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CRIMINAL VICTIMISATION AND HOUSING IN CATO MANOR

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Introduction

The Cato Manor area has a long history as a point of contention. The vibrant Indian and African community that had settled in the area was forcibly removed in 1955, and the land lay vacant for many years. As apartheid began to crumble, informal African settlement began as workers from rural areas sought a home base closer to the city centre. By the time of the democratic transition, there was a resident population large enough to merit special government attention.

This resulted in the creation of the Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) in 1993, an organisation dedicated to the “integrated development” of the area. The idea behind “integrated development” is that no development intervention should take place in isolation from others, and thus programmes to provide infrastructure, housing, education, economic opportunity, social outlets, and the like should be co-ordinated by a single management organisation. Receiving substantial funds from both national government and European funders, the Cato Manor project was viewed as a pilot for community development initiatives across the country. It was hoped that the lessons learned from Cato Manor would result in field-tested interventions that could be replicated across the country.

It was quickly realised, however, that one facet of community development had been left out of the integrated model – security. Without adequate security, even the provision of basic infrastructure was undermined, as contractors were robbed when attempting to build in the area. In the shack area of Cato Crest in particular, faction fighting and criminal violence made progress toward development impossible.

This resulted in the appointment of S’bu Xulu as full-time head of security for the CMDA, and he initiated a series of community safety programmes. A Special Investigations Task Team was formed by the South African Police Services (SAPS) and Durban Metro Police to investigate serious offences in the area. The City of Leeds, Durban’s sister city in the United Kingdom, worked with the CMDA to produce a holistic security strategy for Cato Manor. It is envisaged that this approach to community based crime prevention will be rolled out and applied to the entire metropolitan region.

In late 2000, the Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) initiated a “crime audit” of the Cato Manor area, funded by the Metro Council via the Safer Cities project. This was done in order to gauge the effectiveness of crime prevention programmes in place to date, and to provide some sort of benchmark for future initiatives. The decision was made to take a three-pronged approach:

- a representative “victims survey” would be conducted;
- the results of this survey would be compared to police crime statistics for the area;
- the results of this information would be fed back to the community, and their response elicited in a series of focus groups.

This report focuses on the first leg of this audit, the victim's survey.

Why a victims survey?

Police statistics do not always provide an accurate and complete picture of the crime experienced by people on the ground. International victimisation surveys have found high levels of unreported crime all over the world, especially in areas such as assault, domestic violence, and sex crimes.

South Africa is no exception in this regard. Figure One shows the rate of reporting of three major crime types in Africa as a whole and in South Africa in particular. While South Africa's reporting rates are slightly better, it is easy to see that about half the crime experienced in this country never gets reported to the authorities.

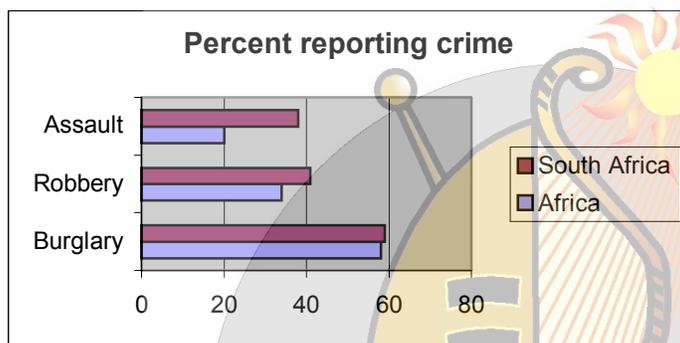


Figure 1: Crime reporting rates (Source: UNICRI, 1998; StatsSA, 1998)

The South African National Victims of Crime survey (StatsSA, 1998) found that more than 40% of all burglaries, more than 60% of all livestock theft, and more than 70% of all personal theft is not reported. These figures are true for the nation as a whole, and may be expected to be higher in poor areas where distrust of authorities is high, such as Cato Manor. This means that police statistics actually conceal more crime than they reveal in many important crime categories.

In addition, police statistics do not describe many important aspects of the experience of victimisation, some of which can be used to tailor or evaluate crime prevention interventions. For example, the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim is not spelled out in the official statistics, and this piece of information can help us understand whether the source of crime in an area is primarily domestic pressures, factional conflict, or more organised criminal enterprises. Residents of an area may have special insight into chronic criminal problems, such as gansterism and drugs. While low levels of reporting are indicative of poor police/community relations, a survey is needed to understand why these problems persist, and to gauge how effective community-police interventions have been.

Despite these advantages, victim's surveys also have their problems. People who are not inclined to discuss a criminal matter with the police might be equally put off by an anonymous fieldworker knocking at their door. Unlike the relatively safe confines of a police station, the victimiser may even be present in the household during the interview, and community members may be suspicious of outsiders who show up claiming to be doing academic research. Thus, most victims' surveys also show low levels of reporting of sex crimes and domestic abuse, and cannot be considered an accurate gauge of these crimes.

In the present study, field workers were chosen from outside the community, to assure their objectivity and to avoid any implication that they might be linked to criminal groups. In order to assure their safety and acceptance by the community, they were accompanied by “field guides” chosen by the community leadership structures. It is unclear whether the presence of these field guides had any impact on candid reporting.

Another problem is that unless a series of surveys are conducted longitudinally, victim's surveys are poor at tracking trends over time. While questions can be asked retrospectively about victimisation in the past, experience shows that interviewees tend to temporally conflate their experiences forward into the most recent years. It is therefore standard practice to record experiences from past years, but only to compare figures from the most recent year's experiences.

Comparing victimisation rates to those found in other surveys and to official statistics is generally difficult, because definitions of crime vary greatly between jurisdictions and between cultures. Academics have tried to overcome jurisdictional differences by defining crimes in their own terms, but these terms differ and may conflict with the legal or cultural understanding of the respondents. Community members may not feel it is possible for a man to rape his wife or be guilty of assault against his own children, for example. If the respondent reported the crime, he may define it as the police did at the time, regardless of the fieldworker's definitions. The distinction between an assault and an attempted murder, or between a justifiable homicide, manslaughter, and murder, can be highly contentious and even the experts may differ in their opinions. Even within a cultural setting, results may differ across time as a result of public education campaigns.

In order to make the data from this survey comparable to at least one other source, questions and definitions were based on the survey conducted in Durban in 1997 by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). The Durban survey was just one of a series the ISS conducted in the major cities and rural areas. The ISS conducted their study as a street survey, speaking to those who agreed to be interviewed at major intersections in the cities concerned. Since those who had little to report might not bother to agree to be interviewed, and those who had the most interesting stories to tell might be especially inclined to participate, it was anticipated that the ISS figures would be higher than those found in the present study, which was household based.

A national victims survey was conducted in South Africa by the Secretariat for Safety and Security in 1998 (StatsSA, 1998). A number of methodological problems emerged, unfortunately, and the final results are questionable. For example, the survey came out with the counterintuitive finding that residents of the Free State are the most at risk of violent crime in the country. International survey data have been compiled and compared by the United Nations Criminal Research Institute (UNICRI, 1998). Where appropriate, data from these surveys are used for comparison in this study.

