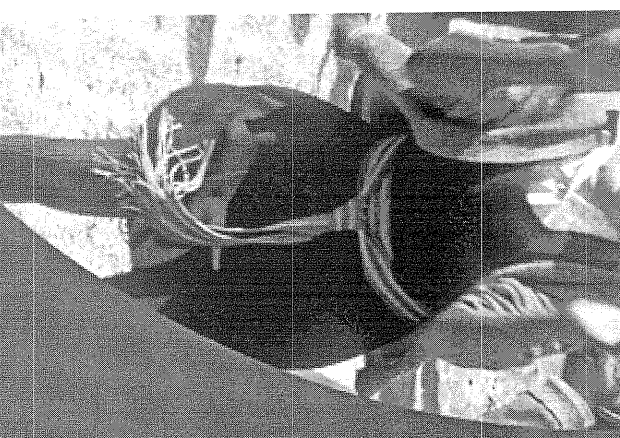
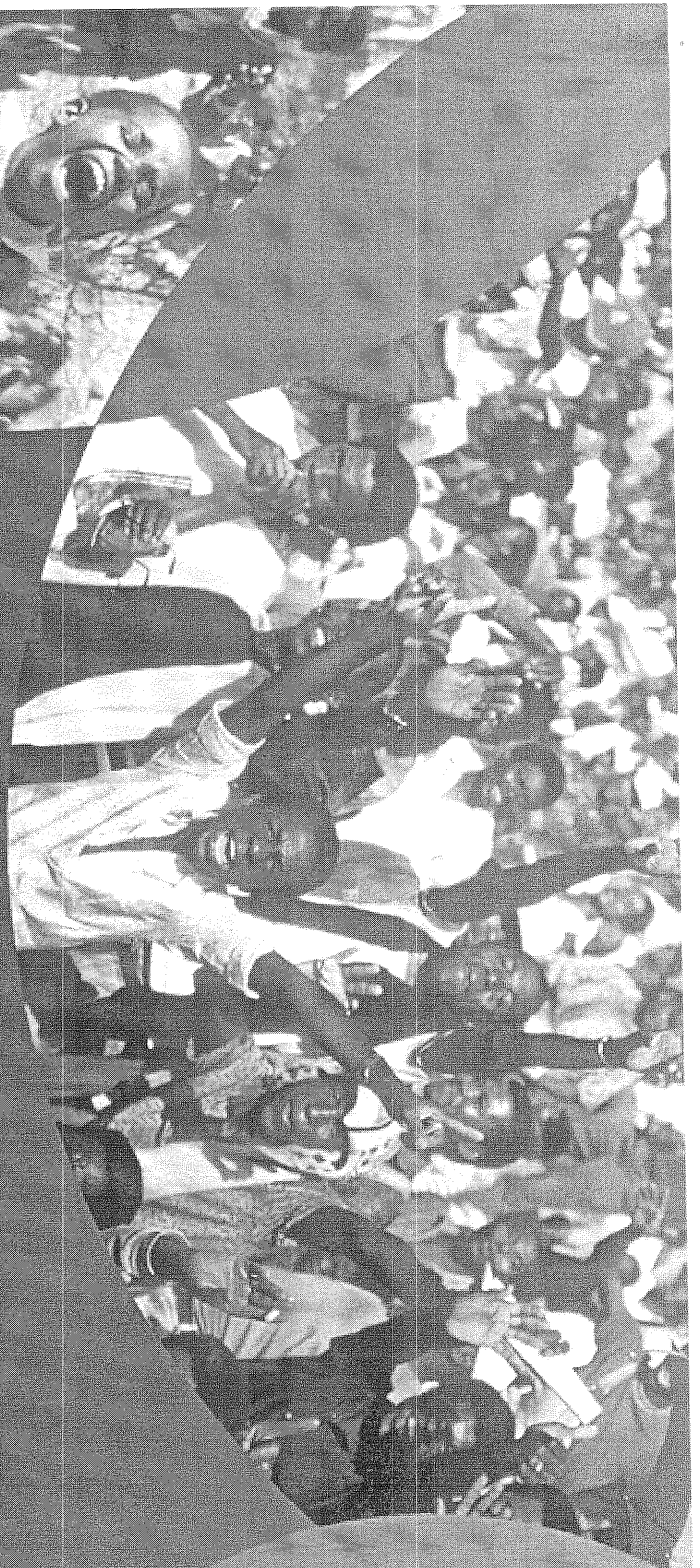


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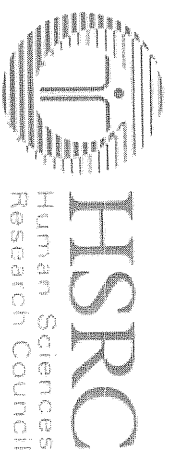
Age of Hope or Anxiety?

Fear of Crime in South Africa

Benjamin Roberts

9th ISQOLS Conference,
Istituto degli Innocenti, Florence, Italy
19th – 23rd July 2009

Social science that makes a difference



Content

- # Introduction
- # Method
- # Recent national trends in fear of crime
- # Who is more fearful?
 - # Gender differentials in fear of crime
 - # Fear and the role of age
 - # Population group differentials in fear of crime
 - # Socio-economic factors
- # Behavioural and attitudinal responses to fear of crime
- # Conclusion: an age of hope or anxiety

Introduction

- # Few issues in SA today provoke as emotive a response as that of crime
- # Public debate since the release of **official crime statistics** in late 2006
- # Crime persistently features as a **pressing national priority area** among citizens in public opinion surveys.
- # In addition, **media images** of violent criminal acts and mounting public disaffection abound.
- # Presentation:
 - # Concerned not with the actual levels of victimization in South Africa, but rather with an important and oft neglected related social phenomenon, namely the **fear of crime**.
 - # Aim: provide a preliminary descriptive analysis of the nature and dynamics of fear of crime in post-apartheid South Africa.

Introduction (2)

- # Why is it important to focus on people's anxieties relating to their personal safety?
- # Answer: complex, detrimental effects on QOL
- # These include:
 - # Reliance on racial stereotypes in discussing crime;
 - # Constraints on people's mobility and ability to socialise;
 - # A hastening retreat from public space;
 - # 'Architecture of fear';
- # Such anxieties may also:
 - # Diminish sense of trust and cohesion in communities;
 - # Provide mounting appeals for death penalty;
 - # Lend credibility to vigilante violence
 - # Fuel cycles of violence

Introduction (3)

- # Fear of crime: prominent social and political problem in international circles
- # Since 1960s: focus of increasing research and policy attention
 - # Numerous studies
 - # Fear continues to impinge upon the well-being of a proportion of the population
 - # Unequal distribution of crime *and* the fear of crime
- # Govts: respond by establishing the reduction of the fear of crime as a distinct social objective

Method

- # Data: Since 2005, SASAS incl. several global fear of crime measures:
 - # “How safe or unsafe do you feel personally on most days?” (5-pt scale: v. unsafe to v.safe)
 - # “How safe or unsafe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?”
 - # “How safe or unsafe do you feel walking alone in this area during the day?”
(4-pt scale: v. safe; fairly safe; a bit unsafe; v. unsafe)
- # Sample sizes (adults 16 years +)
 - # 2005=5,734
 - # 2006=5,843
 - # 2007=3,164
 - # 2008=3,321

Method (2)

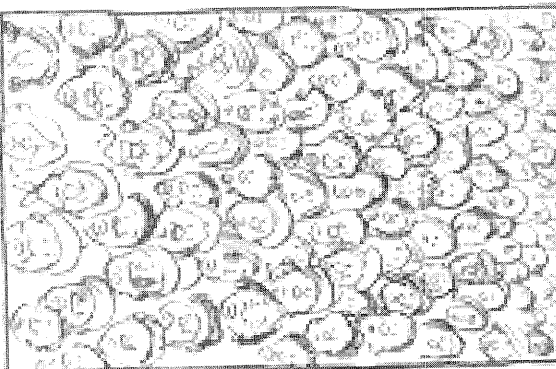
- # SASAS measures of crime: limited to the narrow set of global measures
 - ┆ imposes obvious constraints on scope of analysis
 - ┆ BUT... do nonetheless allow us to explore trends since the early 1990s, and
 - ┆ add to an expanding body of evidence
- # Experimentation with ESS fear of crime questions:
 - ┆ Experience of crime (2007/8);
 - ┆ Worry about specific types of crime (2007/8);
 - ┆ Impact of specific crime fears on QOL (2008)

National trends in fear of crime

This year's CRIME STATS

Number of people
RAPED

54 926
(down 0.3%)



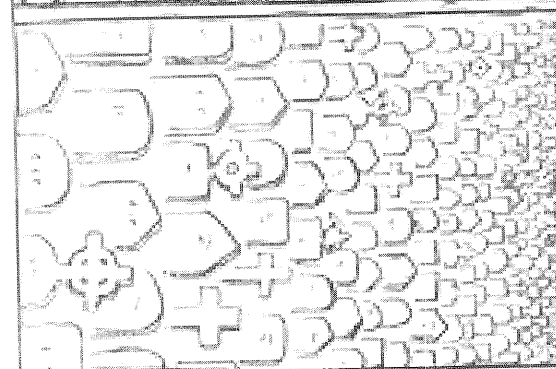
Number of people
SERIOUSLY ASSAULTED

226 942
(down 9%)



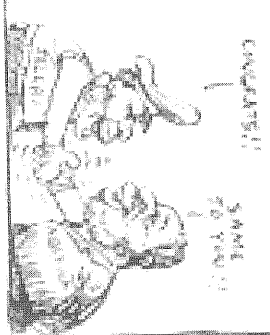
Number of people
MURDERED

18 528
(down 1.4%)



