



CRIME IN CAPE TOWN

Some Strategic considerations with respect to the use of Information

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DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

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1. Crime information and technology

Crime information provides an essential basis for understanding crime, for identifying hotspots, for designing interventions, for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of police action and crime prevention, and for informing strategy.

Official police statistics of reported crimes (from the South African Police Services) provide a limited understanding of the crime picture. The statistics only indicate that a crime has been committed in a police district within a year. The statistics are released six or more months after the end of the financial year. Combining the time series / historical crime information with the district area one is, at best, able to get a rough indication of improvement or deterioration within and between police districts (see figure 1, with (2001-2006) in Planning District D).

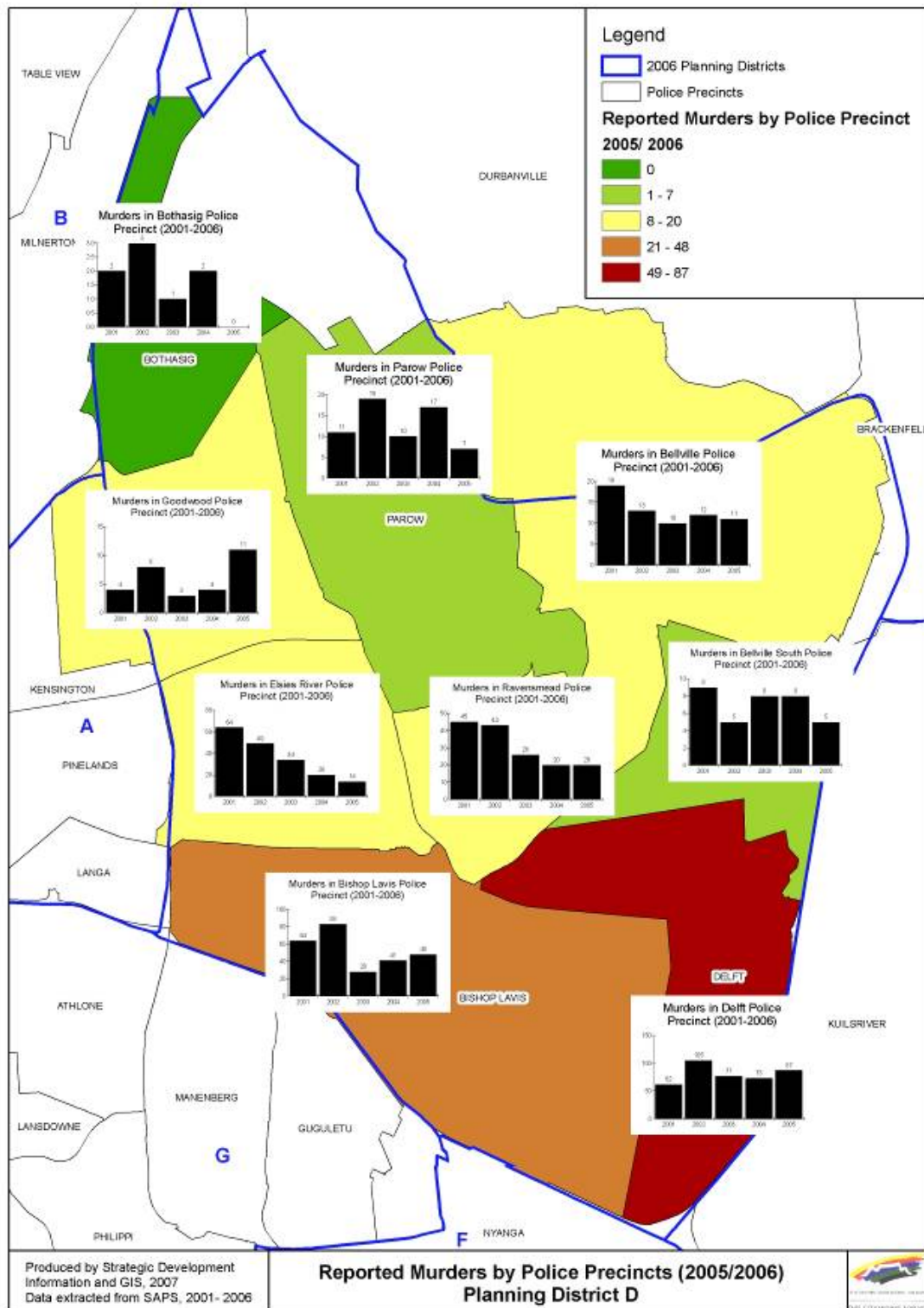
The reported crime statistics don't indicate the location (suburb, street, proximity to commercial area), time (hour, day, month) or person(s) involved, etc. They don't indicate the rate of crime (crime committed per 100 000 population) which is a more accurate measure taking into account changing population numbers in an area. This information is critical for understanding crime hotspots and designing interventions to address crimes in these, and adjacent catchment, areas.