Another problem with comparing survey data with official statistics is that surveys focus on individuals and households, while the police focus on station areas. This survey reveals the crime experienced by people living in Cato Manor, while the police statistics for the relevant station areas portray the crime experienced by both residents and non-residents within their jurisdictions, which also include areas outside Cato Manor.

Despite these problems, it was decided that a victim's survey would be the best point of departure toward understanding crime in Cato Manor. The results would give an idea of the extent of underreporting, and the official statistics could then be interpreted in this light. The data on chronic crime problems and community-police relations could also serve as a point of departure for subsequent focus groups.

The sample and questions

The broad community of Cato Manor is made up of several distinct sub-communities. These areas differ in characteristics such as the level of formality of the housing, the origin and arrival date of the residents, political leadership, ethnicity, and so on. Table One shows the areas sampled, something about their character, the total population of the area, and the number of surveys conducted. A total of 841 households were surveyed; this averages out to about one household for every 100 residents, with no less than 30 households in any given area.

Location	Character	Population	Sample
Cato Crest	Informal with high turnover	19 300	190
Wiggins/ Umkambane	More formal	3 700	40
Fast Track East	Upgraded, "club" area	2 500	31
Fast Track West	Upgraded, "club" area	2 500	30
Old Dunbar	Newer shack area	8 300	81
New Dunbar	Newer shack area. Political leadership different from Old Dunbar	5 000	50
Bonella	Public housing estate, Indian population	5 500	50
Wiggins 1/ Masxhawulane	Formal housing invaded, different SE profile	5 600	60
Wiggins 5a/Msimbini	Shack area	900	30
Umkumbaan	Low density, Indian, lower middle income	300	30
Jamaica	New shack area	3 900	40
Chesterville	Formal township	15 000	150
Chesterville extension 2 and incremental	New development	1 300	30
Chesterville bond (extension 1)	New development	2 300	30
TOTAL SAMPLE			842

Within these areas, a team of six field workers and one field supervisor approached households on a systematically randomised basis. With Cato Crest, for example, each of the defined sub-sections was canvassed on different days, with every sixth house being approached. Since the survey was conducted during daylight hours, more formal areas required a greater number of attempts in order to find an available respondent.

The questions asked included details of demographics and household assets, victimisation data, perceptions of safety, safety precautions taken, opinions of the police and other community safety structures, and opinions of chronic problems confronting the area. A final broad qualitative question inviting the residents to problematise the issue of community safety

for themselves rounded off the survey. A copy of the questionnaire is included in this report as Annex A

Demographics

The fact that the survey was conducted during daylight hours during both weekdays and weekends undoubtedly had an impact on the demographics of the sample, and thus on the final results. Overall, 65% of the respondents were female, and nearly half declared themselves “unemployed, actively seeking employment”. These figures would probably been different if the survey were conducted after working hours exclusively.

In over half of the interviews, however, the field workers were able to interview the head of the household and in 56% of these cases, the head was female. In 22% of the cases the partner of the head was interviewed, and 21% it was a child of the head. Four households were headed by students. Forty percent of the heads of household reported being unemployed. Of those reporting employment, 37% worked in the Durban CBD, and 20% worked in their own home. The median level of education reported of those not presently in school was Standard Eight.

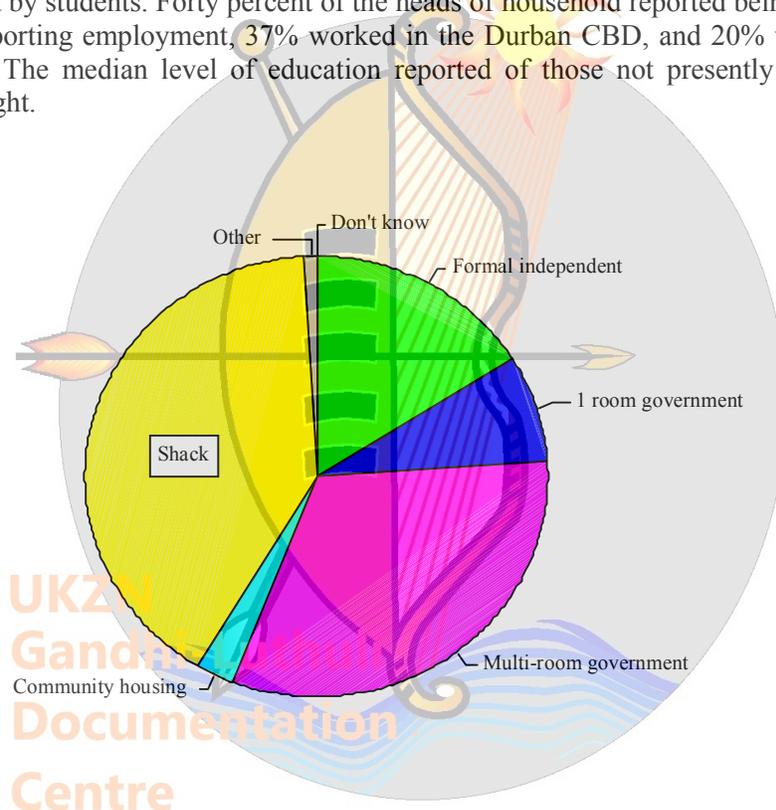


Figure 2: Housing types

Just over 40% of the households polled were living in shacks, with a third in government multi-room housing, and 16% in independent brick and mortar housing. The median household size was four members, three of whom were adults.

Ethnically, the sample was 90% Zulu-speaking, with small pockets of Indian residents. This shows that Cato Manor is an area solidly rooted in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Very few non-South Africans were found in the sample.

As was anticipated, very few of the residents had access to personal vehicles, and this is obviously important when weighing up vehicular crime data. Only 12% of the households

reported owning a car or other vehicle. In contrast, 84% reported owning their own home. While rentals are not unknown, even in shack areas, the bulk of the people polled claimed home ownership.

The overall picture is very close to what was expected. Cato Manor is an area of very high unemployment and low education levels where local people try to find work in the nearby CBD or formal suburbs. Most are dependent on public transport and although many claim home ownership, many reside in shacks.

Victimisation levels

Reports of victimisation were taken only in the following crime categories:

- Burglary
- Robbery
- Assault
- Murder
- Sexual assault
- Theft of vehicle
- Vehicular hijacking

Any positive report of victimisation led to the completion of a supplementary form that recorded the details of the incident, allowing for analysis of each crime type. For the categories of “burglary”, “murder”, and “theft of vehicle”, the question was asked at the household level (i.e., whether anyone in the household had been the victim of that crime). The respondents were asked only about the crime they themselves had experienced in the other crime categories. For the purposes of the survey, “household” was defined as all people who slept in that house every night.

Burglary, which was the most commonly reported crime, was the crime most often cited as the crime that hurt residents the worst. While this is a direct product of the fact that more people experienced burglary than any other crime listed, this does show that burglary is the crime causing the most damage in the area. The financial impact was mentioned more often than emotional or physical harms as the most hurtful aspect of criminal victimisation, and this again is a product of the fact that burglary, a property crime, was most common. Thus, while violent crimes may be more damaging in individual cases, the community as a whole suffers most due to the real economic costs of having their property stolen from their homes.

