The Grahamstown Police-Community Relations Survey

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Introduction

This research was commissioned by the "Commission on Policing in Grahamstown" which was established in September 1992 after a dispute arose between the police and members of the Rini community. The Commission was established under the auspices of the Local Dispute Resolution Committee, itself a structure of the National Peace Accord.

The Commission felt that a proper understanding of the nature of the Grahamstown community and its social problems would be an essential pre-requisite to the development of any form of "community-policing". The Commission therefore requested that the Policing Research Project of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation assist in obtaining the necessary data and developing recommendations.

The researchers found the state of police-community relations in Grahamstown better than in many other parts of the country. The fact that the local black community has begun to engage in a dialogue with the police over issues of crime and policing suggests there is great potential for achieving improvements in the relationship. Although this report focuses on problems with policing, we believe that there is good foundation for further developments in police-community dialogue in Grahamstown. The local SAP particularly impressed us with their enthusiasm for a new style of policing, and the seriousness with which they participated in this study.

The primary research for this study consisted of a number of interviews with "stakeholder groups" in Grahamstown. The interviews were conducted over a two week period in January and February of 1993. The Policing Commission (effectively a subcommittee of the Local Dispute Resolution Committee (LDRC)) hosted and organised the research visit. Interviews with the various groups consisted of a questions relating to the state of police-community relations and perceptions about policing, problems and possible

solutions. Sources of the verbatim quotes used in this report are not identified, as respondents were guaranteed anonymity as a condition of participating in the research process. We have attempted to reproduce many of the perceptions expressed without specifically evaluating their correctness or otherwise, so that the Policing Commission is made aware of them. Taking full account of these perceptions will be critical to the process of generating productive police community dialogue.

A further component of the study is a profile of the police organisation in Grahamstown, constructed from interviews with a range of police officers. A number of serving members of the SAP in Grahamstown were interviewed. Some of these were more formal interviews, with senior officers and commanders, and some were less formal group discussions with a range of junior members from various branches. The commanders at the Grahamstown and Rini police stations made their staff available for these discussions. It has not been usual for researchers to gain such co-operation from a police organisation, and we were impressed by the police's willingness to discuss their problems and ideas. Police respondents were asked the same questions about police-community relations, problems and solutions, as all other respondents. However, interviews with the police highlighted a number of internal police organisational issues which are described in a separate section below.

All respondents were questioned on their assessment of the existing police-community liaison forum. As the central component of the SAP's new "community-based policing" approach, the forum is discussed in some detail. In terms of recommendations, we talk about a *process* of police-community *consultation*, rather than about "community policing" because we believe that many of the pre-requisites for community policing cannot be met at present and are only likely to be dealt with in the longer term. This does not mean that a process cannot be set in motion in Grahamstown in the interim.

Community Views of Policing

In this section of the report, we list the problems which were raised by the various sectors of the Grahamstown community. Although we would argue that all these sectors need to be seen as part of one community, the reality is that they have had different experiences of policing, and continue to be subject to significantly different living conditions. It is necessary to understand the range of perceptions of the police as a basis for developing a holistic set of recommendations.

Black Community

Mistrust and Lack of Confidence in Police

There is a general mistrust of the police, which is obviously rooted in the history of police practice under apartheid.

Some people who know they are meant to go to the police demonstrate some reluctance in going there because of treatment they have previously received.

We don't really have confidence and trust in the police.

This has resulted in a fundamental communication problem – the people don't communicate with the police; and the police don't know what to do to please the community.

One possible outcome of this situation is that people resort to informal "self-help" measures as a substitute for formal policing.

We would rather protect our own members than put our trust in the SAP.

This latter view was encountered only once in all our interviews with representatives of the black community – in fact, we were encouraged by the respondents' recognition of the role that the police could play in creating security for the community. This is also demonstrative of the fact that the impoverished community has to rely on the state police, because they cannot afford to purchase private security.

Respondents told us that the informal justice structures of the street committees had largely disintegrated in recent years, thus forcing the community to rely on the formal police. It is, in fact this process which led the community to demand better service from the SAP. We suggest that when a community tackles the police directly over issues of safety and service, there is an increased potential for improvement in the police-community relationship.

In contrast to the prevalent views expressed above, a member of the Rini Administration claimed that the Rini Community was appreciative of the actions of the police in the township:

The community from what I have learned from them, they appreciate it. They are responsible people, they appreciate the presence and the actions of the police here in the township because they are also exposed to these radicals and they are complaining about the violence and the intimidation so the visibility of the police is very important to them ... . The only complaints are when they don't see regular patrols. They are complaining about that, they would like to see them regularly patrolling the area ... to keep the criminals out of the streets.

Police Attitudes

The oft-cited problem of police attitudes is less tangible than many of the other problems raised by black residents of Grahamstown, but an equally serious problem. Respondents complained of racism, sexism and arrogance on the part of the police. Many people felt that it is the older policemen who have problematic attitudes, and that they should be retired or retrenched.

However, there was also some understanding that the police are also the victims of a racist system:

The police force have been trained to see all the black people as enemies. That cannot be changed over a period of 2 years or 3 years.

One of the products of apartheid was the effective separation of the lives of black and white South Africans. This is manifest in the perception that senior, white, police decision-makers have no understanding of life in the black community; and that this ignorance underlies and perpetuates racist attitudes:

The police should go to the township and consider the problems of the people, but they don't.

Our analysis of policing in Grahamstown suggests that deeply ingrained, perhaps subconscious racism underlies the police force's approach to their task. The under-resourcing of policing for the black community is evident in almost every sphere. The lack of energy that has been put into serving the black population's needs obviously has historical and political roots. But, unless it is recognised and addressed, the disparities will continue to generate perceptions that the police are racist.

However, negative perceptions are as deeply ingrained on the side of the community as they are in the police and it is clear that police and community attitudes feed off each other. Because they have not experienced significant changes in police attitudes or police service, black residents continue to feel threatened by the police:

They don't see the police as providing safety – they feel threatened. I think it's a chronic psychological problem.

Police Efficiency

The main problem with the police expressed by black residents is that the police are inefficient in dealing with the problems of crime and social disorder in their community.

Our main problem seems to be the criminals [not unrest]. The complaints of criminals needs no negotiation, except to be arrested and face their charges in a court of law.

When we've reported other problems that we've seen in town, we reported it at the police, but they were

saying, no, there is nothing they can they do. They have to catch them in the act. We told them that we are witnesses but they didn't take action on that.

Our main complaint is that when we report a case, many a time they say they can't find the hooligans, the thieves, whatever, and it takes over a year before they get hold of them – when the young fellows [the hooligans] are still in the location.

It's a waste of time going to the police.

We do report cases, but nothing gets done. We do rely on them, but they don't attend to our problems. If we go to them several times and they don't attend to our problems, what must we do?

An important concern was expressed by an administrator in the Rini Council. This concern was that obsessive concern with community relations may actually render the police ineffective.

I'm just worried that the police are so concerned about their image and the relationship [with the community] that they are reluctant in some cases to act when their actions are needed … . Man, what is the use of phoning you and getting you out and you

are not prepared to act. The reply you get is that they've got different orders now ...

The implication here was that there are times when it is necessary for the police to be unpopular and to take firm action, but where they may be crippled by concern over their "public image." This was specifically attributed to the constraints on police action consequent on the changes in the post-1990 period and the beginning of negotiations.

One of the Rini Town Councillors interviewed blamed inefficient policing even more directly for the problems experienced in the Rini township. His story is instructive and is reproduced here:

I, on the other side, blame the police for what the location is like now. For instance, if you report a case, the robbers, they won't arrest them ... . The next thing they come back. Your house will be stoned throughout the night even the following day. You see as the case is now, I was a man who was robbed in broad daylight in my home. My money was taken, I was robbed at the point of a revolver. An assegai was put on my throat, throttled and dragged into my room. I was kicked about so much that even now I am not well ... . It is about four months ago. I reported the matter to the police. Even now nothing has been done, they have not looked into the matter. Those boys are still here. I know them. I gave the police their names. They have robbed three people after they attacked me. Nothing has been done. People are afraid to talk, because the robbers are about. If you say anything, you run the risk of being attacked.

These sentiments are matched by a belief that the service provided by the police the white community and in the city, is more efficient than that provided in the black community. This perception is strengthened by the visible disparity in policing resources (both in terms of quality of police officers and in terms of police infrastructure) between the two areas.

While there may be many valid reasons for the lack of progress in a criminal matter, the tension that is currently being generated by police inefficiency could be reduced if the police instituted a more effective system for keeping complainants informed on the progress of their cases. The lack of police follow-up to complainants generates the perception that the police are lazy, unwilling or inefficient in pursuing cases that involve black victims. These perceptions serve to harden negative attitudes towards the police and diminish the chances for better co-operation between police and community.

Police Response Time

The poor police response time to calls from members of the public was an oft-cited complaint, particularly by residents of the township:

When one makes a call to the police, they usually arrive two hours later.

If you have a burglary in the house, and you phone the police to come at once, or a fight, when it is becoming dangerous, it is hours before they come.

We call the police, they get there after two or three days to make an arrest – you get annoyed because every time you phone and tell them to come immediately because there is a skirmish here, they never come.

The problem of poor response time in the township is clearly linked to inadequate resourcing of township policing. It is exacerbated by the situation of the former municipal

police, who may be less skilled or less equipped than their SAP colleagues; and by the Internal Stability Unit's (ISU) refusal to get involved in incidents which they pass during routine patrols.

Rapid response time is one of the most common demands of police services around the world; and attention to this problem has been a component of most models of community policing developed elsewhere. The police's response to calls is their first interface with the public over a criminal case, and is crucial in setting the tone of future interactions. If the police impress complainants with efficient service from the outset, public confidence in the police is bound to improve.

Municipal Police

Township residents were almost unanimous in their criticism of the former municipal police who police the township since their incorporation into the SAP. There is a strong perception that these members do not have the same standards of training or service delivery as their counterparts in the SAP in Grahamstown:

They are useless.

You find that they are relaxing there the whole day. After a while you see they are walking in groups to a shebeen; and the government is overtaxing us to pay them. They used to be the Municipal Police, and now the government is paying for them to have a nice time.

It is so bad that people do not report cases to them, they just go to the police in town.

As an ANC representative pointed out, the perceptions of the municipal police are strongly influenced by popular memories of their historical role:

The past does play a role. People remember the municipal police as not being interested in their concerns. They are still not accepted by the people.

Internal Stability Unit

The problems in relation to the introduction of the ISU were listed in a previous report to the LRDC. The LDRC had mediated the issues between the police and a community delegation. However, we found that a number of these issues were again raised by several of the representatives of black community organisations interviewed for this study. Although some mentioned the paramilitary style and the historical role of the riot police as problems, most people were concerned that the ISU seems unwilling to take on normal police duties while they are out on patrol in the township.

One time when we were having problems here, we reported to the police in camouflage. They were standing very close to us. They said, no, there is nothing we can do, just go to the police station.

There is no doubt that the ISU is the most visible face of policing in the township, and yet residents feel that they are being "observed" rather than "served" by this unit. This is partly because of the military approach of the ISU. The detail of organisational differentiation between the ISU and other units of the SAP is not understood by members of the community who simply want good service from all the police.

Lack of Visible, Preventative Policing

Apart from the ISU, residents complained that there is an inadequate visible police presence in the township. They echo, in some senses, the calls made by the white community for "bobbies on the beat". The lack of visible police presence was also related to the police's failure to do effective crime prevention work in the township.

There is, of course, a contradiction implicit in these statements of township residents – on the one hand, the police are not trusted, but on the other, there is a call for a more visible police presence in the township.

The problem with the ISU is that they are visible, but people don't trust them.

Even though we do not trust them, we need them.

This is obviously also a relative demand – relative to the high visibility of the SAP in the city centre of Grahamstown.

Respondents linked the issue of police patrols in the township to the problem of response time:

If there was a patrol (in the township) at least, they would communicate by radio and hopefully they would arrive sooner.

Police Involvement in Gang Violence

We have a group of gangsters here who call themselves the Amashampi. They go around molesting people, rape – going to the schools and pulling the children out, raping them. It's a nasty game.

The gang violence which currently grips the Grahamstown townships is a major source of concern to the black community. Because the police have been ineffective in containing the problem, there is a perception that the police are somehow involved with the gangs. The issue of police action against the gangs has been previously addressed by the LDRC, but we found that many sectors of the black community had not seen any improvement in the

situation; and also that some had not been informed about what the outcome of that mediation was.

The reason why we believe that the gangsters are aided by the State, directly or indirectly, is because you find that the gangsters kill people, rape people, but you see them roaming the street, but they have been identified. Or if they are ever caught by the police, they sleep only one night in the prison, the following day you see them in the street.

It is clear that decisions to grant bail, to charge or release offenders, are not made solely by the police; and that many of the perceptions around police inactivity are, in fact, related to the criminal justice system. This suggests the need for better inter-agency co-operation within the system, as well as for improved public education about the criminal justice process.

However, more disturbing are allegations made to researchers about police corruption and involvement with gangs, and police refusal to disarm or arrest suspects. Although it is likely that some of these allegations are rooted in a general mistrust of the police, it is equally likely that there is some material basis for the allegations. With gang violence (especially rape) being one of the black community's central concerns in relation to crime, it is especially important that the police conduct themselves in these cases in such a way as to engender confidence in their ability to control the problem.

Public Education

Many respondents identified public ignorance about crime and the criminal justice system as one of the factors inhibiting the police-community relationship.

Victim Aid

The general disillusionment with levels of police service is reflected in the fact that residents despair that the police will ever be able to deliver effective aid to victims of crime. While people did not necessarily expect that police would be able to solve all criminal cases or address all the damage arising from criminal acts, they do desire a police service that is sympathetic and sensitive. This is particularly stressed in cases of violence against women

and children, as these incidents are currently the main source of concern in the township communities.

We need supportive policemen. Nobody is actually taught to listen in the police force.

The lack of attention paid to victims is not only referred to in relation to police attitudes and conduct, but also in relation to the fact that their relationships with other agencies such as welfare organisations and hospitals are not adequate. The 'multi-agency' nature of community policing elsewhere has emphasised the need for co-operation between different institutions if issues of crime prevention and victim aid are to be adequately addressed by the police.

Campaigns around the policing of rape and domestic violence have contributed to the sophistication of community policing strategies (including victim aid) in other parts of the world. The fact that rape and child abuse by gangsters is topping the community agenda in terms of policing in Grahamstown, suggests a strong demand for more "victim-oriented" policing in the town.

Police Misconduct and Abuses

Several respondents in this survey referred to drunkenness, bribe-taking and reckless driving among members of the SAP. Although hard evidence of this problem was impossible to find, we believe that such allegations must be taken seriously and investigated in a manner which will restore community trust in the police. These problems represent not only a failure of ordinary policing, but the failure of the SAP to represent an example in impoverished and marginalised communities – particularly among the youth.

Police Training

They actually cannot take a proper statement. They don't know what they are listening for. They don't know which details are significant. … Listening and interviewing and being able to extract the essence of a story and put it down on paper as a statement –

that seems to be a skill eluding most of the police people I've met.

Many respondents felt that the problems and solutions in terms of police practice lie in police training. Many respondents suggested that if the police were trained "differently", the situation would improve. One respondent suggested that the training should "enable" the police officers. Others suggested that a social or community dimension would have to be included in the training:

They have to be taught how to be involved in the community, because they don't understand the needs of the people.

Inequitable Resourcing

The inequitable distribution of police resources is a central and potentially volatile complaint by residents of the black communities. The number of policemen and police vehicles in the centre of Grahamstown far exceeds those in the black communities. The black communities are also far larger than the white community, and therefore require more resources.

This leads to a perception that police resources are distributed according to racial or political criteria, rather than according to need. This serves to reinforce cynicism about the police and to suggest that the SAP are not concerned about ensuring the security of township residents.

Intimidation by Criminals

One of the reasons given for the black community's unwillingness to co-operate with the police or to join the neighbourhood watch is that the criminal element is quite strong and the gangs are quite organised. The result is that there is a real possibility of intimidation by gangsters if one is known to be co-operating with the police. If policing was effective in containing gang activity, and if people felt more confidence in the SAP, this problem could be avoided.

White Community

The concerns of representatives of the white community in respect of policing differ in many respects from those of the members of the black community. Although there are some common concerns, much of the material emanating from the white community focuses on

the causes of crime in the area, rather than the problems of the police community relationship. In many respects this is due to the fact that the white community experienced the issue of policing in much less critical terms and was more satisfied with the service which they received. Where problems were raised, these often revolved around perceptions of the relationship between the SAP and the black residents of Grahamstown.

Perceptions of the Community

Informants from white Grahamstown were particularly aware of the divisions within the wider community. One civic representative expressed the hope that a single administration would ultimately unite the community. Another pointed to the divisions even within the white community in the town. In terms of the racial divisions, it was pointed out that these coincided with differential access to resources. It was noted that racial integration was wishful considering that few blacks could afford the cost of living in the white areas. These problems were further complicated by the fact that those groups within white Grahamstown that were concerned to bridge the cultural gap, were constantly confronted by uncertainty as to who were appropriate representative structures within the township community which itself was seen as severely divided. It was also pointed out that the University was a key institution in overcoming all of these problems and in building contact across racial lines. This potential was also seen as inherent in church organisations.

There is a widespread perception in "white" Grahamstown, that the problems of crime and violence are all rooted in the black communities of the town – that Rini and the "coloured" areas are the sources of problems for the residents in the white areas. When asked about the perceptions of the white community in Grahamstown, one member of the Rini administration confirmed this view of the white community. When pressed further on this issue, he also suggested that these perceptions were probably justified.

From the perspective of another informant, this was largely attributable to class rather than simply racial differences within the wider community, emanating mainly from the problem of unemployment in the black areas. It was also pointed out that racist attitudes and an out of date "master-servant relationship" still prevailed in Grahamstown, despite changed attitudes of many of the farmers in the area.

