

The Relevance of the National Crime Prevention Strategy for Sustainable Development in South Africa

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Introduction

Historically shaped structural deprivation, unemployment and underdevelopment in South African society, provides the key context to the increasing levels of crime. However, it is not simply poor people who commit crimes, whether violent or acquisitive in nature. The magnitude of white collar crime and corruption committed by senior members of the business community and government, and the enormous cost which this entails for the country, is illustrative in this regard. (The National Crime Prevention Strategy, 1996:18)

The link between crime and development is as hinted at above, a complex one. In South Africa the levels of crime, violence and corruption are seen as one of the biggest threats to the consolidation of democracy and the future stability of the country. A country caught in a vicious cycle of crime and poverty, each feeding off each other, has necessitated a paradigm shift in regards to the way that crime is conceptualised and tackled. This has resulted in the establishment of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) which offers deeper insight into the problem of crime in South Africa and presents a relatively new framework for tackling the issue. Given the increasing international recognition given to the notion of sustainable development over the past three decades as the best way to improve the quality of life

for all people, it is appropriate that the relevance of the NCPS in this regard be determined.

Although there is plenty written about the issues of crime and development generally, very little, if anything at all, has been written about *crime prevention and sustainable development*. This is probably because both areas are relatively new challenges to many years of conventional thinking and practice. It is therefore with much enthusiasm and some trepidation that an attempt will be made in this paper to present the argument that the National Crime Prevention Strategy presents relevant policy principles and initiatives in support of sustainable development in South Africa.

Firstly, the key aspects of sustainable development as a concept will be briefly presented with particular reference to its social, the economic and the environmental components. Secondly, the nature of the impact that crime and violence has on these components and what this means for sustainable development in South Africa will then be presented. Subsequently, the background to crime prevention in general and the establishment of the NCPS in particular will be discussed. Finally, Reed (1996: 425), argues that as the components of sustainable development are intimately interrelated, efforts to promote sustainability must support all three components. Premised in this argument, the way that the NCPS supports specific elements in each component will be presented to complete the objective of this paper.

What is Sustainable Development?

The ideologies that had initially underscored the way in which institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the United Nations had viewed development was dominated by the theories of modernisation, underdevelopment and dependency (Munslow et al, 1997:68). Consequently, the modern western state represented the ideal stage of development with all other states being measured and valued against this ideal. This perception was largely premised on the notion that growth and development should primarily be measured by economic indicators.

Sustainable development as a conceptual notion is generally seen as having emerged and evolved over the past 30 years. The Stockholm conference of 1972 and the Rio Conference of 1990 are hailed as representing the formal institutional responses to the growing demand from civil society that governments actively deal with an increasing environmental crises. (Reed, 1996: 17). Another key component of the evolution of sustainable development was the result of mediating the conflicting global North – South development perspectives. Whereas the Northern perspective focused on the negative impacts of industrialisation on the environment, the South was primarily concerned with poverty alleviation, (Reed, 1996: 18). This led to understandings that the pollution caused by industrialisation in the North constrained development in the South, and that the resulting poverty was the main cause of environmental problems, "... for which economic growth would have to provide the answer" (Reed, 1996: 18).

The outcome of these political forces can be seen in the definition of the concept which sees the aim of sustainable development as "... improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems" (Reed, 1996:

18). So while it is acknowledged that economic growth is an important element for human development, the issue starts to focus more on how this economic growth is achieved and what this should mean for all people. Consequently, the foundations of sustainable development have not only changed the previous economic component of development, but have also begun to include social and environmental components. These three components represent what has been called the three pillars of sustainability, (Reed, 1996: 425). Thus the notion of development has been fundamentally broadened to acknowledge all that which people can understand as contributing to their overall quality of life.