Only five people reported being hijacked, and only ten women reported either actual or attempted sexual assault, so these crimes were dropped from further analysis. The low levels of reported sexual assault are expected in victim's surveys, for reasons discussed above. Although vehicular ownership was low in Cato Manor (12% of households), it is surprising that so few hijackings were reported, given that Bellevue Road adjoining the area has come to be known as “hijack alley”. Apparently, people from outside the community are targeted, either incidentally or intentionally.

There were only six cases of vehicular theft reported, with two of these being non-African Bonella residents. While this number is small, it is about what would be expected given that only 12% of the households owned vehicles.

Victimisation levels were surprisingly low overall. Comparing the figures for the most recent year among Cato Manor residents to the levels found by the ISS study for all of Durban in 1997 (Figure 3), the Cato Manor rates are very close to those of a sample taken from the general population. Assault and murder levels were actually higher in Durban as a whole. This would suggest that Cato Manor is not a particularly dangerous place to live in Durban.

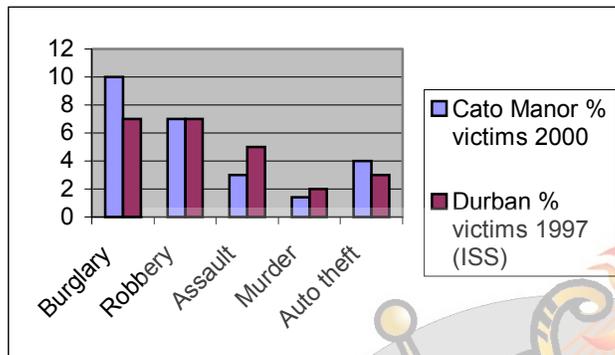


Figure 3: Comparative victimisation levels

As was mentioned above, however, the ISS levels may be artificially high, due to the methodology of street surveying. These figures still show one in every 10 households in Cato Manor was burglarised in the last year, and, as specific analysis of this crime type will show, many of these “burglaries” were, in fact, violent crimes. This level of burglary is not unusual for the African continent but is much higher than that found in the rest of the developing world. (UNICRI, 1998). Comparing the Cato Manor rates to just the African sample of the ISS study shows Cato Manor being safer in every category but auto theft.

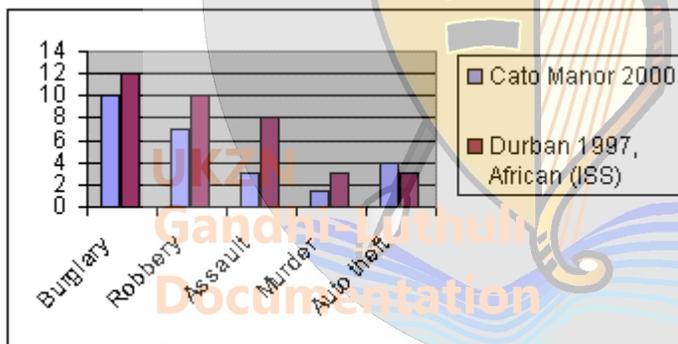


Figure 4: Comparative victimisation rates

Comparing the survey rates to those found for KwaZulu-Natal as a whole in the Secretariat’s survey in 1998, burglary again appears to be high and assault is again curiously low. As mentioned earlier, however, the provincial statistics for that survey were questionable, and the present study was not designed to be comparable to the Secretariat’s in terms of definitions and other parameters. Given that the Secretariat’s figures were drawn from a household study encompassing all of KwaZulu-Natal, not just disadvantaged areas, crime levels in Cato Manor are again lower than might be anticipated.

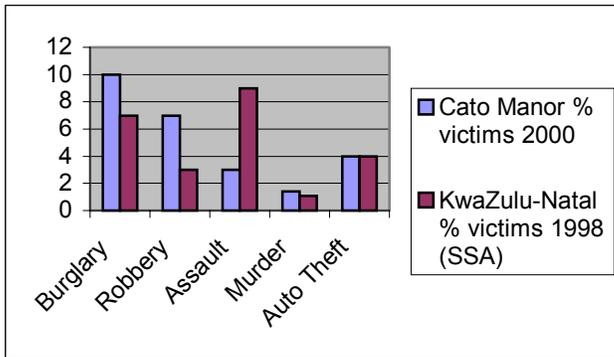


Figure 5: Comparative victimisation rates

Thus, of the 843 people surveyed, a rather small percentage reported victimisation in the delineated categories. The tentative conclusion that can be drawn from this is that Cato Manor is actually a relatively safe place to live. This is supported by the data on perceptions of safety.

Perceptions of safety

Most of the respondents (69%) reported feeling “very safe” or “fairly safe” when walking in their area during the day.

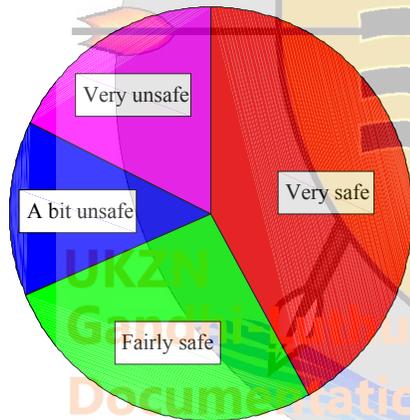


Figure 6: Perceptions of safety (daytime)

Unfortunately, these perceptions shifted drastically after dark, when 80% felt a bit unsafe or very unsafe walking in their area.

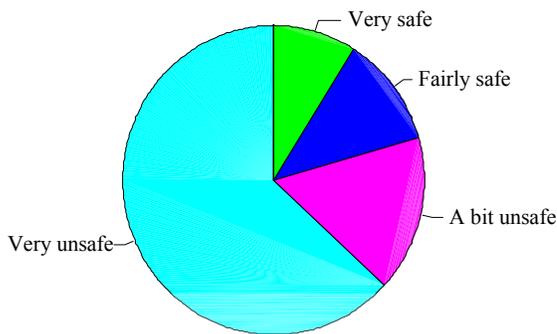


Figure 7: Perceptions of safety (after dark)

Feelings of security varied sharply by area, with 100% of Bonella residents reporting feeling safe during the day, compared to just over 60% of Cato Crest and Old Dunbar residents. In fact, 72% of Bonella residents even felt safe walking after dark, compared to about 10% of Cato Crest and Old Dunbar residents.

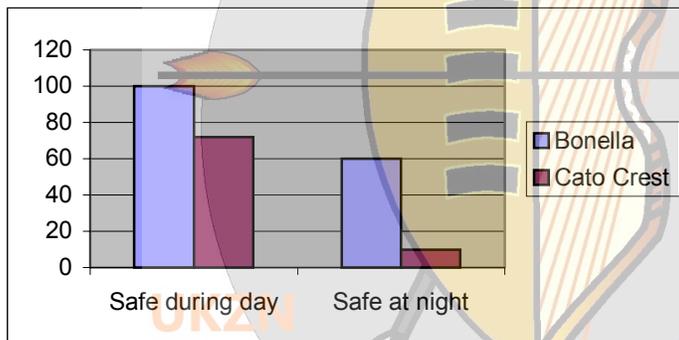


Figure 8: Perceptions of safety by area of residence

This extreme contrast between daytime and nighttime safety is unusual, and points to an infrastructure problem – lack of street lighting. Victims reported not being able to identify perpetrators in the dark, allowing criminals to act with immunity. In the area where night was feared the most – the shack areas – there are not even streets to light. A representative from the metro Electricity Department suggested that part of this fear of the dark may have to do with the pirating of electricity, as several deaths had occurred in Cato Manor in recent weeks due to children stepping on exposed power lines. This level of fear of the night is remarkable by international standards, as Figure 9 indicates.