Perceptions of Police-Community Relations

One informant pointed out the dangers of an inclination to romanticise "the community" in forging a policy of community policing or accountability of the police to the community. The divisions within the community made this very difficult. It was argued that in many situations the police find themselves in very difficult situations and yet manage to handle them quite well. There is tendency to focus on the criticisms of policing, but the changing environment makes it very difficult for police on the ground to adapt. The result is that we tend not to accredit them with the successes that are their due. Even where they don't act because of new constraints, there will be interest groups that complain because they are used to relying

on "hard" policing methods. An example cited to illustrate this was the Ethiopian Church dispute which permeated communities within and beyond Grahamstown. In one town it was alleged that the police were siding with one side, whilst in another town the opposite was alleged. This interviewee cited the problem of civic activists who historically have insisted on due process of law, and who were to be heard demanding that the police "take action" against one or other faction in the dispute. This makes this a no-win situation for the police.

In this regard it was widely felt by representatives of the white community, that the police have been playing an extremely positive role in the LDRC. However, this is really in the arena of non-political disputes such as the church dispute and the water dispute. It was noted that the problem of trust may well arise again where the police are active in a political context such as in an election situation. Here the legacy and memory of certain high profile policemen may plague their ability to act effectively in a politically volatile context. One interviewee was extremely positive about the role of the SAP at the LDRC, but cautioned that this involved only one or two key individuals. However, she did mention that an extremely positive sign was the initiation of education training workshops run for SAP personnel.

I think the police are often placed in a situation of being de facto mediators and that often is not easy for them.

Generally the representatives of white Grahamstown, including the Ratepayers Association and the municipality, were extremely positive about the role of the police-community liaison forum. As one informant pointed out:

I haven't come across any bad points when I have attended. There has always been a lovely atmosphere, lots of discussion. The people are very informal, and the people who are present have always done their homework.

However, another informant suggested that the police-community liaison forum was little more than a public relations exercise. It was acknowledged that this nonetheless had an important role, but that there was a problem with the nature and content of much of the discussion which took place there. It was also perceived that much of what came out at the forum was initiated by the police – it was largely seen by this informant as being police-dominated. It was recognised that a related problem was the failure of community representatives to invest in the forum with any consistency or regularity. It was also raised that the methods of publicising the meetings were inadequate. Finally, it was suggested that the police who participated in the forums were often inexperienced in running such a thing and it was further suggested that there needs to be some training of police in this regard. For example, it was seen as simply insensitive that the SAP representatives frequently addressed the meetings in Afrikaans.

Few of the journalists interviewed had participated in the police-community liaison forums, but most were under the impression that they were white-dominated and concerned with such issues as neighbourhood watch reportbacks etc. They suggested that the forum had an image as being insensitive to the township policing needs.

Perceptions of Crime

It was claimed that there was very little violent crime in white Grahamstown. Most of the problems were reported by one journalist as being the result of unemployment in the township – petty theft, housebreaking, bag snatching and the like. Members of the Grahamstown Town Council reported that the major problem was the "break-in phenomenon", particularly during the Christmas period when people were not at home. Bag-snatching in town was the other problem related. Store managers were particularly concerned with massive amounts of shop-lifting and the theft of trolleys from the larger retail outlets. One informant claimed that hawkers were a real problem and regularly stole from at least one shop that she was aware of. Those interviewed also complained of vandalism, for example, of parking meters.

It was interesting that women were often perceived as the major victims of this sort of petty crime within Grahamstown. Much of the crime described was also perceived in racial terms – as "black on white crime."

One informant referred to a recent bank robbery in Grahamstown, but said that such crime was completely exceptional. She went on to say that the real problems were with petty crime, but that this nonetheless generated "a bit of a siege mentality" amongst white homeowners, who created fortress-like security behind high walls, burglar bars and alarms etc. The source of the problem was regarded as being unemployment, but this was exacerbated in Grahamstown due to the proximity of the township to the white areas. As noted above, white Grahamstonians ultimately saw the problem as emanating from the township population. This view resonated well with the views of farmers interviewed from the areas surrounding Grahamstown as well.

The other problem which was raised was the problem of "mass action" which was seen as leading to criminal behaviour. This was identified, either in the form of crime during marches, or in the form of intimidation during labour unrest or stayaways. It was considered impossible for the police to effectively combat this sort of subtle intimidation.

Other informants emphasised the levels of domestic violence which was on the increase in the community, but related this mostly to the black community. This too was attributed to the levels of unemployment.

For the farmers who were consulted, the main problem was identified as stock theft. However, depending on the proximity to the township, this became a more general problem of theft of "anything and everything," as well as a great concern with personal safety. As one farmer said:

... stock theft is not new, it is a totally traditional exercise in this area. The part that I find alarming is the way crime is actually becoming much more violent. They treat you with total contempt and we are feeling much more threatened ... I walk about with a gun. But still, stock theft causes me more loss than the drought!

Efficiency and Effectiveness of Policing

One informant argued that most people who reported robberies or housebreaking incidents to the SAP at the station, did so for insurance purposes rather than out of any belief that they would ever recover their goods or see the thief caught and prosecuted. Nonetheless, in contrast to many other informants, the interviewees from the Grahamstown Ratepayers Association, praised the rapid response which they received from the SAP in the town.

Another interviewee acknowledged the difficulties which the SAP confronted, especially in respect of solving crime. Nonetheless, he argued that the perception of police inefficiency, whether it was justified or not, was all important as it inhibited the development of more co-operative and productive police-community relations.

For their part, the farmers interviewed were exceptionally positive about the role which the Stock Theft Unit was playing in the area. Problems that were raised, however, included the suggestion that the Stock Theft Unit was hopelessly understaffed and also suffered severely

from the transfer of effective policemen who had worked at building a relationship with the farmers. "Every time a new guy came in, he had to start all over again." On the question of personal safety, the farmers interviewed said that the nature of the rural areas demanded that farmers rely more on each other and their neighbours for support than on the police who could never protect them effectively. They explained a kind of farmers support system akin to a neighbourhood watch, which they had set up in the Grahamstown vicinity.

Failures in the Criminal Justice System – The Effect on Policing

White informants from the Ratepayers Association, as well as some of the farmers interviewed, complained bitterly of the counter-productive effects of the early release system and the ease with which accused persons could get out of jail and intimidate witnesses or complainants. In particular it was pointed out that this detrimentally affected the morale of the police, and brought the legal profession into disrepute. One informant added that many of the prosecutors were also to blame because, for example on the question of stock theft:

... they didn't know the difference between a sheep and goat and this sort of incompetence could undermine even the most watertight of cases in the courts.

Some of these interviewees also suggested that there must be greater communication or accountability to complainants about the progress of their cases, so that those affected don't become disillusioned with the role of the police.

It was also recommended that there should be more effective protection of people who press charges or who offer to give information to the police.

The views of these informants were generally that people blamed the police unfairly for these failings which were the responsibility of other branches of the criminal justice system.

Community Education

The representatives of the Grahamstown city Council were generally extremely positive about the role of the SAP in the area and suggested that the various branches of the administration had extremely good working relations with the SAP. Especially the Traffic police worked very closely with the SAP and found them to be utterly reliable and efficient. In this regard it was argued that the SAP had played a vital and constructive role in

resolving problems and disputes in relation to the various taxi associations operative in the Grahamstown area.

Even though there was an acknowledgement of the problem of trust of the SAP by members of the black community, this was regarded as a problem of education of this sector of the community and not as an objective problem with police practice.

Problems of Accessibility of the Police

One informant from within the white community was particularly concerned to point out the problem of the new police station in Grahamstown. He argued that it was a big mistake to move from the "user-friendly" police station in New Street, to the new "fortress" that is currently the main police station. He also argued that the SAP's day to day dealings with the public in the charge office were often alienating.

However, what can begin to change is the relationship and the attitude and the behaviour of the police, themselves. If they want people to think of them as being more user-friendly then there are specific changes that must take place on their part, to demonstrate that they are in fact a new organisation.

Some of the white informants suggested that there should always be a senior policeman present in the charge office who could deal with the more sensitive issues which came before him.

Another informant raised some problems with the competence of black constables who staffed the charge office and suggested that she had little confidence in their ability. She went on to suggest that neither they, nor some of the Afrikaans speaking policemen, were comfortable with complainants who spoke english and that this was a real problem. Other members of the white community noted that the police were changing their attitudes and were slowly but surely overcoming the historically political nature of policing and were thus becoming more objective in handling criminal and other sorts of violence.

From the journalists interviewed there were suggestions that the police were sometimes quite slow in responding to requests. They seemed insensitive to the press as a source of information and a vehicle of accountability to the community, and tended to deal with the

press when it suited them or when they wanted to publicise an initiative of their own. It was claimed that the police often felt threatened by the interest of the press in particular issues.

Visible Policing

From many of the informants the view of policing over the recent period was extremely positive and appreciative of the changes that had taken place. One quote reflects this view:

I think in the last number of months, the policing in Grahamstown has improved ... . With this visible policing, the bobby on the beat, we see them all the time in town, they are pretty widely spread ... . Given that the police have a very meagre manpower resource, they are doing the best that they possibly can.

However, other informants emphasised the need for more visible policing, particularly in the form of foot patrols in the city centre. Several parties from within the white community expressed scepticism about plain clothes policing as "this is not visible policing." Once again, the thrust was for a "bobby on the beat" system of policing:

I spoke to the Captain there, and he said: 'well we've got policemen there.' So I said: 'well, I haven't seen them' and he replied that they were in plain clothes. But if you need help you don't know who to run to, and I think it is a deterrent to the thieves just to see that policeman. I don't agree with the plain clothes especially when patrolling the streets.

The Internal Stability Unit

On the question of the deployment of the ISU, this was perceived by some white informants to be a consequence of the failure of the municipal police to be effective in the township and was seen as a supplementary force in this regard. The ISU was seen as a township unit which did not contribute to the visible policing profile of the white areas.

Training and Resourcing

One informant said that it was clear that the police were under-staffed and undertrained. Another suggested that the problem with the police is often one of training coupled to the historical legacy of policing methods. Either way, one of the central problems noted by most of the informants from this sector of the community, was the vital need for intensive training and re-training within the SAP in Grahamstown. This view was reflected in relation to most of the problems that have already been discussed under the headings above. The training of policemen and women at the charge office desk was seen as essential to making policing more accessible to the public. Training was also regarded as essential to the establishment of effective visible policing and the establishment of a "bobby on the beat" type of service. Training was also identified by many of the interviewees as being the vital mechanism through which change in the police force could take place, especially the critical need for educating the lower ranks about new policing strategies and policies. In short, there was no single area canvassed, in which training was not seen as an essential element of change, of increased efficiency and of improved police-community relations.

Constraints on Change

One informant argued that there can be little doubt that public perception of the police is largely negative, but he noted that at least at a management level, there is a clear concern to change. He claimed that in some cases this may be cynically motivated, but for the most part it appears sincere. The most important remaining problem was seen to be how to spread the new approach down the ranks, and this informant argued that intensive training was the only workable method.

An interesting point was made by one of the informants from the white community when she said that one of the key factors in building trust between police and the community representatives, both black and white, resided in the willingness of some of the key police figures to acknowledge the mistakes of the past and the attempt to overcome them in dealing with the future. There was still some residual mistrust in relation to these sorts of high profile policing figures.

The central constraint on appropriate change within the SAP was identified by one of the informants from the white community as being the absence of such mechanisms as rendered police policy and approach visible to the general public. There must be more room for public intervention in the framing of policing priorities and policies. The problem was summarised as one of a lack of accountability. One of the primary solutions to this problem was motivated as being the transformation of selection and recruitment procedures so that

members of the wider community saw the police force as a hospitable home with career prospect for themselves. The Churches and the civics were seen as the new recruitment terrain which the police should prioritise in an attempt to change perceptions and prejudices.

In a similar vein, for many of the white informants the simple problem confronted by the SAP was the impossibility of recruiting the right sort of black policemen to police the townships. It was argued that any black township resident who was seen wearing a uniform would be killed. This was even taken to include members of St. Johns or the Red Cross!

It was also argued by some that the national nature of police accountability could act as a liability which inhibited the creativity of local level police responses and initiatives. They were seen as quite literally having to account for every penny expended to the regional and national levels.

Community Involvement in Policing

Another suggestion was that the neighbourhood watch system had to be improved and more community participants had to be recruited.

The DP representative said that a lot had already been done to improve the patrolling of Grahamstown's white suburbs, but that still more could be achieved in this regard. To achieve this, however, the police would need specific training and upgrading of their skills.

Also a push here for police patrols to be less lethally armed.

For one of the farmers interviewed, the police weren't seen as a problem, but it was acknowledged that they simply couldn't cope without community support. To this end he said:

I have no gripe with the police, but what I would like to suggest is that we consider joining the commando and become much more police and civil defence oriented, and bring out staff as well into the whole thing. We've got to regard the criminal as an expendable resource, absolute vermin.

Having said this, one of the farmers interviewed also pointed out that it was an essential responsibility of the police to establish contact and good working relations with the staff employed on the farms if they were to be at all effective.

I do feel that the blacks often are left out of the discussion and they should also actually get involved in police patrolling etc. They shouldn't only patrol from a landowner's point of view. They should involve the blacks so that the blacks immediately ... become more involved with them. They shouldn't only come and visit us. They should make a point of talking to the staff. "Do you have any problems? What would you like to see us do?" That sort of thing, you know?

It was nonetheless acknowledged that the blame in this regard was as much at the door of the farmers who excluded their staff, as it was the responsibility of the police.

The Legal Fraternity

A number of officials in the Grahamstown courts were interviewed for this study, as well as various legal practitioners. Because the profession interacts with policing issues on a regular basis, they were considered an important sub-community within the Grahamstown policing survey.

A prominent member of the profession outlined a classic dilemma which affects the policing of black communities such as in Grahamstown. He noted that on one hand, the community is demanding more effective policing and a greater police presence, whilst on the other they are reluctant to co-operate with the police and distrust them. The result, he argued is the failure of many cases brought before the courts because of a reluctance on the part of many township residents to provide information or to step into the witness box. It was suggested that there must be a greater structured participation of community members in combatting crime and it was suggested that the ideal mechanism would probably be some sort of neighbourhood watch in the townships. However, it was pointed out that the danger of such a structure becoming a law unto itself has also to be recognised. The only way that this can be avoided is if two things are done: firstly, there must be a rebuilding of credible and responsible civic structures within the township; and secondly, there must be more effective

communication and liaison between community representatives and the police. In any event the critical factor is that there must be a build up of trust between police and the community. It was argued that this trust is essential to the effective operation of the criminal justice system.

Crime

From the perspective of the public prosecutor, the crime rate in Grahamstown is high. He estimated that there were between 200 and 250 new cases coming before the courts each month. Of these, there were only approximately 2 killings per month, many of which ended up as culpable homicide rather than murder charges. The majority of the cases revolved around housebreaking and theft charges, although there were also a large number of rape and sexual assault cases – most of them being domestic/marital abuse.

In the category of violent crime, it was reported that there are few instances of political violence. Most of the violent crime results from domestic conflict and the perceived causes were attributed to general factors such as socio-political circumstances, particularly poverty, which results in high levels of domestic stress. Related to this, another member of the legal profession argued that the township gang phenomenon which had long-term historical roots, continued to pose a serious problem of lawlessness which the police were not really dealing with effectively.

One of the prominent lawyers interviewed argued that the level of police competence in dealing with crime and violence has dropped considerably in the past while. This was attributed to the fact that it is frequently young, under-trained policemen who are being left alone in investigating serious crimes such as murder, rape etc. The inefficiency was regarded as "very worrying," and one case was mentioned where failure to take an alleged rape victim to the doctor, undermined the whole case because there was no medical evidence of the trauma. This informant claimed that the situation was even worse in the police stations in the townships where, he argued, many policemen and women at the charge office were simply incapable of taking down a statement accurately. This potentially served to completely undermine the complainants' cases. He also cited the example of some of his clients who had walked into town to report a matter at the central police station, only to be told that they must go back to the station in the township and report it there.

The Criminal Justice System

A grave problem which was reported is the effect of inadequate policing methods on the public image of the criminal justice system. One source estimated that over half of the dockets before the Senior Public Prosecutor are sent back for more information or for further investigation. In some cases this was attributed to simple disinterest or negligence on the part of the investigating officers – although it would be wrong to generalise, as some of the policemen are known to be extremely impressive and the prosecution staff are particularly knowledgeable about who are the good/reliable policemen.

An important problem which was raised was that black, township-based complainants simply couldn't expect the same enthusiasm or quality of attention in police investigation of their problems. At least three prominent members of the Grahamstown legal establishment suggested a similar racial bias in this regard. One of them said:

I can't say what the reason for that is. If there is a crime being committed and its a white person there is a lot of investigation, but if there is a crime being committed and its a black person, your black officers must go out there ... . You don't get the same kind of quality of investigation if the complainant is black. But that attitude is not so much prevalent ... . The problem is not so much the individuals, but the infrastructure and how the system works.

Another commented:

Generally speaking, I suppose they don't treat blacks as courteously as they do whites ... Its their initial reaction that causes animosity ... . In the white areas it [policing] is very good, but from the little bit that I have gathered, it is not so good in the black areas.

Another lawyer noted that even in the context of common law crimes, the lack of trust in the police resulted in a reluctance of members of the public to assist. Similar sentiments were expressed by many of the policemen interviewed as well.

The police were also regarded as being generally inaccessible to the residents of Rini and the police stations in the township are seen by members of the legal profession in Grahamstown as being under-resourced and lacking in infrastructure. Added to this are the

beliefs that many of the police present as poor witnesses before the court and many are incapable of taking down proper statements from witnesses. This is frequently due to their lack of training and/or experience. Furthermore, it was reported that police generally give minimal support to victims of violent crimes and are generally disinterested in the complainant once they have taken a statement.

