serious crimes.

Crime levels in South Africa are affected by some of the factors (obtained from Department of Safety and Security, 1996): "...all forms of crime increase during periods of political transition. Our own rapid transition had the unintended consequences of breaking down the existing (and legitimate) mechanisms of social control without immediately replacing them with legitimate and credible alternatives; the Government of National Unity inherited, intact, the entire public service, including a racially based, disproportionate distribution of Criminal Justice resources. Insufficient and ill-equipped personnel, combined with outdated systems, and fragmented departments, have contributed to a system that has been unable to cope with the demands created by the need to provide services to all the people of South Africa; the political transition also generated substantial material expectations many of which were largely beyond the immediate delivery capacity of the new government. This has generated frustrated expectations. The very high, and often unrealized, expectations associated with transition have contributed to the justification of crime; South Africa's violent history has left us with a 'culture of violence', which

contributes to the high levels of violence associated with criminal activity in South Africa; historically shaped, poverty and underdevelopment provide key contextual factors in understanding increasing crime levels; the historical marginalization of the youth, combined with the slow growth in the job market, has contributed to the creation of large pool of 'at risk' young people; while economic growth and development are crucial in addressing the factors which lead to crime, poorly managed development can itself contribute to increased crime rates; and the number and easy accessibility of fire-arms is a major contributor to violent crime". It is, therefore, imperative for the government to establish effective structures to improve the challenges related to crime in South Africa, that are discussed in the next section.

Measures to Combat Crime

The government has established strategies, departments and legislation to combat crime in South Africa.

The government launched the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* (NCPS) in 1996 with one of the main objectives is creation of a dedicated and integrated crime prevention capacity which can conduct ongoing research and evaluation of departmental and public campaigners as well as facilitating effective crime prevention programmes at provincial and local

level. The strategy follows a shift from reactive 'crime control' which deploys most resources towards responding after crimes have already been committed, towards proactive 'crime prevention' aimed at preventing crime from occurring at all (obtained from Department of Safety and Security, 1996). The NCPS, by recognizing that crime is a "result of a multitude of factors,... went beyond only looking at the role that the criminal justice system had to play to deal with the challenge...introduced a new paradigm for the state and the way it had to function to address crime" (Newham, 2005). The key components of this paradigm were (Rauch *in* Newham, 2005):

- Government cannot deal with crime on its own. The institutions of government on all three tiers (national, provincial and local) must work together and with civil society to reduce crime
- Law enforcement and criminal justice responses alone are inadequate on addressing crime
- The criminal justice system cannot operate effectively unless there is better coordination between the departments that constitute the system, and integration of their activities
- Crimes are different and must be 'disaggregated' if effective prevention strategies are to be designed and implemented
- Prevention efforts need to be focused on victims and potential victims, and not merely on perpetrators, as is the case with traditional systems of criminal justice
- Prevention efforts need to take cognizance of the fear of crime, as well as of actual crime patters.

In order to achieve the above mentioned, the government adopted a four-pillar approach to crime prevention:

- The Criminal Justice Process aims to make the criminal justice system more efficient and effective. It must provide a sure and clear deterrent for criminals and reduce the risks of re-offending.
- Reducing Crime through Environmental Design focuses on designing systems to reduce the opportunity for crime and increase the ease of detection and identification of criminals.
- Public Values and Education concern initiatives aimed at changing the way communities react to crime and violence. It involves programmes which utilize public education and information in facilitating meaningful citizen participation in crime prevention.
- Trans-national crime programmes aim at improving the controls over cross border traffic related to crime and reducing the refuge which the region offenders to international criminal syndicates (Department of Safety and Security, 1996).

These objectives assisted the policy-makers to draft the *White Paper on Safety and Security 1998* presenting the broad definition of crime prevention as "all activities which reduce, deter or prevent the occurrence of specific crimes firstly, by altering the environment in which they occur, secondly by changing the conditions which are thought to cause them, and thirdly by providing a strong deterrent in the form of an effective criminal justice system" (Newham, 2005).

