



Africa Criminal Justice Reform
Organisation pour la Réforme de la Justice Pénale en Afrique
Organização para a Reforma da Justiça Criminal em África



Determining the Policing Needs and Priorities of the Western Cape

Data and trends on the policing of drugs
Implications for future policing

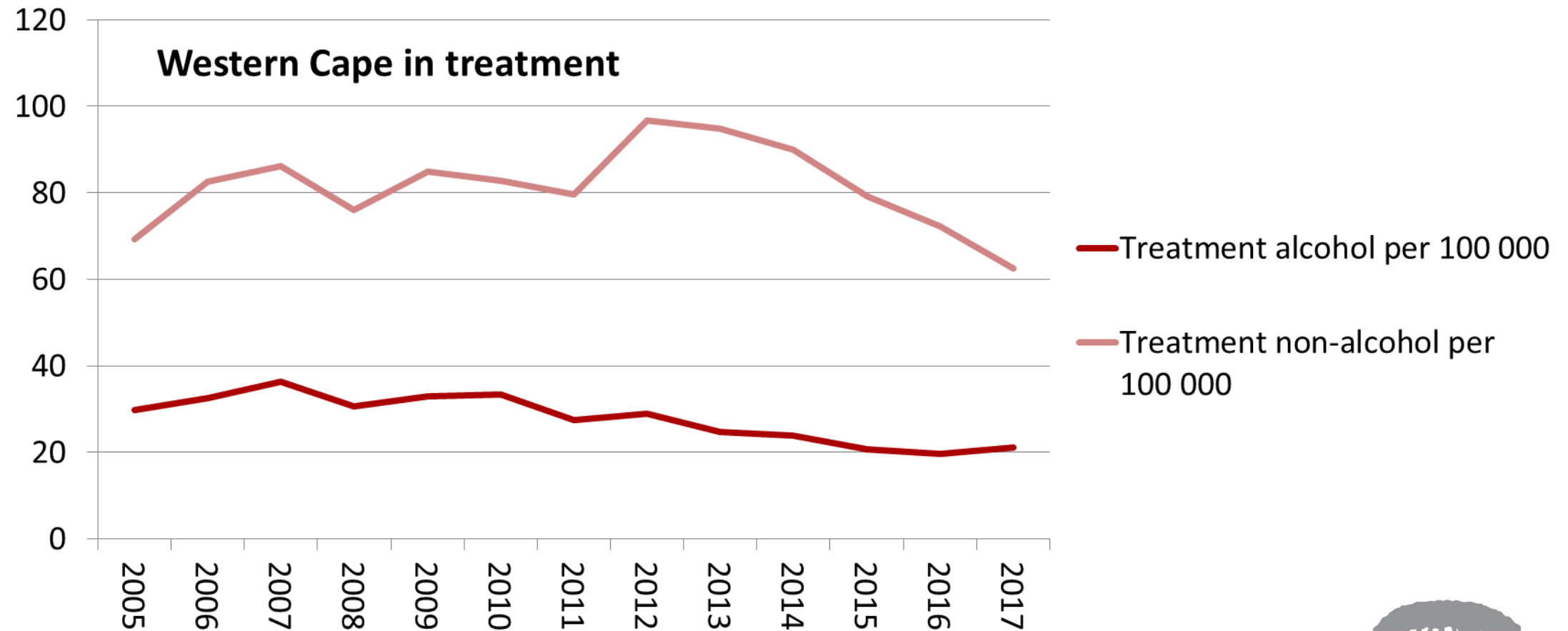
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The problem of drugs

- There are users, misusers, abusers – and traders.
- Harms caused by drugs range: some affect only the individual to those affecting whole communities.
- Misusers, abusers (“problematic users”) and traders cause a range of harms.
- Responses to drug harms need to come from individuals, families, communities, social development and health departments – and law enforcement.
- What is the most appropriate role of policing in relation to drug harms?

Substance abuse treatment



Theorised benefits of drug policing in relation to crime and violence

- Arrests and convictions remove problematic users (who may act out while under the influence, or steal to fund their habit) and traders from the community for the period of their incarceration.
- Incarceration may break patterns of misuse or abuse.
- Possibility of incarceration may deter some non-users from using.
 - Unlikely to deter abusers.
- Confiscation of products from the community prevents easy access.
- Incarceration of sellers disrupts supply.