All of these factors, although they go to the question of police "inefficiency", have a direct bearing on the public attitude to the criminal justice system as a whole. Because the system is so reliant on effective and sensitive policing, problems at this level often serve to discredit the entire legal framework of criminal justice. This is compounded by the fact that the police are usually the first and central point of contact between the public and the criminal justice system.

An important consequence of the perceived failure of the criminal justice system was alluded to by the Attorney-General who noted that: where members of the community did co-operate with the police in a particular matter and where this did not result in a conviction, the danger was that members of the community would then take the law into their own hands. Whilst this couldn't be condoned, it must also be seen as a consequence of a loss of faith in the criminal justice system, which may or may not have been a result of inept or inadequate policing.

The causes of the failure of a criminal case before the courts are very hard to ascertain under these circumstances – whether it is due to inadequate policing or whether it is due to a reluctance on the part of the community to participate and co-operate, is seldom if ever detectable. Where there is any indication of corrupt or inadequate investigation by members of the police force, it was pointed out that there are readily available direct channels of communication between the Attorney-General's office and senior police in Grahamstown and these must be used without reserve.

A further point was made that the slow workings of the criminal justice system may itself sometimes serve to frustrate ill-informed members of the community who expect virtually instant justice. The failure of the system to deliver this, sometimes has the reverse effect to that discussed above, in that community members blame the police for the failings of the criminal justice system. Many of the lawyers and officials interviewed argued that the community is generally under-educated about the rights of an accused before the courts, with the result that they are often intolerant of the delays and processes which the criminal justice system demands. Community education about this problem was viewed as vital. People need to know how the system works, they need to understand due process of law – both to avoid the sort of tensions discussed above, as well as to benefit themselves should they ever come before the courts.

The classic example given here was of an alleged rapist who, having been reported to the SAP by members of the community, is seen out on the street the very next day, having

secured bail. This was described as an irony of the development of a human rights jurisprudence which sought to protect the accused, but which was not accompanied by adequate witness protection or victim aid programmes. Community misunderstanding of these issues serves to substantially complicate the community-police relationship. Add to this the devastating effects of early release of criminals on police morale, as well as on community perceptions of policing and of the criminal justice system itself.

On the issue of imprisonment, one lawyer raised the problematic issue of the imprisonment of juveniles in the police cells, especially street children. He argued that the police often did not do enough to locate the parents of these children and the result was that they frequently sat in jail.

Police Misconduct

Informants remarked positively that few of the crimes with which police themselves were charged involved crimes of "dishonesty." It was also claimed that investigation of crimes against policemen are generally of a higher-than-average standard, despite the fact that the criminal charges against them were generally for petty crimes such as reckless driving or drunken driving. Nonetheless, it was also pointed out that conviction on these offences seldom saw police being suspended or dismissed.

Another lawyer raised more serious problems with the practice of the SAP policing themselves. He expressed little faith in the internal disciplinary procedures (especially regarding charges of police assault) and argued that this generated further suspicion and mistrust of the SAP. This informant claimed that the problem was even worse where SAP members met charges of assault against them, with charges that the accused was resisting arrest. Pursuit of the truth in these situations is too reliant on SAP investigation of themselves. It was suggested that there must be an independent source of investigation of charges involving police abuse of power. It was also claimed that a high proportion of the complaints about police assault appeared to involve the Internal Stability Unit. The particular interviewee also noted that, in his experience, the success rate in prosecutions of police for assaults was between 80-90% of those charged. However, it was argued that the prosecutions were generally much slower than for ordinary civilians, and that few of the policemen were ever suspended pending the outcome of such prosecutions.

On a slightly different note, one lawyer noted that instances of police violence had dropped off substantially over the last period. He suggested that this was due to a change in police attitude at the managerial level, but that it was no guarantee that the bias and prejudice of the past did not still exist at grassroots level within the force.

In a similar vein, another legal representative argued that a large proportion of the assaults in custody allegedly perpetrated by police, involved younger policemen who were not supervised closely enough. Many of the assaults with which this lawyer had had to deal, took place in the police station over weekends – when senior officers were too often not

available. This point was extended saying that it was often impossible to contact a senior policeman on the weekend.

In contrast to the above, a spokesperson for the Attorney-General's office suggested that the internal investigation of policemen by the SAP appeared to be fairly efficient. He did note, however, that it is not standard practice to suspend a policeman pending a criminal charge and this lies within the discretion of the police department. The wide range of charges which occasionally face policemen makes it impossible to stipulate a general rule on suspension pending a charge coming to court.

Perceptions of Police Organisational Problems

A member of the legal profession who has previously represented black policemen, claimed that one of the biggest problems within the SAP is that of racism:

There is a clear division in the police force and most of these black guys seem to feel they are downtrodden by their white counter-parts. Generally there is dissatisfaction amongst black cops.

He went on to argue that these racial tensions were exacerbated by the number of non-residents, sometimes Zulu speakers who were recruited into the force – particularly within the municipal police based at Rini – and who have recently been brought under the control of the SAP. It was suggested that, although these people have to some extent been integrated into the Grahamstown black community, there is a real danger that a community such as this, relatively free of any ethnic tensions, could be infected by national political developments in conjunction with these sorts of short-sighted policing strategies. This was not viewed as a current problem, but as a potential danger in the future, which had not necessarily been foreseen.

Another potential problem which was outlined in terms of the policing "hierarchy" was the danger that any attempts to implement structures and processes of community policing at the local level, would most likely be impeded unless there is approval from above. It was felt that this may even require Ministerial approval. The danger was outlined that if such approval was not obtained, then either police at the local level would be powerless to implement local agreements, or those agreements could later be sabotaged by the Minister or a General who does not approve of the method or of the process. This could serve to discredit the police themselves even further – and could thus be counter productive – or it

could discredit community leaders who invest in the programme and who are then unable to deliver anything to their communities.

Proposals

The specific perspective of the legal fraternity in Grahamstown and their particular view of policing through the prism of the courtroom, demands that the suggestions which they made be set out separately from the wider community.

General recommendations, however, included the suggestion that there must be an upgrading of the police station in the township to ensure that it was on a par with the station in town. It was also felt by several members of the profession that there needs to be improved training within the force to ensure that police know that they are supposed to be in the service of the community. It was suggested that practically this might entail raising entry requirements, as well as providing longer and better quality training.

One important suggestion was that there was a need for a fairly senior policeman at the court to work with a member of the public prosecutor's office and to liaise with members of the public who come to find out about the progress of their investigation/case. There is also a need for smoother liaison between the prosecutor and the police so as to avoid the collapse of cases at the last minute or once they come before the courts.

The point was strenuously made by one member of the legal profession that "supervisory committees", ombuds-structures or formal liaison structures could merely blur the realities of police-community relations on the ground. He thus emphasised the need to build better grassroots liaison through senior black policemen and through accountability in terms of decisions made by the police on a day-to-day basis.

Another important suggestion was that it may be important for the Attorney-General's office to be directly involved in the LDRC as well as in the police-community liaison forum or any comparable structures that may be put in place. This was seen as an important way of accrediting the structures, whilst also enabling these forums to grapple with the complexities of the relationship between policing and the criminal justice system.

It was also suggested by some of the members of the legal fraternity that the profession could play an important role in not only police-community liaison, but in scrutiny of policing as well. One person even suggested that lawyers could be involved in a lay visitors' scheme in the police stations – provided this was requested by the community.

On the issue of police abuse of power, one respondent argued that there should always be a senior police officer on duty in the charge office. The critical issue is to ensure that someone responsible and accountable was always available to arrestees as well as to the public. He also suggested that there should be a routine weekly visit by a member of the profession or by some other respected community member (preferably not a magistrate) to

the cells to hear any complaints which prisoners, detainees or those awaiting trial may have in respect of their captors.

Without exception, every member of the legal profession consulted in the course of this community survey, expressed concern over the vital need for popular education on the workings and role of the criminal justice system. It was suggested that this should begin at an early age within the schooling system, and should be spread in the realm of adult education as well.

Police Needs and Organisational Problems

Achieving an improvement in the police-community relationship does not only require efforts by the police in terms of their external relationships, but it may also require substantial reorganisation of the internal organisation of the police force in order to make it a more flexible and accessible organisation. This section lists both the external and internal factors which police respondents felt needed attention if the police-community relationship was to be significantly improved.

External Factors Identified by Police Respondents

Political History

The police recognise that the political history of apartheid is largely responsible for the poor relationship between themselves and the community. They are also aware of how difficult it will be to address the long-term problems which apartheid created for policing. As one policeman pointed out:

Even if Mandela is in power, it won't help.

No Co-operation from Witnesses

The police complain that their investigations are hampered by the lack of co-operation from the community, and that witnesses do not readily volunteer. Some police respondents

suggested that this is a result of intimidation, but others believed that it simply reflects the community's lack of confidence in the SAP. This is a vicious cycle, because the police's problems in completing investigations, are inevitably reflected in the community's complaints about police inefficiency.

Hostility Towards Police

Some units of the police are more exposed to community aggression towards the police by virtue of their work. These include the SANAB – narcotics – and the ISU. When the narcotics police are making a search, arrest or seizure in the township, the result is invariably that a large, angry crowd forms and expresses aggression towards the police. This has been a problem for the Narcotics police, who see themselves as a specialised investigation unit which should not have to play a central role in the police-community relationship. More lately, they call the ISU for assistance when this sort of situation develops. They are appreciative of the ISU's efforts which usually result in the situation being contained. This example suggests that policing methods themselves may in fact generate further conflict.

Related to this example is the fact that a number of respondents from the black community explicitly proposed to us that the police should not be pursuing cases involving small amounts of marijuana; and that the problems of violent gangsterism are far more deserving of the police's attention. These issues will be at the heart of negotiations between police and community over police priorities and methods.

One of the major dilemmas faced by the police is the tension between demands for, and their own desire to provide, more accessible and 'transparent' policing on one hand, and perceived threats to police coming from certain sectors of the black community (such as militant political groups and heavily armed criminals) on the other. Again, this is a cyclical problem – if the community felt that the police were truly serving their interests, they would not tolerate attacks on the police. But the police need to take the initiative in improving their service in order to win the trust of the community, but they are currently unwilling to do so, for fear of attack or because of perceptions of antagonism towards them.

Public Attitudes

There was a strong perception among police respondents that the onus is now on the community to "change" and to become more involved in policing. This is premised on an assumption that the police have changed as much as is possible under current circumstances.

The public attitudes are what must change – not us.

Leaders in the community must do more to change attitudes.

The biggest problem is that we, the police, are really trying our very best to reach out to the community, but we are not getting the response that we should be getting.

However, these beliefs do not take into account the history of oppressive policing within the community. This means that the onus should be on the police to further extend themselves and to do whatever is necessary to secure community confidence and co-operation. In the foreseeable future, even with substantial political transformation, the police will need to make the necessary concessions to break the impasse in their relationship with the community.

Communication with the Community

Many of the police respondents felt that their main problem is how to communicate with people in the communities which they police. This was expressed most clearly by white police officers as a problem over language – that they do not speak or understand the vernacular language. But the problem is larger than simply one of language, it has to do with forms and styles of communication with which the police are unfamiliar. They also expressed the frustration that their positions and their jobs, prevent them from interacting and communicating with many members of the Grahamstown community, as a consequence of a political history in which they had little or no choice.

Crisis-driven Cooperation

Police respondents assessed their existing community relations strategy as largely crisis-based. When there is an issue of community conflict, then community members are concerned to negotiate with the police. The relationship is therefore ad-hoc, rather than being a continuous open channel for communication and problem-solving. Although the police expressed their frustrations with this situation, we believe that this is a positive indicator that the community are prepared to engage with the police over problems, and that they have a vision of the role that the police can play in reducing social conflicts and ensuring security.

Need for Public Education

The public don't know what policing is about. They don't understand the law.

The police respondents highlighted the need for public education about the policing and the law. There is a need for more education about the criminal justice process, because many members of the community will blame the police for, or expect the police to solve, problems that they experience with other institutions in the criminal justice system. The police are overstretched and not equipped to answer for decisions that are made by other agencies such as the courts and the prosecutors.

Politicisation of Crime

Police respondents feel that the political reform process over the last three years has politicised crime in a new and different way. Expectations created at time of Mandela's release in 1990 have unshackled criminal activity because

... people suddenly thought that they wouldn't go to jail or that they would easily get out of jail if they did.

The combined issues of prisoner release programmes and political indemnity led, in some respondents' views, to a weakening of the deterrent effect of the police and the criminal justice system as a whole. A variety of criminal acts could be claimed as political, thus, in some senses, "justifying" crime. The police found this trend threatening not only because they sense a major increase in crime as a result, but also because it undermines their authority to censure and deter.

No Representative Structures

The police felt that one of the major limitations on any police-community negotiation process is the current lack of truly representative structures in Grahamstown.

The organisations we meet with don't really represent everyone; there are lots of ordinary people who aren't involved in politics.

They suggested that this process may be easier in the future when there is one, democratically elected local administration.

Internal Factors Identified by Police Respondents

Relations with Pretoria

One of the key features of any model of community policing is local flexibility. The local police need to be able to adjust their operations to suit the requirements of the local community. This is very difficult, given the highly centralised and military nature of the SAP. Traditionally, orders have been given from the police head office in Pretoria, and transmitted down the organisation to local stations. Not only is this a slow and cumbersome process, but it also results in miscommunication and poor levels of implementation.

The local SAP often feel constrained by directives from Pretoria, which are inappropriate for their circumstances, but unable to do anything about them. Some respondents indicated that using personal contacts in the upper echelons of the organisation is the only way to get around this problem. However, this generates further problems of accountability when informal networks and relationships are being mobilised. It also means that certain key individuals build power bases which are not necessarily constructive.

The task of decentralising police decision-making is being attempted by the SAP, but so far little has changed for police officers in local stations. The planning and advice that is issued from SAP Head Office is often not applicable to all stations, and police respondents felt that this was a potential danger:

Pretoria think they know everything, but they sit in isolation. It's like the MD of any company. He doesn't see the nuts and bolts down on ground level, the little problems that you experience. And if it is not addressed in the overall plan and catered for, you are going to come a cropper over something very small.

Police Bureaucracy

The SAP is a highly centralised, top-heavy, military-style bureaucracy. The fact that internal communication is slow and inefficient has begun to be recognised both in Grahamstown and at a national level, where a specific department has been established to address the problem.

The red tape in the police force – there is no way, with the best will in the world, there is no way you are going to hurry the process.

The bureaucratic nature of the police organisation has consequences for community relations because complainants become frustrated about how long things take to happen. It is a major contributing factor to the community's perception that the police force is inefficient. This is problematic for the local police in their relationship with the community, because much of the bureaucratic slowness is rooted in the upper levels of the organisation.

But internal communication problems also have consequences within the local police organisation in Grahamstown. The District Commissioner stressed to us that this is a major area of concern, and that certain strategies have already been adopted to improve information flow in the Grahamstown police district.

Some of the junior ranking members interviewed felt that there is a continuing problem of internal communication, that they still do not know what other sectors of the organisation are involved in. This appears to be a particular problem in relation to the community relations work. Some of the junior members had had no information or discussions about the public relations office or the community liaison forum. Some had not even heard of the forum, despite attempts by the senior officers to address all members on the subject at a series of lectures. In fact, the monthly briefing lectures which are organised by the senior managers reflect the problem in microcosm – the lectures are given in Afrikaans, a language which is not well understood by many of the African members of the force.

Transfer Policy

The SAP has traditionally had a policy of transferring staff to different stations or branches after a few years on each job. This was one of the major grievances of the police in terms of conditions of service, and led to many members leaving the force. As a result, this policy has been amended, but vestiges of the system remain. It is not only problematic for the social and personal lives of the police officers concerned, but it also inhibits the development of local knowledge by police personnel. This local knowledge is one of the key characteristics of a good community police officer. Respondents told us that transfers can also adversely affect relationships which have built up between commanding officers and subordinates in particular places or units. The system of transferring police personnel therefore needs to be addressed as one of the organisational prerequisites for community policing.

Racial Tension

Interviews revealed a considerable amount of racial tension within the police organisation in Grahamstown. The friction is felt by both black and white members.

Although they acknowledge that their situation has improved somewhat since the political reforms of 1990, black members still feel disadvantaged within the organisation, and that they are not accorded the same status as white members:

We blacks don't participate in management.

We have no decision-making powers. We just do what we are told.

The senior officers don't understand the black policemen.

Junior white policemen also expressed some awareness of the problem, although this was largely experienced at a social level. In some instances the language which these junior officers used was quite instructive of the implicit history of racial tensions within the organisation.

Nowadays they [the black policemen] are *allowed* to come to our ball or to join our tea club ... but they still don't do it.

The reality is that black policemen are clustered in the lowest ranks of the police force, and in lower-status occupations such as the Municipal police unit and the Police Assistants. This is partly a consequence of previous regulations which prevented black members from being promoted above a certain rank; and partly a product of the historically racist nature of the police's informal culture.

This is a serious problem, not only for the individuals concerned, who experience racism and a lack of opportunities, but also for the public image of the police. Representivity[1] of the police organisation is one of the issues addressed by community policing programmes elsewhere. This is because a more representative police force is more likely to win the confidence of the community. It also means that the police force can utilise all the potential available to it, rather than being constrained by outdated systems of classification and exclusion.

Inadequate Resources

It appears that people's complaints about the poor standard of police service in the townships have some basis in the under-resourcing of township policing.

One police van for the township is simply not adequate for policing between 80 000 and 120 000 people. The new Rini satellite police station had no telephone when we visited. Police radios are reportedly often out of order.

