PREVENTING CRIME IN TOWNSHIPS: FOUNDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Abstract
This paper examines selected policy directions and the performance of the broader South African criminal justice system and connects this to the growth and development of townships. A major part of the paper is devoted to crime prevention issues. At the level of crime prevention many more people are affected, with the rate of crime victimisation driving the fear of crime. A qualitative analysis of the relevant literature was made. When levels of insecurity are high, as they often are in townships, it is inevitable that entrepreneurs and investors, whether foreign or local, will be reluctant to invest, concluding that the risk factors are larger than their appetites. It is argued that an effective crime prevention policy and efficient performance in this area can contribute to the economic growth and development of vulnerable communities. Several recommendations are made.

INTRODUCTION

Various foundations are necessary for entrepreneurship to grow in marginalised communities. These can be divided into business and social fundamentals. With regard to business, these include access to finance and enterprise development, for example. The social fundamentals include safety and security, for the business and its customers. Growth and development as planned for by the government and desired by society at large permeates a number of policy issues. The criminal justice sector and primarily the crime prevention policy and its implementation are critical factors in determining the image of stability, security and free and vibrant economic activity. Entrepreneurship is one form of achieving economic empowerment and human development in marginalised communities. Crime is fundamentally a socio-economic problem and the police thus have less influence on the causes of crime. Parliament concluded a public consultation process on the review of the criminal justice system, for the overhaul of which a R5.4-billion budget allocation was announced (Manuel, 2009). This was necessary to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of a function of government that is overwhelmed at all levels. The police cannot cope with the current high levels of crime. The courts are battling with huge backlogs both in the prosecution and the judiciary functions. Correctional centres are largely malfunctioning owing to overcrowding. Although townships house an important constituency of the ruling party, as can be seen from annual

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1 This paper was developed in part from drafts prepared during postgraduate studies at the University of Leicester and the Senior Management Programme at the University of Pretoria.
crime statistics (see Table 2), they generate far more crime than areas elsewhere. They are home to the biggest concentration of people who are poverty-stricken, who are victims of crime and equally who require better opportunities for economic empowerment. This is because of their closeness to the major centres of business and the huge populations they house.

KEY CONCEPTS

Growth and development
These terms are widely used in economics to refer to the growth of the economy, and commonly human and infrastructural development. In the case of South Africa as a developing country, these considerations have given rise to such terminology as a ‘developmental state’ to emphasise the vision of the ruling elite. That ‘growth is good for the poor’ is a common statement and one often backed by theory, research and history, argues Verme (2010). The author concurs that in the end growth reduces poverty but notes that growth in output alone is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for poverty reduction in the short term. Jayal (2009) also reconsider the debate brought about by the assumption that, ‘in democratic polities, economic development is always and inevitably more difficult to accomplish’. These arguments illustrate that the ‘growth and development’ literature is a highly contested space. The concepts of economic empowerment and human development are the key issues when growth and development are considered.

Crime prevention
Crime prevention is the reduction of opportunities for committing crime. This can either be in a proactive manner using social approaches such as entrepreneurship, education, family cohesion, employment and sport, or through police operational tactics such as arrests, police visibility and even the judiciary function of sentencing. To make the case for the rise of crime prevention, Felson (2002) identifies a ‘cops and courts’ fallacy, which exaggerates the importance of the police, the courts and prisons as key factors in preventing crime. In criminology and policing, the ‘crime prevention’ concept led to reasoning about risk and security management in a specific context, as the author does in this article, in the case of townships. Proponents of crime prevention may want to ask, ‘What can influence anyone not to commit crime in a township?’ Because crime prevention is concerned with the abundance of ‘opportunities’ to commit crime, this paper uses as background the fact that crime is rampant in these areas.

Townships
Historically, in apartheid South Africa, the term ‘township’ was used to depict the place where black people resided on the urban periphery. It has become an accepted English word to describe the same areas even in contemporary South Africa. Despite obvious poverty, which has also led to the rise in informal settlements within these areas, townships have seen expansive development in the post-apartheid era. They are vibrant, overcrowded and popular. We now have ‘township jazz’, ‘township tours’ and ‘township property’.
POLICY AND PERFORMANCE THEORIES

Lawrence and Weber (2009:165) list the elements of public policy as inputs, goals, tools and effects. In the context of this paper, “crime prevention in townships” is viewed as a singular action as it comprises many facets. Lawrence and Weber (2009:168) point out two major types of public policy, namely economic and social policies. This paper deals with the intersection of the two. Economic policy covers such other policies as fiscal, taxation, monetary, trade and industrial policies. All these types of economic policy can be explored separately for the purpose of understanding their impact on growth and development in townships. Using the standards of historical government allocation, the impact of South Africa’s fiscal policy on townships has been immense in the post-apartheid era, as evidenced by infrastructural investment. Government expenditure on police stations, health facilities, schools and a range of municipal services is visible. Yet in comparison with economic successes elsewhere in the country, the township business is still on the margins of the mainstream economy.

