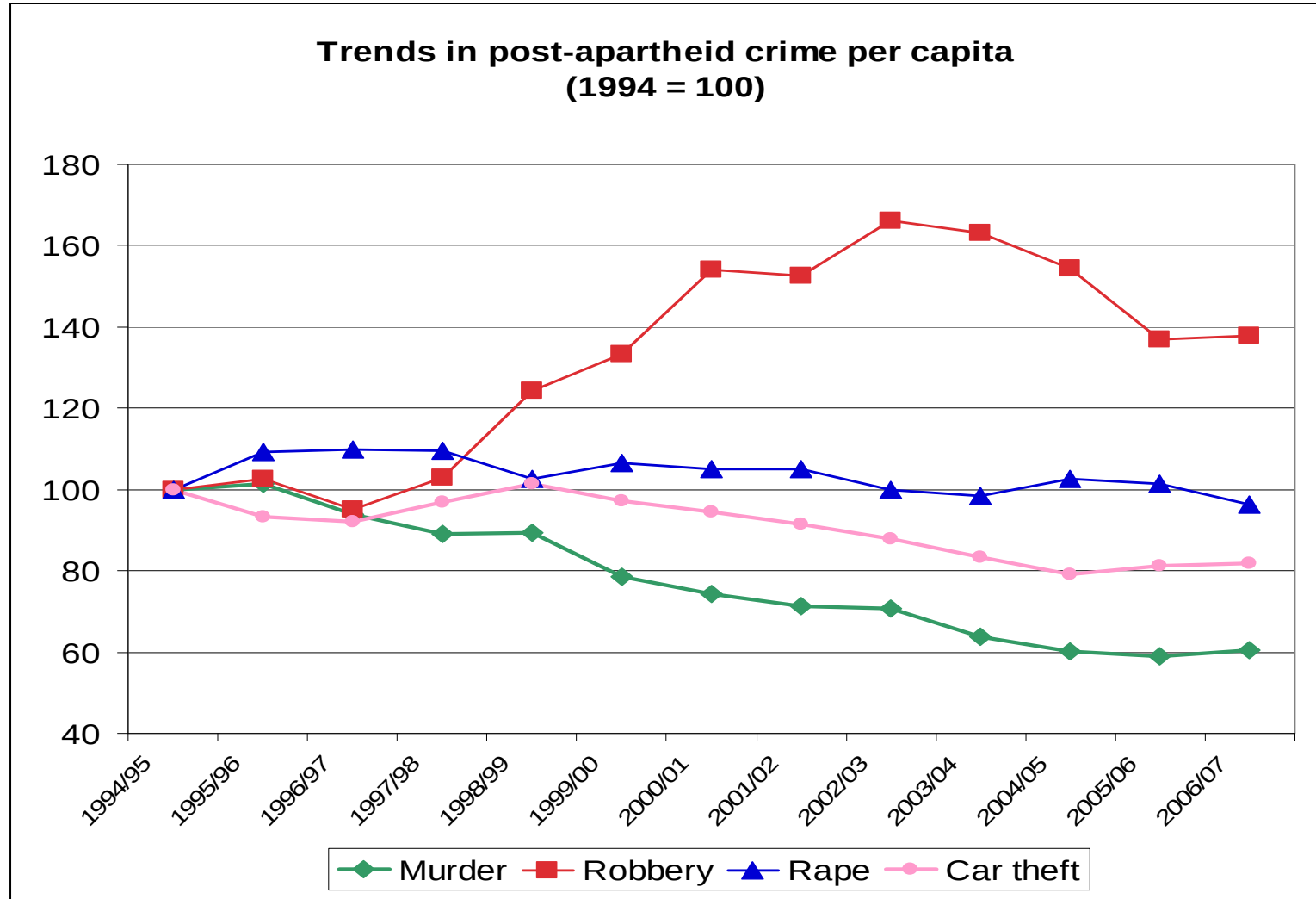

Violent crime trends since 1994

How many South Africans are robbed every year?