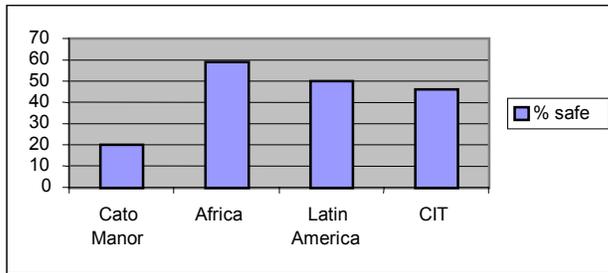


Figure 9: Comparative nighttime fear

When asked what precautions they take to protect themselves from crime while walking, the most popular response was “don’t walk after dark”. The second most popular response was “avoid certain areas”.

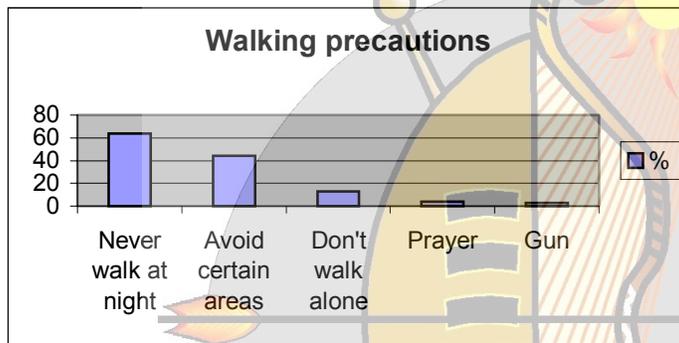


Figure 10: Precautions taken while walking

Cato Crest (40%) and Old Dunbar (13%) were the two areas most cited as being the places most residents would be afraid to walk in Cato Manor. However, Cato Manor was not generally regarded by the residents as the most dangerous part of Durban. The Northern townships (and KwaMashu in particular) were listed as the area respondents most fear.

These fears appear to have some basis in real chances of victimisation, as the informal areas seem to be the most crime prone. For example, residents of Cato Crest (17%) and Old Dunbar (20%) were among the most likely to have had their homes burgled in the last year, and 70% of the burglaries occurred after dark. But fear of victimisation may have a greater impact on quality of life than victimisation itself. If over 60% of the residents of Cato Manor refuse to go out after dark, then lack of street lighting is seriously limiting employment, social, and educational opportunities.

Precautions taken to protect the home also point to a serious lack of security infrastructure. Over 40% of the respondents said they took no precautions to prevent being victimised, including simple door locks. Clearly, in shack areas, traditional “target hardening” makes little sense.

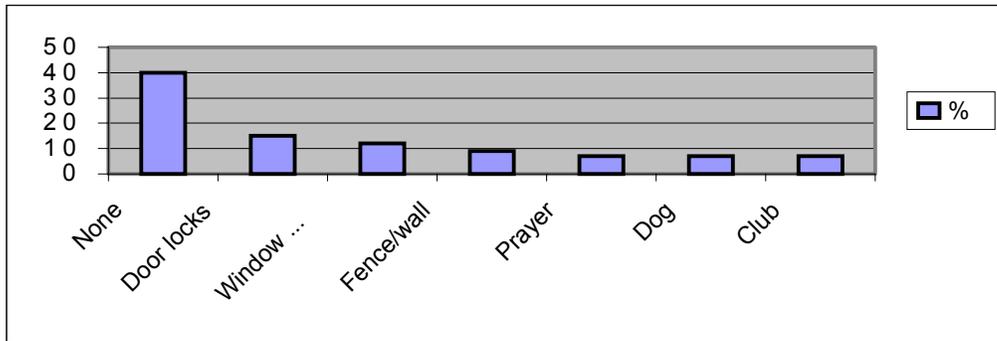


Figure 11: Precautions taken to protect home

This stands in contrast to the ISS findings about the African population in Durban. While the ISS found 36% of black Durban residents had no protection, they did not include the unsolicited response “prayer” which was mentioned by 5% of Cato Manor respondents. This suggests that Cato Manor residents are particularly deprived in terms of basic security infrastructure in their housing. The most frequently mentioned safety feature was security door locks, which only 12% of the sample declared. Surprisingly, 9% of shack dwellers claimed to have security locks, compared to less than 5% of community housing residents (one out of 23 houses polled). Apparently, government housing does not come supplied with door locks, which may be a planning oversight, but 26% of the multi-room government housing residents have security door locks, and 21% have grilles over their doors or windows. The lack of locks will be discussed further in the section on burglary, below.

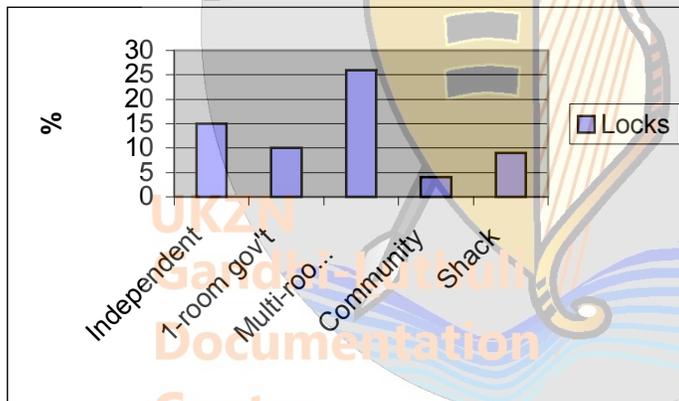


Figure 12: Presence of security locks

Few Cato Manor residents kept dogs (6%), while this was the most popular form of protection among Africans in Durban generally (18%) according to the ISS. Residents of multi-room government housing, who are also more likely than average to have a fence (19%) are more likely to have a dog (10%), while shack dwellers, who have little room for an animal, are less likely (5%).

The preceding discussion underscores the connection between security and basic infrastructure. The need for adequate lighting is manifest, but problems with pirating of electricity from street lamps pose a considerable obstacle. The live wiring left exposed in this form of theft is a major safety and fire hazard, particularly in the shack areas where the

practice is common. Aside from the obvious goal of formalising housing and providing electrical service to the entire area, some creative interim measures to secure street lighting should be considered. The costs involved in maintaining the status quo (in terms of accidental deaths, criminal victimisation, and reduced opportunities due to restricted hours of free movement) would merit considerable expenditure in this area.

Burglary was identified as the crime having the worst impact on the community due to the real economic impact it has on the lives of the victimised, and the high rate of burglary can be traced in part to the lack of basic security infrastructure. As will further be discussed in the burglary section to follow, the lack of basic security in housing, including state-constructed housing, illustrates how security is not generally factored into development thinking. Ideally, 100% of government projects should include door locks and burglar bars over the windows. As was briefly discussed in the meeting of 29 March, the provision of these basic security features provides an opportunity for local entrepreneurs.