Social policy as another main type of public policy covers forms of social assistance. The criminal justice policy is a social policy along with other forms of social assistance that seek to provide care and development for people, such as health care and education. In a discussion on the relationship between the community and business, Lawrence and Weber (op cit: 365) note that this is about mutual interdependence. To illustrate this point, they list what business needs from the community and vice versa. It is from routine activities to the benefit of the other that often powerful collaborative partnerships arise. Making sure that there is less crime in a community would be to the benefit of business. There are many such examples in the South African context, one of which is Business against Crime. The organisation has funded capital projects such as the installation of closed-circuit television in high-crime areas. Rothstein and Stolle (2009: 293) credit ‘social capital’ for dealing with a social science challenge, namely ‘how to explain variation in successful cooperation among rational agents’. They emphasise that ‘social capital’ rests on the quality of government institutions, a theory based on the causal mechanisms between trustworthy administrative and legal institutions on one side and social trust on the other.

The plethora of strategies and legislation that makes up the crime prevention policy and its implementation requires further analysis. In the functioning of governments, Woolcock and Radin (2009:425) differentiate between the following:

Policies are technocratic. A policy will be designed at a macro-level and be monitored and evaluated ordinarily at the political level first and then at the senior strategic level for operational supervision. The primary distinction and approach of the South African justice system is that the police, the prosecution, and correctional authorities all operate as separate entities that are focussed on the various stages of the criminal justice system.

Programmes are the main feature of public service bureaucracy. Thus, the various criminal justice agencies will have various programmes that are aimed at addressing specific problems in line with the constitutional mandate of each agency. The National Prosecuting Authority, for example, runs a witness protection programme in which in sensitive cases, witnesses are protected using material resources to the benefit of the state’s case. This may entail moving a witness to another location and bearing the costs of the accommodation and all other incidental costs.

Practices are about the idiosyncratic aspects of development interactions. By this they mean the interaction between a practitioner and the recipient of a service, for example a police official and a
victim of crime. Practice is often distinguished from theory or policy directives, as there is a persistent gap between policy formulation and policy implementation.

The ‘place of criminal justice in development planning’ has long been recognised (Wickwar, 1977). National planning, as South Africa has just discovered with the creation of the National Planning Commission, headed by a minister, covers the entire scope of government deliverables. According to Olaonipekun (2004), development runs on a continuum, having traditional, transitional and desired development stages. He argues that Africa has remained perpetually transitional by hopping from one stage of development to another through crises, distractions, confusions and uncertainties. In the context of South Africa, effectively controlling crime has been one of the fundamental failures of the new dispensation.

An understanding of the government’s performance in selected crime prevention challenges is necessary. Marr (2009) lists the following elements of strategy, which have a cause-and-effect relationship on one another:

**Overall Aim:** An organisation has to understand its vision and mission. Barr notes that government and the public sector at large are notoriously bad at clarifying their strategy. With the appointment of the Cabinet, President Zuma also announced the change of the name of the Ministry of Safety and Security to that of Police. Along with the emergent rhetoric about being ‘ha d-on criminals’, it seems that there is a shift from the multi-agency approach that the National Crime Prevention Strategy sought to promote. Thus, the overall aim of a multi-agency approach in crime prevention has been lost. The ‘hard-on-crime’ rhetoric ignores the underlying socio-economic causes of crime.

**Outcomes:** Crime prevention is subject to limited funding, limited skills, an already burdened system, an expectant population and its non-innovative culture. Based on these challenges, at policy level, there must be prioritisation of the specific outcomes that can be achieved in the short, medium and long term. This is the thinking that drives the medium budgeting framework, for example in order to ensure targeted delivery in line with the most pressing needs. Outcomes therefore are about the specific aims that will make an impact. The establishment of the then Directorate of Special Operations, popularly known as the Scorpions, was based on the realisation that organised crime and corruption had taken a grip on society. Despite better resource allocation relative to its size, it was not envisaged that this unit would deal with the scourge of crime at all levels of society. Its members set specific outcomes by focusing on selected cases, which although they were criticised for this cherry-picking approach, were complex cases nevertheless. Political support and requisite funding to the Directorate of Priority Crime Investigations (DPCI or the Hawks) are not at a satisfactory level. Its diminished public profile as an entity that replaced the much-adored Scorpions sends a message of laxity to those involved in organised crime.