A key part of achieving sustainability is achieving what Chambers (1997: 11), argues as finding consensus in the objective of development which is then " ... responsible well-being by and for all." The crux of such a statement promotes the notion that all are in some way responsible if we want to achieve and enjoy the benefits of qualitative development. However, it is painfully clear that there are inherent inequalities in the way that the world is organised. As resources are limited, where some have access to them it will mean that others do not. A large degree of conflict occurs over access to, and control of, what are seen commonly as valuable resources be it land or oil. It is in this context that the notion of common interest becomes the reason for conflict rather than the broader notion of acting towards the interests of all. It is because there are 'winners' and 'losers' that sustainable development does not occur rather than the other way around. It is argued that "... our inability to promote the common interest in sustainable development is often a product of the relative neglect of economic justice within and amongst nations." (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1994: 49)

It is clear then that as development needs to be seen in a more holistic way in order for it to become sustainable, there will be a variety of challenges in implementing sustainable development. Inequalities, as it has just been mentioned, occur not just within nation states, but also between them. However, it has been recognised that strategic policies will need to be taken at the nation state level if there is to be an impact on the development possibilities of a particular country. (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1994: 49). This makes obvious sense if one takes into consideration the various peculiarities that pertain to different countries. Given that one of the primary concerns of most South Africans is the issue of crime and violence, the next section will examine what impact this has for the components of sustainable development.

Crime and the Challenge to Sustainable Development in South Africa

Writings on the issue of sustainable development generally tend to examine its relationship to such things *inter alia* structural adjustment (Reed, 1996), the role of gender (Allen and Thomas, 1992), organisational or administrative constraints (Picard, 1986), or the economics of the environment (Pearce et. al., 1990). There seems to be little if anything, written on what the impact of crime and violence means for the concept of sustainable development. Although it might be taken for granted that these issues have an impact, when one looks briefly at the specifics of the situation in South Africa it becomes clear that sustainable development will be seriously hampered due to the levels of crime and violence in the society. As Chambers (1997) eloquently argues, the aim of sustainable development should be to

improve the quality of life of the poorest sections of society. It will now be briefly demonstrated how the poorest sections of society are the most effected by crime in regards to the social, economic and environmental components necessary for sustainability (Reed, 1996: 22).

It does not take too much imagination to become aware of the extent to which the high levels of crime and violence have an impact in the general quality of life for most people in South Africa. On average there are about 25 000 murders every year in South Africa. This works out to about 57 murders per 100 000 people, whereas in comparison the international average is about 5 murders per 100 000. This costs the country in terms of a loss of earning at around R13 800 million annually, (Kruger, 1998: 399). Furthermore, 188 out of every 100 000 are victims of armed robbery with 142 000 reported robberies with force being reported in 1997. (CIAC, 1997) In terms of violence there are on average 1, 5 million people experiencing the direct psychological, emotional or physical costs of criminal violence every year (Kruger, 1998: 400).

If the crime of violence is looked at in context, the implications for the social component of sustainable development become clearer. The problem with the way in which the above statistics are presented is that makes it appear that crime seems to occur uniformly across South Africa. If the violence is contextualised, challenges that violence presents to the social component of sustainability become more apparent. Particularly in relation to the elements that necessitates equal access of the poor to such things as future investments, social wealth, legal assistance etc. (Reed, 1996: 23). Police and victim survey statistics reveal that violent crime occurs at a significantly higher rate in rural provinces amongst the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the population. For example a report released by the Minister of Safety and Security in January 1999 showed the rate of murder, hi-jacking and assault per population numbers to be highest in the mainly rural provinces of the Free State, KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga. (Cawthra and Kraak, 1999: 36). In fact the poverty stricken are 80 times more likely to die or suffer injury a result of violent crime than the rich in South Africa. (Steinburg, 1999: 48). Therefore, Chambers' (1997: 14) assertion that the problem of sustainable development is to determine "... how, in conditions of continuous and accelerating change , to put people first and poor people first of all ...", will necessitate an inclusion of how to deal with the scourge of violent crime in South Africa.