The Mulweli consortium 1997 produced an analytical report stating the following challenges in the criminal justice system: the justice system was running out of capacity and was subject to excessive churn resulting in major inefficiencies; management of cases through the justice system as a particular area of weakness; courts are faced with huge backlogs and prisons were overcrowded with the number of awaiting trial prisoners increasing at an alarming rate (Rand, 2005). To overcome these challenges, the implementation of *Integrated Justice System (IJS)* was considered as a solution. The criminal justice system forms a Justice and Protection Services Cluster comprise of the Ministries of Safety and Security, Justice and Constitutional Development, Correctional Services, Defence and Independent Complaints Directorate. The various departments under the IJS are working towards reducing the extent of crime in South Africa. The following measures have been implemented:

- The modernizing of all systems in the justice network, including financial, administrative and management systems;
- Utilization of budget reform as an instrument of improved planning, bench marking, performance assessment and undertaking to redirect spending away from administrative structures, to service and operational points;
- Finding the most cost-effective way of implementing key new legislative frameworks and the development of a strategic approach to costing legislation;
- The acceleration of implementing legislation; and
- Reprioritization and re-alignment (Rand, 2005).

Adequate financial resources are required to achieve the above objectives. The next section deals with the amount of money spent on the IJS for crime prevention.

Cost to Crime

The allocation of public resources by government is perhaps the most quintessentially political question confronting any society. How much should government spend? How should these funds be divided

between the numerous programmes and services that government offers? (Altbeker, 2005). The cost to the Justice and Protection Services cluster is reflected

in the following tables (compiled from National Treasury, 2008):

Table 2: Cost to Justice and Protection Services Cluster

Safety and Security						
R thousand	2008/09				2009/10	2010/11
	Total to be appropriated	Current payments	Transfers and sub-sidies	Payments for capital assets	Total	Total
MTEF allocation*	13382925	12222963	186230	973732	15018911	16362276
Administration	17081910	15999771	122823	959316	19062986	20699045
Visible Policing	6494606	6263355	34377	196874	7103389	7643586
Detective Services	1427925	1397314	7185	23426	1673084	1954140
Crime Intelligence	2065877	1986228	2859	76790	2462256	2734649
Protection and Security Services						
Total expenditure estimates	40453243	37869631	353474	2230138	45320626	49393696
Justice and Constitutional Development						
Administration	941145	919897	8661	12587	1094686	1195454
Court Services	3371615	2944335	7244	420036	3808084	3997339
State Legal Services	503153	498558	500	4095	562056	589383
National Prosecuting Authority	2122727	2041251	8937	72539	2423230	2552706
Auxiliary and Associated Services	1402792	335524	1056068	11200	1591920	1735180
Total	8341432	6739565	1081410	520457	9479976	10070062
Direct charges against the National Revenue Fund	1389329	1319994	69335	-	1519689	1654870
Total expenditure estimates	9730761	8059559	1150745	520457	10999665	11724932
Correctional Services						
Administration	3111582	3025995	10085	75502	3373333	3605016
Security	3873242	3771291	1951	100000	4116254	4433021
Corrections	1064678	1043604	18810	2264	1125249	1211717
Care	1394735	1386864	-	7871	1457670	1601463
Development	396615	362846	-	33769	476337	509011
Social Reintegration	386538	382043	3573	922	411320	442021
Facilities	1444444	548764	-	895680	1692301	3448151
Total expenditure estimates	11671834	10521407	34419	1116008	12652464	15250400
Defence						
Administration	2426930	2390654	22954	13322	2741808	3022963
Landward Defence	6792237	4827873	1925380	38984	7729488	8503142
Air Defence	9006514	2976466	6007012	23036	8349125	8912754
Maritime Defence	1809630	1413528	376704	19398	2009108	2005189
Military Health Support	2119145	2035093	14489	69563	2446585	2609049
Defence Intelligence	509850	174137	335014	699	579687	608462
General Support	3933746	2816323	915153	202270	4237268	4687027
Force Employment	1635103	1416837	163873	54393	1767498	1851887
Total expenditure estimates	28233155	18050911	9760579	421665	29860567	32200473