In terms of human resources, some branches operate with extremely heavy workloads, and staff do 100-200 hours of overtime per month to cope with the backlog.

If we accept the District Commissioner's statement that his District is fairly well-staffed, and having discovered severe disparities in resource allocation in the area, we must conclude that the problem lies with the management and distribution of resources. The uneven distribution of policing resources between the white and black communities is a visible source of resentment to the black community, and must therefore be addressed as part of the broad community relations strategy.

Tensions Between Different Units

Police respondents from a range of units and ranks spoke about tensions which exist between the different divisions of the force. The ISU, for example, receives additional reimbursement – a form of "danger pay" – and this generates feelings of dissatisfaction among other units. They also operate under a separate command structure, and, because they are an "out of town" unit, tend not to socialise with the local police. This reinforces the isolation and special status of the ISU.

The former Security Branch – many of whom now work on community relations – still carry the aura of the old days – they are seen as dealing with important confidential matters, and maintain a secretive style. Other members of the force complained that there is no communication about what the community relations work involves.

The municipal police are extremely marginalised. Because they operate under their own commander, and are confined to policing the township, they are isolated from the day-to-day life of the police organisation in Grahamstown. This has resulted in some resentment.

Former Municipal Police

There is no doubt that the municipal police themselves are in a disadvantaged position within the police organisation. The reality is that they generally have lower standards of education and of police training than their SAP counterparts. They are undertrained, mostly limited to policing in the township, given few resources, and have few opportunities for promotion. They operate under a slightly separate command structure and are removed from the general organisational dynamics of the SAP.

Many of the senior officers in the SAP feel that the municipal police are a burden, a legacy of the past for which there is no solution. The fact that senior officers are aware of the low levels of service delivered by the police in the township, suggests that there is some reluctance to take on responsibility for dealing with the problem of the former municipal police at a local level. Instead, there is a belief that the problem will be tackled through national initiatives.

We battled with them [the municipal police] … . We discovered that some of those complaints (in the township) are never attended to. They don't even go out there. They will report back and say that they couldn't find it. Or, when they got there, the complainant was satisfied – you know, that kind of thing. So now I am using the Stability Unit to do exactly the same function. We have brought down our reaction time from about half an hour to about five minutes. Because those guys never know now, who is going to check on them. With the result that we are getting productivity out of them now and we are getting service out of them. Because those guys, let's face it, they were originally there to guard the councillors and the municipality offices. They didn't really have a policing function. They were actually nightwatchmen.

Internal Stability Unit

The community's problems with the ISU have been covered in previous sections above. SAP respondents had some different problems with the unit. Some of the problems revolve around competition between different units within the force; and some around the community reaction to the ISU, which has, in some cases, generated more problems for the local SAP.

There was a marked difference in the perceptions of senior white officers and black policemen who live in the township about the introduction of the ISU. A senior white officer stated categorically that:

... the ISU has been introduced without problems. There hasn't been a single complaint. The ISU have just been doing visible policing.

This flies in the face of the report by LDRC mediators which dealt with problems raised by the community at the introduction of the ISU. Furthermore, a black member of the SAP commented that:

... the riot unit is not a good thing. Most of the community is afraid of them. People think they are SADF killers.

Political Education

Some officers stressed to us the need for political education within the force.

Many policemen are not aware of how important the political changes are. The problem is the police culture, we need to change attitudes.

The police have been denied, like all other South Africans, an opportunity to learn about and practice democracy. This is vital in view of the key role which the police themselves are going to play in managing forthcoming elections and the in the process of transition. No attention has been paid by the SAP in Grahamstown to questions about how they are going to police the elections and protect people's rights to freedom of political expression – and this will require urgent attention within the local SAP.

Sentencing Policy

Police morale is dented by low sentences handed down to criminals whom they have worked hard to arrest. There is a high rate of recidivism (repeat offending). Many offenders get out of prison and back to the local streets soon after they were initially arrested. This process is highly visible to the police in a small town, and has inevitable discouraging effects for the police.

Ill-Disciplined Junior Members

There appears to be real problem with young policemen who "behave like cowboys" and therefore negate all the efforts by senior officers to improve the police's image in the community and to build confidence in the police.

This problem is recognised by both the police and the community. One senior officer explained why so many young policemen were sitting in at the police-community liaison forums:

We get these youngsters (young policemen). We get them to sit in the back. They don't need to say anything, but they must sit in and listen to what we discuss and in which direction we are moving, because it's no use if we are carrying on with a big project and down in the streets they are breaking down everything.

Members of the community complained about the way young officers conduct themselves, and recognised that this must be a problem for the police leadership:

There are senior policemen needing to project a good public image; and junior policemen actually not demonstrating any concern about what kind of image the police are projecting.

New Management Style

Many of the more senior police officers commented on the management style that has been introduced by the current District Commissioner. It was felt that the new approach had improved the organisation and had reduced tensions. However, many of the lowest-ranking policemen expressed the feeling that very little had changed, or that the changes had not impacted on them in any significant manner.

Community Profile

The Grahamstown Community?

In the course of our survey it rapidly became apparent that it was unrealistic to talk of a single Grahamstown community. This despite the perspectives of many of the stakeholder interviewed, that this community, unlike many others in the country, was relatively free of conflict and was significantly cohesive. People described "the community" in very different terms – especially in relation to policing – and it is therefore more realistic to talk about Grahamstown as a range of sub-communities. This reflects the extent to which the wider community is divided and actually quite fractured.

The source of these division was explained in different terms by different people. Some focused on obvious racial divisions, others on political differences or on different socio-economic circumstances. For some of the Rini Town Councillors, these divisions within the wider community were reflected in an imbalance within policing priorities which favoured the white areas over and above the township community. It was proposed that the best solution to this problem was racial integration.

Members of the Grahamstown Town Council claimed that despite the unshackling of the political process and the abolition of racial discrimination on the statute books, there has been little change in the racial profile of the Grahamstown community. There has been virtually no substantial integration of the population outside the University residences, despite the fact that any permits which were sought by blacks seeking to live in white Grahamstown were always granted by the Town Council. Councillors from Rini went further in suggesting that there is still considerable racial tension in Grahamstown as a whole, but

that there is growing "goodwill" rooted in the mutual economic dependence of the various sectors of the community. Nonetheless, one informant from Rini noted that:

There is a feeling that Grahamstown is superior, Rini is inferior … in the provision of services. That is where all the crux lies.

Development and Local Government Issues

It is clear that the legacy of apartheid has left many of these racially oriented cleavages within the society. It is equally clear that, to a large extent, racial differences coincide with disparities in lifestyle and, at a collective level, in dramatic disparities in the development or lack of development which different sub-communities are able to enjoy. The social problems which result, impact directly on crime levels, levels of conflict and, most significantly in this context, the climate and context within which policing takes place. For this reason, it is necessary here to briefly canvass these issues so as to properly reflect some of the circumstances within which police community-relations operate.

The overview of local government and developmental issues which follows, is not exhaustive. Indeed, the dearth of updated research on Grahamstown which was available to the researchers, renders a thorough study impossible. Instead, this perspective is, like much of the report thus far, rooted in the perceptions of the stakeholder that have been interviewed. As such, it considers the specific points at which the concerns of local government, development and policing intersect in the various Grahamstown sub-communities.

Nor does this overview ignore the obvious fact that developmental solutions are, by there very nature, long-term solutions which only peripherally involve the SAP. They are nonetheless one of the main sources of conflict within the wider Grahamstown community and, as such, impact on the policing context in the town. Development, job creation and integration appear to be some of the vital pre-requisites for building sound police-community relations in the long term.

Local Government Issues

It is quite clear that many of the problems of policing in the Grahamstown area (and indeed, the differential policing needs within different sub-communities), are related directly to the imbalances in the delivery of services, infrastructural development and the resourcing of these different sub-communities – the delivery of policing services and facilities being one central concern. It was frequently claimed by those interviewed, that the obvious solution

was the rationalisation of infrastructural development and the provision of resources – possibly including policing – through the unification of the different local governments and administrations. Equally often there were claims and counter-claims that particular players were stalling or preventing this process from occurring. Some informants claimed that local government bureaucrats were standing in the way of such a "one city" initiative, whilst others claimed that the local government representatives were in favour of the idea, but that it was being stalled by the political parties.

Informants from the Grahamstown Town Council expressed their opinions on this subject. One administrator suggested that although unity in local government and administration was "hoped for", the reality in terms of physical town planning rendered this a less obtainable prospect than was sometimes assumed. Nonetheless, there was a recognition that "there must be co-operation if there is to be any real development." This was regarded as essential in industrial development and job creation, where it was claimed there has already been some co-operation. It was claimed that another area of growing co-operation has been in the delivery of services, despite it being a sphere of high conflict involving boycotts, non-payment of dues as well as water and electricity cut-offs.

Another Grahamstown administrator went on to note that there was sometimes a contradiction between local initiatives (such as the Grahamstown One City Initiative), which were often in advance of national constitutional developments or financial arrangements, and these national processes. Emphasising that they were working outside of the provisions of the Interim Measures Act, members of the Grahamstown Town Council went on to point out that Grahamstown had established its own negotiating forum on local government and had moved towards establishing a single administration. It was claimed that there was some resistance from the Rini Town Council, but that this had largely been sorted out through a bi-lateral negotiation process. The challenge was seen now to be to extend the process and to engage other groups in it.

By contrast, members of the Rini Town Council and administration implied that it was the Grahamstown Town Council that was "dragging its feet" on the issue of negotiating a joint administration. Although it was agreed that there were no obstacles in principle, the nuts and bolts of the practical agreements were taking a considerable period of time.

On the related issue of whether the police should be locally or nationally accountable, that is, whether the police should fall under the control of a new unified local government administration, the white Grahamstown municipal officials expressed positive sentiments about the prospect of a locally controlled police force. However, their main concern was a developmental one in that the town could not afford to pay for such a force.

You can't control such a police force unless you have total control over the purse strings and a small town like Grahamstown could never afford all the policing which this town needs.

A Rini administrator suggested that local level control of the police and decentralised organisation was a positive idea in principle, because this would ensure that local level policing was more responsive to community needs and less hamstrung by bureaucratic and political considerations. Rini Town Councillors, however, expressed a similar concern to that expressed by their white counterparts in the Grahamstown Council. They warned that under-resourced councils such as their own, already suffering a terminal cash-flow crisis, could ill afford an additional financial burden in the form of the obligation to fund local police.

Nonetheless, there was considerable preference expressed by them for the old municipal police who were specifically deployed in the 1980s to protect the councillors. They claimed that since the municipal police had been incorporated into the SAP, the service which they received had deteriorated.

They must start by taking down statements. They must at some stage consult with a certain person who is holding a senior position, they cannot do as they please, they must get orders from that person to say okay you can go ... . Now they haven't got a free hand. That is the main cry of the community. Because they are used to quick response that they used to get from the Municipal Police. In fact that has been the order of the day with the SAP, they never respond very quickly ... . They wait until something has happened ... . The police now are not so effective as they used to be in the past.

From this it appears that these informants were in favour of a locally accountable police force, but that this may have been coloured by the fact that the municipal police of old were specifically deployed for their own protection.

An administrative official in the "coloured" Management Committee suggested that local level control of policing and the definition of policing priorities would be well serviced by the SAP being subject to the control of the local authorities. He suggested that this was an approach adopted in the US which could profitably be transported to the Eastern Cape. However, this informant did sound an important word of warning. He firstly noted that the problem of local financing for such a municipally accountable force (in the context of underdeveloped communities incapable of generating the necessary resources for their local authorities), could only be overcome by the unification of the local government and the rationalisation of the delivery of resources. Secondly, he pointed to the failure of "black on black policing" experiments during the 1980s which had left a legacy of mistrust of the municipal police and the so-called "kitskonstabels". If decentralised policing was to be implemented, he argued, it would have to be clearly distinct in form and orientation from its municipal policing predecessors. The third qualification raised by this informant was the vital need for the professionalisation of the police. In this context he emphasised that local level control should not serve to inhibit the adequate resourcing of the training programmes necessary to this end.

In this context it was suggested by the latter informant that the solution may be regional rather than local control over the police force. This may overcome the problems of financial resourcing through regional rather than local-level rationalisation.

An insightful comment made was that many of the tensions and much of the conflict generated in small towns in the region and even in Grahamstown, was the product of a lack of local and even regional government initiative. One informant claimed that these government structures simply don't have new mechanisms and ways of thinking appropriate to coping with problems connected with communities and with local government problems. The result is that often the police get caught in the middle, having to resolve these disputes and conflict which have been aggravated by bureaucratic conservatism in the structures of local and regional government.

In terms of this, this interviewee expressed some concern at the prospect of local level control over the police if this was via local or regional government structures – unless these structures and their traditional methods were to change quite dramatically. In short, even if it were possible in terms of the SAP, the local government structures don't have the necessary capacity to either fund or regulate policing. At very least, it was mooted, this would take considerable time.

The experience of this policing dilemma – rooted in the dearth of credible or authoritative political structures – relates to a broader problem of the "deregulation of social control"

during the era of negotiations which have followed February 1990. The new political style and the priority of negotiating a political settlement, rendered old "hard" policing methods redundant and socially unacceptable. The result was that the methods and structures of policing of the past were being dismantled. The problems arose, however, when a stalled national negotiation process, failed to generate or deliver alternative forms of consensus-based social controls. In other words, the old forms of authority and policing were being discredited and discarded, but no new authority or policing relationships were being framed through the national negotiation process. For many people, it thus appeared as if the society was left with no credible sources of authority, no means by which people could be effectively policed. In this climate, crime was on the increase and the society increasingly appeared to be ruled by lawlessness.

Stated somewhat differently, the unshackling of the political process in the wake of February 1990, demanded that the hard policing of criminalised politics had to stop. Yet, an ironic consequence of the repressive style of policing under apartheid was that it appeared to keep criminal activity partially under control. The result was that the unshackling of the political process referred to above, had the unintended consequence of providing greater space within which not only politicians, but also criminals, could operate. On the ground, the experience of this was sometimes that policing had become less effective and more inefficient than in previous years.

Although it is increasingly likely that there will be some momentum generated in the national negotiation process and that this will touch directly on the status and nature of policing in the country, the creation of new sources of control and accountability will take a long time to be effective at the grassroots level. For this reason, the need to build community-police trust at the local-level and to forge organisational liaison and structures of accountability, is all the more urgent. In the Grahamstown context, this seems to imply a need for some momentum in the plans to develop a single city administration and local authority.

Organisational Development

A central point that was made repeatedly by many of the informants was the urgent need to rebuild local-level and particularly civic organisation. In part, this need was directly bred of the repressive legacy of apartheid policing in the 1980s, during which time local civic organisation and street committees in the African township were perceived as a threat to state security and systematically smashed. In the current climate, the urgent need for – and dearth of – representative and accountable organisation at grassroots level, was widely perceived as a serious problem in developing and building policing institutions which serviced police-community trust. This urgent need for organisational development and capacity building, although not a "hard" developmental issue, is nonetheless a human development aspect which is critical to founding accountable policing structures. In this context, one informant complained that the political organisations could simply no longer control their membership adequately.

More than one informant referred to the lack of accountability of local civic organisation leadership, compounded in some cases by rumours of mismanagement and even corruption. Furthermore, it was claimed that the Ethiopian Church dispute had served to undermine the unifying influence of the church in the black community. As a result there is no authoritative representative structure within the township community that can be referred to with confidence.

Any rooted or accountable developmental programme, which will necessarily entail the investment and allocation of resources, demands the resolution of this organisational problem if it is to avoid the real danger of servicing greater division and conflict within the impoverished communities of Grahamstown. This has already been demonstrated in at least one instance where a substantial IDT subsidised housing programme was stalled due to allegations of mismanagement within the civic.

An even greater problem confronts the black local authority which is plagued by the legacy of popular opposition to them as vehicles of 'reform' in the course of the 1980s and which, even in the view of some of the present councillors, was also the site of much corruption. All of the Rini Town Councillors related how they had been under attack during that period, and how much of the residual resentment remained within the township community.

One informant also pointed out the equally urgent need for organisational development within the SAP as well. Arguing for organisational capacity building, he identified two central problems which he suggested could plague any community policing initiative at the local level in Grahamstown if they were not redressed within the SAP. Firstly he argued that a central problem was the establishment of a Police-community Relations Division as a separate and distinct division within the SAP. He noted that the effect of establishing a separate "Community Development Department" simply meant that this work and this perspective was not in fact integrated into the other major activities of the organisation. He suggested that this problem within the SAP could undermine the central importance of community liaison and accountability within the work of the police. Secondly, he argued that the nature of the national and regional structure of the SAP, its hierarchical and bureaucratic character, meant that priorities and principles established at a national level may well clash fundamentally with the principle of local sensitivity and accountability. This also contributed to an inevitable lack of flexibility of local managers to change the ways in which they operate.

Any lack of trust in the SAP further compounds the lack of credible social authority within the black community and translates easily into a growing disrespect for the law as a whole. This is of great relevance here because of the pervasive perceptions that under- or uneven development, massive unemployment and the inadequate delivery of services etc., all impact directly on both the levels of crime and social conflict within the community, as well as on the framework within which accountable policing is being sought.

Socio-Economic and Infrastructural Development

It was argued by some informants, that the police should be more directly involved in developmental concerns. The point was made by one person interviewed that if the police were called in to deal with natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes, there was no reason why they shouldn't be performing a similar service in the context of developmental issues such as housing and reconstruction. This, it was claimed, would assist in transforming the image of the SAP as a "force" to one of policing as a "community service". It was acknowledged, however, that this would necessitate specific education and training programmes within the SAP to ensure that police were appropriately sensitised to the needs in this arena. (On this issue, see the recommendation below on *Multi-Agency Approach.*)

There was, however, a strong contrary view expressed which argued that in the current context, and considering the current levels of suspicion of the policing agencies, direct involvement of the police in development and the delivery of services or resources, could well detrimentally pollute developmental initiatives in the context of community mistrust of the police. It was argued by one informant that this was especially dangerous to the prospective establishment of an inter-organisational and politically non-aligned development forum. In any event, the reality is that a key point of contact between the police and affected communities has been via the policing and mediation of conflict over basic developmental issues such as the delivery of water to Rini township, the boycott of services and refusal to pay rates and rentals.