In terms of the effect of violence on women, particularly those in the rural areas, provides similar kinds of challenges. With well over 50 000 rapes being reported a year, the annual incidence of violence experienced by African (significantly rural) women is ten times greater than their white (significantly urban) counter parts, (Trauma Review, 1996). At this juncture it must also be noted that it is generally accepted that most incidents of gender violence do not get reported. Organisations working with victims of sexual violence such as People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) believed that less than one in 30 rapes is reported to the police. Victim surveys generally demonstrate significant differences between official police results and experiences of gender crime. Research results released in May 1998 on the Southern areas of Johannesburg revealed that 30% of the women living there had been victims of severe sexual violence at some point in their lives with 77% saying that sexual violence was 'very common' in their environment (Cawthra and Kraak, 1999: 39). Given this state of affairs in South Africa, it can be argued that it is not possible to think about the issue of gender and sustainable development without

addressing the structural and physical violence being perpetrated against women by men. Thus, if we are as Pearson argues (1995: 301), to accede to the task of understanding how gender relations effect social and economic organisation, it will be necessary to understand these relations are effected by violence and crime. Particularly when the effects of poverty are seen as a major contributory factor to the occurrence of violence (Human Rights Watch, 1995: 54)

In regards to the economic component of development, crime can have a devastating impact which, although effects everybody to some degree, ultimately effects the poorest sections of the country the most. As Baskin (1999: 20) emphatically states, "High crime rates reduce business confidence and contribute to reduced levels of investment, and poor economic performance. This in turn effects job creation." Generally, it is recognised that the crime level also redirects resources that could be used to uplift the conditions of the poor as in "the cost of protecting building materials reduces the amount that can be spent on building low cost housing" (Baskin, 1999: 20.) Although a high level of street crime is generally seen as a threat to development, this is not necessarily the worst type of crime to affect an economy. The occurrence of white-collar crime and government corruption has the biggest impact on the South African economy. Between 1996 and 1997 there was a 7% increase in the occurrence of white collar crime, mainly fraud, with 58 668 cases being reported to the police totalling R3,61 billion (Heath, 1998). Although the actual extent of corruption is difficult if not impossible to measure, the Heath Special Investigating Unit managed to prevent and recover the loss of states assets to the amount of R640 million during 1998 alone (Heath, 1998). Although a significant amount of money, these figures only represent that which is officially recorded in regards to economic crime. Studies have shown that, "The level of corruption in a country, as estimated by international investment advisory services, has a strong negative impact on investment and growth." (Klitgaard, 1997: 6). Clearly, this will have an effect on the government's ability to ensure that sufficient revenue is directed into projects that will benefit the poor and promote sustainable development.

The effect of corruption can also have a significant effect on the environment. One of the key arguments raised in the debates driving the evolution of sustainable development, is that when the poor are forced into survival strategies due to underdevelopment, it can have a significant destructive impact on the environment. There are a number of examples of this in South Africa. Where there is no electrification, huge amounts of wood and coal will be burned which in turn promotes deforestation and air pollution. Corruption may mean that money that could be spent on uplifting the poor to ensure that they can live without negatively effecting the environment is not available. Furthermore, it has been argued that law enforcement plays a significant role in protecting the environment more generally (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987: 46). In South Africa the high level of crime has overburdened the police service, the courts and the judiciary. Such a situation substantially challenges the ability of the state to monitor and enforce environmental laws and regulations. A result of this has been clearly seen in the publicity given to the massive extent of illegal poaching of 'perlemoen', (a much sought after ocean mollusc in Asia. These are specific examples of how the over extension of law enforcement agencies has led to a substantial decrease in certain types of environmental stock.