Opinions of police and related structures

The overall appraisal of police performance was surprisingly good. Although opinions were divided, more thought the police were doing a good job (48%) than thought they weren't (46%) and only a few claimed they didn't know (6%).

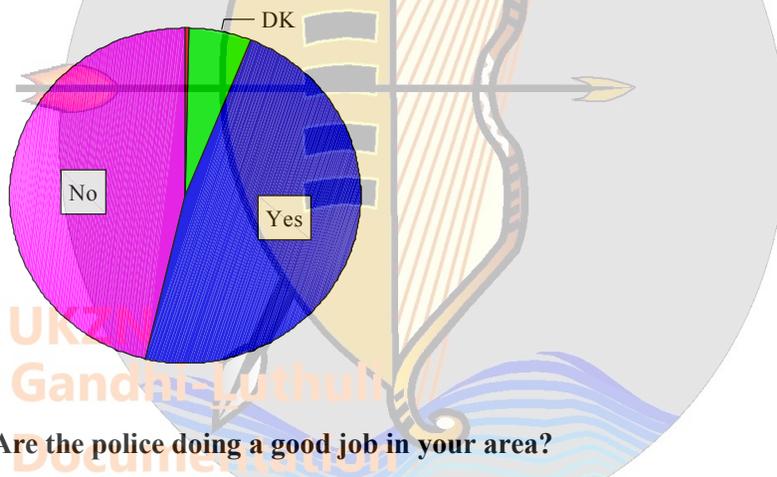


Figure 13: Are the police doing a good job in your area?

This compares favourably to the opinion of police service in Durban generally and to informal settlements in particular in the ISS survey. Whites were found to generally have a higher opinion of police service in Durban, with Indians being most critical, and access to the police was found to be a strong determining factor in approval ratings. The fact that so many approve of police performance in Cato Manor provides a strong endorsement of the stations in the area, despite the 46% that are still unsatisfied.

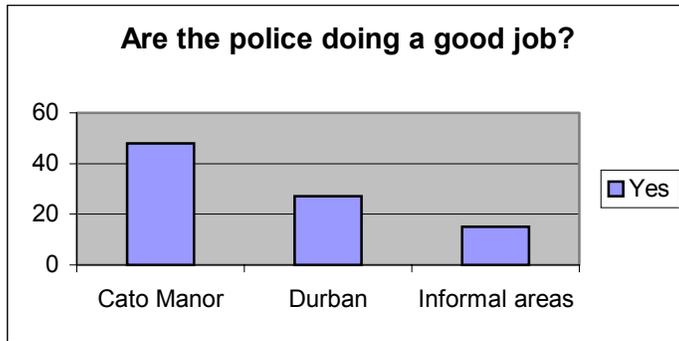


Figure 14: Comparative approval rates

Reasons for disapproval focused on issues of access and attitude, rather than corruption and racism, which is also reassuring. The most common reasons given for disappointment with the police were:

- the lack of visible patrol or refusal to enter the area (listed in 37% of the cases)
- laziness and an unprofessional attitude (43% of cases)
- taking money from or working with the criminals (17% of cases)

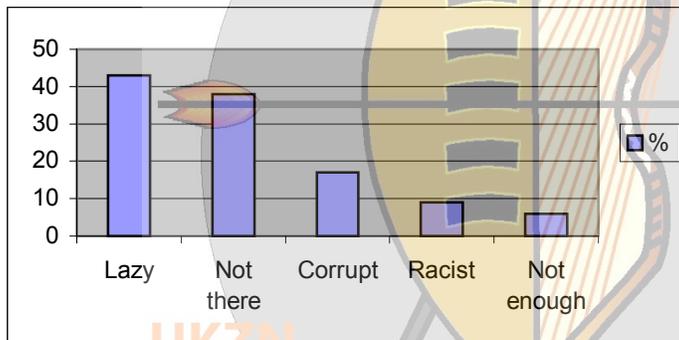


Figure 15: Reasons for disapproval of police

There were comparatively few references racism, favouritism, lack of resources, or general tardiness in responding.

As with feelings of safety, opinions of police performance varied sharply by area, with 70% of Bonella residents being satisfied compared to 45% of Cato Manor and Old Dunbar residents. Since one of the primary complaints was lack of visible presence or fear of entering the area, this may relate again to infrastructure, as shack areas are difficult patrol, particularly at night. Bonella is one of the few parts of the station area where roads are good, so this area may be benefiting from disproportionate visible patrol.

An even more impressive response was found to the question “Do you think you can trust the police to make things better after reporting a crime?” A striking 56% responded affirmatively, suggesting that some disapproval is due to lack of crime prevention efforts rather than investigative response. Still more compelling was the 90% that said they would report a crime to their local station if victimised today, although, as Figure 15 shows, their actual reporting rates were considerably less.

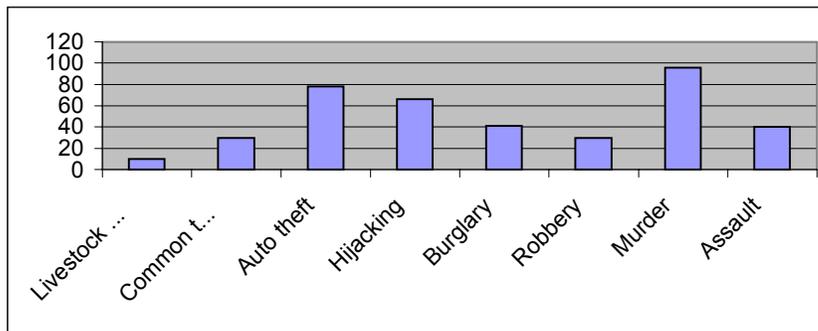


Figure 16: Reporting rates

Comparing these reporting rates to those found by the ISS in Durban as a whole show reporting to be generally lower in Cato Manor, particularly for offences such as burglary and robbery. Part of this may have to do with the lack of household and personal insurance among Cato Manor residents, as subsequent discussions of specific crime types will show.

Questions geared to evaluate community policing were not as convincing, but were still relatively positive. Only 14% could name a local police member who they could approach with a problem, when in theory this proportion should be close to 100%. This again emphasises the issue of visibility and accessibility. Although Cato Manor residents feel relatively safe and therefore positive about the police, they do not find the police accessible enough report problems when they do arise.

Only 43% said they knew of a community police forum (CPF) in their area, when this figure should also have been close to 100%. Of those who knew of one, however, half said they had attended a meeting, which is remarkably high. Of those who knew of a CPF, 60% said they thought the forum was making their area safer, which is also a fairly high approval rating. Nineteen percent said they were aware of other community safety programmes in their area, but only 36 people had heard of the Special Investigative Task Team.

Residents were asked groups to which they might report crime issues besides the police, such as traditional leadership, community leadership, neighbourhood watch groups, and taxi, vigilante, and gang structures. Community leadership was the only group that garnered any appreciable support, and fully 80% of those polled said they would report crime to community leaders. In fact, the field workers report that in many areas, victims were required to report crime to community leadership first before taking the matter to the police, and it was suggested that some reports got no further than the community leaders. While 56% of those asked said that community leaders were effective in combating crime, more thought the police were more effective (51%) than community leaders (37%).