Theorised harms of drug policing

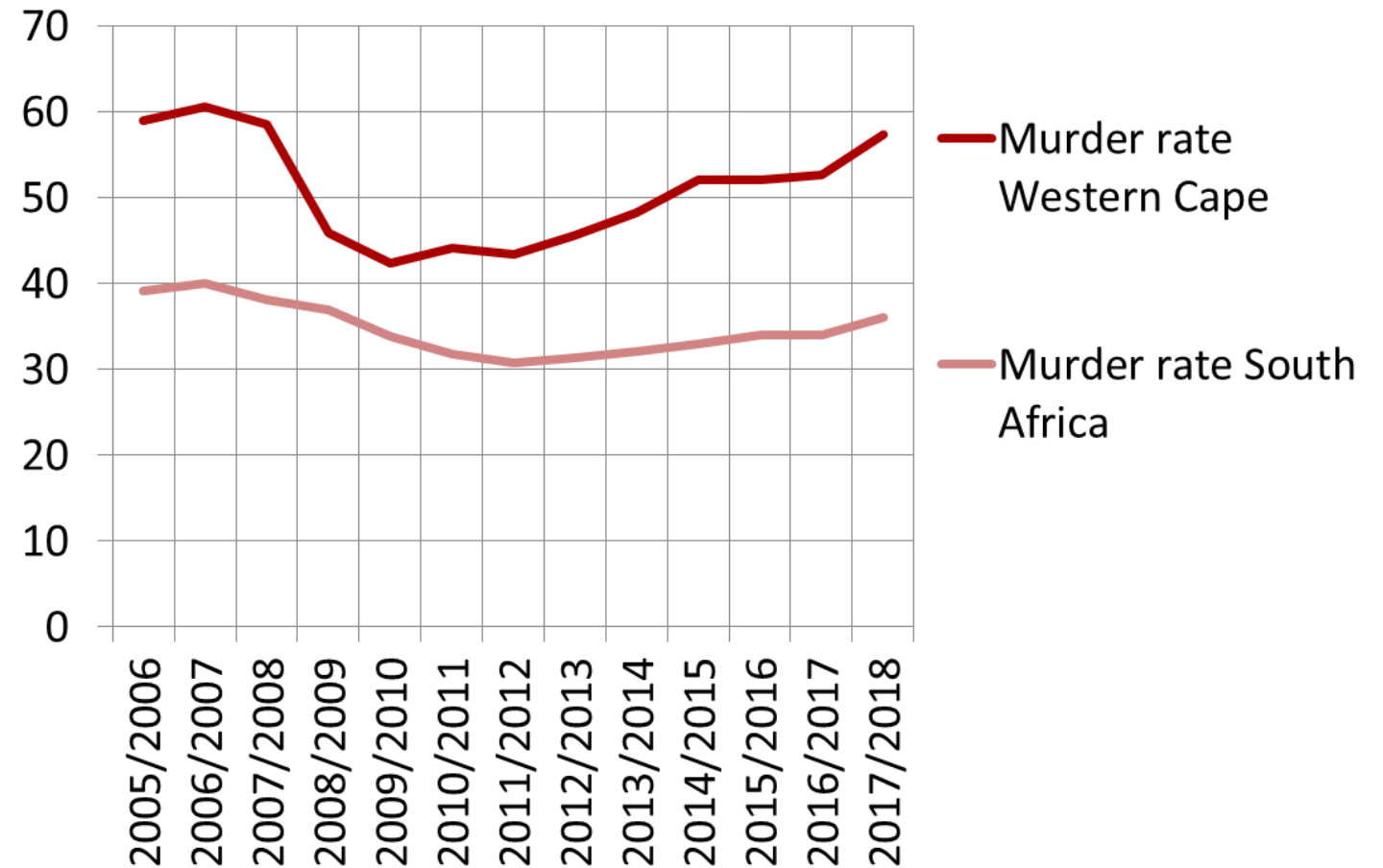
- Arrests of users (vs problematic users) undermines trust in police, especially when other serious crimes go unpoliced.
- Fear of arrest prevents calls for help from users at risk of violence or violence in progress.
- Arrests, convictions, incarceration of users consumes public resources which could be used in relation to other serious crimes.
- Incarceration exposes users to criminal networks.
- Social and economic impact of incarceration of non-problematic users on incomes, families and households, even if for short periods.
 - Associated criminogenic effects of jobs and income losses, impact of permanent criminal record.
- Disruption of criminal drug networks leads to violence and corruption.