Towards the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS)

'Crime prevention' as a strategy to deal with crime emerged in response of the failure of the traditional 'crime control' and 'due process' models to effectively lower crime rates around the world. Without going into the complexities of each, it will be sufficient to say that these strategies largely operate once a crime has been identified or committed. Thus crime control is about identifying the existence of crime and trying to control its occurrence primarily through policing, whereas 'due process' is about identifying, arresting and managing criminal offenders through the criminal justice system. Crime prevention on the other hand, "... involves the disruption of mechanisms which cause crime." (Pease, 1997:963). Correspondingly, crime prevention is a proactive strategy that aims to address the multiple causal factors that can be identified as contributing to incidences of crime. The aim of which is to identify strategic interventions that can prevent crime from occurring in the first place. By its very nature therefore, crime prevention has as its central focus the social realities of people, and is long term in its thinking. It does not seek to replace crime control or due process models, but sees these as providing only limited and generally short-term solutions to effectively dealing with crime.

Crime prevention as an internationally recognised field emerged during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK). The first national institutional crime prevention response occurred during 1971 in the United States of America with the establishment of the National Crime Prevention Institute (NCPI). A few years later during 1975, the Home Office Committee on Crime Prevention was established in the United Kingdom, (Naude, 1993: 314). Crime prevention really only started to achieved international status however, at the international mayors conferences in Montreal during 1989 and then again in Paris during 1991. At both these conferences, agendas were developed for safer cities across the world. Eventually in 1996 the 'First International Conference for Crime Prevention Practitioners' was held in Canada (Pearcy et al, 1996: 43). While sustainable development had achieved international status at the beginning of the 1970s, the notion of crime prevention achieved international recognition during the 1990s. This may account for crime prevention having not yet been recognised as an integral element of sustainable development.

A strong link between the concepts of sustainable development and crime prevention can be found in the principle of 'cost internalisation'. Reed (1996: 23), argues that 'cost internalisation' is key to sustainable development as it attempts to include the social and environmental costs of development projects to better determine a "constant stream of benefits" from these projects. It is in precisely this area that the arguments for crime prevention strongly emerge. Studies have shown that the cost of the reactive crime control and 'due process' models far outweigh the costs involved in preventing crime from occurring in the first place. Studies of crime prevention programmes in Western Europe including countries such as the USA and Australia, have demonstrated remarkable savings. The following examples are illustrative. In the State of Hawaii in the USA, a state wide home visitation programme led to a decrease in the occurrence of child abuse resulting in a saving of \$1.3 million which would have otherwise been spent on reacting to a higher number of child abuse cases (Crime Prevention Digest, 1997: 6). Another crime prevention initiative that focused on burglary and that involved 2000 households managed to yield a 500% return on the initial project investment, (Crime Prevention Digest, 1997: 6). The results of longitudinal studies conducted on such initiatives have revealed certain crime

prevention strategies have led to significant decreases in the incidents of, and therefore the resulting costs of crime. The cases mentioned above demonstrate how the costs of the crime prevention initiatives can be substantially lower than the costs that arise from dealing with crimes that have already occurred. It can therefore be argued that the relative savings resulting from crime prevention strategies could free up significant resources that could be used to promote the sustainability of development.

It was partly as a result of recognising that South Africa's crime problem was too large and complicated to be handled by costly conventional crime control and 'due process' models that the NCPS arose as the government grand anti-crime strategy. The NCPS recognised the need for a "new paradigm" for dealing with crime in South Africa (NCPS, 1996: 6). Work on the NCPS was started after the opening of Parliament in 1995 and a proposed outline was presented to cabinet by the end of that year. About the same time that the Cabinet mandated the strategy team to proceed with the development on the NCPS, the government allocated R200 million from the Reconstruction and Development Fund (RDP) towards projects which would reform the criminal justice system. According to Simpson and Rauch (1998:3), this was the first step towards, "... emphasising the developmental paradigm for crime prevention in South Africa." This was later reinforced when the NCPS then became, "... linked in as one of the pillars of the government's National Growth and Development Strategy." (Simpson and Rauch, 1998: 3)