Thus, the police have developed a relatively good reputation in the Cato Manor area, although discontents felt they were not active or visible enough. CPF attendance suggests a community that is willing to assist in fighting crime, and strong community leadership structures are in place to organise interventions.

Crime trends and problems

In addition to their relatively positive view of the police, the respondents were more positive than might be expected about the crime situation. Although 57% thought crime had got worse in recent years, 29% thought it had decreased, and 13% said it had stayed the same. Thus, 42% felt crime had not got worse, which is remarkable given general perceptions about growing crime in the country in general.

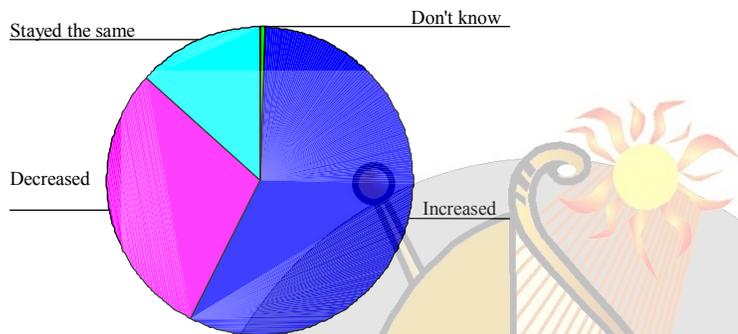


Figure 17: How has crime changed in recent years?

The respondents were asked which type of crime was most common in their area, and which type of crime they were most afraid of in their area. Perhaps due to translation problems, many gave multiple responses to these questions. The community correctly identified burglary (47%) and robbery as the most common crimes (21%), but a large contingent also mentioned murder (17%). Accordingly, burglary is crime most feared in Cato Manor (39%), followed by murder (26%) and robbery (17%). Rape, which is generally one of the most feared crime types, was mentioned by only 14% of the respondents. Of course, this is primarily an issue for the 65% of the sample that is female.

Respondents were asked to name any of the local gangs they knew of. This question was asked to determine whether the gangs in the area existed as a named institution independent of any individual members (as is common in the coloured townships of the Western Cape and Johannesburg) or whether these “gangs” were just temporary associations of local criminal youths. Thirty-four percent said there were no gangs in their area, and all but two could not give any name to the local gangs. Of those who felt they knew who was committing most of the crime in their area, however, 62% felt that the local criminals were organised into gangs or syndicates, and 47% felt local youth were responsible for most of the crime. A total of 77% of those who felt they had knowledge said the crime was mostly committed by local people.

Questions about the kinds of drugs used and sold in the area were added as an afterthought, as this is one area in which this researcher has particular expertise. Traditionally, drugs other than cannabis are unusual in the black community, due to the isolation and poverty this community confronted in the past, and due to the influence of the African Independent Churches, which ban use of intoxicating substances among members. Urine tests among arrestees conducted by the ISS and the Medical Research Council have found that hard drug consumption levels among blacks are still much lower than among other ethnic groups.

It was, therefore, highly surprising that, in addition to high levels of cannabis use, other drugs were also commonly mentioned. Eighty-eight percent of the people polled said dagga was used in their area, and 85% said it was sold there. Forty-three percent said Mandrax was used and 32% said it was sold in their area. Seven percent said crack was used and 4% said it was sold in their area. Fifty four percent of respondents said they knew someone in Cato Manor who needed drugs every day.

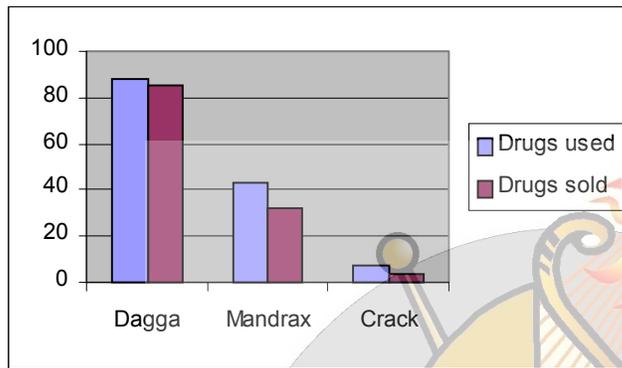


Figure 18: Drugs used and sold

In the ISS/MRC study, while 35% of the arrestees tested positive for cannabis, only 9% tested positive for Mandrax (compared to 62% of Indians) and only 2% tested positive for cocaine (compared to 32% of whites). These figures were gathered among those arrested for crime, including drug crime, and are probably much higher than in the general population. The fact that so many identified Mandrax in the area and that crack was mentioned at all is very surprising, and points to a potential source of serious crime in the future. In fact, the high levels of hijacking in the areas immediately adjoining Cato Manor may represent the first manifestations of this problem. Serious addicts (particularly crack addicts) cannot endure the turnaround time involved property crimes like burglary, which involve more planning and transporting the goods to a buyer. They tend to turn to violent crimes like robbery, which can yield instant cash, or hijacking, which produces a mobile commodity that can be immediately exchanged for drugs (since many stolen vehicle syndicates operate in tandem with drug smuggling routes).

While separate detailed questionnaires were only completed for the major crimes of burglary, robbery, assault, murder, and vehicular theft and robbery, brief questions were asked about the common crimes of livestock theft and simple theft.

Livestock theft was the most commonly reported crime in the Secretariat's national victim's survey, and a small portion (8%) of Cato Manor residents do own livestock of some form. A total of 26% of livestock owners reported having a animal stolen in the past five years, and 90% of these did not report the crime to the police. The most common reason given was that reporting was not necessary or important (59%) followed by the fact that other methods were used to resolve the issue (24%). For many crime types, failure to report is due to a feeling that the issue is not significant enough (or the chances of positive resolution are too small) to bother reporting to the police. Many people prefer to cut their losses and let it go. The two individuals who did bother to report were not satisfied with the police response (which they probably anticipated would mean the return of their property), so perhaps the non-reporters in this category are simply have more savvy.

A similarly brief set of questions was asked around personal theft, and 28% reported some experience of this crime in the past five years. Only 30% reported this incident to the police, and of these, only 24% were satisfied with the response. Again, about half that did not report said it was not necessary or important enough, with 17% saying the matter was resolved by other means, and 14% saying they did not trust the police.

This section has highlighted several important facts about crime in Cato Manor. Though many believe the crime situation has not deteriorated in recent years, the residents are most concerned about being burgled and robbed. They see the source of crime as internal, primarily caused by local youth working in informal groups. A surprise finding was that drugs are more common in the area than most, including local police, would have guessed. Petty theft victimisation rates are about average, as are reporting patterns in this area. The remaining crime types will be discussed individually, in order of frequency.

Burglary

As discussed above, burglary is the major crime most often experienced and most feared in Cato Manor. The following conclusions are based on analysis of 156 incidents of burglary in the area, as detailed by the residents in the survey. Residents were asked to recount their most recent experience of burglary, not the most sensational incident, and only one form was filled out for each victim.