Antony Altbeker
8 May 2008

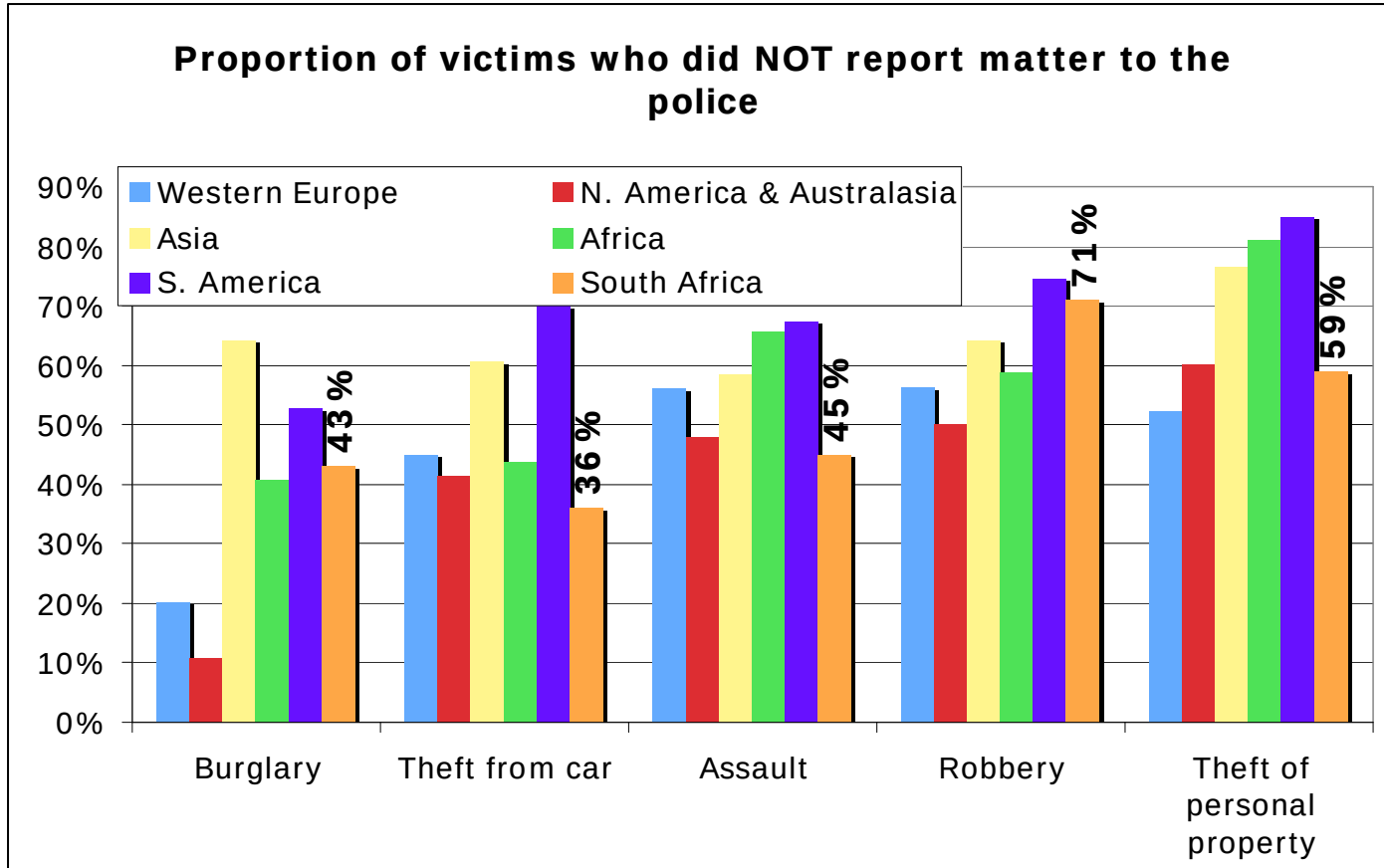
A tale of two trends

Although per capita murder rates have fallen by 40%, ...
... per capita, rates of RECORDED robbery have risen by 40%



A lot of crime is not reported (in SA and elsewhere)

Comparing SAPS and victimisation data (2003)				
	SAPS	Victim survey	Implied reporting / recording rate	Did you report?
Murder	0.04%	0.05%	85%	N/A
Assault	1.17%	2.20%	53%	55%
Housebreaking	0.65%	1.88%	34%	57%
Robbery	0.41%	2.00%	21%	29%
Car theft	0.19%	0.28%	69%	97%



Is the rise in robbery just a matter of increased reporting/recording?

Reasons to think that rise in robbery IS a of increased reporting and recording

The murder rate has decreased and murder is well-reported and recorded

Ditto for car theft

Some improvement in physical accessibility of the police, leading to increased reporting

Some improvement in police legitimacy, leading to increased reporting

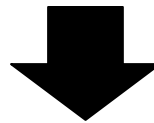
Reasons to think that the rise in robbery IS NOT a result of increased reporting and recording

Survey data does not show a consistent rise in reporting of robbery

Reporting of rape has NOT risen

Public perception suggests FAR more fear and may be a response to rise in robbery rates

Robbery rates have risen in areas that were well-served by policing in the past



Hard to believe that robbery rates are not substantially higher today than they were in the mid-1990s.

Accounting for the divergent trends

What explains the decline in murder

End of political violence

Social and political stability

Improvements in quality of life of poorest

Policing of firearms (?)