Passed by the Cabinet in May 1996, the NCPS consisted of a policy document that presented a framework for the establishment and implementation of crime prevention projects through out the country. Priority crime concerns were identified, challenges were highlighted and steps taken were acknowledged. A four-pillar approach was then provided as the overall framework through which to guide projects at all levels of government and society. These pillars include;

- 1) Improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice system consisting of nine national programmes,
- 2) Reducing crime through environmental design consisting of four national programmes,
- 3) Developing two national public values and school education programmes
- 4) Tackling trans-national crime consisting of two national programmes

The NCPS also goes into significant detail about the difficulties in understanding crime and how this affects the approaches in dealing with it. A key component of the NCPS emphasises that "there is no single cause of crime in South Africa." (1996: 9). However, a commonly held view on the relationship between crime and development is that crime is a result of poverty and that "... development strategies which are aimed at dealing with poverty will also serve as a means of preventing crime." (Lynelle, 1997: 133). All though there is some evidence to link the existence of poverty to certain kinds of crime, (Taylor, 1997: 284), this is only makes up one small part of the multiplicity of factors which are known to contribute to criminal acts. The NCPS acknowledges that the key context for high crime levels in South Africa is provided by structural deprivation, unemployment and underdevelopment, but that, "Poverty however, is not an inherent explanation of criminal activity as is often assumed." (1996: 18)

Thus, there is a clear recognition that crime is a highly complex phenomenon with many different causes and solutions. In this regards there is evidence that instead of

decreasing levels of crime, that development can in fact provide opportunities for an increase in incidents of crime. Bruce (1997:30), warns that, "Development plans which do not address issues of safety and security may, in themselves, make an area 'criminal friendly'. The development process itself may present people with opportunities for criminality or may contribute to conflict and sometimes violence within the community." It is at this juncture that the relevance of crime prevention as a necessary element for sustainable development becomes more apparent.

Linking the NCPS to Sustainable Development

In this section the relevance of the NCPS as a particular strategy for sustainable development will be made clear. According to Reed (1996: 22), "correcting deficient national development strategies requires addressing the three pillars of sustainability." Consequently, a number of elements are forwarded as constituting "... some of the more important requisites for shifting to national sustainability strategies in the context of the rapidly changing world order." (Reed, 1996: 22). Although it may be important to take note of Norgaards (1994: 37), warning that "It is impossible to define sustainable development in an operational manner in the detail and with the level of control presumed in the logic of modernity", even Noorgaard concedes that, "... guiding economic activity towards much more limited and defined ends ... will be necessary as they [developing countries in particular] strive towards sustainable development." It is in this context that the importance of the development and implementation of the NCPS needs to be recognised. One way to highlight this compatibility between the NCPS and the notion of sustainable development is to briefly compare each of the three components of sustainability with key elements of the NCPS.

Social Component

According to Reed (1996: 428), "Equity is a fundamental concern of sustainability's social dimension." By this it is meant that social sustainability is measured by the extent to which all citizens can access "... minimum standards of security, human rights and social benefits ..." (Reed, 1996:428). Three elements that will be briefly examined within the social component will include those of distributional equity, social services and gender equity. The impact of crime on sustainable development was highlighted earlier. It will now be shown how the NCPS as a policy document relates and intends to address these elements of sustainable development.

Firstly, the NCPS (1996: 19) recognises that there can be "... little debate about the role of economic development as a vital ingredient in the fight against crime" but that "... crime is capturing a significant portion of the country's economic wealth." Furthermore that it intends on tackling the issues of "Misappropriation of financial resources, corruption and graft within government", which can seriously undermine government driven initiatives and confidence in democratic governance itself (NCPS, 1996: 49). Hence there is strong understanding that those that are in greatest need of government assistance will be the most seriously effected by the extent of economic crime and that distributional equity is substantially harmed by the governments failure to tackle the issue of economic crime and corruption.