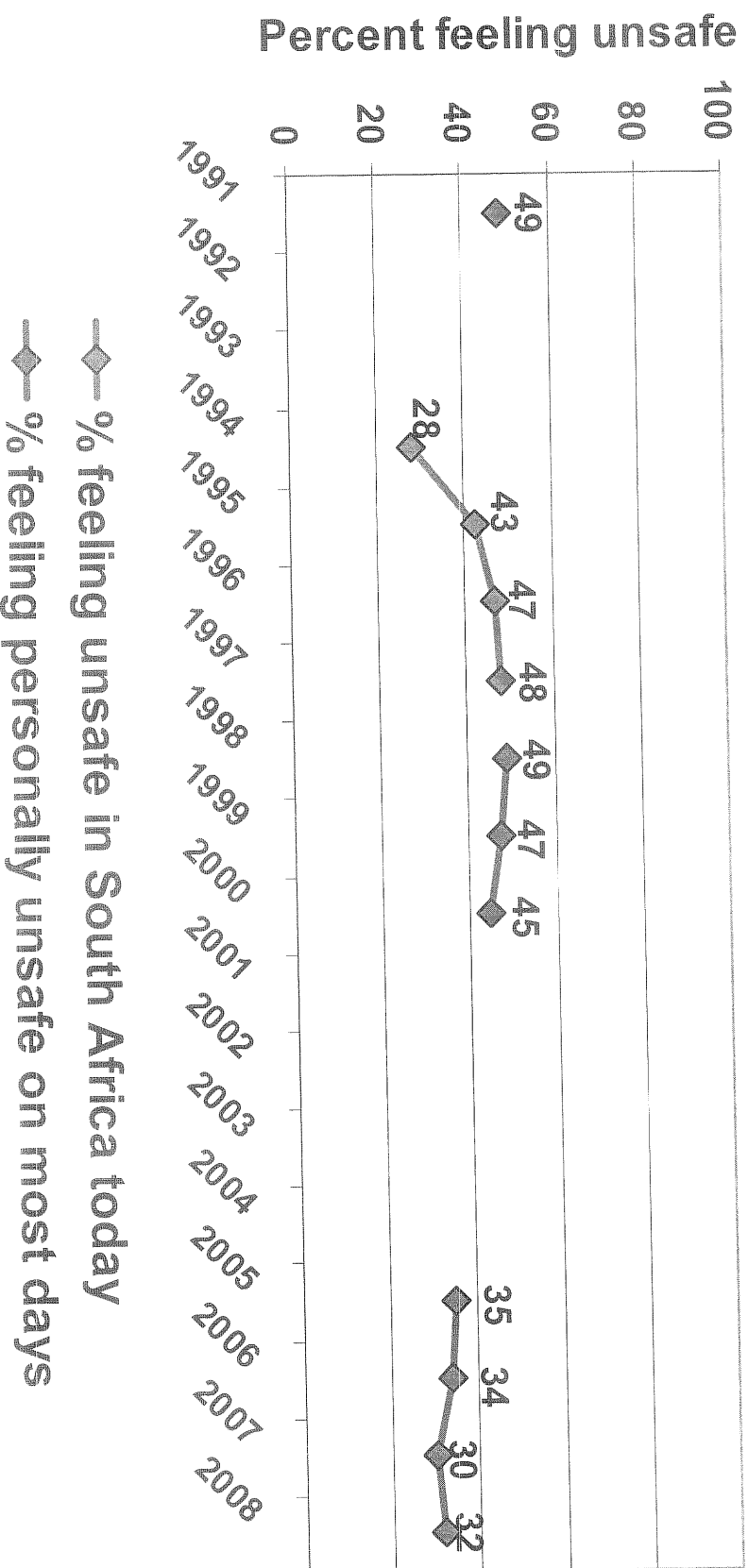
Number of people
who think this is a
GREAT IMPROVEMENT,
not a NATIONAL CRISIS

2
(same as last year)

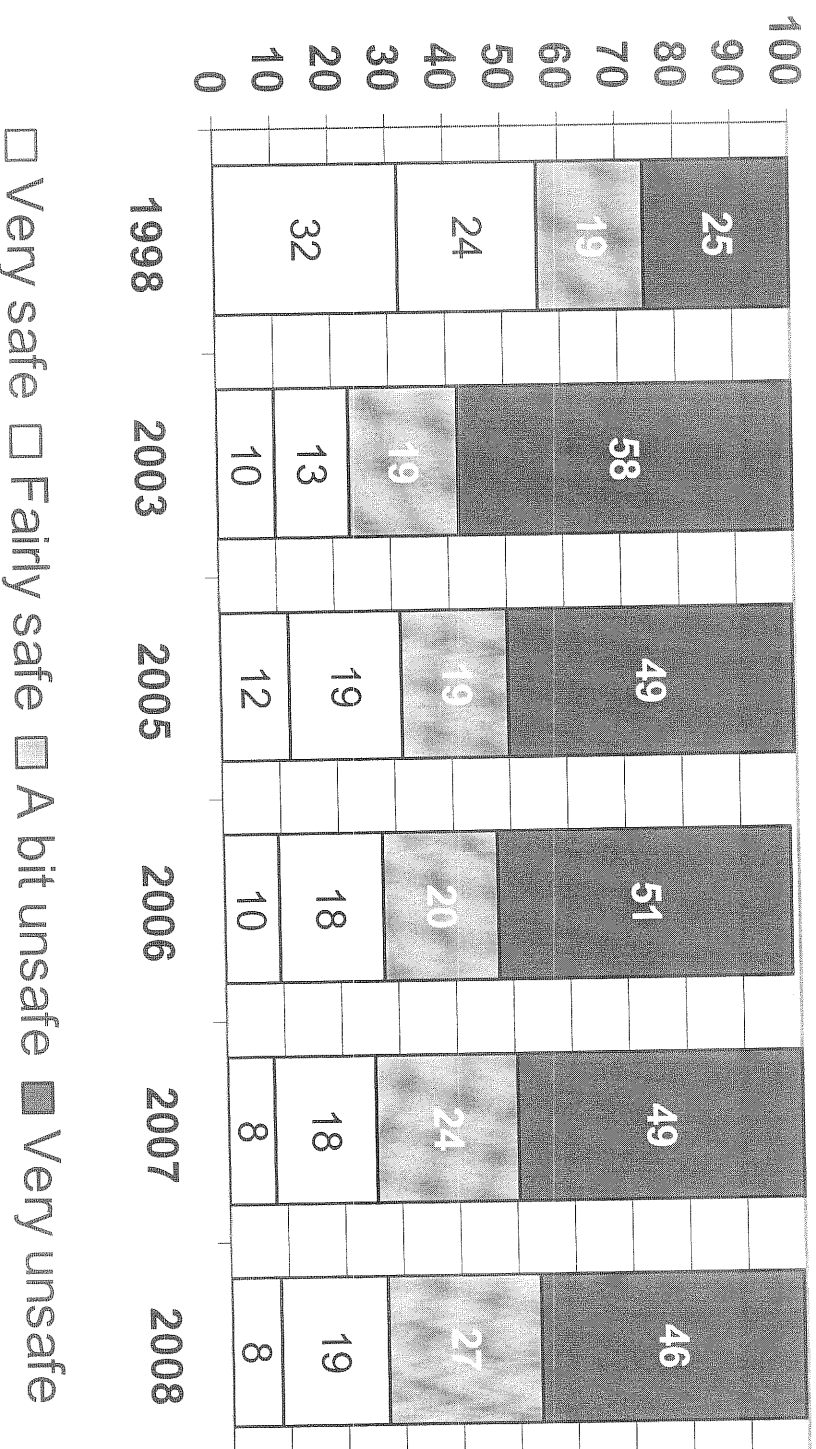


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Percentage of South Africans feeling personally unsafe, 1991-2008