**Outputs:** Core activities of any organisation dictate that a little must be done about each area of competence as determined by the availability of financial, human and material resources. The question of ensuring access to justice, for example, is part of the mandate of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. Over the years indigent communities have had to rely on pro bono work of major law firms and public interest non-governmental legal organisations such as the Legal Resources Centre and the Women’s Legal Centre. The average township resident has no legal recourse in complicated disputes, whether these are criminal or civil. Those who perpetrate crime in the townships are aware of this loophole and exploit it.

**Enablers:** Barr refers to the enablers as the ‘tree’s hidden roots’, the tangible and intangible resources that are necessary for the outputs and outcomes to be realised. The scramble for resources at the National Treasury by Cabinet, through provincial and local levels, is evidence of the
importance of an enabling environment. An agreed vision as well as desirable outcomes and outputs cannot be realised without adequate resources. During periods of economic strain, such as during the current recession and in view of an enlarged cabinet, resources become even scarcer. There are many demands on the public purse, but public safety and security must be prioritised (Open Society Foundation, 2010:38). Raiser (2009:493) defines social capital as ‘norms and networks’ in a society. These must lead to benefits for citizens in which bilateral exchange relations, collective and good governance are facilitated. Raiser (op cit: 496) attributes sharp declines during the transition period to weak institutions that must support a functioning market economy. Raiser highlights the results of a Euro barometer survey in which a clear positive correlation between the levels of trust in public institutions and economic performance was found. The author affirms ‘the role of trust in law enforcement institutions as an important determinant of transition outcomes.’

ISSUES ON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Mohamed (2005a) proposes a huge economic-development project to deal with structural weaknesses, distortions and inefficiencies that developed in the economy over the last century. He dismisses the thinking of mainstream economics that the financial sector is able to allocate capital efficiently. These institutions have shaped structural weaknesses and skewed the distribution of wealth. One of the major criticisms about the so-called second economy is that financial institutions are failing to provide capital to black entrepreneurs who in urban areas have the best skills and exposure to enter the economic mainstream. The capabilities that black people have are assigned value within a context shaped by history. One needs to be aware of history, power relations and institutions when defining skills and categorising workers as skilled and unskilled in South Africa (Mohamed, 2005b). Some of the main reasons for the historical deterioration in fixed capital formation are periods of political uncertainty and increased levels of crime and violence (Du Toit, 2002: 28). The author further notes that these may pose a serious threat to the ability of the country to strengthen its future economic growth capacity.

In the macro factors of economic performance, government and business efficiency, and infrastructure, which are often used to test international competitiveness, marginalised communities such as the townships are left behind in the sea of economics jargon. Consequently, hardly any change has taken place in the relations of economic power and control. The African National Congress government ironically presides over a period that is reproducing inequality along racial lines as effectively as apartheid legislation and its institutional apparatus did. Pelupessy and Slabbert (2001:41) submit that the economic impact of criminal violence in townships is likely to be bigger than in rural areas. In poorer areas of the country, which are invariably black, effective community policing has been hampered by lack of skills and resources for fighting crime (Malan, 2000). The lack of cohesiveness within the criminal justice system in townships reveals disparities in the nature, extent and effects of victimisation (Christopher, 1994; Ramphele, 1993; Shaw, 2002).

South Africa has been hailed as an economic success based on its economic fundamentals. After the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy affirmed government’s grasp of macro-economic essentials, the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa put the emphasis on skills development. The limited success of the post-apartheid governments in improving capital spending on poor black people is widely recognised. Efforts to effect black economic empowerment in meaningful terms are responsible for de-racialising the economy only in the high-earning section of the population. The problem of inadequate management development has long been raised (Templer et. al, 1992). Using the example of the similarly economically disadvantaged area of the US-Mexican
border, it can be illustrated that increased trade around localities has a positive effect on human development (Anderson, 2010).