Secondly, the NCPS recognises that there needs to be a shift in emphasis from that which approaches crime as a "security issue" to one that tackles crime as a "social issue". "This not only supports a problem solving approach to crime but also demands that crime is seen as a shared responsibility of all agencies, levels of government and organs of society." (NCPS, 1996: 6). Flowing from this, the NCPS emphasises the substantial obstacle presented by the absence of a national political consensus on the issue of crime. It is subsequently recognises that this undermines the benefits that a common interest perspective brings to tackling the "... wider socio-economic problems which underpin acquisitive or violent crime." (NCPS, 1996: 18). Hence the Public Values and Education Pillar of the NCPS aims to promote a new "common sense" among individuals and communities in relation to taking responsibility for crime and its reduction (1996: 73). Furthermore, there is strong recognition that not only do poverty, unemployment and relative deprivation, "... operate as an incentive for criminal activity and contribute as a justification for such crime.", but that, "... it is in fact black (and often poor) citizens who are the most vulnerable to crime." (NCPS, 1996: 18) It is therefore acknowledged that the absence of social support for the unemployed contributes towards driving people into a criminal economy. Also, that it is these people as victims in particular, that require the most urgent support because the absence of victim-aid services adds to a sense of powerlessness, generates the quest for informal retributive justice which is criminal in nature, and "breathes life into popular resistance to human rights issues which are viewed as serving perpetrators rather than victims needs." (NCPS, 1996: 21).

Thirdly, the NCPS (1996: 22), recognises that "The disempowerment of women in economic, political and other spheres is exacerbated by the fear of violence with which all women live, and which has cumulatively negative effects on the prospects of growth and development of society as a whole." Thus the NCPS is acutely aware of the way in which crime effects the equitable participation and contribution of women as a group in our society. Correspondingly the NCPS includes gender violence and crimes against women as a priority crime area and identifies 25 specific projects to be carried out by the South African Police Service, Department of Justice and Department of Welfare.

Economic Component

The key element within the economic component of sustainable development is the role of the state. The state is seen as the manager of the public well being and consequently should be involved in "... strengthening the administrative, regulatory and standard setting functions of government in areas which the defence of public interest and public welfare is required", (Reed, 1996: 22 – 23). Towards this end the role of the state must be adapted, "... to areas in which it performs more efficiently than the private sector and in which it facilitates optimal participation by the private sector," (Reed, 1996: 22 – 23). The general aim then of economic growth in the context of sustainable development is to achieve a set of social goals that advances the skills, knowledge, capability and choice of the most disadvantaged members of the population. (Pearce and Warford, 1993: 55)

In relation to this component, it can be shown that the NCPS seeks to address this element in a number of key ways. The NCPS clearly recognises that crime in South Africa presents a "major constraint on development" and that because of the multi-faceted nature for the crime problem, "it demands an integrated and co-ordinated process of policy formation and action planning within government", (1996: 44). The

NCPS further recognises that "The relationship between crime, violence and development necessitates the engagement of the Reconstruction and Development Programme and of development agencies." (1996: 44). Although the RDP as an economic development policy has largely disappeared in any recognisable form, the overall principle of engaging the institutions involved with economic growth and development in crime prevention initiatives still remains necessary. The departments of Health, Welfare, Education, Trade and Industry and Home Affairs are listed as key partners in the development and implementation of national programmes to prevent and combat the effects of crime throughout society. The NCPS recognises the need for improved capacity within government to ensure delivery and also makes specific mention of building up relationships between the different spheres and departments of government in this regard. The focus here includes information management so that it contributes to "... decision making about resource allocation, re-prioritisation, communication needs and human resource development needs." (NCPS, 1996: 47).

In terms of the second element in the above mentioned economic component, the NCPS recognises that it is, "... it is essential that government acts to facilitate the mobilisation of civil society ... in a way which fosters the growth of civic involvement, encourages NGOs and allows for local variations in approach." (1996:28). In relation to the facilitating private sector involvement, the NCPS acknowledges that, "... the private sector in particular has demonstrated its eagerness to play a role and its concern about the impact of crime on development and the economy. This relationship must be explored and developed." (1996, 48). It is therefore explicit that the principles of the NCPS relate closely to the objective and elements of the economic component for sustainable development.