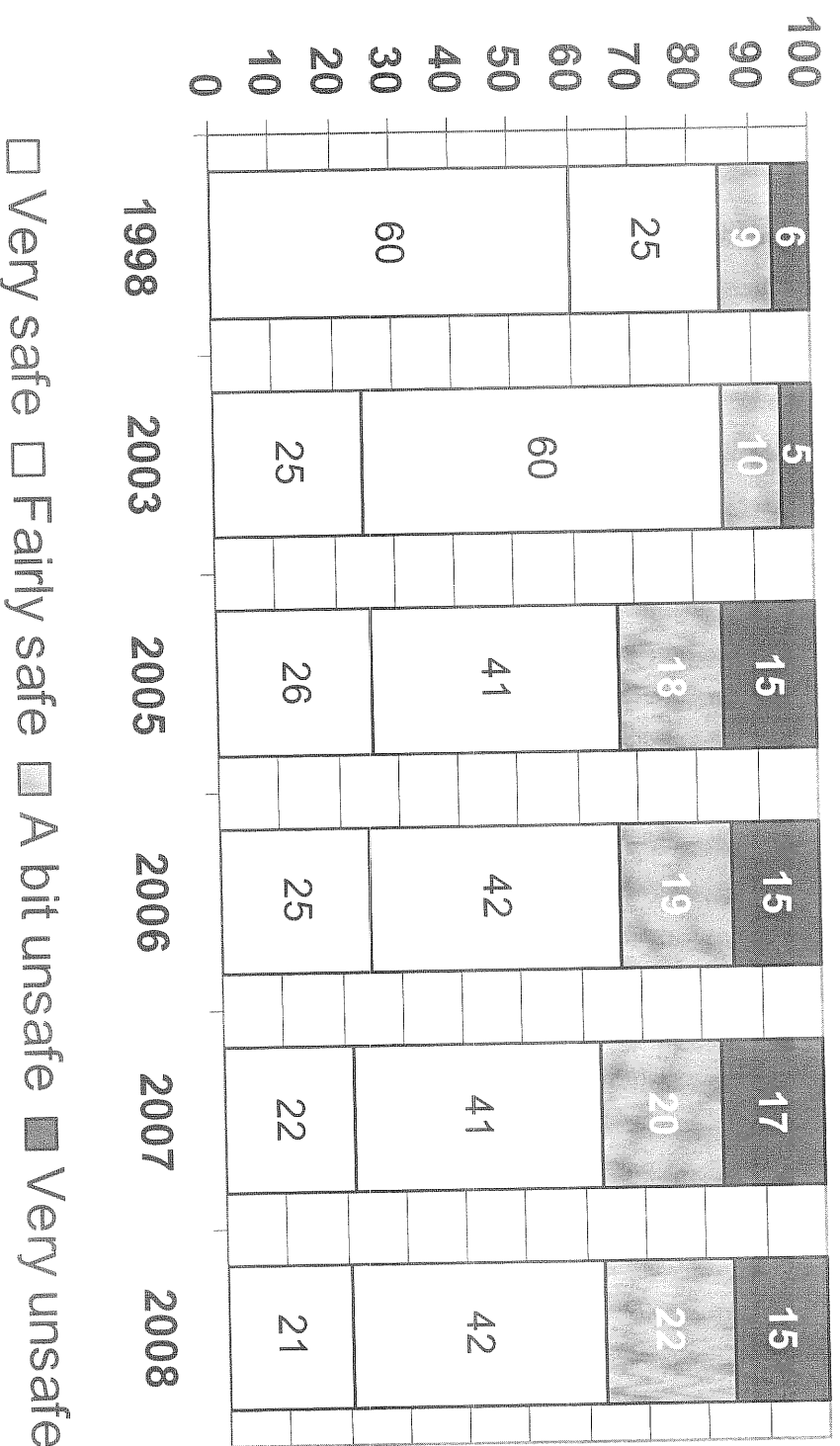


Safety walking alone in area after dark, 1998-2008



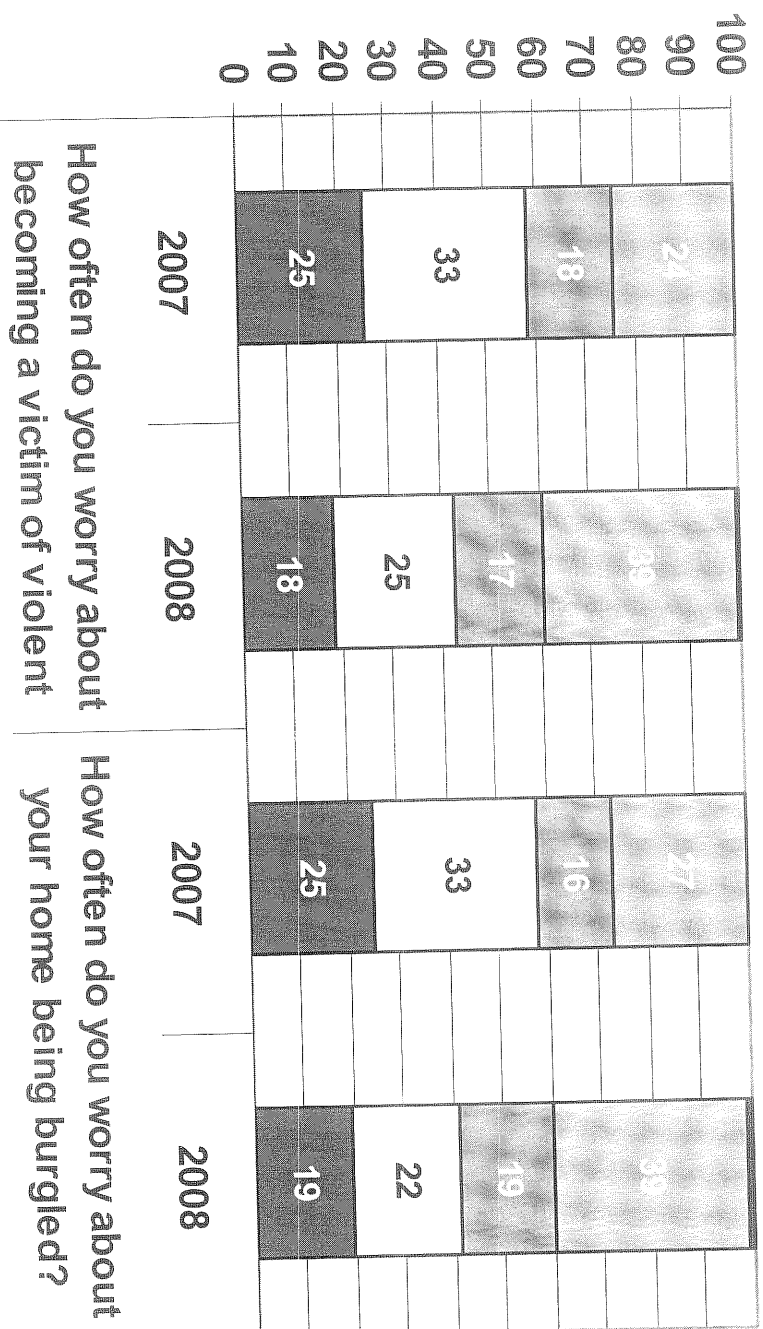
Sources: Statistics South Africa (1999); Burton et al. (2004);
 HSRC, SASAS 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

Safety walking alone in area during the day, 1998-2008



Sources: Statistics South Africa (1999); Burton et al. (2004); HSRG, SASAS 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

Worry about specific types of crime, 2007-2008



- All or most of the time
- Some of the time
- Just occasionally
- Never

Correspondence between Global Fear Questions in Identifying the Fearful (row %) (2008)

	Unsafe personally on most days	Unsafe walking alone during day	Unsafe walking alone after dark
Unsafe personally on most days	100	83	97
Unsafe walking alone during day	72	100	96
Unsafe walking alone after dark	43	49	100

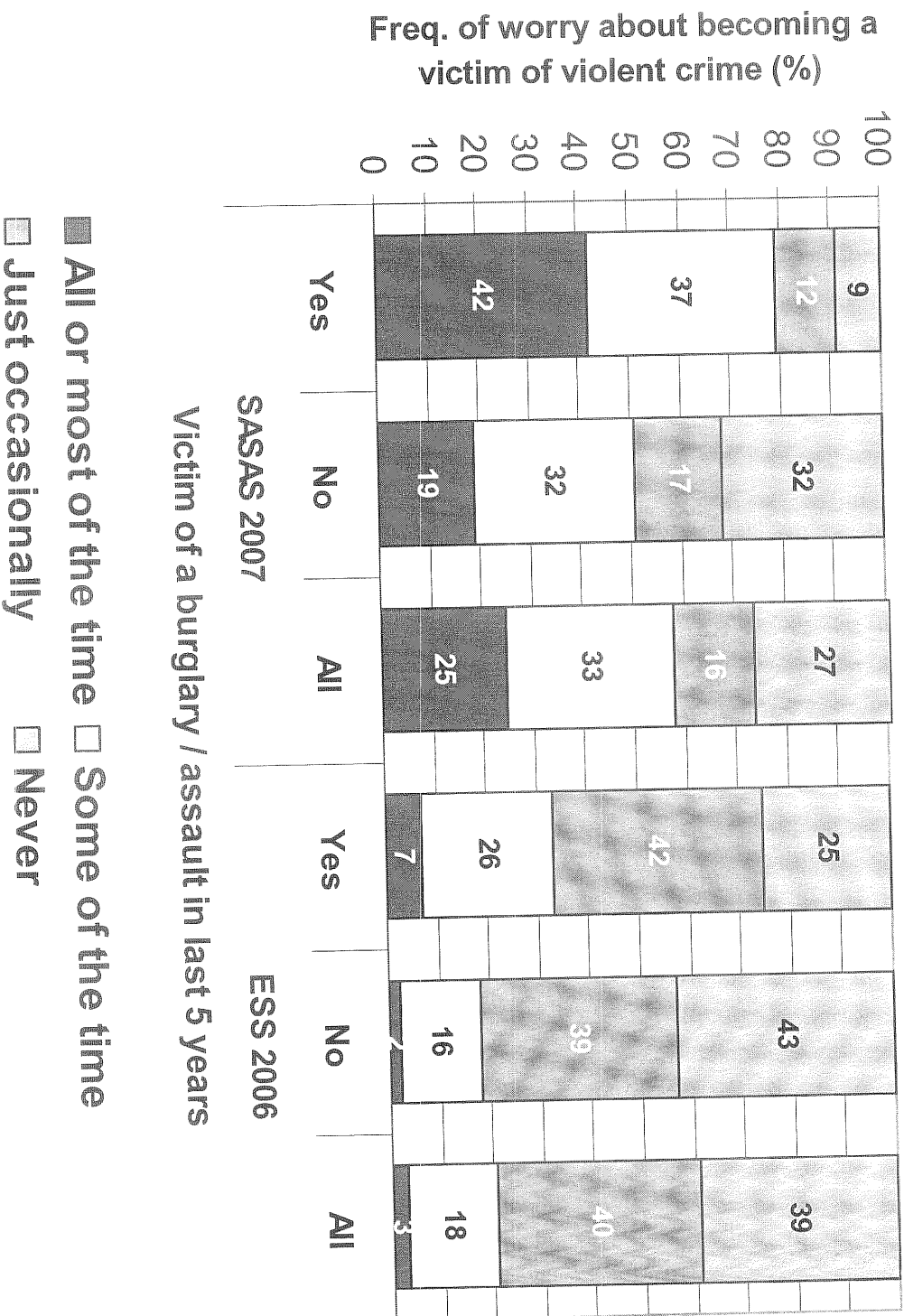
Comparing Global Fear Questions and Specific Fear Questions (row %) (2008)

	How often worry about home being burgled					Total
	All / most of time	Some of the time	Just occasionally	Never	DK	
Unsafe personally on most days	44	28	14	13	0	100
Unsafe walking alone during day	38	29	17	16	1	100
Unsafe walking alone after dark	25	25	20	29	1	100
	How often worry about becoming a victim of violent crime					Total
	All / most of time	Some of the time	Just occasionally	Never	DK	
Unsafe personally on most days	41	33	13	13	0	100
Unsafe walking alone during day	37	33	13	16	1	100
Unsafe walking alone after dark	24	29	18	29	0	100

