

PREFACE

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.