**Developing townships for growth**
Because both small and big businesses are underpinned by efficiency in their operations, they find it desirable that government agencies are responsive to creating favourable business conditions. The relationship between crime prevention and business can be simply illustrated as follows:

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
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<th>CRIME PREVENTION AND BUSINESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective Crime Prevention &amp; Investigations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Confidence</td>
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<td>Consistent &amp; Decisive Judiciary</td>
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<td>Successful Prosecutions Based on Evidence</td>
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One way of measuring actual growth and development in South Africa is to study the historically marginalised sections of the population with regard to their economic participation in the post-apartheid era, as well as the particular impediments they encounter. The challenges of development in townships because of the crime situation have been studied (Ngantweni, 2009; Ngantweni & Manamela, 2009). There is no proven scientific basis to argue that poverty causes crime. However, there is a plethora of opportunities both for perpetrating crime and for being a victim to crime in a far more disproportionate way than elsewhere. There are many indicators that criminal violence is
ravaging black urban areas. The South African and German governments signed a co-operation agreement earmarking some R35 million for the Mdantsane Violence Prevention Programme, a project that plans to tackle violence in schools, gender-based violence, community violence prevention, sport, culture and economic development, public spaces and community development funding (Mabindla, 2006). The 16 days of activism to stop violence against women and children that is well observed in townships illustrates the suffering of women and children in these communities. There are several police stations that have been given presidential status to enable them to receive more resources. In his Safety and Security budget vote for 2004/2005, the Minister alluded to the crime and socio- graphic profiles indicating where most contact crimes are committed (Nqakula, 2004: 3-4). This has been a trend, as can be seen in official crime statistics over the years. The table below illustrates trends in just three townships. There is not a single suburb that comes close to these figures if the same categories of crime are examined.

Table 2


<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Katlehong '08</th>
<th>Katlehong '09</th>
<th>Kwa-Mashu '08</th>
<th>Kwa-Mashu '09</th>
<th>Nyanga '08</th>
<th>Nyanga '09</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Murder</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape*</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1291</td>
<td>1251</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South African Police Service

*Rape: After the 2007/2008 statistics, the definition of rape changed. The 2008/2009 statistics include all sexual offences.

Notably the police station areas in a number of townships have been reduced because of new police stations. The number of residents in each township varies considerably, with hard data hard to find because of the use of the ward system that sometimes divides wards. The number of police officials has also increased over the years, in particular in townships. Even without the data about the number of residents in each of the townships cited above, it is safe to note that for an average residential area these numbers are frightening during peacetime.
Securing township businesses

For an entrepreneur, there are a number of challenges to running a sustainable business. Securing a business against crime threats does not immediately fall within the expertise of an average entrepreneur anywhere. The average township business is uninsured, the risk profile stipulated by insurance companies often being too high even for those who are considering insuring their businesses. Some are robbed constantly. The statistics for this crime are misleading because of the small number of businesses in townships and the lack of data on the size of the population in each township. Often the police response times and the quality of service are unsatisfactory; suspects are never caught, goods are never recovered and no background checks are done by businesses to vet employees.

Better secured businesses enhance economic activity in townships. The following are some strategies for doing this:

- Whether in consultation with the police or on their own, businesses must educate themselves on risk management practices with regard to crime.

- With the enthusiastic co-operation of the township business community, businesses must be pro-actively policed rather than merely respond to crime incidents already committed. Businesses ought to adopt a ‘friends of the police culture’. This will eliminate any corrupt practices on the part of the police, where these are a problem for crime prevention.

- The quality of investigations of crimes committed against township businesses requires a drastic improvement. This should include a better effort on the part of the police to recover stolen stock, as this has major cost implications for a business and its continued viability in certain instances.

CRIME PREVENTION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Poverty and Inequality Report commissioned by government noted as one of the constraints to growth, a ‘declining utilization of human resources and slow growth in human resource development’ (Presidency, 1997). In the context of townships, the impact of ineffective crime prevention must be addressed. An essential activity of the criminal justice system is communicating crime trends and alerting communities about new threats, as well as the state’s response to these. The fear of crime in South Africa has been found to be escalating (Human Sciences Research Council, 2008). According to this study, the fear of crime rose to 74 percent in 2007 from 44 percent in 1998, with urban and informal settlement dwellers showing the biggest concern about crime. Townships form the largest component of this latter group. The research body made a policy recommendation that the fear of crime must be considered a priority to the same extent that actual strategies at reducing crime are.

Below, some challenges to economic empowerment and human development in townships are dealt with from a crime prevention perspective.

8
Youth empowerment
The crime prevention-economic empowerment axis is distinctly important for townships. By June 2008, of the 113 333 sentenced offenders, 34 819 were 25 years old and younger (Department of Correctional Services, 2009). The Financial Mail estimates that fewer than 28 per cent of sentenced offenders participate in rehabilitation programmes, most of which teach menial skills.

The following could be done to contribute to youth empowerment:

- Encourage learners to take entrepreneurship or business-related subjects in township schools. A practical orientation should be emphasised even for out-of-school youths.
- Target youth at risk or those already in conflict with the law. Early intervention remains the most important step in preventing criminal careers. In this case existing state, non-governmental and research institution initiatives must be strengthened.
- Involve the youth in social crime prevention projects extensively. This will raise their awareness of the negative effects of crime in society.