Fear of crime: A comparative perspective

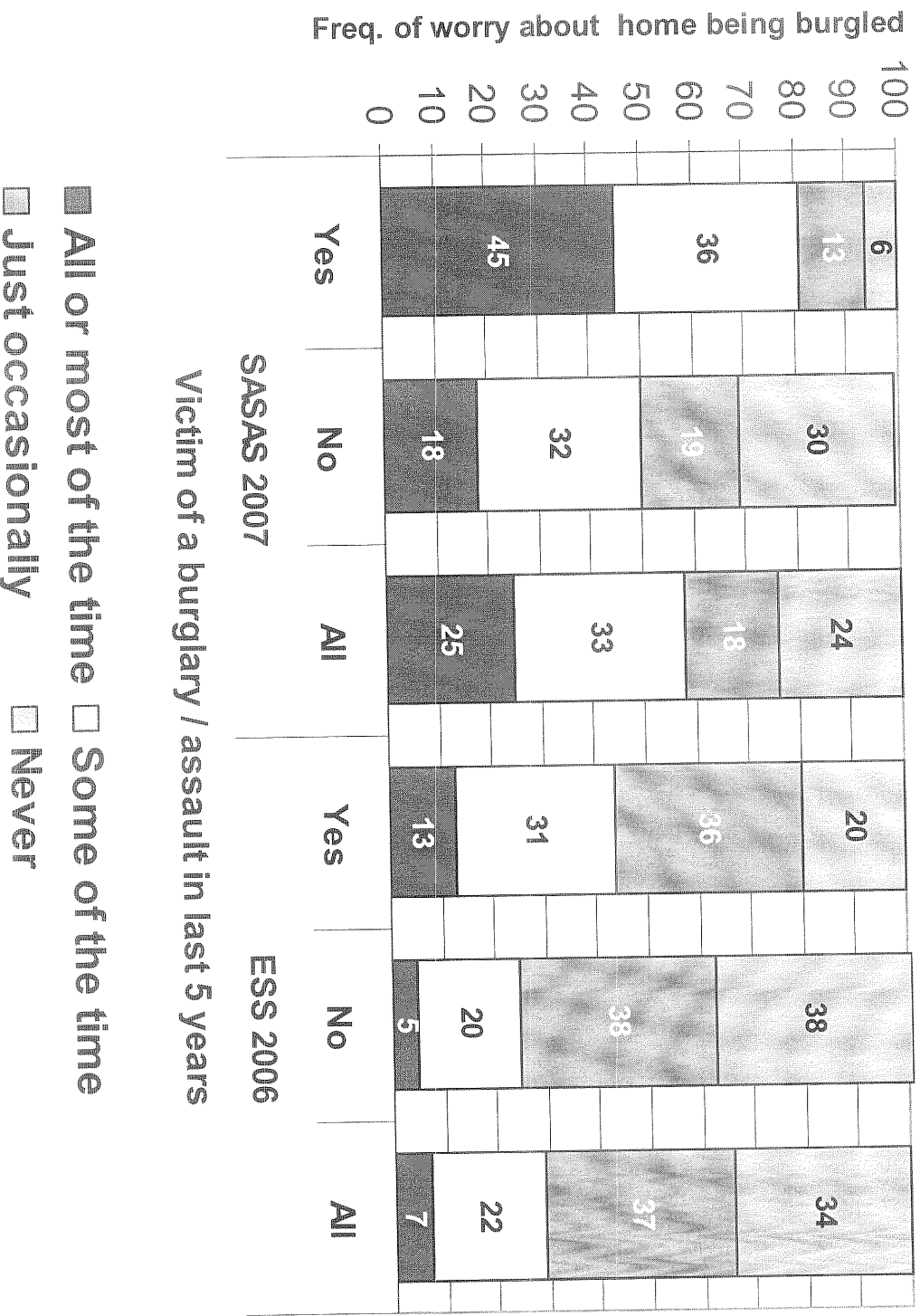


Influence of experience of crime on fear (violent crime): SASAS and the ESS (2007)



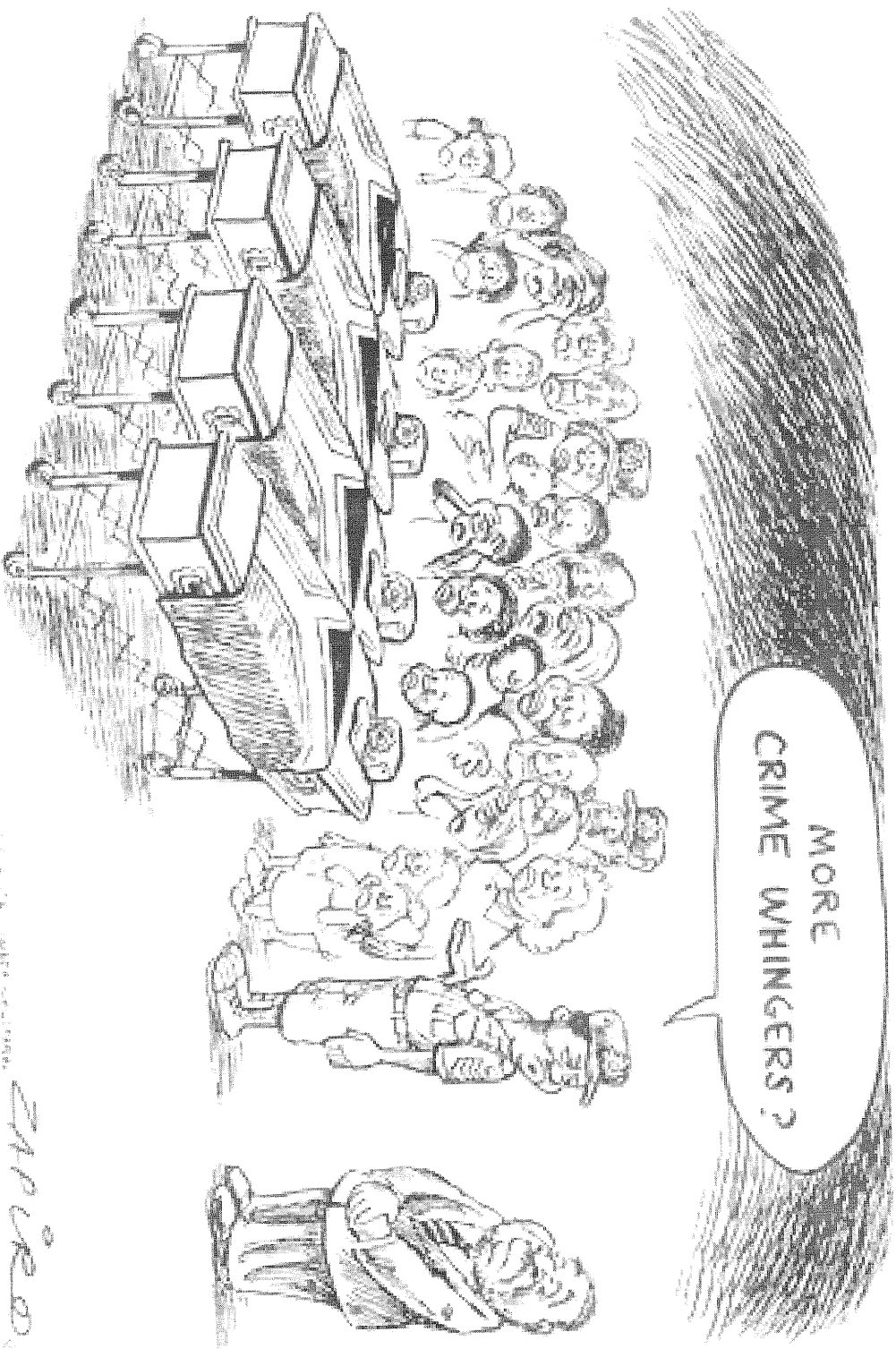
Sources: SASAS 2007; ESS 2006

Influence of experience of crime on fear (burglary): SASAS and the ESS (2007)