As might be expected given lighting conditions, 70% of the burglaries occurred after dark, and given that many refuse to go out at night, it is not surprising that the residents were at home in about half the burglaries. What is surprising is that threats or violence were used in 30% of the cases. In terms of South African law, these were not just burglaries at all – they were home robberies. Given the size of most of the homes in the area, it is likely that in the 20% of the cases when the victims were at home but where force was not used, the victims allowed the burglars to go on about their business without confrontation.

Burglary is generally classified as a property crime, but robbery is a violent crime, and is generally regarded as a lot more serious, particularly when the incident occurs in the home and when whole families are threatened. In 20% of the cases, a gun was used. In 8%, injuries were inflicted. In 6%, hospitalisation was required. This is not burglary in the ordinary sense. The trauma of having one's home violated is great when there is not confrontation between the victim and the thieves. How much greater must be the trauma when all this is done in front of the victim's face?

The perpetrators gained entry to the home by a wide range of means. In about a quarter of the cases, a secured door was simply forced open. In about 12% of the cases, the security on the door was overcome by other means. In another 12%, the door had no security features at all, and so the perpetrators simply walked in. In 14% of the cases, force was used on the residents to gain entry. In 11% of the cases, entry was gained by trickery. In nearly every case, the burglars entered straight through the front door – rarely were windows or other means of entry used.

Burglary Cato Manor-style is not generally conducted on tiptoe. Covert entry and stealthy pilfering are unnecessary when doors can be kicked in or have no locks. It can be difficult to tell whether the residents are at home or not in the dark of night, so one must be prepared to use force. If you can con or frighten the hapless victim into letting you in, all the better.

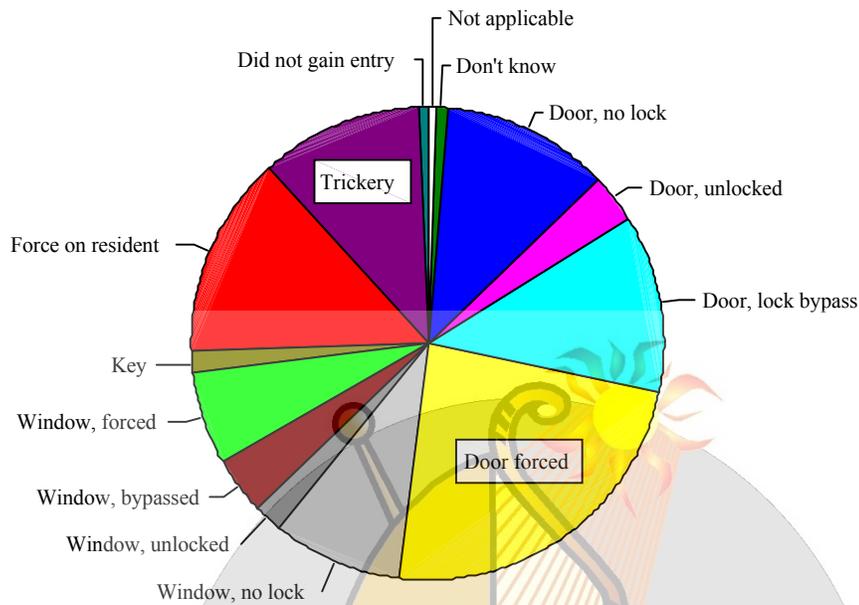


Figure 19: Burglar's means of entry

One might expect that a single incident of this sort might lead to a certain amount of home improvement on the security side, but 56% of the victims did not add security following the burglary, most probably due to poverty.

Unfortunately, only 41% of the victims reported this crime to the police. This is a very low reporting rate for burglary – the Secretariat's study found a nation-wide burglary reporting rate of 59%. This is probably due to the fact that only in only 17 cases (13% of cases where property was taken) was the property insured. Many of those that did not report said it was not necessary/important (32%) but nearly a quarter said they used other means to resolve the situation.

Of those reporting, only 27% were satisfied with the police response. Property was recovered in 13% of the burglaries, and in all but one of these cases, the property was found in Cato Manor. In 58% of the cases, the victims said they knew who burgled their homes – this is truly remarkable for a crime where firm leads on suspects are usually hard to find. In nearly a quarter of the cases, there was some witness to the crime, either a neighbour or the victims themselves. In only 11 cases was it believed that the burglars were from outside Cato Crest. In the majority of cases, it was believed that the perpetrators were under the age of 25, and in 28 cases, it was believed that they were members of a gang.

Thus, burglary in Cato Manor has some unique features. It is a crime of personal confrontation, in which the victim is more likely than not to know the perpetrator. Most of the time, the burglar simply comes through the front door. Still, nearly 60% of these crimes go unreported to the police, which is a pity given the solubility of these crimes. There is need for both improved infrastructure and improved police performance in this area.

Robbery

While many of the burglaries recorded in this study were actually robberies, true robberies were also the second most commonly experienced and the second most feared offence, with 10% of the respondents having been robbed since 1994. The following analysis is based on 82 robberies that were committed between 1994 and 2001.

As with burglary, most of these incidents (66%) took place after dark. In 87% of the cases, the robbers succeeded in taking something of value. The robbers mostly (77%) worked in groups of two, three, or four people. In 84% of the cases, the victim did not know who the robbers were. In the remaining 15% of the cases, 55% of the time the victim knew the robbers by name, 27% of the time they were known by face.

In 91% of the cases, the robbers spoke Zulu. Surprisingly, in 9% of the cases, women were involved. Unlike the burglary suspects, 41% of the robbers were believed to be from outside the area. In 63% of the cases, these people were believed to be under the age of 25, but, since many were outsiders, it was difficult to tell if they were members of an organised group.

Most (78%) of the victims made the mistake of being alone on the street at the time of the incident. Most were on the street (38%), in front of their house (16%) or at a public transport stop or vehicle in Cato Manor (16%) at the time of the incident. The majority of the incidents involved only threats, but nearly half involved some violence. The most commonly used weapons were a gun (43%), a knife (32%), or no weapon at all (20%). In 20% of the cases, injuries were sustained, and in 60% of these cases, medical attention was required.

Only 30% of the victims reported the crime to the police, and only 35% of those who did were satisfied with the response. Of those who did not report, 47% said it was not necessary or important enough, 15% said they did not trust the police, and 9% said the police were not accessible.

The most frequently stolen item, surprisingly, was clothing (including sunglasses), which was taken in 37% of the cases. Money was taken in 22% of the cases, followed in frequency by handbags or briefcases (16%) and jewellery (11%). Property was only recovered in 4% of the cases.

Thus, robbery seems to be a less personal crime than burglary, perpetrated more often by strangers and outsiders to the community. The property taken seems to be petty, but the force considerable, with handguns and knives being used in the majority of the cases, and serious injuries being not uncommon. Since most of these incident occurred after dark, the issue of street lighting is again implicated, as is access control to the area.

Assault

Half the 49 assaults recorded occurred in the victim's own home, 25% on the street in a residential area. In 61% of the cases, the victim was not alone with the perpetrator. In about half the cases, no weapon was used, but in 18% a gun was used and in 16% a knife was used. Surprisingly, guns were most likely to be used in the home. In 71% of these cases injuries were involved and in 80% the injuries required medical attention. In one case, a death was involved, and in 39% of the cases, the victim felt their attacker was intent on killing them.