2. Problem statement

Crime is a multi-faceted ailment of society and requires a multi-sectoral approach, involving **information and partnerships**. There are a number of government agencies and NGOs that capture data on crime but do not necessarily coordinate their information efforts or their intervention and prevention strategies. The SAPS records 33 categories of crime and has the most comprehensive set of data, although this information is not made available at the correct spatial and temporal level for it to be effective for integrated management by other agencies. Essentially the approach to crime is not coordinated and probably not scientific thus reducing the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in their fight against crime.

There are numerous sources from which incidents are reported, and operational centres from which resources are dispatched. Within the City there are call taking facilities at Corporate Call Centre, Disaster Management, 107, Fire and Rescue, Safety and Security's SSU/Radio, CCTV, Security Services, Land invasion, Traffic, Water, Electricity, Waste, etc. Some of these have multiple facilities, a hangover from past administrations. In Province there's

Ambulance, Traffic, Mortuary services, Hospitals. Despite this the City is in a unique position to assist the develop line function integration as well as assist the law enforcement agencies through coordinating information efforts and facilitating partnerships. Given the scale of the crime problem and the many categories of crime this role probably needs to be limited to a set of priorities focussing on crime against a person and violent crime in particular.



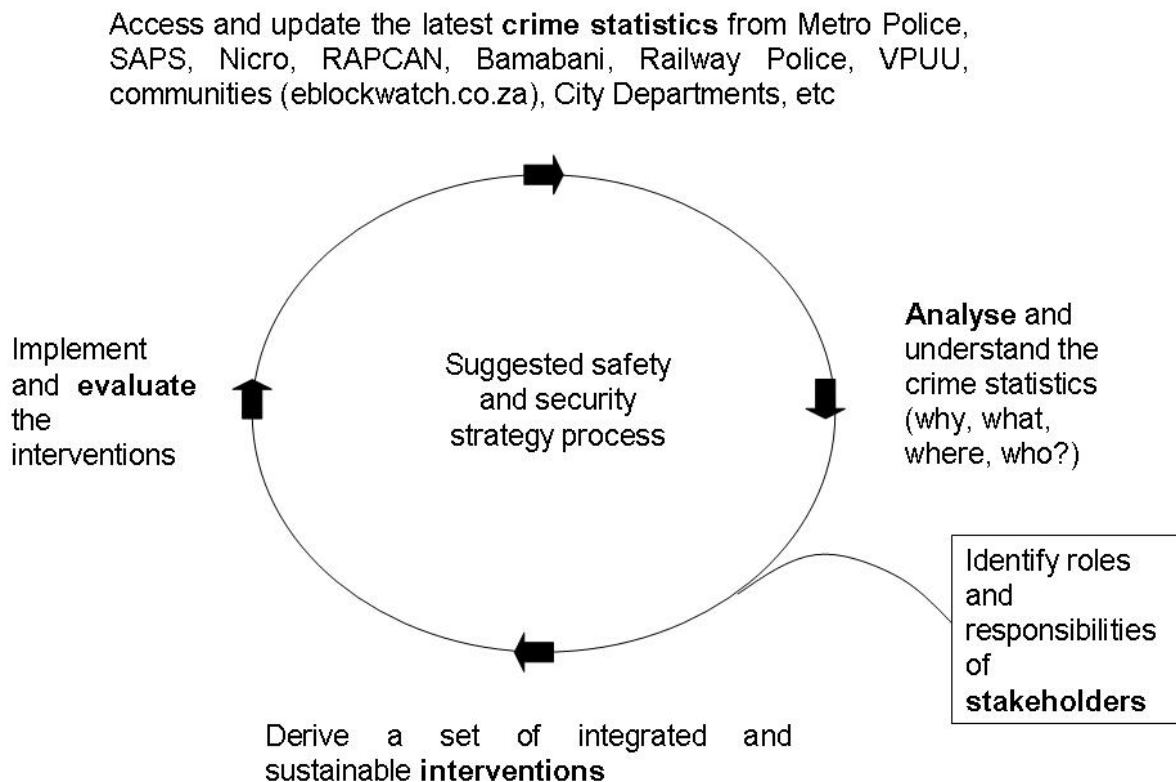
3. Approach

This brief attempts to consolidate some of the available information and initiatives to provide the basis for an approach to crime information, more inclusive stakeholder involvement and a more integrated response amongst City, SAPS and other role players in addressing the crime situation in Cape Town **through information sharing and some systems integration**. The approach needs to start small focussing on certain categories of crime like crime against person, particularly violent crime, and needs to be based in a few hotspots and then scaled up to the city level.