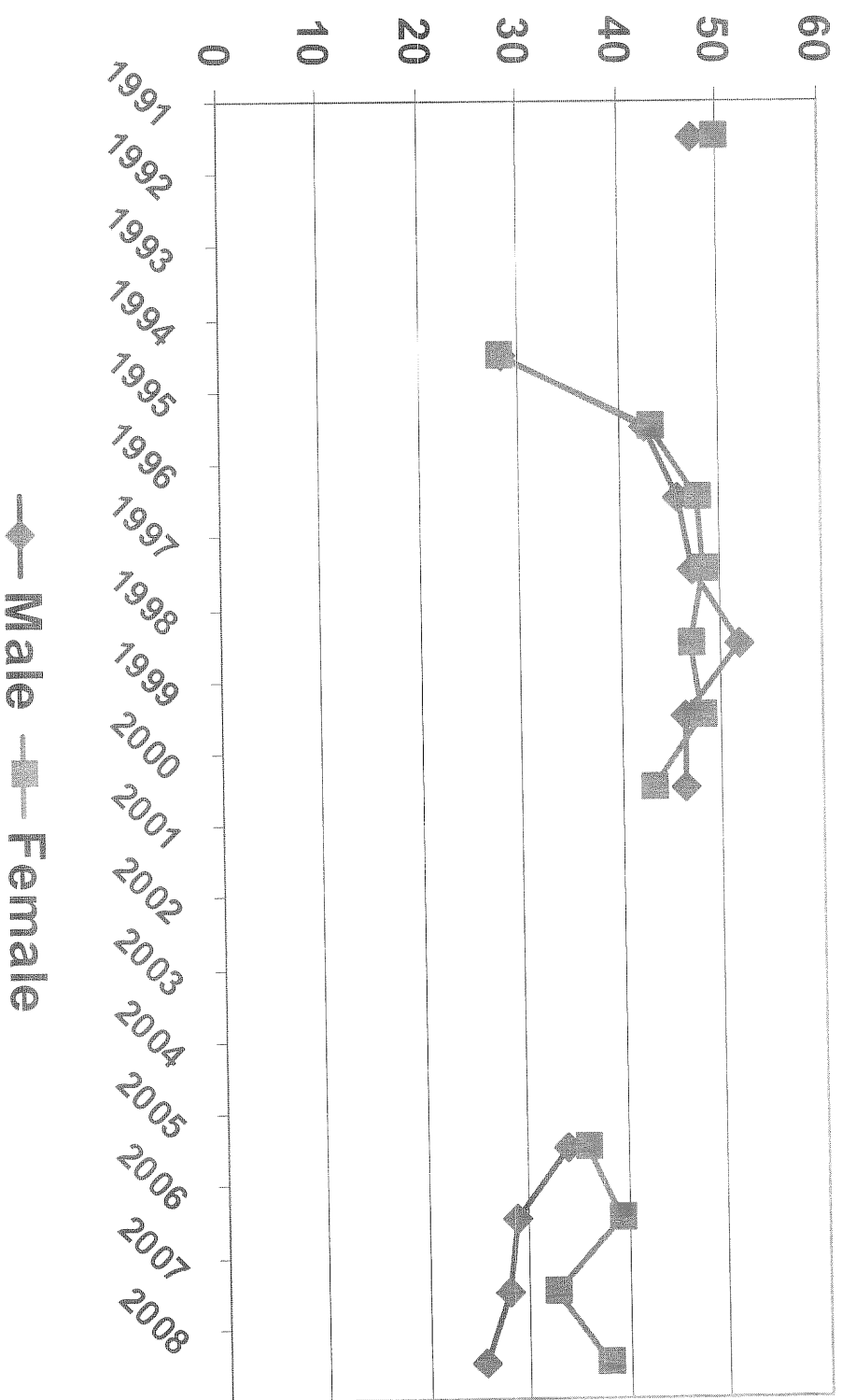
Sources: SASAS 2007; ESS 2006

Who is more fearful?



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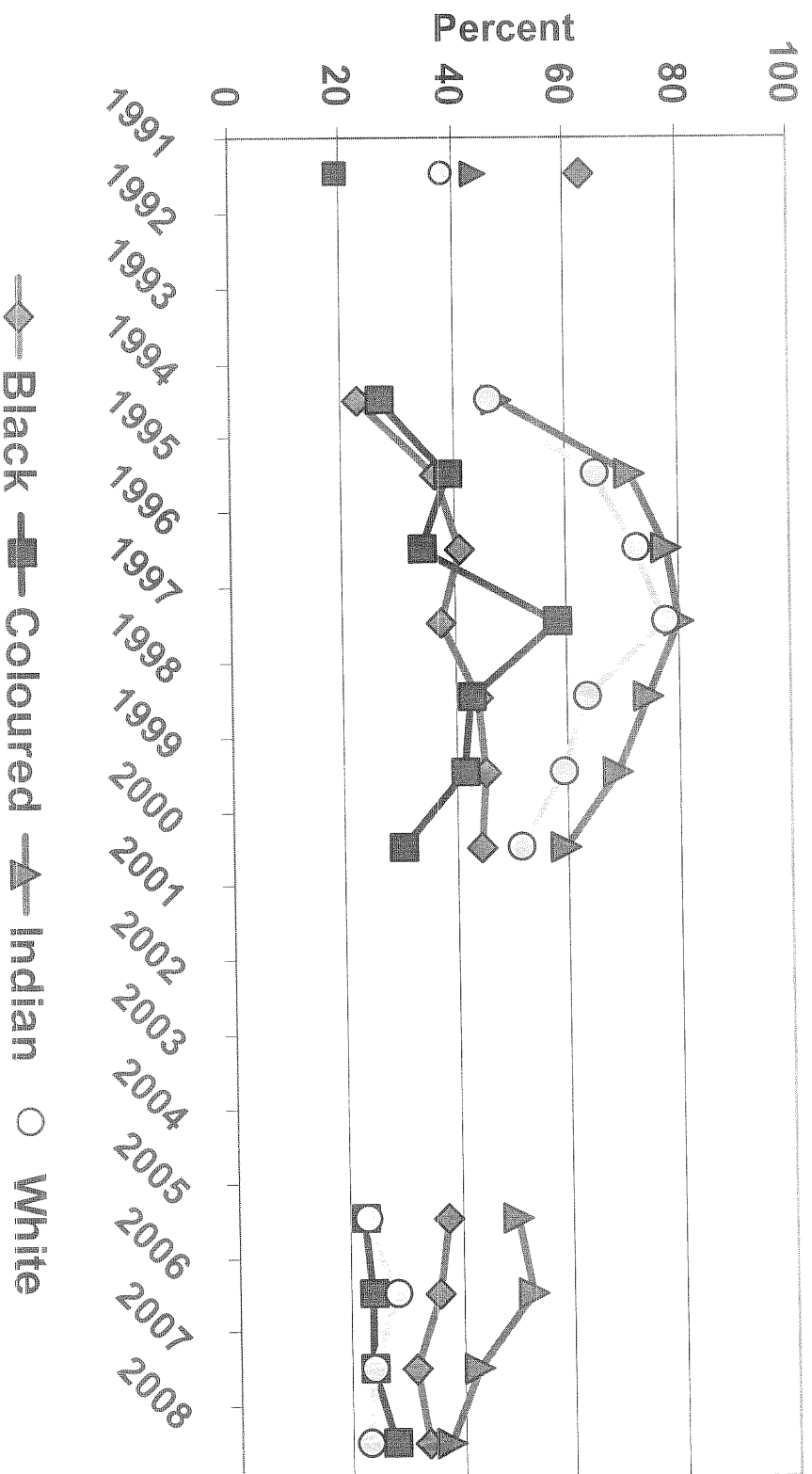
Percentage of respondents' feeling personally unsafe by sex, 1991-2008



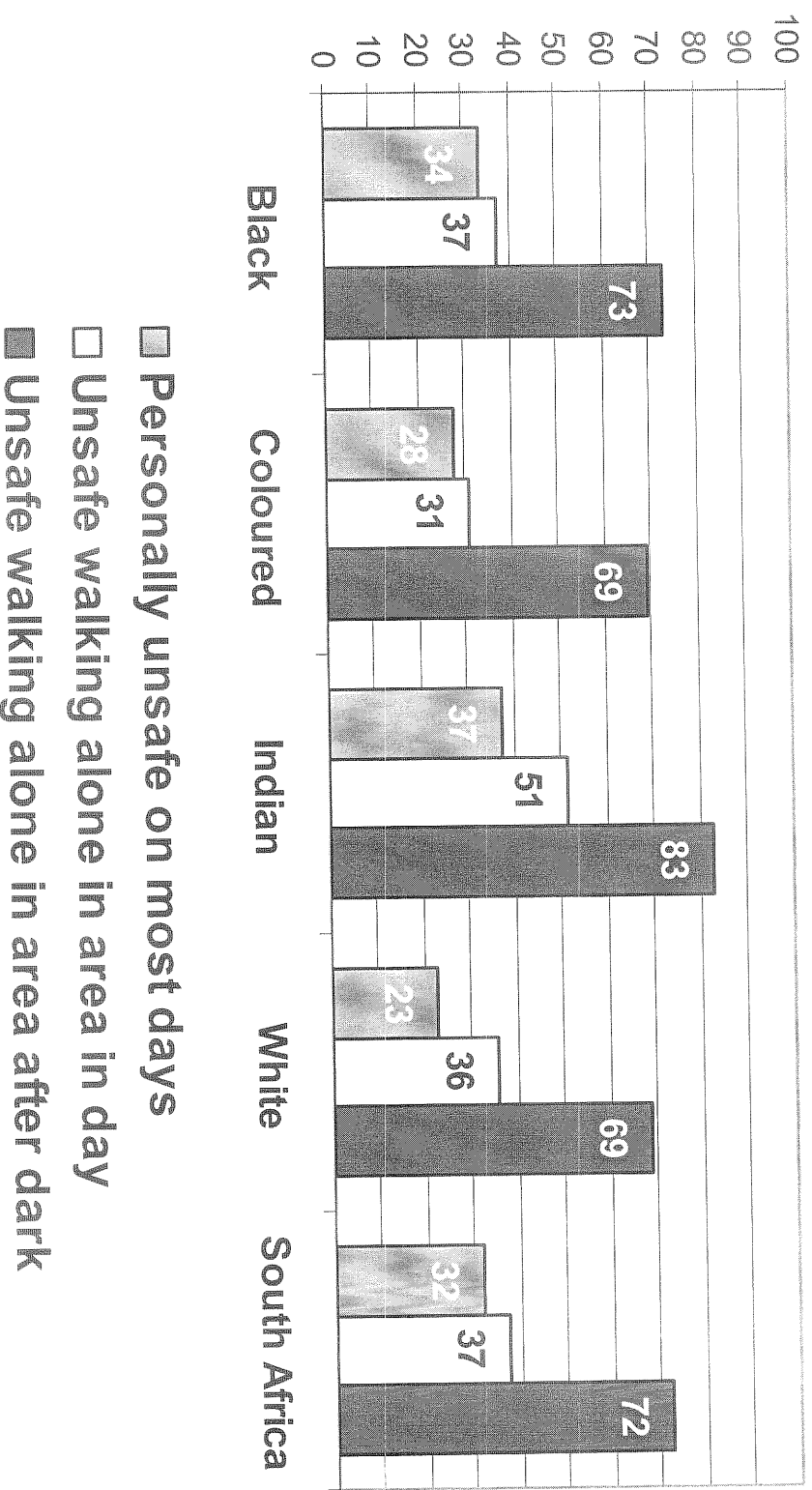
Age

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

Percentage of respondents' feeling personally unsafe by population group, 1991-2008