Liquor control
Liquor control in townships is a complex process where black entrepreneurs have to be given space to flourish while communities are protected from the dangerous effects of alcohol abuse that have already left bodily scars, broken families and a hopeless youth. The regulation of alcohol in townships has evolved around discriminatory patterns since the early twentieth century. This worsened during the decades of apartheid. The construction of beer halls as recreational centres for township residents backfired. These were burned down by the people for symbolising apartheid. Beer halls tacitly promoted irresponsible drinking among black people. This sub-culture continues. Before the festive season of 2009, the South African Breweries announced a R40 million commitment to public awareness about the dangers of alcohol abuse. It would also help a number of informal traders to enter the legal market. On the other side, the Medical Research Council estimated that 46 percent of all unnatural deaths in South Africa are directly linked to alcohol consumption. ‘The impact of alcohol abuse on our welfare system is well documented,’ notes Matsemela (2009) and Ngantweni (2003a). The Liquor Act’s emphasis on social responsibility, which includes combating alcohol abuse and a commitment to black economic empowerment, is highly commendable. The involvement of black people in more other areas of the business is unlikely to have a positive dimension on the negative impact that alcohol is generally having on the urbanised black population. There is so little knowledge about the dangers of alcoholism that ironically there is a surge of anger in sections of the township communities about the government’s tougher stance on the liquor trade. The level of assaults, particularly on weekends, remains a headache for township police managers to the extent that awareness campaigns on the dangers of alcohol are increasingly becoming part of the police’s social crime prevention programme.

Firearms control
The proliferation of firearms draws attention to the causes and typology of violent crime in these areas. If crime prevention in townships could be improved, they could potentially be developed into stable centres of economic growth (Ngantweni, 2001; 2003b) and safe tourist attractions. A drawback to these spin-offs is their reputation for gun violence. Between January and May in 2004
alone, registered gun-owners reported about 8 000 firearms lost or stolen (Nqakula, 2004:5). Notably, this figure excludes unreported firearms, which should constitute a considerable figure nationally. This trend has not changed. Nqakula reminded South Africa that since 2000 alone over 85 000 firearms had been lost or stolen. Many of those firearms are lost and still circulate in townships to perpetrate crimes. Experience has taught police agencies that the majority of the firearms stolen elsewhere also end up in townships. It is no wonder then that murder rates in some areas resemble war zones. What people and authorities understand well in countries such as Botswana and the United Kingdom, and as Nqakula agrees, is that the stricter control of firearms does not undermine the right to own firearms as the primary objective, but is aimed at the protection of people from the abuse of firearms. South Africa, the United States and Latin American countries such as Columbia are good examples of what not to do in connection with the control of firearms. Their murder rates committed with firearms provide all the proof that gun violence cannot be mitigated with guns.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above discussion, a number of key recommendations on crime prevention to contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of townships are made below. An effective and efficient crime prevention approach in townships can serve as a catalyst for entrepreneurship.

The following is proposed:

- **Instilling and supporting a culture of entrepreneurship among young people.**

  Collaborative partnerships with schools, big business and institutions of higher learning must be encouraged to kick-start a vibrant economic activity from among the most vulnerable group in the context of the future, the youth. Education for employment should be promoted as a secondary option. It is in this context that initiatives such as the International Conference on ‘Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development in Marginalised Communities’, organised and hosted by the University of Johannesburg in Soweto, must be commended.

- **An urgent policy and strategy review on licensing liquor outlets and firearms must be instituted to stem the tide of violent crime victimisation.**

  Consideration must be given to the unique nature of townships as regards levels of education, unemployment, inadequate recreational facilities, quality of housing and other relevant factors juxtaposed against a liberal approach to the availability of alcohol and firearms.

- **A targeted effort with enough funding is required to improve the efficiency of the entire criminal justice system in the townships.**

  To achieve this, the prevention, investigation, prosecution, adjudication and correction in connection with serious violent crime must be prioritised. A number of new approaches could be developed. To impart greater responsibility to police leadership at station level, for example, all murder scenes should be visited by a member holding the rank of deputy director, with only a
captain rank investigating such a crime at any station. The idea of community courts should be pursued, as less serious cases contribute to the load of cases in district courts. The role of non-governmental organisations in helping government implement its policies should not be underestimated.

- Efficiency in all business support and funding programmes must be ensured.

All agencies charged with this duty should adequately improve their systems. Since it is business and not the state (Coetzee, 2009) that creates wealth, such agencies should have performance-enhancing programmes and projects to sustain a culture of responsiveness to the needs of business as the key driver of growth and development.

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