The incident was not reported to the police in 60% of the cases. The reasons given for not reporting were varied, but most common were fear of the perpetrators (17%) distrust of the

police (17%), and inaccessibility of the police. Happily, of those who did report, nearly half were satisfied with the police response.

In just under half the cases, only one person was involved, but all others involved multiple assailants. Nearly all (94%) of the assailants were Zulu-speaking. The most frequent assailants were known community members (33%) and spouses or lovers (22%). The assailant was unknown in about a quarter of the cases. Most of the attacks were due to sudden personal anger towards the victim (27%), jealousy or other romantic motive (22%), and money or other financial motive (14%). Few incidents involving political, racial, or authoritarian violence were recorded.

In 41% of the cases, the assailant was believed to have been drinking or taking drugs, and in 27% of the cases, the victim had also been drinking or taking drugs. There were witnesses in 74% of the cases, and these witnesses tried to help in 56% of the incident in which they were present. The victim attempted to fight back in a third of the cases, and felt they did not provoke the attack 86% of the time. Over 40% felt the perpetrator was likely to attack them again.

It therefore appears that the forms of assault are varied, with several types of violence between intimates being picked up in this survey: domestic abuse, drunken brawling, disputes over money. What is remarkable is the seriousness of the attacks, with most of the assaults resulting in a need for medical attention and perceived intent to kill being present in a sizeable minority of the cases. Guns were also a feature in a surprising number of household incidents. The most likely explanation for extreme nature of these attacks is that the respondents simply did not bother to mention less violent episodes. This would suggest that the rate of chargeable assault is likely to be higher than these figures capture, and that the community has simply become inured to lesser background violence.

While those who reported the incident were slightly more likely to be dissatisfied than not, the higher approval ratings given to the police in this category are encouraging. Part of this is likely due to the fact that cases of assault involve no recovery of property, which is probably behind a lot of the dissatisfaction experienced by respondents in the previous two categories.

Murder

A total of 28 households reported that one of their members (defined as one who sleeps under their roof every night) had been murdered since 1994. Eight of these incidents occurred on the streets of Cato Manor, while six occurred at home. A gun was used in 23 of these murders. In 39% of the cases, the person murdered was a source of income for the household.

The incident was reported to the police in all but one case, and the respondents were satisfied in five cases. The one person who did not report said other means were used to resolve the case.

In 20 of the cases, the respondent was convinced they knew who the killer was, in six cases because the respondent witnessed the murder. In most of the cases, the killer was an unrelated community member, either known (39%) or unknown (21%). Possible motives were varied, with attempted robbery (4 cases) being the most commonly cited reason. In 12 cases, the respondent did not know why their household member had been killed. Alcohol or drugs were involved in five of the cases, and 11 people said that this killing was part of an ongoing problem that is likely to result in more deaths.

While it is hard to generalise on the basis of so few cases, it is worth noting that many of these deaths were to the respondents fairly random events involving their fellow community members. The sense of insecurity and distrust this must engender within the community could pose a formidable obstacle to co-operative security.

Conclusions

The preceding discussions cover a wide range of criminal episodes, and each crime type seems to have its own dynamic:

- Burglary is the most common and most feared crime, as it is costly and often violent. The perpetrators are often known to the victims, and this is probably how the criminals know which households to target. Entry is usually forceful and the residents, who are as likely to be home as not, are subject to substantial intimidation and trauma.
- Robbery in the street is more often a crime between strangers, where the victim is targeted by a small group due to being alone and in possession of a desired object, such as a piece of clothing or jewellery. While the material stakes are low, the level of force used is not, with guns or knives being used in the majority of incidents.
- Assaults captured by this survey are interpersonal crimes, often involving alcohol or drugs and taking place in the presence of others. Guns were a surprising feature of domestic assaults. Overall, they are remarkable due to their severity, and it is likely that the rate of chargeable assault is probably much higher than this survey recorded.
- Murder, as represented by the few cases examined, is a frighteningly random sort of crime, with many deaths having no apparent cause. The suspected murderers are more often than not unrelated community members, so these crime are internal but not domestic.

While in the first part of this survey 90% of the respondents said they would report a crime to the police, not nearly so many actually do so when victimised. Reporting rates varied between burglary (41%), robbery (30%), assault (40%), and murder (96%). Comparatively speaking, the rates for burglary and robbery are low, while the rates for assault and murder are about average for the country. The low rates for crime where property is taken is probably due to a lack of insurance. The rate of assault reporting looks encouraging, but it seems likely from the types of assault reported that the survey itself missed a lot of less severe assault, such as low-level domestic violence.

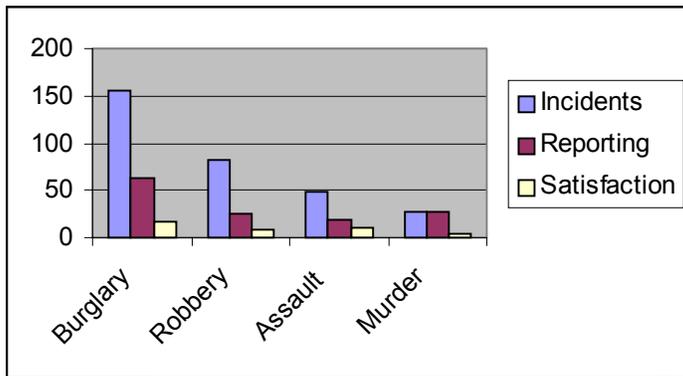


Figure 20: Comparative numbers of cases reporting and satisfied

While the first part of the survey suggested relatively high levels of satisfaction with the police, experiences in actual incidents of reporting were less positive. Although 57% thought they could trust the police to make things better after reporting a crime, only 30% of those actually reporting said they were satisfied with the police response.

Thus, the residents of Cato Manor seem more satisfied with the police in the abstract than in any particular instance. This may be due in part to the relatively low levels of crime they experience in the area. It is hoped that focus groups will shed more light on this issue.

While part of this relative safety is due to law enforcement, part is surely due to the advantages of living in a presidential lead project. While nearly half the daytime populace is looking for work, the residents of Cato Manor have more reason to be optimistic about their prospects than others of a similar social class. They have access to a variety of programmes and facilities, as well as many having security of tenure in their homes. Community structures are strong and general community cohesion is growing. Many of the classic requirements for crime prevention are in place.

That having been said, there is still a long way to go toward making Cato Manor safer through development. Lighting, residential security, roads, and formal housing will all add to community safety and allow residents to enjoy the freedom of movement they presently lack. And development goes beyond infrastructure to include employment and education, including civic and life-skills education. Drug awareness may become an increasingly important aspect of this programme in the near future.

In sum, while Cato Manor is far from a safe place to live, it does not pose the sorts of hazards one might expect in this mix of public housing and informal settlement. Should development continue apace with security in mind, we can expect it to become safer still. There appears to be a genuine openness toward working with the police, despite past dissatisfaction. Law enforcement and community leadership should work together to make the most of this window of opportunity.