From a developmental perspective, one of the key limits confronted by the Grahamstown community is the fact that the town's main "industry" is education. This clearly places immediate limits on the tax base, resources and the consequent capacity for job creation within a climate of massive unemployment. For the Grahamstown Town Council representatives, as well as for the Rini Town Council members interviewed, this fact was central to the escalating levels of crime and they placed a priority on the generation of industrial growth and job creation in the town. It was noted by one of the informants that not only was there a priority on creating new jobs, but simply on sustaining the number of jobs currently available. He referred, as a case in point, to the closure approximately one year earlier of a substantial employer such as Corobrik.

The assumption that unemployment levels were directly responsible for the levels of crime was a common theme throughout the interviews. The Rini Town Clerk estimated that unemployment in Rini was running at between 80 and 85 percent. A similar figure was given by the Rini Town Councillors, one of whom expressed some mystification as to how people actually survive.

They need to eat. They need to dress up. Some of them need to take their children to school. I don't know how they make it, but somehow ...

Another source estimated that there were 12 000 to 15 000 unemployed people in Grahamstown at any time. Unemployment was also reported as being prohibitively high in Grahamstown's "coloured" community.

At a more general level, Grahamstown's white town councillors acknowledged that developmental problems, particularly the delivery of services, actually directly underpinned conflict between and within the Grahamstown sub-communities. They specifically referred here to the dispute over water. It was noted that conflicts such as the water dispute also rapidly translated into racial tensions and became the focal point of "mass action" and public demonstrations, which in turn required the intervention of the police.

This point was reinforced by the Rini councillors who complained that they were confronted by the legacy of apartheid's racially-based uneven development and that their credibility was undermined when the responsibility for self-financing the upgrading and developmental process was imposed on black local authorities in the 1980s. They noted that this had served to politicise a wide range of related civic issues and rendered them open to high levels of conflict. There was considerable resentment of central white government over these and related issues.

The central developmental issue which was raised was the problem of "uncontrolled urbanisation" – compounded by the pervasive effect of the drought and the effective retrenchment of large numbers of farm labourers – in the absence of appropriate facilities to accommodate people and which resulted in the growth of high density squatting communities. At its most simple level, Grahamstown's white town councillors argued that this led to much acquisitive crime including petty stock theft, and demanded a comprehensive programme of upgrading as no other appropriate housing is available. For the Rini Town Council, the problems of uncontrolled squatting were considerably more manifest. In particular there was a history of direct conflict between squatters and the Council over where squatters were allowed to settle. The Council, after a lengthy battle, managed to secure a piece of land for this purpose, but many squatters refused to leave the sites on which they had already established their dwellings. According to one administrator at the Rini Council offices, this was due to political influences and the bad faith of the Grahamstown Civic Association (GRACA). In the end, attempts to forcibly remove the squatters in the course of 1990 failed and several people were killed in the ensuing conflict.

On this issue the Rini Town Councillors once again blamed the short-sightedness of central government:

... the government did away with influx controls. Well and good, we didn't like it ourselves. We were under the impression that if anyone could find a home they must be free like the whites to live there. But the government never thought of adding more houses in the urban areas, to take the new influx – because people perceive the urban areas as those places where life is better ... . You will find people in the middle of the night building in the squatter areas. That was the failure of the government. Now it is the baby of the Council to make provision for those people who are squatting. There is no infrastructure provided. No water is provided.

More generally, it was noted by the Rini Town Clerk, as well as by members or the Grahamstown Town Council, that the tensions over facilities and access to resources which arose in relation to the squatting communities posed other serious problems. The hygiene related problems led to greater social tensions within the township and beyond. In the course of attempts to upgrade, competing claims were also perceived as a potential problem which may necessitate policing interventions. A peripherally related problem was that of stock-owners keeping cattle in the urban centre. The requirement that cattle had to be fenced generated much conflict and this was not effectively resolved through negotiations. Of central concern was the fact that there remains a great deal of suspicion over local authority initiatives in this regard – and this is understandable considering the history alluded to above.

Crime

Having thus examined the socio-economic context which most informants claim lie at the root of the crime rate in Grahamstown, it is now appropriate to begin to examine the nature and extent of crime in the town. The police gave the following figures for reported serious crime in the Grahamstown district (not only the city) in 1992:

OFFENCE	NO OF CASES IN 1992	% CHANGE OVER 1991 FIGURES	CLEAR UP RATE
Murder	103	+ 16%	95%
Assault GBH			95%
Rape	250	+ 45%	88%
Housebreaking	2 461	− 10%	30%
Stocktheft	785	+ 160%	23%
Theft	4 102	− 31%	50%
Robbery	211	− 77%	69%
TOTAL CASES	2 108	+ 288%	

In the context of the developmental concerns expressed earlier, it was claimed by one informant that the social dislocation caused by rapid urbanisation, when combined with high levels of unemployment, generated intense domestic conflict within recently urbanised family units. This interviewee indicated that the traditional kinship networks of the extended family, could simply not endure the degree of pressure exerted by lifestyles and unemployment in the Grahamstown context indefinitely. The stresses and strains of urban life were already seen to be taking their toll in the form of increased domestic conflict, battery of women, child abuse etc. This view is supported by the observations of at least one of the Rini town councillors who saw familial and generational conflict as relating in part to the abolition of influx control. He stated:

... we have been brought up in the streets of the city for years now. But we have never experienced what is happening nowadays. What I can say is that the devil has been turned loose. We've got families who breed juvenile delinquents. Our standard of living has changed due to no influx control. I believe influx control kept the balance of the population of the cities ... but everyone is flocking to town now and the problem is that there are those families who are not bringing up their children well in the towns.

It is striking that this dimension of domestic crime, described by a very wide range of stakeholder as the most prolific form of violent crime in the Grahamstown area, does not even feature amongst the police statistics. To some extent this is explicable by the simple fact that much of this domestic crime remains hidden or goes unreported, yet most of the social welfare agencies consulted were more critical of the police in their explanations of this fact. Referring to child abuse, domestic violence and the pervasive influence of alcohol abuse in these crimes, workers at the social welfare agencies complained of a high degree of police incompetence in dealing – or not dealing with this dimension of crime in Grahamstown. This is reflected in the quotes below:

I think there is an unspoken policy that domestic affairs or family matters do not constitute police work. There is an enormous amount of confusion within the police about what their role is. It is often open to interpretation. They should clarify their policy.

The crux of the matter is the difficulty to distinguish between social welfare and criminal matters. Most of our cases seem criminal and so we refer them back to the police and vice-versa. That causes much frustration and social workers also see the police as not willing to co-operate with them.

They should know that the public demands assistance from them, and they should not shrug cases off lightly. Violence in a marital situation is their concern.

The police are sitting at the frontline of a whole system which does not function at all. The domestic matters are particularly disastrous. There's just no action taken or sympathy given.

This is not the exclusive preserve of the police, however. One particularly necessary area for public education is on the whole area of domestic violence. Respondents from the welfare community and the police identified alcohol abuse, unemployment and domestic violence as the major contributing factors to high levels of interpersonal violence. Although it is recognised that policing of the domestic area is difficult, it was felt that the police should play a constructive role in public education around these issues.

Gangs

Another problem related to unemployment and underdevelopment which was raised by many of the informants in the township context, was the problem of youth gangs. A representative of the Rini administration suggested that the problem was a generational one – a breakdown in parental discipline.

That ... has changed completely now, they just go as they want to go. The parents don't have authority of the children anymore and in fact they are scared of their children.

Although the explanation of this social disintegration has been related to massive stress placed on extended family and kinship networks by uncontrolled urbanisation, drought and joblessness, it must be noted that at least one interviewee suggested that the breakdown of parental control was also related to the influence of "radicals" within the schools. It was argued that one of the consequences of this was the serious problem of gang formation and criminal youth gang activity. Members of the Rini Town Council claimed that the gang problem is considerably worse than in the past.

The problem of youth gangs was also highlighted by the representative of the Coloured Management Committee, who related the problem of gang formation and activity to the socio-economic problems being experienced within the coloured community – in particular the problem of unemployment coupled with the failure of the education system. He added that not only do kids not have the prospect of employment, but they don't even have adequate sources of entertainment due to the lack of facilities in these underdeveloped black areas. This meant that the problems of unemployment lay not only at the root of gang activity, but at the heart of the problem of drug and alcohol abuse within this sub-community. He went on to suggest that the primary solution must be the creation of jobs, especially through the development of small businesses and possibly with the assistance of the Small Business Development Corporation.

Another informant also referred to the serious gang problem in the coloured areas, arguing that the Bowker Street or "Ghost Town" gang problem was aggravated by rumours and allegations that the police were aligned with one of the gangs involved. However, it should be noted that when the police did intervene and actually shot someone in the dispute, some members of the community were arguing that the SAP did not act firmly enough.

It is interesting to note one community representative's response when asked why the community has allowed the gang problem to continue. She noted that, although the gangs have been around for about three years …

... the community hasn't acted violently against them because we are fearing the situation of Natal,

Johannesburg, Transvaal – because if the community acts against them, it means there will be faction fights all over Grahamstown. Grahamstown would be in the same state as Natal and we are fearing that. We want the police to do their part but they seem to have failed.

In dealing with the problem, the police would do well to take seriously the fears thus expressed by community members.

Police-Community Relations: The history of repression

One of the major obstacles facing the SAP is its history. The police were the "professional force in the suppression of resistance to apartheid".[2] The military and counter-insurgency role of the police was expanded in the 1970s and 1980s and the States of Emergency[3] gave them virtually limitless powers. The SAP was notorious for its brutal treatment of suspects and for the racist attitudes of its members.

The States of Emergency, which were still in place when President FW De Klerk announced the sweeping political reforms of 1990, still loom large in people's memories. Emergency regulations were implemented with particular vigour by the police and the military in the Eastern Cape. One respondent in the survey estimated that half the adult male African population of Grahamstown had been detained by the police during the States of Emergency.

The Security Branch of the SAP were at the forefront of the political repression carried out by the police. They were responsible for collecting information on political activity in the area, and for interrogating detainees. Although the old Security Branch has now been renamed the Crime Intelligence Service (CIS/MID), the legacy of suspicion and antagonism towards this section of the police force is still fairly strong. However, the researchers found that a significant proportion of the respondents surveyed in Grahamstown were, in fact, prepared to work with those same policemen who had detained and interrogated them a few years previously.

The more public face of policing in the townships during the Emergency was the ubiquitous Casspir of the riot squad. The police and the SADF controlled the township community using military tactics such as curfews and house-to-house searches. There was no "ordinary" policing of the township, and much of the criminal activity in Rini was dealt by the informal street committee structures of the UDF/Civic.

Another legacy of the State of Emergency era is the municipal police. The municipal police first emerged in the townships of the Eastern Cape in April 1986, employed by local authorities. In a study of municipal police in the Eastern Cape, the Black Sash[4] cite the (then) mayor of Rini Town Council, Mr Colley Draai:

Basically the municipal police are an appendage of the Rini Town Council. Their instructions as to what has to be done comes from the town council, under the direction of the lieutenant who is based at the Rini Town Council office. So, as for the instructions, they get them from the police who basically give them our policy as to how we would like things done.[5]

According to the Sash, the main activities of the municipal policemen involved "random acts of violence directed at political opponents of the government, both real and imagined".[6] The municipal police and special constables ("kitskonstabels") did weaken the organisations of the United Democratic Front, and marked a significant shift in the government strategy for policing in the townships:

A black police force was now used in the frontline against apartheid opponents. This changed the international image of the police as white bullies, and the media started talking about 'black-on-black violence'. Secondly, the kitskonstabels allowed the State to get back into many previous no-go areas. They were a strong police presence on the streets, they knew what was happening in the townships, and their brutality scared many people away from

organisations. .. [It] was a very cheap way of getting more police into the townships – four kitskonstabels could be employed for the price of one ordinary police officer.[7]

However, because the municipal police were so poorly trained and supervised, there were many disciplinary problems. "Serious abuses of power occurred from the first weeks of their deployment. Abuses such as fatal shootings, random attacks, sexual abuse, verbal abuse and harassment were widespread and systematic."[8] These disciplinary problems were one of the factors which compelled the SAP to "incorporate" the municipal police into the police force, (which was experiencing a manpower crisis), in 1988.

One of the other problems created by the Emergency is that the indemnity granted to the security forces by the Emergency regulations meant that police misconduct was not effectively censured, either by the police leadership, the government, or the criminal justice system. The government's "Total Strategy" nurtured *systemic* police misconduct – that is, misconduct, abuses of power and deviance which are *encouraged or tolerated* by the institution:

The ideology of National Security provides a justification for the mobilisation of the armed forces over the state's opponents, and renders it inevitable that political-military considerations will override the legal and ethical ones. Under such circumstances the occurrence of organisational deviance is amplified. ... The government-police relations and the former's dependence on the latter also means that the government is not prepared to risk alienating the police by criticising their conduct. And so, in the absence of government criticism, deviant or illegal police conduct is sanctioned.[9]

The corruption and unchecked abuses of power, which were a feature of the repressive policing of the 1980s, left a legacy which is still very much alive in the communal memory of Grahamstown's black population.

Organisation of Policing in Grahamstown

Structure of the SAP

The SAP in Grahamstown has 269 members. The majority of these work in the Uniform Branch (now called Visible Policing) which is responsible for staffing the police stations, for patrolling and for responding to calls. The main police station is in Beaufort Street, in the town centre, and there are two satellite police stations in Rini township, which are staffed largely by former members of the municipal police. The Beaufort street police station is also the headquarters for the surrounding police district, not only for the city of Grahamstown, and the officer commanding is the District Commissioner, Colonel De Klerk.

The management group which works with the District Commissioner consists of four senior officers who meet weekly. The commanders of all the various divisions and branches meet with this group twice a week to plan and co-ordinate their activities. These meetings serve as a the major vehicle for internal communication. It is then the responsibility of the various commanders to ensure that information is passed down to their staff.

The District Commissioner also meets with the commanders of all the police stations in the district on a monthly basis. In addition, the District Commissioner and other senior managers address the entire staff contingent of the district in a series of monthly lectures on aspects of the police reform programme or on topical issues.

The other divisions include the Crime Intelligence Service (the old Security Branch), Crime Investigation (Detective Branch), SANAB/Narcotics (Drug squad), the Internal Stability Unit (the old Riot Unit) and the former municipal police who were incorporated into the SAP. These 62 former municipal police still operate under a slightly separate command structure, and are restricted to duties in the township. Support services include specialists such as the forensic unit, as well as administrative staff.

The Grahamstown Station Commander is responsible for the policing of Grahamstown itself, including the various township areas. 59 people work in the station, plus 39 assistants – including charge office, patrols, visible policing and crime prevention. Approximately 4 people staff the charge office counter at any one time. The crime register, for opening cases, in held at the Beaufort St. police station. This means that police in Rini can only take reports, they cannot open dockets.

The main police station has two vehicles available for patrols -one for the town and one for the township. Severe under-resourcing of the police in the township was evident. In fact, the

researchers were surprised by the fact that the Rini satellite police station had no telephone (and was therefore not accessible to members of the public needing urgent assistance) when visited for this study.

The recent arrival of the Internal Stability Unit in the Rini township has generated a number of problems in terms of police-community relations.[10] The ISU which is now based in Grahamstown is intended to serve the whole police district in terms of public order policing; and the SAP management in are delighted with the additional manpower. The ISU is accountable to regional ISD command, not to the local police station, and although they usually discuss strategies with the district commissioner, it is difficult for the Station Commander to control and direct their activities.

The arrival and conduct of this highly-militarised unit has provoked concern from township residents. The camouflage-clad ISU is identified with the repressive of policing which characterised the Emergency years. The conflict between the police and community over the introduction of the ISU was mediated in September 1992 by the LDRC in September 1992. The SAP indicated at that time that "the purpose of this unit is to promote peace during unrest, and its members are specially selected, mentally and physically, for this purpose. Their prime task is to assist with ordinary policing of all crimes. However, if unrest occurs in an area, this unit – not the ordinary police – will be called out".[11] In fact, Grahamstown itself is not currently identified by the SAP as a problematic "unrest area".

Police-Community Liaison Forums

The SAP participate in a number of "liaison forums" with different sectors of the community. Many of them are bilateral forums between the police and specific interest groups such as organised business or the farming community.

For the purposes of this study, we will focus on the general, rather than the specific, forums – namely the police-community liaison forum, which was initiated by the SAP, and the Local Dispute Resolution Committee, which is a structure of the National Peace Accord. These forums attempt to involve or represent the broad Grahamstown community, and are concerned with issues of crime and community conflict.

Local Dispute Resolution Committee

One lawyer we interviewed noted that the Grahamstown Local Dispute Resolution Committee (LDRC) had achieved a great deal, for example in containing and mediating the Ethiopian Church Dispute. However, the sentiment was expressed that the presence of policemen with a security branch history in positions central to the LDRC and the community liaison structures, had serious potential to compromise the structures because of historical antagonisms. Nonetheless, the restraint with which the SAP operated in the church dispute was highly commended.

Like the police-community liaison forum, the LDRC does suffer from problems of limited participation by organisations representing the black community. However, it has succeeded in creating confidence through its activities in resolving a number of disputes; and because it is not seen to be "owned" or initiated by the police:

The one which seems a likely success is the LDRC because, in that one, the structure is fair, it is not chaired by the police. Instead, it's chaired by ministers. They do have some credibility among the community. It has managed to sort out some problems peacefully in the township.