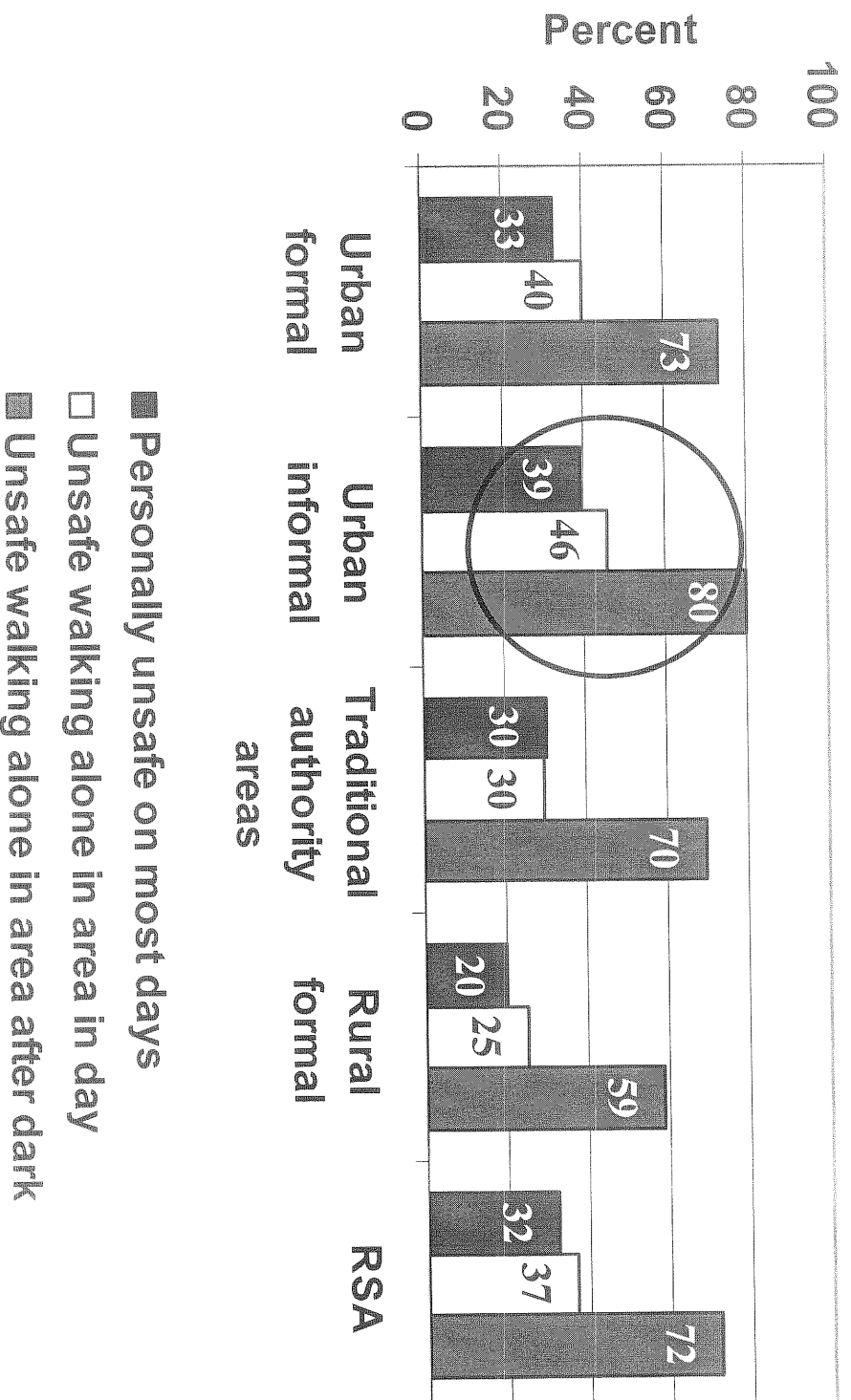
Percentage of respondents' feeling unsafe by population group, 2008



Socio-economic factors

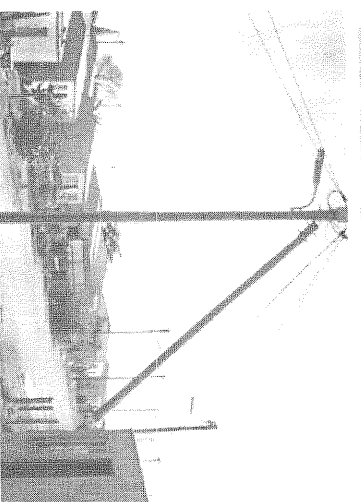
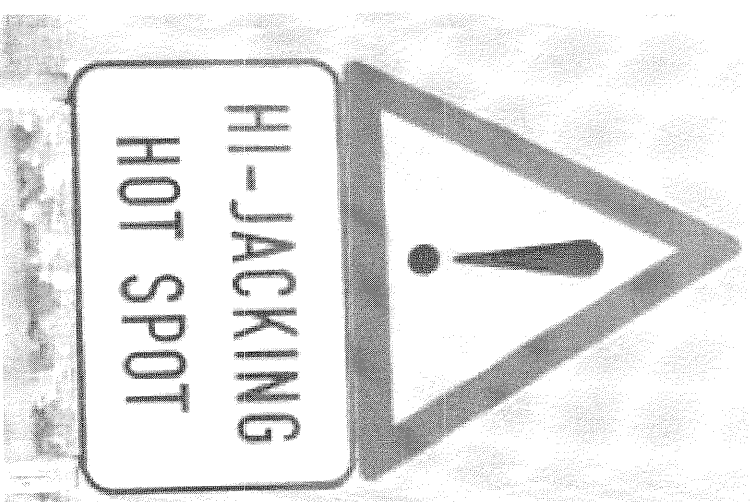
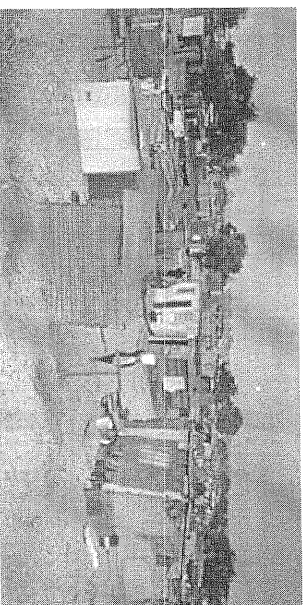
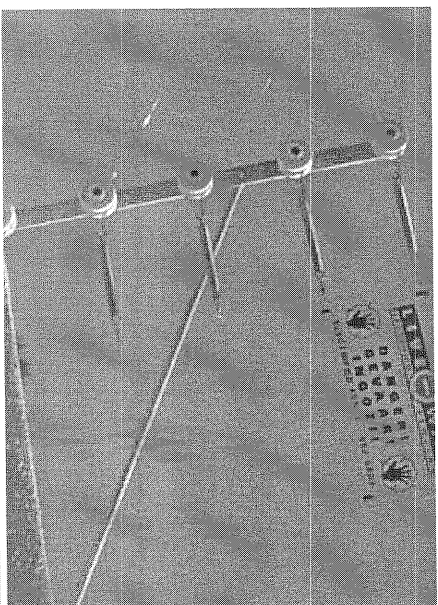
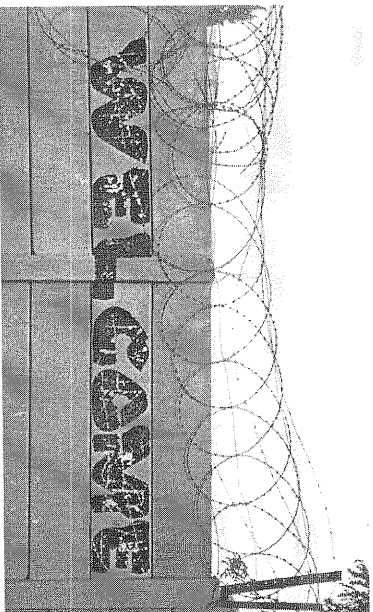
- # Although there is some ambiguity w.r.t fear and socio-economic status,
- # Evidence suggests that fear of crime
 - └ Is higher amongst middle class households,
 - └ Is related to employment status and
 - └ Adversely impacts on overall sense of personal wellbeing