Independent Complaints Directorate						
Administration	35631	34396	56	1179	42977	46199
Complaints Processing, Monitoring and Investigation	49964	44719	-	5245	56254	59123
Information Management and Research	12902	11618	-	1284	16165	17322
Total expenditure estimates	98497	90733	56	7708	115396	122644

**MTEF (Medium Term Expenditure Framework): medium term budgeting is about maintaining alignment between strategic prioritization of policy, planning for implementation and finalizing spending plans in support of government’s objectives (National Treasury, 2008). In terms of the MTEF, allocations*

for any financial year were accompanied by guideline allocations for each of two subsequent years (Altbeker, 2005).

The additional allocation to national votes 2008/09-2010/11 is also made by the National Treasury (2008) as:

Table 3: Additional Allocation to National Votes

Justice and Protection Services	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
R million Medium-term expenditure estimates				
Correctional Services	306	385	2205	2896
Defence	610	835	1809	3254
Independent Complaints Directorate	3	5	5	13
Justice and Constitutional Development	176	253	291	720
Safety and Security	1310	1752	3439	6501
Total	2405	3229	7750	13384

Naturally, looking at the extent of the resourcing of the criminal justice system does not exhaust the question of the extent to which criminal justice issues has been prioritized. The effort put into inexpensive activities which build public confidence in the criminal justice system, the extent of visible political commitment to safety and security and law enforcement, and the development of appropriate organizational and legal mechanisms are also important indicators of prioritization within the criminal justice cluster (Pelser and Rauch, 2001).

Economic and financial analysis of crime and crime prevention, control or reduction efforts are generally distinguished as: cost analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, cost-saving analysis and cost-benefit analysis, from the simplest to the more complex (Karoly *in* Sansfacon, 2004). One concern raised repeatedly in discussions about the NCPS is the apparent absence of a rigorous cost-benefit analysis preceding the making of decisions to fund projects and/or programmes. The absence of such a process is unfortunately both because it reduces the likelihood that funds will be optimally utilized, and because it reinforces poor financial decision-making processes in the constituent departments. Even with the expenditure on criminal justice described above,

it is not possible to conduct a sound cost-benefit analysis...Research findings about cost-benefit ratios depends heavily on the level of services already delivered...The wide variety, and complexity, of assigning a monetary value to crime prevention makes it extremely difficult to determine accurately the benefits of a programme, and therefore, to determine the economic rationale for the programme (Altbeker and Rauch, 1999). Altbeker (2005) further stresses on the “complexity and diversity of the services provided, together with the facts that these are hard-to-measure intangible services, poses a singular challenge for policy-makers in the field of criminal justice. This is ... they cannot know with any precision what they get for the money that is spent...Given the difficulties associated with quantifying the impact of the criminal justice system as a whole, it should come as little surprise that it is even harder to seek to disaggregate the discrete impact of the system’s different components. Does a rand spent on police patrols prevent more crime than rand spent on investigations or rehabilitation or ensuring an effective prosecution?...The result is that the natural state of policy-makers in government, Parliament, and in the criminal justice system itself, is one of profound, ineradicable uncertainty; and they are sel-

dom offered unambiguous evidence that a particular change in the scale or pattern of resource allocation will have a precise impact or what the scale of that impact will be...In the messy world of criminal justice, policy-making can never meet those sorts of standards”.