Police-Community Liaison Forum

The police-community liaison forum began in June 1992, meeting monthly at the police station. Various organisations and individuals are sent invitations, and there is limited publicity about the meetings in the local press. The meetings are open to individual members of the public as well as representatives of organisations. Very little was known about the forum by respondents interviewed for this study, which suggests that the police's publicity campaign around the forum has not been successful. The media could play an important role in making any new police-community process known to the broader community. One of the problems with the existing forum is that the press do not regularly attend meetings, and this has limited the public profile of the forum.

An examination of the minutes of meetings held so far reveals that the maximum number of organisations represented at any of the forums held in 1992 was 13. Of these, the majority were from the white community and the civil and welfare services. The only political parties to have attended the meetings are the Democratic Party and the Conservative Party, which, again, represent the white community; and the tripartite alliance of ANC/COSATU/SACP have not attended the meetings. The civic organisations which claim to represent township residents were only present at two of the meetings last year.

Despite police efforts to embark on a new style of policing and to involve the community through forums such as these, the initial problem remains a lack of representative attendance at the meetings. The forums have been white-dominated and police-run. This has led other participants to feel disempowered and that they are being co-opted in some sort of police public relations exercise.

We don't feel that the liaison forum aids the community, as it promotes the SAP. As a result, it's not gaining much support. (Black community)

The format of the meetings focuses on the police themselves; and the other participants are regarded as a passive "audience". Quotes from police and civilian participants reflect this problem:

The main problem is that the community comes to listen and not to give information. (SAP)

The main participants are police. My impression is that the whole focus of those forums is on neighbourhood watches. The actual forum itself is not a conducive forum to talk in. Discussion and debate is hardly ever encouraged. (White community)

What was happening, they were inviting us to those meetings for their own agenda. Then in that meeting you just sat there and listened to Colonel Meistre speaking and thereafter the meeting was closed. (Black community)

The problem of who else could initiate and manage the forum has not been an easy one for the police to address. However, there has been little creativity shown by the police in the way in which meetings are chaired and run. The police in the Grahamstown district have been slow in following their counterparts in other centres in relinquishing the chair of such

meetings. The police tend to adopt a very formal meeting procedure, with most of the inputs being given in the form of "lectures", which participants find uninteresting.

Another problem, which respondents who had attended the forum identified, was that of a disproportionate police presence at the meetings. An examination of the records of attendance from meetings last year shows that police constituted up to 60% of the attendees in certain months.

A further problem with the police involvement in the forum, but one which reflects a problem in the police organisation more generally, is that most of the police officers who chair, speak and participate in the meetings are white, with very little participation by black officers. This serves to reinforce perceptions about racism within the police force, and does not engender the trust of the black community.

A prominent member of the legal profession argued that the problem with the existing police-community liaison forum was that it was too much of a "police-initiated and controlled thing". Here it was strongly motivated that community initiative was vital if such a forum was to have any credibility. It was suggested that participation in the forum should be based on organisational representation, should be regular, and should thus serve to build relationships of trust. Another problem that was identified was the vital need to get rank-and-file policemen and women involved in the forum.

This sentiment was reinforced by another member of the legal profession who argued that there was little purpose served by liaison forums if the agendas were preconceived or controlled by the police. It was argued that there needs to be a process more like workshops between police and community members, so that communication of problems and perceptions is unfettered. The critical issue is also that many of the existing forums only provide for a limited representative participation and consequently fail to reach the grassroots. It was argued that the most important thing is to ensure that junior rank and file policemen are exposed directly to the criticisms, perceptions and sentiments of township people. It was strongly suggested that if civil society was to properly control the policing of the community, then strong civic structures had to be built and these, rather than just the political organisations, had to be at the centre of the structures of police accountability. The suggestion was that a series of workshops should be held with just the SAP and the civics present.

Some participants found that the forum focused too heavily on the perpetrators of crimes, indeed on petty and property crimes, and not enough on the victims of violent crime. More broadly, respondents were sceptical of how *effective* the forum was in addressing problems of crime or policing. It was seen as a "talking shop" which has little real impact on police conduct.

The forum has not delivered any results which indicate that the police have changed in any way.

The problem of representative participation in police decision-making is recognised by police and community members alike. However, while some see simple increases in the numbers of participating organisations and individuals as the solution, we would argue that simply increasing the rate of attendance by township residents will not address the central problem – the power imbalance between police and community.

The central problem is that the black community has been historically distanced from policing and are, therefore, inevitably disadvantaged in negotiations with the police. As one police officer put it:

Past problems dominate the way the forums work.

The historical mistrust of the police by the broad 'democratic' community in Grahamstown, both black and white, directly results in suspicion about any new police initiative. Until the macro-political context changes, this type of suspicion is unavoidable:

It is a problem that the ex-Security Branch are involved in the forum – lots of people feel 'you can never trust a policeman'. There is a suspicion that this is a new Security Branch strategy. The police are still seen as agents of the apartheid state.

We see any structure of the regime as part and parcel of the government. So it is hard for us to say that we can sit down with the police and discuss things like community policing and all that. ... We are not

prepared at this point in time to join any structures that are organised by the regime.

Although the problem of community alienation from the police is exacerbated by the history of apartheid policing, it exists in many such forums elsewhere in the world. Policing is a profession which allows its members to acquire technical skills and specialised language which exclude non-members from engaging meaningfully in police discourse.

We used to participate in those discussions until such time that the ANC Branch in Grahamstown thought that no, there is nothing coming out of those meetings. If there was a resolution that you didn't understand, or they understood it better than you, they would publish that the ANC and the SAP 'agreed' on whatever issue. This was confusing to us, we didn't know what we were doing there and we didn't understand our role. So we wrote them a letter saying the ANC of Grahamstown won't be attending such meetings.

Some of the police respondents expressed resentment and despondency about the lack of progress being made by the forum:

We can't tell the community things if they don't attend the forums. They should be making better use of the forums.

The public should be giving the police their ideas.

Community people don't volunteer information.

The police do not adequately understand the implications of the historical power relationship between the SAP and the black community. They assume that, having made an initiative, the community should be forthcoming with an enthusiastic response. It is therefore our concern to emphasise that the historical problems generated by apartheid policing demand sophisticated, long-term solutions. There is little hope for police-community relations strategies which are aimed at achieving short-term propaganda victories. Successful strategies demand insight and patience on the part of the police.

The police correctly identify the process of reporting back from the forums as one of the problems with the process:

if the community organisations don't report back to their members, then the whole object is defeated.

This is especially problematic where there are no democratically elected structures of local government, and where there are contests over the representivity of existing organisations. Unless the community organisations incorporate policing issues into their programmes, and formalise procedures for reporting back from meetings with the police, the majority of ordinary residents of Grahamstown will continue to be alienated from the police.

Despite all the problems listed here, we found that there was a greater degree of acceptance of the police among the black community in Grahamstown than we had anticipated. There are a number of possible reasons for this: the lack of "political violence" in the community, the fact that a violent crime problem has brought the community together and focused attention on the desirable role of the police, and the high levels of political education among the black community. Many activists and community leaders have a sophisticated vision of what policing could be, and there is an encouraging level of engagement between police and community leadership.

These forums help a lot, because at a certain level, they influence the police, and influence the community to accept (the police) in order to solve problems together.

Neighbourhood Watch

The central proposal for generating community participation within the policing in Grahamstown (apart from the police-community liaison forums) which has been considered by the SAP, is the neighbourhood watch system, reintroduced from March 1992. The motivation was set out in a pamphlet issued by the SAP which stated:

Your involvement in your immediate environment involves many aspects. You must know your neighbour and his movements, as well as domestic workers who are normally permitted on the property ... . The role the Neighbourhood Watch should fulfil cannot replace the task of the police. It serves merely as the eyes and ears of the police, who are not able to be everywhere at the same time. It is not expected that the Neighbourhood Watch patrol the streets and the suburbs, as this is a function of the police. It is however, requested of members of the Neighbourhood Watch to be alert and have their neighbour's interest at heart. Should situations or people appear suspicious, the police should be contacted as soon as possible.

It is clear that this pamphlet was directed at the white areas rather than the African township. An immediate problem which would affect the implementation of the system in

Rini would be the lack of access to telephones for the purposes of alerting policing back-up (particularly the absence of a telephone at the satellite police station in the township). An even greater problem would be the popular concern over the SAP's response time in the Rini area and the resultant lack of confidence in the system as set out in the pamphlet. These factors may contribute to the much more central problem which is a lack of enthusiasm for the project amongst township residents. This was pointed out by one member of the Rini township administration, who based this on slightly different grounds:

... they [the township community] are too scared to organise this. They are not prepared to come forward and to say, listen come here and use my telephone if you have any problems on the street. They won't do that, and they won't do anything from their side to combat crime. They just rely on the police. They support the idea of the Neighbourhood Watch, but they don't want to get involved ... . They don't want to be singled out because you are an 'impimpi' ... . So they would support the police, the neighbourhood watch but they wouldn't admit to it.

Some of the Rini Town Councillors were themselves a lot more sceptical and threatened by the prospect of a neighbourhood watch in the township. They were clearly influenced by the history of the 1980s and warned that a neighbourhood watch could easily be used against certain people in the community. The comparison that was drawn was with the "kangaroo courts" which were "terrorising" both the councillors and the community during the earlier period. One informant outlined his perspective of the problems:

[The] neighbourhood watch that we are talking about must be reasonable people, adults. You are not talking about children. You don't have children running about in the streets. The idea of

neighbourhood watch is a good one, especially at night. But with us it is different. With street committees you are going to have meetings and so and so has been called to appear. Now you will find that the people who are there are the youngsters. They take the decisions now, no mature person, like a mother or a father who will discipline them. This person will be bulldozed ... . That is the kind of committee we have seen in the past.

In particular they referred to the "Peacemakers" and argued that this grouping had developed originally to combat the gang problem, but had soon transformed itself into a criminal outfit. These informants also pointed out that few people would be willing to involve themselves in a neighbourhood watch for fear of being labelled "sellouts".

Although less motivated by fear, a similar concern was expressed by a member of the Coloured Management Committee administration. He simply warned that neighbourhood watch systems could be abused by people who took the law into their own hands.

Studies of neighbourhood watch elsewhere have concluded that such schemes are not sustainable, that they disproportionately increase levels of community fear about crime,[12] and they do not result in a drop in crime levels[13] – in fact, they may lead to inflation in figures for reported crime. Neighbourhood Watch is no substitute for community-based policing.

Theoretical Framework: Community policing & accountability

One of the problems with the concept "Community Policing" is that it assumes a set of ideas about "community". Although this weakness has been identified in policing studies elsewhere, it is particularly problematic in the South African context, where society has intentionally and officially divided since even before the imposition of apartheid laws. The policies of the National Party government divided and destroyed many pre-existing "communities" through racial classification, the group areas act, the immorality act and the migrant labour system. They also served to create false notions of community based purely on racial difference. The States of Emergency during the 1980s served to destroy community organisations and divide black communities even further.

The interview material on the question of community suggested, perhaps unsurprisingly, that problems of racial division were indeed fundamental to an examination of any social enterprise in Grahamstown. Indeed, the differential police response to events and practices in white and black areas of the city is only understandable in this context.

The other problem with the concept of community policing is how to define "policing". Indeed, many social ordering functions which happen outside the formal jurisdiction of the state, from private security firms, to people's courts, to parental discipline over children, could be regarded as "policing" functions. For the purposes of this study, we have focused on formal state policing, that is, the role of the South African Police.

As Marais, 1992a, has pointed out:

it is not very useful in the South African context to talk about community policing. One should rather talk about the specific characteristics of policing which one wants to achieve – such as community sensitivity, accountability and representivity.14

The work of Marais (1992 and 1992a) has largely determined our theoretical approach to this exercise. A fundamental tenet of his work is that proper mechanisms for police accountability need to established and operational before any form of community policing can take place. This poses a dilemma in the current context, for we have no democratically elected structures of governance, nor a culture of political accountability. However, a more democratic tradition has emerged from within the political and civic organisations of the black community, and this must inform any proposal for future forms of governance,15 including policing.

Our recommendations in relation to community policing in Grahamstown must therefore be prefaced by a discussion of the concept of police accountability.

Police Accountability

Accountability of the police force is necessary in a way which does not apply to any other Government Departments or professions because of the particular nature of policing. Because the police are granted certain powers by the State and society (such as the monopoly on the legal use of force), they are held accountable to civil society for the exercise of those powers. Secondly, policing is a highly discretionary activity. Because the law does not provide a clear set of guidelines for police behaviour in any given situation, the

individual member of the police force is required to exercise his discretion in applying the law. There is thus a need for certain checks and balances in order to prevent abuses of police powers.

Because the law alone is not an adequate regulator of police activity, democratic societies generally provide for more direct forms of police accountability to the community which is policed. Not only does this create a further set of checks on police powers, but trust and good relations between the police and the public generally serve the interests of both the police and the community, in preventing crime and ensuring the security of the population. However, the community tends to be disadvantaged in such a relationship because it does not access to the skilled and technical aspects of policework.

Control of the police in South Africa is still restricted to institutions and processes which exclude the majority of citizens. Formal accountability to government is not effective in wielding real control of the police force. The law is limited in censuring police malpractice. Hierarchical and inefficient management practises have lead to a proliferation of informal lobby mechanisms within the police force, which create the space for obstructionism and the pursuance of personal agendas. Disciplinary mechanisms are generally ineffective, and working relationships with communities are almost entirely restricted to white society.

Multilateral participation and "transparency" are vital in the management of the police force. Acceptable policing, as defined in a code of conduct, needs to be enforced through public participation in disciplinary mechanisms and systematic assessment. Effective police-community consultation structures are a priority for the building of trust and sensitivity between the police and the community.

Harrison-Moore (1992), in an evaluation of community policing in the USA, suggests that an absence of mechanisms for external accountability is problematic in a number of ways:

The absence of ongoing accountability weakened police departments. Without any continuing, formal dialogue between the police, their political overseers, and the community about the overall goals and performance of the police, the police lacked any way of advancing their status. They could avoid criticism, but it was hard for them to win praise. As a result, their standing tended to stagnate.

Without ongoing aggregate measurements of their performance, police became extremely vulnerable to the damaging effects of individual incidents that became the focus of intensive news coverage. ... The police gradually became cut off from the aspirations, desires, and concerns of citizens, [and were] increasingly seen as irrelevant to the concerns of citizens. From the vantage point of police executives and leaders, insulation from external accountability made it harder for them to challenge their own organisations to perform. ... Strong external accountability would, it seems, have strengthened their hands vis-a-vis their own organisations, and made it more likely that the values pursued through the organisation's operations actually reflected the values that citizens would have liked to see reflected.16

Community Policing

Following Marais (1992a), we would suggest the following principles and objectives for community policing in South Africa:

Principles

(i) Acceptance of the principle of public oversight and accountability at an operational level. Key areas of concern here are the establishment of mechanisms

for the credible handling of public complaints and involvement of independent persons in the investigation of police abuses and police criminality.

(ii) Police organisation should subject its planning and strategy development to public scrutiny. This "transparency" of the police organisation is particularly important in relation to training, promotions, internal disciplinary mechanisms and the mechanisms for control over undercover and surveillance work.

(iii) Accountability either at a regional or national level to a broadly representative civilian structure.

(iv) That organic or traditional systems of local policing such as anti-crime committees should be facilitated and supported, insofar as they are broadly accountable and representative of the community and operate according to accepted criteria of political tolerance.17 Where conflict around such structures exists it is the role of the police to ascertain the nature of such conflict and to deal with this in a constructive way.

(v) The diversity of communities is recognised and accepted. This means that the maintenance of social order must, as far as possible, occur according to the values and norms in a particular community.[18]

(vi) That special attempts should be made by the police force to address the needs and concerns of special interest groups which are, or have been, discriminated against; or by virtue of some other factor, are disadvantaged in their ability to demand specific police service.

(vii) All communities should have access to the same quality of service and resources should be fairly allocated. Visible mechanisms must be established to ensure that powerful and influential groups are not allocated an unfair proportion of police resources.

(viii) Community policing requires changes to the police organisation to enable local operational flexibility, enhance the status of patrol work and the rewards for community problem-solving, rather than the arrest of suspects.

Objectives

(i) Community policing has as its objective the establishment of an enduring partnership between police and all communities, with the view to more effective protection of the community and a better quality of life. A particular focus of community policing are those communities where trust for, and co-operation with, the police have been particularly low.

(ii) Through research and the gathering of information on a systematic basis, to deal with problems of crime and violence in a proactive and "problem-solving" manner.

(iii) Through input and information from the community, to fashion the nature of the policing service provided so that it, as far as possible, addresses the primary concerns and fears of citizens. Community policing thus aims to make the police agency more accountable to the community being served.

(iv) To provide a visible and accessible presence which enhances confidence in the police and improves crime prevention.

(v) To align the values of the police organisation to those of the emergent new South Africa, and, in addition, to produce police officers who can interact with their communities sensitively and in a way which respects local norms and values.

Policing Strategies

(i) The establishment of consultative forums at community level which are aimed at establishing equal relations with all sectors of the community with a view to providing input into the management of local policing.

(ii) The reorganisation of the local police organisation to facilitate problem-solving and local sensitivity, as well as to address equity issues within the force.

(iii) The use of needs assessment and research to ascertain the concerns of the community.

(iv) A process of thorough consultation around changes in policing practices at a local level.

(v) The integration of the philosophy and information derived from community policing into all aspects of police-work.

(vi) The development of special programmes to serve the needs of marginalised, minority and other special interest groups and to foster sensitivity to their concerns and values. In our context, considerable attention has to be applied to the needs of most black communities.

(vii) The assignment of personnel to relatively small geographical areas on a long term basis and the use of beat patrol in communities as a means of establishing contact with these communities.