A number of elements comprise the process and need to be dealt with in further detail:

- Access and update the latest crime statistics
- Analyse and understand the crime statistics and the implications thereof
- Identify role players, roles and responsibilities
- Derive a set of integrated and sustainable interventions
- Implement and evaluate the interventions

This has been illustrated as an iterative management process in the Figure below, involving understanding the need, allocating resources and implementing the interventions.



4. Discussion

Crime and Poverty

Crime is a multi-faceted ailment of society and requires a multi-sectoral approach. Firstly, there is a need to understand the many factors influencing crime activity, especially socio-economic and physical conditions of communities. Crime is an extremely complex social phenomenon, which has a variety of complex causes and effects. Secondly, there is a need to understand the impact of crime on those communities, surrounding communities, business and the economy.

Poverty is often cited as a cause of crime and violence, but increasing international evidence suggests that poverty *per se* has little to do with crime and violence levels. Rather crime and violence occur more frequently in settings where there is an unequal distribution of scarce resources or power (relative poverty) coupled with weak institutional controls. Crime increases when the social control that operates through formal institutions (such as the police and judicial systems) and informal institutions, including civil society organisations, breaks down or is weakened. Although there is no simple or direct causal relationship between inequality and violence, inequality does appear to exacerbate the likelihood of violent crime, especially when it coincides with other factors. This theory is based on the assumption that individuals or groups are more likely to engage in violence if they perceive a gap between what they have and what they believe they deserve (United Nations, 2006).

South African Police Services and Partnerships

The end of international isolation and the demands with the transition to democracy in South Africa have thrown the SAPS at high speed into a new field of ideas about crime prevention; and their training and organisation hardly equip them to engage with and implement the sophisticated ideas about crime prevention which abound in international policing fora. Concepts such as community policing, partnerships and inter-agency collaboration have been sowed on hard ground in the South Africa Police Service but there is a growing realisation that the **problem will only be solved through partnerships.**

City of Cape Town

Because crime is tied closely to relative poverty the City of Cape Town has a responsibility in addressing the crime situation in Cape Town. Through facilitating economic growth (with a focus on sustainable job creation not just supporting GDP), reducing poverty and providing services in support of both these interventions the City is in a position to assist in the reduction of crime levels. The tourism industry, 2010, foreign capital inflows and other levers

that the City has an influence on all have the potential to contribute to reducing unemployment, inequality and hopefully assist in addressing crime.

Safety and security has been one of the priority areas in Cape Town's Integrated Development Plans for the past five years and will feature as a priority in the next IDP (2007/8-2011/12).

The City established a Metropolitan Police Force in 2002 and funded this to the tune of R 500 million per annum (R612 million for 2006/7). The Metro Police is essentially involved in traffic enforcement, by-law enforcement and crime prevention. Metro Police officers function as peace officers and have the power to arrest but must handover suspects to the SAPS. They are deployed in eight service areas and are dispatched according to focus areas / hotspots in those service areas in order to address crime against persons.

Part of the problem lies with the information not being utilized effectively such that the various agencies and communities are able to communicate or have joint planning. Rauch (1998), in interviews with 38 police commissions in greater Johannesburg, found that two thirds of them had some contact with the elected councillors in their areas. This includes good relationships with councillors, who assist in activating local government official in problem solving. The majority of the station commissioners indicated that they had some contact with the traffic department of the local authority, making this the most common interface between police and local government. The over-welcoming majority of station commissioners described ad-hoc interaction with local authorities, rather than any form of sustained relationship (Rauch, 1998). In the United States of America there are a number of GIS based systems that are transparent to the public as well as the law enforcement and management agencies. Compstat (Government run) and chicagocrime (NGO run) are two examples of how up-to-date crime information is served through a GIS interface to a wide range of users. GIS integrated with strategic information analysis has been shown to be a force multiplier in fighting crime holistically (Lochner and Zietsman, 1998), yet this potential remains untapped, as does in fact the inclination between the relevant stakeholders towards inter-agency and inter-departmental integration.