Percentage of respondents' feeling unsafe by geographic type, 2008



Behavioural and attitudinal responses to fear of crime

©2006/07



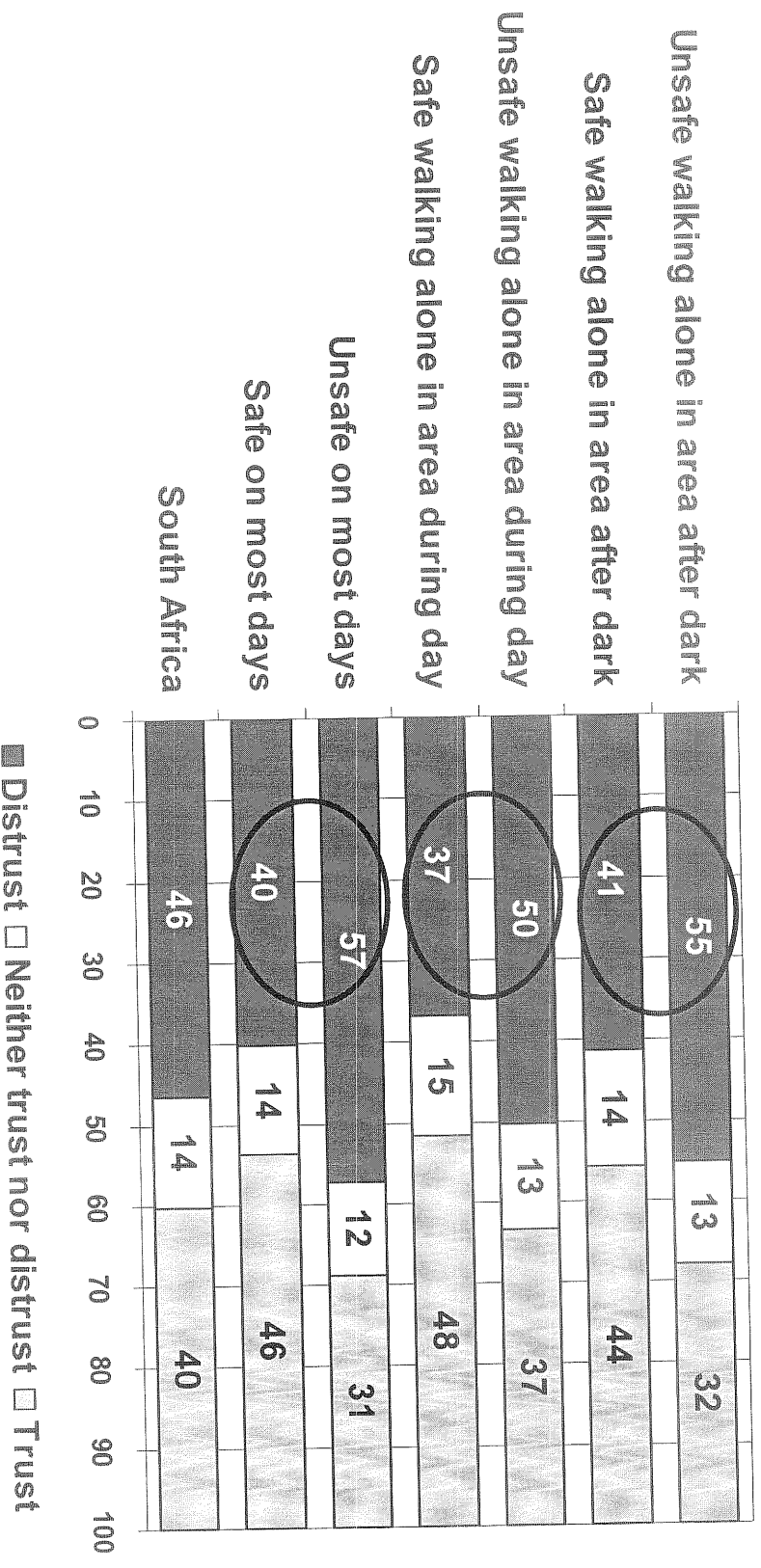
Percentage defining target hardening measures as 'essential' for all South Africans to have to enjoy an acceptable standard of living, 2006

Item	% saying item is 'essential'						
	Total	Safe on most days	Unsafe on most days	Safe during day	Unsafe during day	Safe after dark	Unsafe after dark
Street lighting	91	89	92	88	95	85	93
Having police on the streets in local area	77	76	80	75	81	71	80
A fence or wall around the property	71	68	76	70	72	64	74
Burglar bars in the house	64	62	67	63	68	59	67
A lock-up garage for vehicles	47	44	50	47	47	45	48
A burglar alarm system for the house	43	40	46	43	43	42	43
An armed response service for the house	31	29	32	30	33	30	31

Percentage possessing target hardening measures, 2006

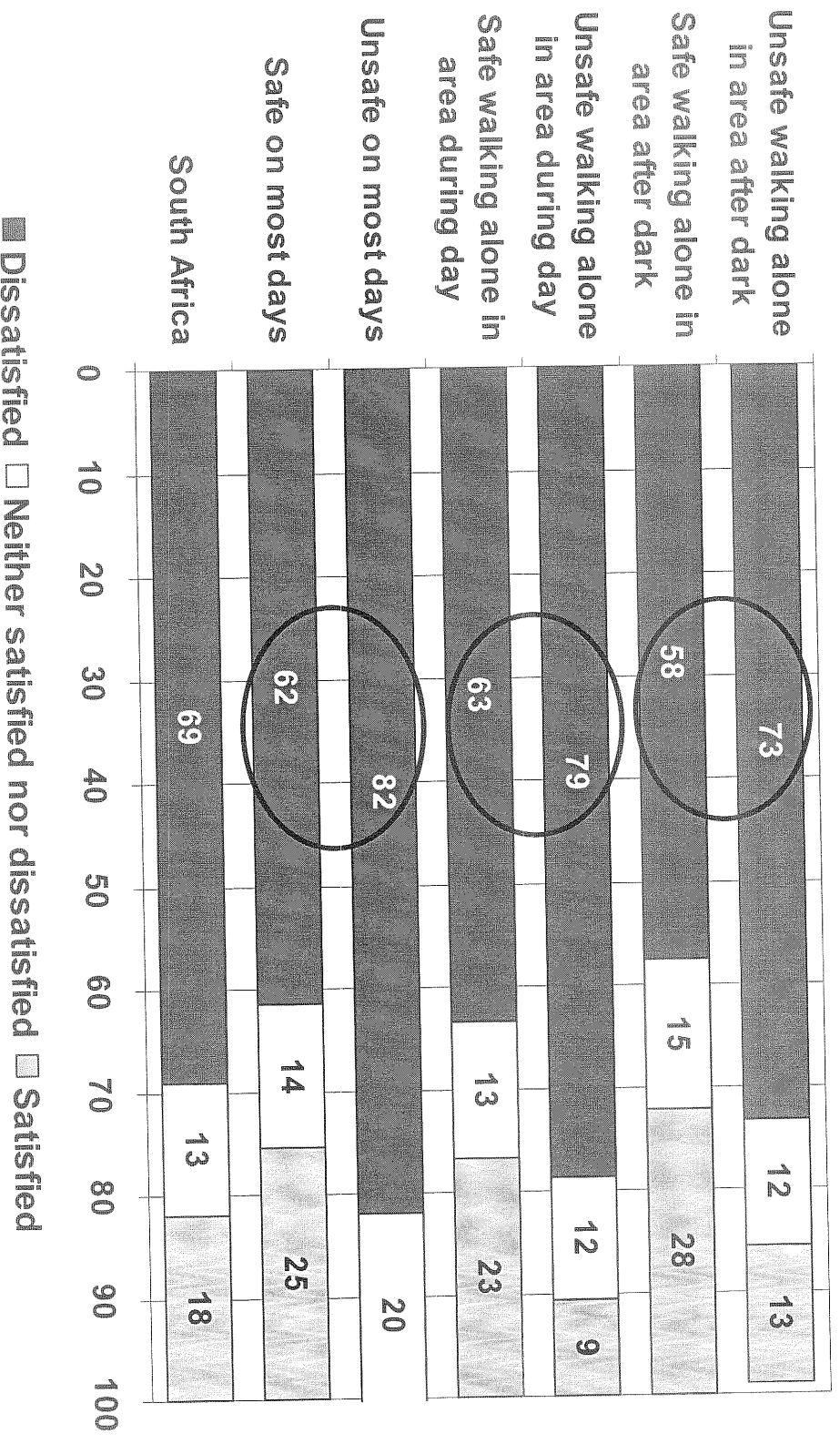
Item	% adults reporting that have the item						
	Total	Safe on most days	Unsafe on most days	Safe during day	Unsafe during day	Safe after dark	Unsafe after dark
Street lighting	51	52	51	50	51	52	49
Having police on the streets in local area	45	47	42	45	43	51	41
A fence or wall around the property	65	68	59	65	64	66	64
Burglar bars in the house	40	41	36	41	39	40	40
A lock-up garage for vehicles	22	24	18	23	20	24	21
A burglar alarm system for the house	12	13	11	13	12	14	12
An armed response service for the house	11	11	8	12	8	14	8

Levels of public trust in the police, by perceived feelings of safety, 2008



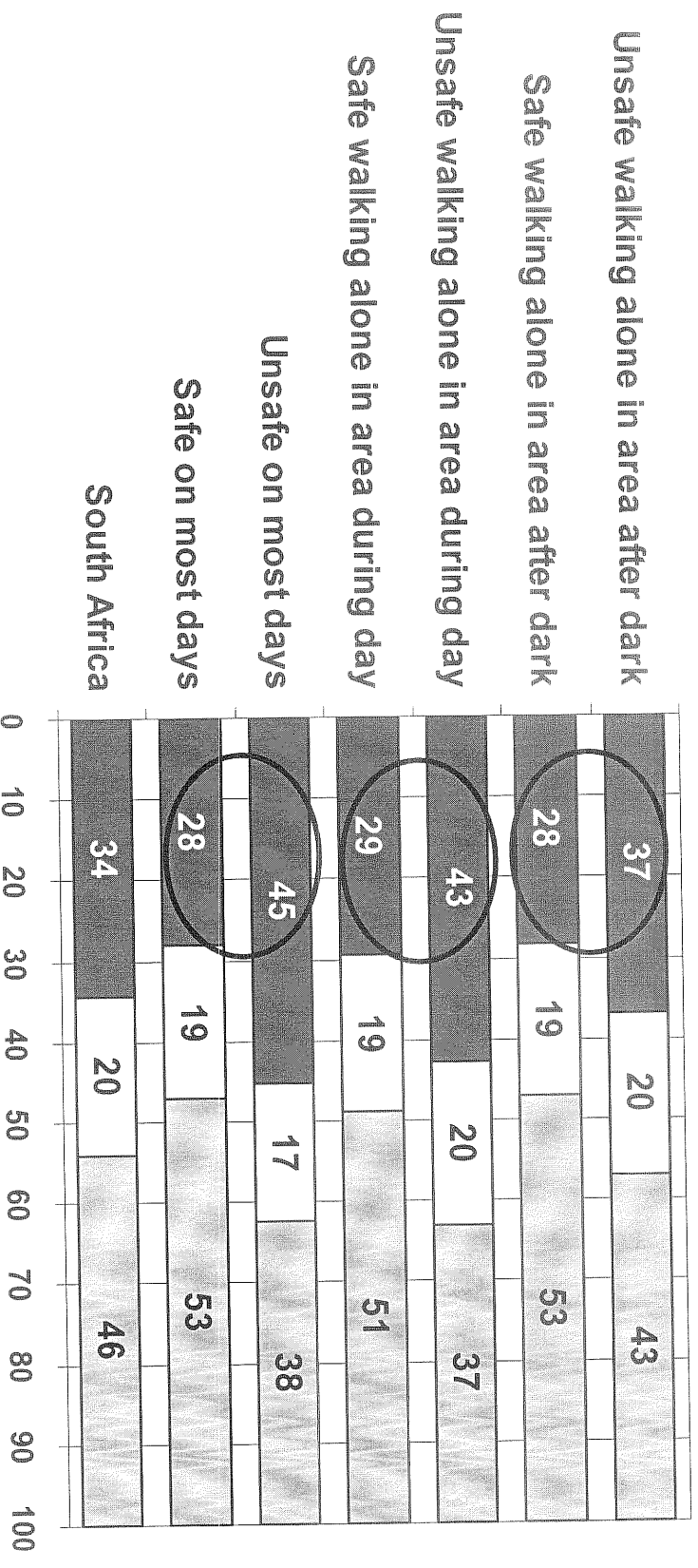
Mean trust scores significantly lower ($p < 0.05$) among those feeling unsafe relative to those feeling safe for all 3 global fear of crime measures