Environmental Component

The most direct link that one could make between the NCPS and the environmental component of sustainable development is in terms of the two elements stated as, "sustainable resource use" and "the institutional framework", with the latter calling for the establishment of clear, enforceable legal and regulatory standards for the private sector, in order to protect and help manage the country's environmental patrimony (Reed, 1996: 22). It could be argued however, that two other elements of the NCPS can be directly related to the environmental component of sustainable development.

On the one hand there is the specific objective of the NCPS to build an "effective and legitimate criminal justice system" which can act as a deterrent to crime (1996: 52). In this way those that operate in defiance of environmental standards as established by law can expect to find themselves on the receiving end of appropriate state sanction. On the other hand, the NCPS recognises "endangered species" as a priority crime area worth tackling as "The trade in endangered species and/or their products remains an international problem that has driven several plant, animal and bird species to the brink of extinction." (1996: 34). Herein lies the clear link between the role of the NCPS and the elements of environment sustainability.

If the issue of the environment is taken a bit further, the NCPS focus on reducing crime through environmental design could be included in the component of environmental sustainability. It is recognised that "The high incidence of many forms of crime are partly due to an environment which provides ample opportunities for crime and where risks of detection, or prosecution are low." (NCPS, 1996: 67). There are subsequent plans then promoted which call for the issue of the environment and

crime to be further examined and incorporated into the ethos of crime control. So although there is no direct explicit link in this regards, at a principled level, there is an acute awareness that the issues of crime and the environment cannot be separated. Notions of sustainable development could then be further incorporated into initiatives that support crime prevention.

Conclusion

Given that the aim of sustainable development is to improve the quality of life for all, particularly the poor in a manner that maintains our environmental integrity, it is crucial that the potential for human destruction is addressed. This is clearly recognised in Chambers (1997: 13), with the argument that development theorists often neglect 'altruism' as an element for sustainable development. The author of this paper agrees with the notion that the 'goodness' of humanity is a crucial element for sustainable development, but further argues that altruism is more likely to emerge if the general environment does not militate against it. Crime and violence are often products of environments where competition and a lack of caring dominate. People who have grown up as children in environmental contexts free from crime and violent are more likely to be amenable to altruism than those who view the world with mistrust and fear. It is therefore in the longer-term interest of all to ensure that such an environment is created. The underlying principle of this paper is that crime prevention should underpin any strategy to deal with the destructive effects of crime and violence.

As was briefly demonstrated, development does not necessarily lead to a reduction on the occurrence of crime and violence as these phenomena have far deeper psychological and sociological roots. Crime prevention however, at a fundamental level recognises that the effects of these factors of the human condition should be prevented from perpetuating destruction in our communities. Whereas it is acknowledged that poverty can perpetuate crime and violence, it is logical that those who are at the highest risk of being victims make up the marginalised classes. Development is then inhibited by the occurrence of crime and violence ironically amongst those who need it most. If not more significantly, white collar crime and corruption also serve to divert the very resources that could be used to promote development and growth amongst the poor. Crime as a phenomenon then, is fundamentally destructive to the promotion of sustainable development.

In this paper the argument was that crime prevention through the principles of the NCPS is an appropriate and relevant strategy for achieving sustainable development in South Africa. The NCPS was thus chosen as the particular policy framework to be assessed against the social, economic and environmental components of sustainable development. In this way it could be determined to what extent this national strategy supports the key components of sustainable development. It was clearly shown that the NCPS directly supports a number of elements underpinning each component of sustainable development. Lastly, it is recognised that this is probably a unique attempt at such an endeavour. Driven by interest and conviction, rather than by certainty and convention, the scope for improvement in such an enterprise is significant. However, the links between crime prevention and sustainable development seemed too important for the author to ignore.

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