We do not assume that community policing is an all-encompassing or unproblematic strategy. Community policing will not be able to deal with some of the severe problems of crime and social disorder which face the South African Police. But we believe that the gravity of the problems in the police-community relationship requires a "community-focused" and "problem-solving" policing approach; and that this approach is ideally suited to

small, contained communities such as that in Grahamstown.

Recommendations

Having examined the problems and history of policing in Grahamstown, and the features of a model of "community policing", we make a number of proposals. Our central recommendations revolve around a process of police-community consultation that should be embarked upon. In our assessment, it is not yet possible to create a true system of "community policing" in Grahamstown (or indeed anywhere in South Africa).

We begin by identifying three steps which are, in a sense, prerequisites for an improvement in police-community relations, and which would also need to be achieved before "community policing" is reached. However, we believe that even these steps can be taken at the local level, because of the enthusiasm of the police and the community for this project. To achieve the necessary conditions for community policing in Grahamstown, the local police will also need to negotiate a more flexible relationship with the SAP head office, and to address a range of internal organisational problems.

We then go on to detail our vision of the police-community consultation process, and other recommendations.

Political Control

When we are under a new government which is accepted by the people ... the police structure would have changed ... . The police will have an understanding attitude to the community.

While this is a rather romantic vision of improvements in police-community relations, it is undoubtedly true that multi-party control over the security forces, even in the interim period, will have a significant impact on people's confidence in the police. In fact, we would argue that there is very little hope for meaningful police reform, or for "community policing" until such time as the political control of the police has been relinquished by the National Party.

Although the question of political control is rather removed from the Grahamstown situation, it is mentioned here as one of the key steps in improving the police-community relationship.

It would be unrealistic to suggest that all our other recommendations will be implementable, or will have any impact, until such time as the political control of the police has moved into more acceptable hands.

Accountability

The next pre-requisite for improved police-community relations, or for "community policing" is a set of effective mechanisms for ensuring police accountability. An accountable police service is one where police priorities and methods are congruent with community values. The police must accept their duty to explain and justify police action in order to enlist public support. The workings of the police organisation must be visible and "transparent" to the public it serves.[19] If the police force were more accountable to the communities they police, public confidence in the police would improve immeasurably. People would no longer feel powerless when confronted with less-than-satisfactory police service, and there would be mechanisms for dealing with complaints.

Some of the mechanisms to build accountability and transparency include:

- An Independent Complaints Procedure: there needs to be an agency which is totally independent and separate from the police, to which members of the public can take complaints about the police. It is entirely unsatisfactory for members of the public to have to make their complaint at the local police station, to the same people they are complaining about. It has also been shown elsewhere that an independent complaints mechanism works to the advantage of the police themselves, who no longer have to fear allegations of conspiracy or "cover-ups".
  The National Peace Accord has provided a network of "Police Reporting Officer" as an office for such complaints. Although this system is far from perfect, it should be utilised and "tested". The LDRC should take responsibility for making the name and telephone number of the nearest Police Reporting Officer (who is in Port Elizabeth) known to the entire community. The local police-community consultation forum can also play a role in hearing complaints, directing them to the appropriate structures, and following up on action taken.

- A Lay Visitors Scheme to supervise police treatment of detainees and suspects in police cells. This would involve certain, accredited, members of the community having free access to conduct random visits to police cells and to question detainees

on their treatment by the police. This would serve to reassure the community about the well-being of detainees; and also to educate certain members of the community about how the police system works. The Police Board is currently consulting with various other bodies about establishing such a scheme nationally. However, the Grahamstown Commission itself should begin to identify suitable individuals to be accredited and trained as lay visitors, and should look into the viability of establishing such a scheme in the area.

As was mentioned earlier, members of the legal profession in Grahamstown have made themselves available to act as lay visitors. One of the lawyers interviewed for this study argued that a lay person would simply not be able to deal with the police adequately and that it would be ideal if this duty was undertaken by members of the legal profession. Perhaps some kind of roster system involving respected members of the local community – professionals or church people were specifically suggested. The only alternative is to train people in the community so that they too are more aware of the limits, possibilities and constraints involved in police work. They would have to be educated about the machinations of the criminal justice system as a whole, criminal procedure, etc. as well.

Improving Standards of Service

The poor levels of service from the police are a major stumbling block to any improvement in police-community relations. Solutions to the efficiency-related problems need to be developed and implemented which will result in the community's recognition of an improved level of service. Without this step, none of our recommendations are going to be feasible.

We would recommend that the local police need to identify problems related to efficiency within their organisation. The issues raised in this report may provide a starting point. Once problems have been identified, a process of problem-solving within the police force itself, which aims at the effective deployment of available police resources can be undertaken.

The list of problems identified, and proposed solutions, should be made public by the police in an effort to increase transparency and public confidence. The need to improve efficiency is particularly great in relation to the police service offered in the township areas, and this process may require special attention to the problems associated with the satellite police stations and the former municipal police.

Police-Community Consultation Process

The existing police-community liaison forum needs to be completely restructured. In its place, we recommend the initiation of a new police-community consultation process. The process would have true "community policing" as its goal. It is a medium-term strategy which takes into account the limitations imposed by the current organisation of the political system and of the policing system. As we have already argued, true community policing can only succeed in the context of a democracy. In the short- and medium-terms, therefore, we need to be searching for measures which would improve police-community relations and which would enable both the police and the community to undertake "community policing" in a meaningful way.

We recommend that the existing Policing Commission takes responsibility for initiating and facilitating a process of police-community consultation, to replace the existing forum. It is important that an independent and credible third party takes responsibility for managing the consultation process. We believe that the difficult process of reconstructing the police-community partnership will need resources and facilitation from civil society; because the process will not succeed if it is determined and managed solely by the police.

The task of facilitating the process involves some administrative aspects, such as finding neutral venues, ensuring that minutes and agendas are circulated, and securing the necessary resources for the process; as well as the larger task of lobbying and keeping open channels of communication with all participants. It is important that the facilitating agency is not seen as "owning" the process, but, rather that the community "owns" it.

The participants in the process should be the SAP and the appropriate representatives of the entire Grahamstown community. The question of how to identify these representatives has been one of the most challenging issues addressed in this study. While all respondents, including the police, agree that the current participation in the liaison forum does not adequately reflect the community of Grahamstown, there were many different proposals about how representatives should be selected. It is true that once there is a democratically elected local government structure in place, such a structure could represent the community. However, there will continue to be important non-governmental organisations and under-represented groups who will need to be included in the process of police decision-making and monitoring. Notwithstanding the options which may present themselves in the future, the challenge is to find representative voices of the community in the current context.

Many respondents suggested that all community-based bodies, organisations and sectors should be represented in the police-community forum. It is likely that this approach would not adequately cover the entire community; because some organisations will be less representative than others, and some sectors of the community may not be organised at all. Some suggested that the process should happen initially at a mass, public level, with discussions about policing being held at public meetings or mass rallies – because this would resonate with a culture or tradition of community mobilisation. We feel that this may

be useful as one step in the process, but is unlikely to be an efficient or comfortable vehicle for all members of the community. Some respondents suggested that other forums, such as the local development and funding forum, be used as the vehicle for police-community dialogue. We fear that the introduction of highly contentious policing issues into other forums may wreck the progress which is being made there.

We would recommend that community groups and sectors be identified by the Commission, who initiate a process of dialogue with all these groups. A broad meeting of all the sectors of Grahamstown community could then be held, at which all these groups are represented. For example, a meeting attended by the community-based organisations, schools, local government bodies, welfare agencies, and other interest groups (such as the stakeholder groups interviewed for this study) could nominate a group of people to represent the broad community's interests. This may well involve a more lengthy process of consultation and mandating within each sector. The experience of the Kellog initiative in 1991-92 around primary health care in Grahamstown may be instructive. The crucial factor is that the community should be satisfied with the representivity and legitimacy of the group of people selected. The "social mix" will need to be right – groups with special needs in relation to policing may need to be included or co-opted.

This group of community representatives would then embark on a process of consultation with the police. The police delegation to the dialogue would need to comprise officers from the relevant sectors of the force, who are able to take decisions without referring back to the District of Regional Offices. We suggest that this means that the Station Commander should be the key police representative in the process.

The process would be facilitated by the Policing Commission. The terms and tasks of the consultative forum would need to be negotiated at the outset. The consultative process would deal with longer-term issues of police policy and police-community relations, in addition to dealing with problems and crises as they arise.

One of the critical factors in ensuring the success of the consultation process will be the extent to which the representatives who actually engage in discussions are able to communicate the issues and progress made to their constituencies. This applies equally to the police and other organisations. There may be a particular need for empowerment of the community group, for example, through training programmes.

It is likely that this will be a fairly lengthy and difficult process. The temptation to find 'quick-fix' solutions in the consultation process should be avoided, in the longer-term interests of the police-community relationship. Also, participants need to learn how to deal with differences and difficulties without causing the entire process to collapse.

The process should be subject to regular evaluation by participants and by other groups – the community and the police must be informed about, and satisfied with, the progress that

is being made. It is desirable that this consultative process be as "transparent" as possible, to avoid suspicions that one group is being dominated or incorporated by the other.

A Police Service Contract

"The police must identify and announce to the public what they are in business for: they need to specify clearly and simply the core services they provide, what the public can expect from each of them, and what standards have been set as the target. The police service must identify and spell out clearly the range of services it can provide, in words and figures which are simple, practical and descriptive, consulting on them with the community it serves. … This 'public contract' will require several things. It will need to incorporate quality of service and value for money as its main themes. The contract will need to be as local as possible, because it can only work with the commitment and ownership of local people (both police and public). Finally, each of the core services – for example, dealing with reports of crimes and accidents, responding to calls for assistance, handling telephone enquiries – will need to include, as far as possible, some measurable criteria. … In principle, this all sounds quite simple. Making it happen will, in reality, be highly complex. Central to the whole process will be the need for fundamental change in the police culture, to accommodate the notion of quality, which, in police terms, is so elusive".[20]

In this way, the police will be seen to be committing themselves to measurable standards of service, and the community will play a part in setting those standards. The police are duty bound to serve the community. A "service contract" between the police and the community is, therefore entirely appropriate. We would recommend that the police-community consultative process attempts to get the police to develop such a service contract for the policing of Grahamstown. This would need to be a priority task.

There is, of course, a need for realism in this regard, and goals must be achievable within stipulated time frames. For example, it is not realistic to set a goal of 3 minute response time while there are still only two police vans available. In another example, it is unlikely that the police will not be able to do much about the progress of cases in the courts, as this is the responsibility of other agencies within the criminal justice system. Debating through these issues will require that the community begins to appreciate the practical constraints on the police.

The police-community consultation forum will be able to monitor whether goals are being met or whether amendments are necessary. This process, whereby goal-setting and evaluation involve the community as well as the police, would be beneficial to police managers as well as to community groups, as it will limit unrealistic expectations being made of the police. It will also be a vehicle for increased police accountability to the local community, because the police will be asked to explain why they are not achieving certain goals.

It is crucial that the discussion about goal-setting for the purposes of drawing up the public "service contract" includes police members of all ranks. The functional staff lower down in the organisation will have a more practical sense of what is possible and what is unrealistic. They are also the people who will be required to deliver the service that is laid out in this "contract", and so it is important that they feel ownership of it.

Of course, this is not a binding or legal "contract" in the true sense of the word. It is a demonstration by the police of their good faith and their commitment to improving levels of service. We believe that this could lead to significant improvements in the public confidence in the police, and in co-operation with the police.

Restructuring the Police Organisation

The adoption of a new philosophy and practice of community consultation both requires, and will result in, significant changes to the police organisation.

"It requires nothing less than breaking down the traditional, hierarchical nature of police organisations, with their inbuilt obsession with processes and procedures as the key element of internal accountability, in favour of a style aimed at developing police staff towards local, smaller, self-sufficient, geographical units which are well-versed in problem identification, teamwork, reduced bureaucracy and trust management, all linked to closer collaboration with other agencies in local government and the criminal justice system."[21]

Perhaps the most important aspect of this process is the introduction of a philosophy and practice of community sensitivity and consultation in all areas of policework. For this reason, all responsibility for community consultation should not be allocated to one department within the police force. The Station Commander should be ultimately responsible for the successful implementation of community consultation throughout the local police organisation.

It also means that command structures would need to be altered. There should be a central command structure for the local area, under which would fall units previously removed, such as the ISU and the former municipal police. In addition to changing command structures, the job definition of each post in the police organisation will need to be written. The responsibilities and roles of each member of the force need to be clearly identified. This is essential for integrating a new philosophy and culture throughout the organisation. It also enables police management to be more effective.

Although there have already been significant improvements in the style of police management in Grahamstown, we believe that there is more to be done. Real efforts must be made to include lower-ranking staff in the decision-making process. Not only will this increase productivity and commitment, but it will increase the feeling among lower-ranking staff that they too have a stake in the new approach to policing.

The allocation of resources (both human and material) within the police organisation will probably need to be altered in line with new priorities and methods. This will require that the police undertake and internal process of identifying the available resources within the police organisation – both physical and human resources – a process which has been termed an "internal audit". The central resource allocation (eg to administration, infrastructure and the District Commissioner's office) will need to be reduced, and those resources spread out at ground level. Inequitable allocations of resources to the policing of different areas will need to be addressed.

Obviously many of these requirements of organisational change are limited by the prevailing structure of the national police organisation. A central issue will thus be the way in which the Grahamstown policy are able to negotiate some autonomy from the police head office in Pretoria. This may be difficult in the short-term, but there are signs that the SAP leadership have recognised the need for real devolution of authority to the regional and local structures.[22]

Because of historical personnel policies, the local police organisation will need to address the question of racial and gender composition of all ranks. This could be done at a local level by identifying certain members for further training, by supporting those who undertake additional training, and perhaps, by establishing "mentor" schemes within the local police station. Some changes to the composition of the officer corps could also be effected if police managers valued community knowledge, language and communication skills as criteria for promotion.

To achieve these organisational changes, strong leadership and managerial skills are required.

"Police leaders must be able to 'see and be seen' and to regularly sample police work at the front end. They need 'to see' because, unless they are in touch with the real problems – it is all too easy to forget what they are, or to fail to realise how things have changed – they cannot expect to provide the right lead and give the necessary support. They need 'to be seen' to instil confidence in their personnel that they care about them and understand the real world in which policing operates, and that they regard them as fellow-professionals from whom high standards are expected."[23]

There is undoubtedly much excellent leadership capacity within the SAP in Grahamstown; but we would encourage the development of yet more managerial skill among a broader range of officers; not least because of the constant threat of transfer of police managers to another unit. We would argue that such a transfer policy directly undermines the development of community-based policing, which has local knowledge or local specialisation as one of its key features. Members with good local knowledge and strong communication skills (especially in an African language) should be recognised and rewarded for their work.

Training for Police and Community

Ideally, both police and community members should receive some training to empower them to deal with the new circumstances in the community, and to utilise the proposed consultation process most effectively. In reality, the potential for such training is quite limited, unless it is initiated and provided in Grahamstown. It would be pointless to wait for the central police or peace structures to provide such training.

We would argue that the community requires additional training on aspects of policing, because of their historical disadvantage in this area. Many community organisations in Grahamstown are weak and this training process could serve to build organisational capacity which would benefit the community as a whole. The workshop programme which is planned as a follow-up to this research will constitute some of the training we envisage.

However, at a later stage, we recommend that the police and community participate in joint training programmes which are aimed at strengthening the proposed consultation process. This could include aspects of meeting procedure, assessment and planning skills which would benefit all participants. The experience of joint training will also strengthen the personal relationships between the participants in the negotiation process. Much could be learned from the training already provided by the LDRC.

In some technical areas, the police may need training to upgrade their skills for particular areas of policework identified through the consultation process. The police should ensure that they use civilian as well as police trainers. If more police officers could speak Xhosa, it would encourage the community to communicate with the police. Language training for the police should therefore also be encouraged.

However, training and education should not be solely focused on the individuals who participate in the police-community negotiation process. We have already argued that any new approach is destined to fail if all the people in the organisations (both police and community) do not know what is happening and feel part of it. For this reason, the issues of public education and of educative programmes in the police organisation should also be addressed by the Commission. For example, the police could adopt the notion of a regular "training day", as described here:

"Good leadership can only come from making time for team-building and the reinforcement of problem-solving skills. Given the nature of policing, and the pace of change, most police staff probably need as much as one clear day every month or six weeks set aside for this purpose. At one police station where this was introduced in conjunction with a new shift system, a survey was carried out to ascertain the views of the officers involved. Many of them stated that the advent of the 'training day' was the most significant event which had occurred since they had joined the police service."[24]

Creating Black Residents' Confidence

Although we believe that improved levels of service delivery will have the result of increasing community trust in the police, we would also argue that additional measures need to taken to build the confidence of the black community. This is for the obvious reason that the black community have historically been most distrusting of the police, and they constitute the majority of the residents of Grahamstown. Building the confidence of the black community in the police may well be the most difficult task for the Commission and the SAP, but it is also the most vital.

One of the issues raised by respondents in this survey is the racial composition of the SAP in Grahamstown, particularly the lack of black police managers. While this is a national problem for the SAP, we would recommend that the local SAP leadership attempt to address the problem in the short-term. This could be done by aiming training programmes at black members of the SAP, and developing systems for job evaluation and career development within the local police organisation. Of course, this would benefit all members of the force; and would also increase the capacity of the police to deliver a better, and more community-sensitive, service. Police managers could also request that local recruitment and promotion from within the existing staff complement be prioritised. Although this will require negotiation between the Grahamstown police and the SAP head office, we believe that it could contribute to a strengthening of the local service.

