Social science that makes a difference

19th - 23rd July 2009
Istituto degli Innocenti, Florence, Italy

9th ISSOILS Conference:

Benjamin Roberts

Fear of Crime in South Africa
Age of Hope or Anxiety?
Conclusion: An age of hope or anxiety
Behavioral and attitudinal responses to fear of crime
Socio-economic factors
Population group differentials in fear of crime
Fear and the role of age
Gender differentials in fear of crime
Who is more fearful?
Recent national trends in fear of crime
Method
Introduction

Cont
Introduction

South Africa.

Nature and dynamics of fear of crime in post-apartheid South Africa, but rather with an important and often neglected related social phenomenon, namely the fear of crime.

Aim: provide a preliminary descriptive analysis of the perceived risk of crime.

Concerned not with the actual levels of victimization in South Africa, but rather with an important and often neglected related social phenomenon, namely the fear of crime.

Presentation:

Mounting public dissatisfaction abounds.

In addition, media images of violent criminal acts and priority area among citizens in public opinion surveys.

Crime persistently features as a pressing national statistic in late 2006.

Public debate since the release of official crime statistics has been vigorous, as that of crime.

Few issues in SA today provoke as emotive a response.
Fuel cycles of violence
Lend credibility to vigilante violence
Provide mounting appeals for death penalty;
Diminish sense of trust and cohesion in communities;

Such anxieties may also:

- Architecture of fear;
- A hastening retreat from public space;
- Constraints on people's mobility and ability to socialise;
- Resilience on racial stereotypes in discussing crime;

These include:

Answer: complex, detrimental effects on QOL
to their personal safety?

Why is it important to focus on people's anxieties relating

Introduction (2)
Introduction (3)

- Fear of crime as a distinct social objective
- Unequal distribution of crime and the fear of crime
- Fear continuously impinging upon the well-being
- Numerous studies
- Policy attention
- Since 1960s: Focus of increasingly research and problem in international circles
- Fear of crime: Prominent social and political

Govts: respond by establishing the reduction of crime
### Sample sizes (adults 16 years+)

- 2008 = 3,321
- 2007 = 3,164
- 2006 = 5,843
- 2005 = 5,734

(4-pt scale: v. safe; fairly safe; a bit unsafe; v. unsafe)

- How safe or unsafe do you feel walking alone in this area during the day?
- How safe or unsafe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?
- How safe or unsafe do you feel personally on most days? (5-pt scale: v. safe to v. unsafe)

Crime measures:

- Data: Since 2005, SASSAS incl. several global fear of

### Method
Experimentation with ESS fear of crime questions:

- Impact of specific crime fears on QCL (2008)
- Worry about specific types of crime (2007/8)
- Experience of crime (2007/8)

- Add to an expanding body of evidence trends since the early 1990's, and
- BUT... do nonetheless allow us to explore analysis
- Imposes obvious constraints on scope of
- Set of global measures

Method (2)
National trends in fear of crime

**CRIME STATS**

- Number of people raped: 15,926 (down 0.3%)
- Number of people seriously assaulted: 226,942 (down 8.5%)
- Number of people murdered: 18,528 (down 1.4%)

Number of people who think this is a great improvement, not a national crisis.

2
1991-2008
Percentage of South Africans feeling personally unsafe
Safety walking alone in area after dark, 1998-2008

the day, 1998-2008

Safety walking alone in area during
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>How often do you worry about your home being burgled?</th>
<th>How often do you worry about becoming a victim of violent crime?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worry about specific types of crime, 2007-2008
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Unsafe after dark as walking alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Unsafe as walking alone during day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Unsafe personally on most days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions in Identifying the Fearful Correspondence between Global Fear (row %) (2008)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Just Occasionally</th>
<th>Some of the Time</th>
<th>Almost All the Time</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Unsafe walking alone after dark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsafe walking alone during day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsafe personally on most days</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>000</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How Often Worry About Becoming a Victim of Violent Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Just Occasionally</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>000</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Specific Fear Questions (Row %) (2008)

Comparing Global Fear Questions and
Fear of crime: A comparative perspective

THAT'S A LIE!!

WE'RE DOWN TO EIGHT TIMES THE INTERNATIONAL NORM!

THIS CONSTANT FOCUS ON CRIME IS JUST A MEDIA FRENZY!

BUT COMMISSIONER, OUR CRIME LEVEL IS NINE TIMES THE ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL NORM.

Victim of a burglary/assault in last 5 years

Sources: SASAS 2007, ESS 2006

Never □ Just occasionally □ All or most of the time □ Some of the time □
Influence of experience of crime on fear

(burglary): SASS and the ESS (2007)
Who is more tearful?