An enhanced working relationship between SAPS, City and others with information sharing would be one element to improve the monitoring and evaluation of crime prevention initiatives.

As one step in this process of improved information sharing the Metropolitan Police has recently (December 2006) registered a project with IT to record and track incidents of crime on a central database. This spatially enabled database will enable a prompt and cost effective flow of information between Police Constables, Management and the community they serve. Consolidated reporting is required for the identification of crime trends and statistics, and a Graphic (Spatial) representation of incidents / events is required for more effective dispatching. Notification via the CCTV centre, Emergency services and Technical Operations Centre (TOC), should be catered for.

This is also the first phase of a larger integration exercise involving other City departments. There are a number of departments in the City that have a need, and are working towards response management systems. At the moment there is no strategy or process in place to integrate these systems into an Integrated Spatially-enabled Response Management System (ISERMS), such that City Police (for example) can communicate directly with Fire or Disaster and Risk Management, or even Provincial Ambulance Services, in responding to the same event or incident, or that transactional data can be generated simultaneously.

The need for co-ordination between departments with various levels of response in dealing with incidents is essential but is still not satisfactory due to inadequate inter-departmental / integrated communication systems. FIFA World Cup 2010 brings with it the opportunity to establish this integration platform. FIFA World Cup 2010 also raises the risk of not being able to deal with the whole spectrum of events or incidents that require a speedy, integrated response. Hence a window of opportunity exists between now and 2008, when a readiness test will be conducted by FIFA to test the City's ability to respond to a number of situations.

There are, however, a number of examples of city-level information and technology processes assisting in crime prevention. These initiatives should be further investigated as a basis for a pilot project in Cape Town information sharing and partnerships.

Local Crime Prevention Toolkit (CSIR – Crime Prevention Centre)

The Local Crime Prevention toolkit has been developed in response to a growing demand at local government level for the development and implementation of effective crime prevention strategies. The toolkit aims to help local stakeholders identify the right functionaries to involve in the process – and to assist in the process itself, with a step-by-step guide to the establishment and maintenance of local crime prevention partnerships. It acknowledges that

while an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach is the logical way to work; such an approach is inevitably difficult to motivate and sustain. The toolkit provides a series of templates for strategic planning, project planning, communications and monitoring and evaluation, available on CD for users to adapt and apply to their own local conditions and needs. There are also tools for local area crime mapping and mobilisation of particular constituencies such as schools. The toolkit is a partnership initiative led by the CSIR Crime Prevention Centre (<http://www.crimeprevention.csir.co.za/>) with the Civil Society Organizations (UMAC and Business Against Crime), the South African Police Service (SAPS).

Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrade (VPUU)

The City of Cape Town (CCT) has entered into a bi-lateral agreement with the German Government via the German Development Bank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) for financial co-operation in the township of Khayelitsha on the project “Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading Programme” (VPUU). The goals of the ‘Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading’ in Khayelitsha are:

- Safety and violence prevention
- Upgrading of neighbourhood facilities
- Economic development
- Community development

The programme has undertaken detailed crime mapping and engagement with community structures. With this information and services and property data the programme is assisting to design infrastructure that will reduce crime in the public precincts that it is working in. GIS is critically important in this case in making it possible to integrate the crime data and the landuse and planning information. VPUU have conducted a baseline on perceptions of crime and have mapped all of the information on GIS – to visually illustrate the geography and nature of crime incidents on the project area and to assist in identifying 24 crime hotspots.

5. Conclusion

From the brief strategic analysis above there are a significant number of opportunities for a more coordinated and strategic response to dealing with crime information in Cape Town. Certainly a core theme should be enhanced information sharing by the various role players who have access to information, but that is not currently coordinated. Another element to investigate, and to facilitate information sharing, is information and technology systems integration. A significant number of the stakeholders (especially the City) have the necessary tools in place to facilitate this.

Information and technology can assist with monitoring crime through trend and spatial analysis, through highlighting hotspots (spatial mapping), through communication and community involvement as well as informing strategic processes (like spatially enabled emergency response systems).

Other recommendations worth following up from the Lochner and Zietsman (1998) work include consultancy / capacity building assistance to SAPS around GIS. From Rauch the aspects that local government could assist with include environment design (which is exactly what the City / KFW VPUU partnership serves to do), closer coordination with traffic department and for the local authorities to play a coordinating role by engaging inter-agency initiatives and by addressing environmental problems (street lighting, grass cutting, squatters, emergency services, etc).

A separate report on an analysis of the Crime Statistics for Cape Town (2001-2006) is available on request from the author or Janet Gie.

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