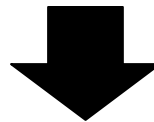
What explains the rise in robbery

Urbanisation

Demographics

Low conviction rates

Displacement from non-violent property crime

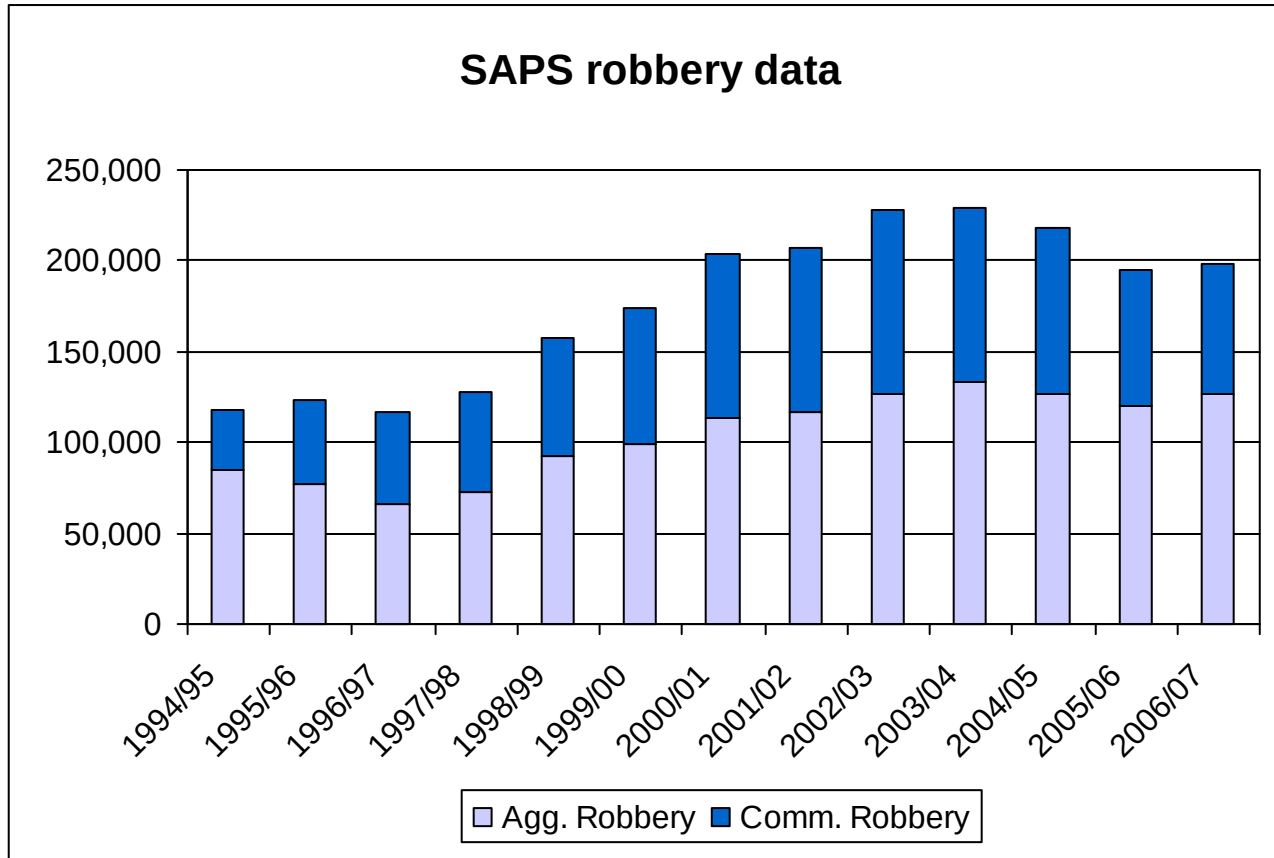


Hard to believe that robbery rates are not substantially higher today than they were in the mid-1990s.

Violent crime trends since 1994

How many South Africans are robbed every year?

SAPS



**= 417 per
100,000**

**This understates the
true level of
victimisation
because ...**

- Under-reporting by victims
- Under-recording by police
- Multiple victims

NCVS (1)

**Robbery victimisation
rate of 4%**

- Amounts to 4,000 per 100,000 (or 10 times the SAPS figure)
- Is double the result for 2003



This is bound to be tomorrow's headline

NCVS (2)

**Did the robbery rate
really double in five
years?**

- Sample size issues
- Issue of the household v individual crime
 - Change in framing of question (?)
- If you exclude household figures from 2007, then rise is much, much smaller (from 2% to 2.1%, rather than from 2% to 4%)
- If you do include household crimes (in 2003 and/or 2007), then you can't just add them to the individual's direct experience when calculating the victimisation rate



**The victimisation survey almost certainly overstates the
true victimisation rate for robbery**

A friendly wager....

Tomorrow's headline will be about the doubling of the robbery rate