Satisfaction with government's efforts at reducing crime, by perceived feelings of safety, 2008



Mean satisfaction with the government's crime reduction efforts is significantly lower ($p < 0.05$) among those feeling unsafe relative to those feeling safe for all 3 fear of crime measures

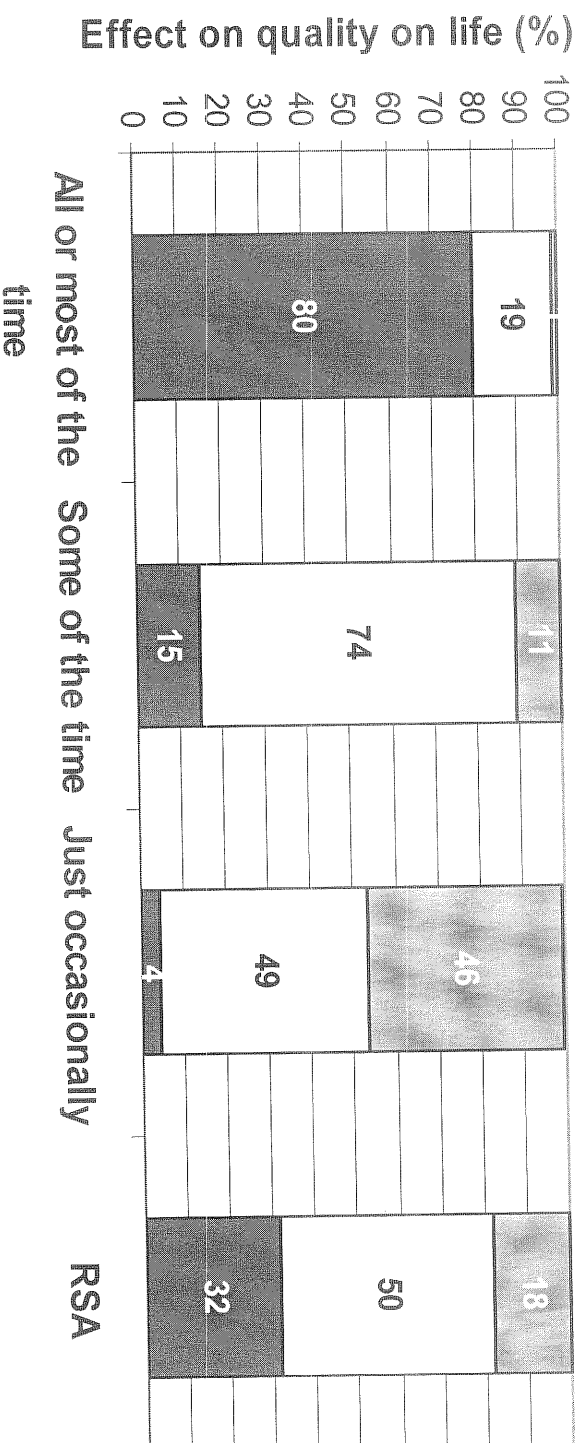
Life satisfaction, by perceived feelings of safety, 2008



Dissatisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Satisfied

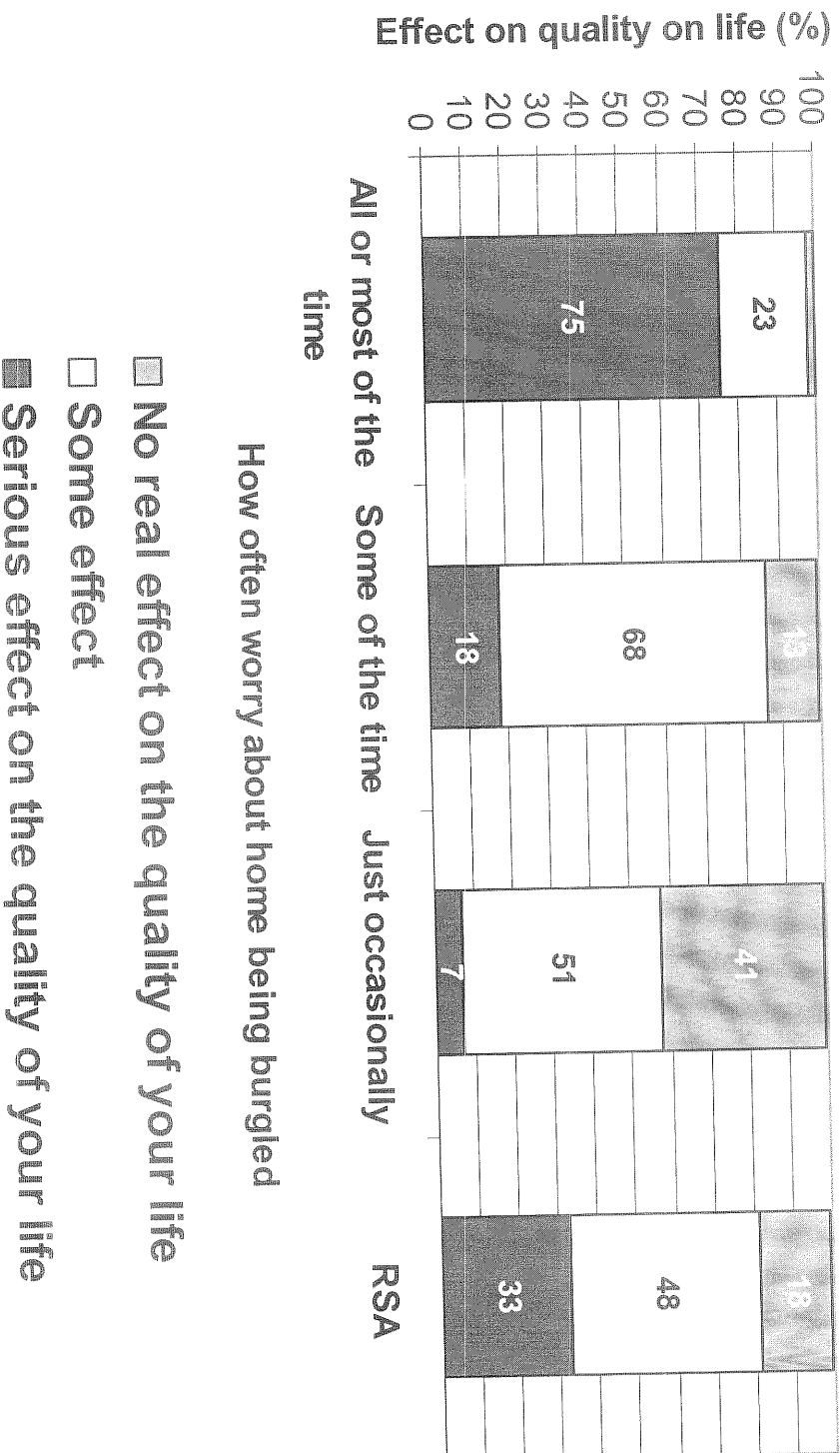
Mean life satisfaction scores significantly lower ($p < 0.05$) among those feeling unsafe relative to those feeling safe for all 3 fear of crime measures

Perceived impact of concern over being a victim of violent crime on personal quality of life, 2008



- No real effect on the quality of your life
- Some effect
- Serious effect on the quality of your life

Perceived impact of concern over home being burgled on personal quality of life, 2008



Conclusion: Age of Anxiety or Hope?

- # (1) **Despite some signs of improvement** since late 1990s...
 - # Deep-seated fears about personal and community safety held by a sizable share
 - # Insecurities not tempered resolute optimism regarding future prospects for SA and its people
- # (2) **YET...**influence of fear on police confidence, demand for public safety, social cohesion, personal wellbeing and quality of life, and to a limited extent satisfaction with the democratic system signifies that the **fear equation remains of considerable importance for policy discussion**
- # (3) Identifying, testing out and evaluating **strategies for reducing the fear of crime**
 - # Only by doing so can we expect to dislodge the shadow of anxiety that looms over the age of hope.

Conclusion (2): Age of Anxiety or Hope?

- # **Policy/political response:** strong political will in new gov administration to tackle crime and associated fear
- # Move from 'defensive' to 'offensive' policing (Burger, 2009)
 - # Concern with addressing perceptions and criticism that the government's policing approach was 'soft' on crime.
 - # May 2009: change of name of the **Department of Safety and Security** to the **Department of Police**
 - # **Strong talk:** 'war on crime'; 'shoot to kill'; 'tougher' approach to crime and criminals
- # Whether this new approach can succeed in simultaneously addressing high crime rates and allaying widespread anxieties about safety remains to be seen

Parting reflections

‘Everywhere I went, the issue of crime was raised, alongside issues like unemployment and the cost of living... When the people talk to me I can see the fear in their eyes and hear the desperation in their voices’

President **JACOB ZUMA**, reflecting on his experiences during pre-election public consultations, *The Star*, 29 Dec 2008.

‘We cannot claim the happiness that comes with freedom if communities live in fear, closeted behind walls and barbed wire, ever anxious in their houses, on the streets and on our roads.’

Former President **THABO MBEKI**, in the annual State of the Nation Address, 2007

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

TREVOR MANUEL, Minister in the Presidency: National Planning Commission, Mar 2007