Conclusion: The Pros and Cons

Crime is a challenge in South Africa that needs urgent improvement. The government has implemented strategies and measures to eradicate crime but there are some challenges that need to be addressed. “It has been said that the South African Police Service (SAPS) faces a problem that many of the personnel are un-or under-trained,...In the criminal justice system more broadly, the effects of the high crime levels are being felt in both the courts and prisons, with enormous backlogs and overcrowding respectively...Long delays, combined with the newly stringent requirements in terms of investigation and evidence collection, make the conviction of suspects the exception rather than the rule in many cases, adding to the stress and workloads of the already overburdened police...the NCPS has seen little of its ideals realized. The combination of the rise in crime, coupled with the reduction in available skills and resources, has meant that the SAPS and the Department of safety and Security have placed their priorities in other, more immediate areas. Sadly, the NCPS, a long term plan, seems to be a something that may not achieved even within the 20 year framework that its writers envisaged, especially as responsibility for the NCPS was moved in March 2000 from the Secretariat for Safety and Security to the SAPS...South Africa, as a new democracy, still has a very fluid and quite unpredictable political environment, and it is hard to evaluate the success of a single approach since one is too often replaced with another project before it has had time to become established” (Obtained from Klipin and Harrison, 2003).

In order to overcome the above challenges, “the strategic plan of the SAPS for 2005 to 2010 sets out several operational priorities. To mention but a few, combating organized crime; serious and violent crime; crime against women and children and improving service delivery to communities. The key organizational priorities that underpin these operational priorities are human resources, budgeting and resource management. Our ultimate aim is to stabilize the levels of crime over the medium term. The management of the SAPS is committed to ensuring that the police service uses the best and most modern technology to prevent and combat crime and has to this end *inter alia*, installed a Genetic Sample Processing Systems at the Forensic Laboratory in Pretor-

ia which is used for Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) Analysis, a breakthrough in terms of turn-around efficiency. In addition, we have established a Biometric Identification and Enhancement Solution capability within the Criminal Record Centre to deal with biometrics, which will facilitate the identification of criminals. Recent successes achieved in the past two weeks alone (notably in Gauteng and various parts of the country) can be attributed to the implementation of the above-mentioned National Crime Prevention Strategy. One of the major National Crime Prevention Strategy successes is the establishment of the High-Technology Centre to co-ordinate information and the utilization of skills and technology to support investigators in identifying suspects, oppose bail, apprehend wanted suspects and establish links between cases of a serious nature” (South African Police Services, 2007).

A number of analysts have lamented the lack of rigorous evaluation of crime prevention initiatives in South Africa. They highlight that unless evaluations are undertaken on such projects it is impossible to know the extent to which they achieved their objectives or actually contributed to a reduction in crime. Furthermore, evaluations are necessary so that learning can take place to enhance the success of crime prevention interventions in other settings. While this has started to be rectified to some degree amongst civil society interventions..., it is still a significant challenge facing government driven programmes (Newham, 2005).

It is therefore, crucial for the criminal justice system to encourage multi-agency partnerships, “aimed at reducing crime or improving the performance of the formal justice system. Useful interventions could focus on:

- partnerships for safety or crime reduction which involve local authorities (as this is a new policy area in South Africa)
- Partnerships to enhance crime prevention in South African schools
- Partnerships which improve services not provided by government (e.g. shelters for women and children who are victims of domestic violence)
- Partnerships which focus on the safety of women and children
- Partnerships which reduce the burden on the criminal justice system by providing diversion options
- Partnerships which reduce re-offending” (Pelser and Rauch, 2001)

Furthermore, the government needs to spend money on crime prevention rather than law enforcement tools. “When we focus on reducing the actual costs to businesses- whether large firms or household-

based enterprises- we play to the strength within justice sector. This is because what we know about crime reduction concerns strategies and tactics to reduce specific crimes at specific locations and at specific times” (Stone, 2006). What makes it difficult to manage the perception of crime is that there is no automatic link between the isolated victories that police and justice officials can achieve and the broader perception of crime. In theory, government could address this through advances in crime control,

developing strategies for reducing the overall crime rate in the country by substantial proportions. In practice, however, our knowledge of crime control is unequal to this task. The alternative is to focus operations on specific crimes in specific places, and-when these succeed- leverage them through strategic communications into broader campaigns to restore hope and build confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole (Stone, 2006).

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