A "getting-to-know-each-other" exercise may also be useful increasing trust between the police and the community. Some community policing systems elsewhere require that police officers spend a couple of days and nights living with a family in the community, or living on the street with the street children, as a way of learning about that community and understanding their needs. Such a programme could be devised in Grahamstown.

The amount and quality of contact that a police officer has with the community should be used as criterion for promotion within the local police organisation. This would encourage police officers to make an effort to increase their interaction with all sectors of the community, and to redress imbalances in community relations which have previously existed.

Inter-Agency approach

An approach to policing which focuses on problem-solving necessitates far greater co-operation and communication between different agencies in the area. One of the major reasons for this is to mobilise all possible resources for solving problems. In the area of victim aid, there will need to be improvements in the relationships between the police and the various health and welfare agencies. Prevention of crime and social disorder will be facilitated if there is good flow of information between the police, community and organisations concerned with other local services. One police officer identified this need in relation to the function of lighting in crime prevention:

There is no electricity. How can you be sure that people are safe in that area? The forum will state the need for electrification in that area. People will see the police are doing something for them as light is part of one's lifestyle and reality. You can't live in the dark and assume you are going to be safe. If there is a representative forum, at least there will be a demonstration of concern and action.

The need for this sort of inter-agency co-operation is vital in an under-developed community like Grahamstown. As we have discussed earlier, the development issues are intrinsically linked with issues of community security, and therefore with policing. There should, ideally, be some interaction between the police and the development process, not only in terms of physical provision of services, but in order that the police can operate in an informed manner if situations of community conflict arise over development issues.

We would argue that the development of a comprehensive inter-agency approach will serve the interests of both the police and the community. If the police are able to refer callers to the appropriate agency, it reduces the amount of bureaucracy that the police have to deal with, and provides a quick and effective service to callers. The welfare workers we interviewed felt, in addition, that it would be important for the police to learn more about what the various agencies do. They also suggested that joint forums with police and welfare agencies around issues of interpersonal violence may assist in addressing the problem of high levels of violent crime, and attendant issues of public fear and victim aid.

Conclusion

The process of police-community consultation will not be easy. There exist, at present, a number of factors which limit its potential; and yet, it is the only viable route to follow.

We believe that the police organisation in Grahamstown can achieve greater community involvement in its decision-making processes, by bearing in mind the principles of flexibility, accountability and broad participation. The effective application of the combined resources of the police and the community can improve the quality of life of the entire Grahamstown community. Members of the Grahamstown community must be assured that they have a valuable role to play, and that their efforts will result in meaningful change.

The Grahamstown community has taken a bold step in addressing these issues; and we believe that there is great potential for success. It will be important to focus on achievable goals in the early stages of the consultation process, and to celebrate the small victories of the police-community partnership. Improvements in police-community relations, with the concomitant benefits for both police and community, are within reach.

Notes:

1 Representivity – the idea that the composition of the police force should reflect more proportionally the composition of the policed community.

2 Cawthra 1986:133

3 First State of Emergency in the 1980s 21 July 1985; Second State of Emergency 12 June 1986; State of Emergency lifted June 1990.

4 "Greenflies": Municipal Police in the Eastern Cape

5 ibid p9

6 ibid p17

7 Legal Education and Action Project (LEAP)/Social Justice Resource Project (SJRP) Institute of Criminology 1990.

8 ibid p15

9 Van Der Spuy, E. (1988) p9

10 see report of the mediators to the LDRC

11 LRDC (1992) "Report on various meetings held between a community delegation and the SAP, Grahamstown" p3.

12 Rosenbaum 1987

13 Illustrated London News Sept 1986 p28

14 Marais 1992 a:8

15 see Brogden and Shearing (1993) forthcoming

16 Harrison Moore 1992: 117-118

17 The Code of Conduct for political organisations in the National Peace Accord provides useful principles against which such structures could be measured. (National Peace Accord 1991).

18 This would of course be greatly facilitated through a process of "decriminalisation" of certain activities which are considered in communities to be quite acceptable. This proposal was widely supported at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) conference on Crime Management in the New South Africa (Pretoria 4-6 August 1992).

19 Yach 1991 p2

20 Pollard 1992 p7-8

21 Pollard 1991 p8-9

22 see SAP Strategic Plan for details

23 Pollard p17

24 Pollard 1991 p18

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Acknowledgements

Appendices

Appendix 1

Private Policing in Grahamstown

Private Security in Grahamstown

There are two functioning "private" security agencies which were consulted in the course of the community survey in Grahamstown, both of which perceived themselves as servicing particular interest groups within the wider Grahamstown community. They are the Rhodes University Protection Unit and T&G (formerly Tom and Gerry) Security Company. Amalgamated Burglar Alarms (ABA) which runs the rapid response operation in Grahamstown was not consulted in the course of the interviews for this community survey.

Rhodes University Protection

The University Protection suggested that the University constituted a distinct community within Grahamstown and noted that there were occasionally conflicting interests between the University and the town in general. It was suggested, for example, that the lenient approach of the University in dealing with student protests or a worker stay-away, conflicted directly with the concerns of the business sector in the town. This generated conflict which was regarded as inevitable.

The primary tasks of the University force is the protection of university property, although they are also involved in monitoring student activity (such as protest marches etc.). The Protection Unit's functions in this capacity are merely to advise the University administration. The manpower of the Unit is, however, extremely small (27 in total) and this was acknowledged as inadequate to establish effective patrols. The constraining factor in this regard is imposed by the prohibitive costs of employing a larger force.

The University Protection's contact with the police is largely limited to criminal matters in which the former don't have the powers of the SAP. The jurisdiction of the University to deal with criminal (or any other matters) before its disciplinary committee obviously does not exclude SAP involvement, although the University will seldom press charges against its own students. This is usually up to the complainant in any particular case. It was claimed that students were generally happy for such problems to be dispensed with internally and that they therefore seldom pressed for direct SAP involvement. In this as well as in other respects, the campus security represented the SAP as a force which largely supplemented the University's own Protection Unit – the latter being primarily responsible for policing the university community. However, to ensure appropriate response in times of crisis, liaison and communication with the SAP was regarded as essential and was conducted through the University Protection Unit personnel. Acknowledging that students may not share their views in general, University Protection described their relationship with the SAP as extremely good. They went on to say that the police were very lenient with the student community, often "surprisingly" so. The University Protection Unit effectively operates as the

key point of liaison and interface between this "university community" and the SAP. In reality, this is a top-down liaison between the University Administration and the SAP from which the majority of the "university community" – the students – are essentially excluded.

The problem of "inefficiency" in respect of criminal matters was expressed by the Campus Protection Unit, but this was attributed to inefficiency of the criminal justice system as a whole, rather than to any problems within the SAP specifically. It was argued, however, that the SAP were severely understaffed and that this compounded the problem. It was felt that some areas of SAP work had improved and others had degenerated, but a high degree of sympathy was expressed for the SAP, who were regarded as confronting a very difficult period of change which was comparable to that experienced by some of the Rhodes security officials during their past experiences in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

T&G Security

T&G provides two central services within Grahamstown. Firstly, they provide a contracted security function, mostly for business and industrial sites. Only a limited service is provided to private homes, due to the limited size of the outfit. Secondly, T&G provides a training course for security guards – although none of the guards trained by them are deployed in the Grahamstown area. Their recruitment for Grahamstown is drawn from another training centre in Scottborough on the Natal South Coast.

As far as the local service is concerned, it is the company's policy to employ black security guards who are Zulu speaking and who are drawn from other areas of the country. It is a deliberate policy not to employ local people who, in the view of the company "may be intimidated" by fellow township residents.

... intimidation we find is our biggest factor to watch out for now ... our blacks are young, they are not feminine, a lot of them come out nineteen or eighteen years old, they do a training course to get a certificate to become registered ... . We expected a lot of flack bringing zulus into the Xhosa speaking area and yet to the contrary ... like I explained earlier on, we screen our men very well and we take the calm, cool and collected blokes – those who are well

adjusted and who can actually deal with the public in the shops and in the town.

The attempt to overcome the prospect of intimidation is also ostensibly serviced by the fact that none of T&G's employees are resident in the township – they are all housed in the company's own "camp." As one black employee put it:

If you are staying in the township, then no-one will arrest his brother or his neighbour. That is why it is better to get people from outside to be the guards. Another thing is that if we are staying in the camp, then we cannot go on strike if there is a strike. If we were in the township, then the guards may also go on strike.

T&G in fact have advised many of their guards to avoid the townships for fear of reprisals against guards who have been involved in arresting township-based criminals. The vast majority of recruits are single men and most are employed on a one year contract.

The T&G force is relatively small, due, it is argued, to the fact that they don't employ casual labour and therefore can't afford to have any kind of back-up force on stand-by. Most of their contracts are for a minimum of six months and this is another reason why they don't offer a householder's security/rapid response service. The limitation on such a service being offered to the public, is that it is financially based.

In total only 45 guards are employed by T&G. They are mostly employed in guarding shops and industrial sites – many only at night. However, T&G management claimed that some of their employees are making up to 15 arrests per week. The main functions which they provide to those who contract for their services are:

... protection from armed robbery; dealing with intimidation; and about 75% of the work is prevention and detection of 'shop theft' or housebreaking.

Although the latter is a protection function once the housebreaking has already taken place, T&G still see themselves an important deterrent force.

Most of the T&G guards are firearm trained. Many of them are ex-SADF soldiers who were in 121 Battalion and many are recruited from Mhlabatini in Kwa-Zulu. The T&G spokesman boasted that some of them could shoot a bazooka! Nonetheless, the security guards are deployed without being armed, but they are all trained in un-armed combat. None of the T&G staff are trained in-house. The training department of T&G services other groups outside of the Eastern Cape.

Tom and Gerry formerly ran a rapid response service, but have since sold the "alarms division" of their business to Amalgamated Burglar Alarms (ABA) – who now provide the domestic security service. The ABA head office is in Port Alfred, but they have an operations office in Grahamstown. T&G continue to work well with ABA. No-one from ABA was interviewed by the researchers.

Relationship with the SAP was described as very good. T&G are often assisted by the SAP where they don't think their own guards can cope. SAP don't really ask for any assistance, but have given T&G guards citations for assisting them or for effective crime control. But SAP don't call on T&G because they know they are too thin on the ground. However, relations with the SAP are complicated by public misconceptions over the roles of the private security company and the SAP. In this regard, there was some feedback to the effect that the private security company was receiving calls from home-owners due to the inability of the SAP to deploy people to protect them, for example after a break-in. This was largely anecdotal, however.

The second difficulty that we find with the public is if they see one of our men duty in the shop and across the road someone gets mugged ... I get complaints from the public saying why didn't my guard go to his or her assistance? We are not paid to look after the public – we are a private concern and we have to

generate our own revenue and if our guard leaves that shop for ten minutes and something happens in the shop? Naturally we do all we can for the public safety … . We don't get a cent for that which we try to do, but the public has the idea that because the man is in uniform his duties are the same as the police – which is rather difficult.

On the question of community trust of the SAP, it was stated that although there are the odd rotten apples within the force, this is the exception. It was argued that ultimately, the SAP are regarded negatively by the wider community and "take a lot of flack" from them. The result is that the police are being "hammered" and this affects their morale. It was argued that this in turn contributes to escalating crime rates and affects the efficiency of the cop on the street.

Many of them become victims because they have become too reluctant to draw their firearms. Sometimes it is arguable that the police have become too worried about their image and this results in them being too 'soft' – this serves to endanger them.

Proposals and Recommendations

It was suggested by the Rhodes Protection Unit that the Zimbabwean model of volunteer police reservists should be used to increase the profile of policing, particularly within the black townships. The critical dimension of this suggestion was that the reservists would be drawn from the community which they are policing and would therefore be best placed to identify the 'bad eggs' etc. It would also give community members the opportunity to become directly involved in the policing process whilst receiving limited remuneration for their services. It was argued that township communities would appreciate this and that it would improve police-community relations.

It was suggested that this direct involvement of members of the public was a vehicle for establishing trust, but that there could be problems if local police were armed. Also, it was a means of affirmative action within the force – ensuring that local people were represented and involved in policing of their own communities. This was premised on a recognition that black communities are as concerned as white suburban communities – if not more so – about the high levels of crime which dominates their lives.

You cannot police without the general co-operation of the public. You just can't. You could have a police state ... where you do it by brute force. If you want evidence or information you go and arrest people, force them ... . But sooner or later you are going to have to depend on their support more, and to encourage them to come forward ... you can only police with the co-operation of the general public. If you haven't got that then you can't police, and that is exactly what has happened in the Transvaal.

A problem was raised with the attempt to find solutions to the problem of policing in Grahamstown without this being tied into national processes of police reform. It was regarded as dangerous and counter-productive to develop competing or different systems of policing at local level. Certainty and predictability demand that the system be implemented uniformly in different areas.

The key suggestion made by the University protection unit was that the SAP must return to the basics of providing a quality service. This was outlined as follows:

They have to put people down on the ground so that you have visible policemen visibly patrolling your area, making you feel safer, and not men in plain clothes or in vehicles. Men in uniform ... . The people

want to see a 'bobby on the beat' ... . That same service has to be extended to the township, we are not just talking about Grahamstown central business district.

It was also argued that such a community-policing initiative would be highly reliant on effective SAP back-up when required, especially if the 'bobby on the beat' system was to function as a non-armed form of policing. This may mean increased person power and if need be, the reallocation of resources within the force to ensure that efficient back-up is always available. In any event, it is probably cheaper to provide these operatives with walkie talkies than with firearms. It was also acknowledged that this system was dependent on community participation and support, as well as a high degree of community responsibility to protect those police from abuse or violence. Furthermore, it was argued that the 'quid pro quo' for visible policing must be the free flow of information and assistance from the community. It is only the guarantee of community assistance that will pave the way for disarming police on the beat:

... if you are going to reduce his power you have to provide an alternative, which is the community. the community needs to recognise and realise that they have a part to play. If that man is patrolling the streets and keeping them safe, if he calls for help, blows on a police whistle, are they going to respond and help him?

It was acknowledged that sustaining interest from a volunteer force would be a problem unless financing was obtained to ensure that these volunteers could be paid for their services. In the context of high levels of unemployment, such a cheap labour force should be easy to come by. Also, in times of crisis, it was recommended that there needs to be some residual emergency power to call up such volunteers to handle the problem. Furthermore, it was suggested that for such a reserve force to work, they must be fully integrated into the police force:

They must be able to identify and must be proud because they are working under a hat, under a badge. Black and white volunteers in the reserve should be wearing the same uniform as the SAP.

The other critical issue which was raised here was the need for training and re-training of the SAP, so that they become more accustomed to this role in co-operation with the community rather than in opposition to it. This cannot operate at a local level alone, but must be part of a national re-training process.

The T&G spokesperson referred to the historically "bad image" of the force. However, here it was suggested that "sincere attempts at reform" have had the ironic effect of rendering police more vulnerable, due to a hesitancy and excessive concern with image instead of effectiveness. It was claimed that the criminal element is taking advantage of the resultant space to operate. This added to a "culture of entitlement" among many people is seen as rendering policing much more difficult.

The argument that the police have become too concerned with their image in the eyes of the community, although somewhat extreme considering the views expressed by a wide range of community representatives, nonetheless resonates with the comments of Mr. Muller of the Rini Town Council. This view is more understandable in the context of the crisis of control and the problem of the "deregulation of social control" which affects the SAP directly. In the context of an era of national negotiations the old arbitrary forms of social control are being broken down, but the haphazard negotiation process has failed to generate alternative forms of consensus-based authority. This means that often policing agencies are incapacitated leaving an authority vacuum which creates greater space for the operation of criminals.

Of course this social and political process has much less of an effect on the operation of private security companies such as T&G. These private security companies are both less directly affected by the political history of policing, as well as being free of many of the regulatory constraints which affect police action. The industry is severely under-regulated and this may serve to render actors in it somewhat insensitive to the imperative of community accountability. This raises other general problems within private policing, which have important applicability to the Grahamstown context. Firstly, by virtue of the fact that private security companies are subject to and reliant on market forces, this has the potential to generate differential delivery of security based on differential access to material resources. Not only does this further skew the delivery of policing to black and white areas, but it also has the potential to fuel existing tensions over the imbalance in resources and the relative deprivation or differential delivery of services to white and black areas. This factor is

likely to be further compounded by the deployment of security guards who are from other parts of the country, who don't speak the local dialect and who don't live in the townships. Finally, such private security concerns also establish a source of client-based accountability rather than community based accountability. In short, privatisation does *not* offer any meaningful community control – in Grahamstown as elsewhere in the country.

Appendix 2

List of Interviews Conducted

Monday 25/01/93

Administrative arrangements

Meet with the Commission

Tuesday 26/01/93

Grahamstown Town Clerk, Town Planning, Town Council & Traffic Police

Cape Provincial Administration

Wednesday 27 /01/93

Lt. Col Meistre

Rini Town Clerk

Chief Magistrate

Rhodes University Security

Bill Davies (ISER)

Glen Hollands

Thursday 28 01/93

SAP

GRACA

CRACO and the Mary Waters Youth League

Friday 29/01/93

Ratepayers Association and Women's Agricultural Assoc.

David de la Harpe

Checkers

Albany Council of Churches

Democratic Party

PAC

Local Dispute Resolution Committee

Monday 01/02/93

GARDA

Tom & Gerry

Lt. Col. Botha and Lt. Col. Meistre

National Council of Women

FAMSA

Child Welfare

Street Children Project

Rhodes SRC

Tuesday 02/02/93

A Gilbert

OK Bazaars

Whitesides

Bonisile Sandi

Senior Public Prosecutor

Bar Council

Rini Town Council

Wednesday 03/02/93

SADF

Farmers' League

Taxi Association

Coloured Management Committee

ANC

Attorney General

Siyabo Manona

The Commission

Thursday 04/02/93

Rini Police Station

Grocott's Mail

E P Herald

ECNA