Crime whingers? More
week in nature, and sensitive to type of question asked.
about personal safety, relationship is inconsistent over time,
appear more fearful for their safety than elderly when asked
ANOVA tests using 2005 SASAS data: Although SA’s youth
Youth are indeed more vulnerable to victimization (1998 VOC
Reason: Maybe strong correlation bet objective risk and fear?
Older South Africans in general seem less likely to express
Substantial churning in relative ranking of fear
personal safety than younger cohorts (exception = 1994)
1991-2005: those aged 65+ do not appear more fearful for
crime and age
the absence of a strongly positive linear relationship bet. Fear of
HRC data: pattern of responses support Internet finding of

Age
group, 1991-2008
personally unsafe by population
Percentage of respondents' feeling
Unsafe walking alone in area after dark
Unsafe walking alone in area in day
Personally unsafe on most days

Percentage of respondents feeling unsafe by population group, 2008

South Africa
White
Indian
Coloured
Black

72 69 83 69 73
37 36 51 31 37
32 23 37 28 34
Evidence suggests that fear of crime and socio-economic status have a direct influence on overall sense of personal well-being. Adversely, impacts on employment status and is related to higher among middle class households.

Although there is some ambiguity w.r.t. fear and socio-economic factors,
Unsafe by geographic type, 2008
Percentage of respondents feeling unsafe walking alone in urban areas after dark
Responses to fear of crime

Behavioral and attitudinal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>% saying item is essential</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police presence</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property around the house</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglar bars in the house</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglar alarm for the house</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alarm system for the vehicle</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence or wall</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area the streets in local</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe after dark</td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe during day</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe during night</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe on most days</td>
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<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Most on days</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Street Lighting</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Dark</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence around in local area</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Rock-up</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage for vehicles</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglar bars in the house</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alarm system for the house</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An armed response</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 2006 Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage possessing target hardening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures, 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% adults reporting that have the item
Global fear of crime measures those feeling unsafe relative to those feeling safe for all 3 mean trust scores significantly lower (p<0.05) among distrust compared to distrust or neither trust nor distrust.

South Africa

Safe on most days

Unsafe on most days

Safe walking alone in area during day

Unsafe walking alone in area during day

Safe walking alone in area after dark

Unsafe walking alone in area after dark

perceived feelings of safety, 2008

Levels of public trust in the police, by
Relative to those feeling safe for all 3 years of crime measures is significantly lower (p > 0.05) among those feeling unsafe.

Mean satisfaction with the government’s crime reduction efforts.

crime measures those feeling unsafe relative to those feeling safe for all 3 years of life satisfaction scores significantly lower (p > 0.05) among feelings of safety, 2008.
Serious effect on the quality of your life
Some effect
No real effect on the quality of your life

How often worry about being a victim of violent crime

Time

All or most of the time
Some of the time
Just occasionally
Rsa

Effect on quality on life (%)

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Personal quality of life, 2008
Being a victim of violent crime on
Perceived impact of concern over
Quality of life, 2008

home being burgled on personal
Perceived impact of concern over

Serious effect on the quality of your life ☐
Somewhat effect ☐
No real effect on the quality of your life ☐

How often worry about home being burgled

Effect on quality on life (%)
Only by doing so can we expect to dislodge the shadow of anxiety that looms over the age of hope.

6. Reducing the Fear of Crime

(3) Identifying, testing out and evaluating strategies for considerable importance for policy discussion

- System signifies that the Fear Equation remains of little, and to a limited extent satisfaction with the democratic public safety, social cohesion, personal well-being and quality prospects for SA and its people.
- Insecurities not tempered by a sizable share of Deep-seated fears about personal and community safety held.

(2) YET Influence of fear on police confidence, demand for

Conclusion: Age of Anxiety or Hope?
anxieties about safety remain to be seen,
addressing high crime rates and alleviating widespread
Whether this new approach can succeed in simultaneously
approach to crime and criminals
Strong talk: war on crime; shoot to kill; tougher
and security to the Department of Police
May 2009: change of name of the Department of Safety
the government's policing approach was 'soft' on crime;
Concern with addressing perceptions and criticism that
(2009)
Move from 'defensive' to 'offensive' policing (Burger,
Administration to tackle crime and associated fear
Policy/Political Response: strong political will in new gov
Conclusion: (2): Age of Anxiety or Hope?
Commission, Mar 2007

Further and faster
and we must deal with them: we must bring crime down
grounded in reality. Nevertheless, those fears are real
assessment of the risks they face are not always
Africans are afraid of crime... Their fears and
We know from survey evidence that far too many South

Address, 2007
Former President THABO MBeki, in the annual State of the Nation
and on our roads;
barbed wire, ever anxious in their houses, on the streets
communities live in fear, closeted behind walls and
We cannot claim the happiness that comes with freedom it

President JACOB ZUMA, reflecting on his experiences during pre-election
their eyes and hear the desperation in their voices.
Living... When the people talk to me I can see the fear in
alongside issues like unemployment and the cost of
Everywhere I went, the issue of crime was raised,

Parting Reflections