Exploring the relationship between drug policing and violence

- Complicating factors:
 - Between 1995 and 2017 population of the province grew by 74%
 - Thus rates per 100 000 must be employed in analysis
 - Measures of violence in crime reports heavily influenced by reporting rates
 - Evidence that reporting rates have deteriorated
 - Thus murder rate is best measure of violent crime rates
 - Drug policing is a proxy indicator for pro-active policing – it is measuring both drug policing and pro-active policing
 - When investigating effects of drug policing, proactive policing effects likely also to be shaping the trends
 - Thus this must be borne in mind in analysis.

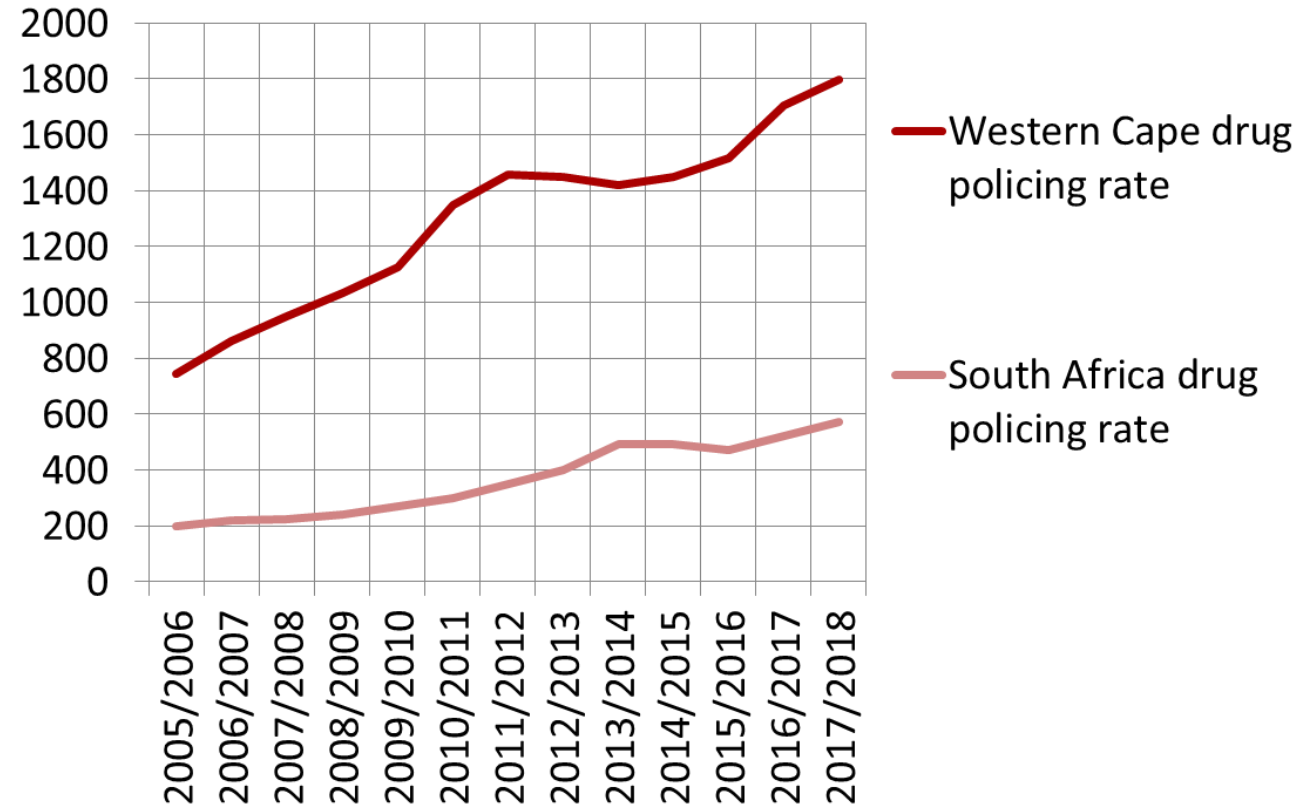
Long term violence trends - murder rate

- Murder is the most reliable indicator of violent crime trends
 - Reduction in provincial murder rate until 2009/10
 - Two years ahead of national trend



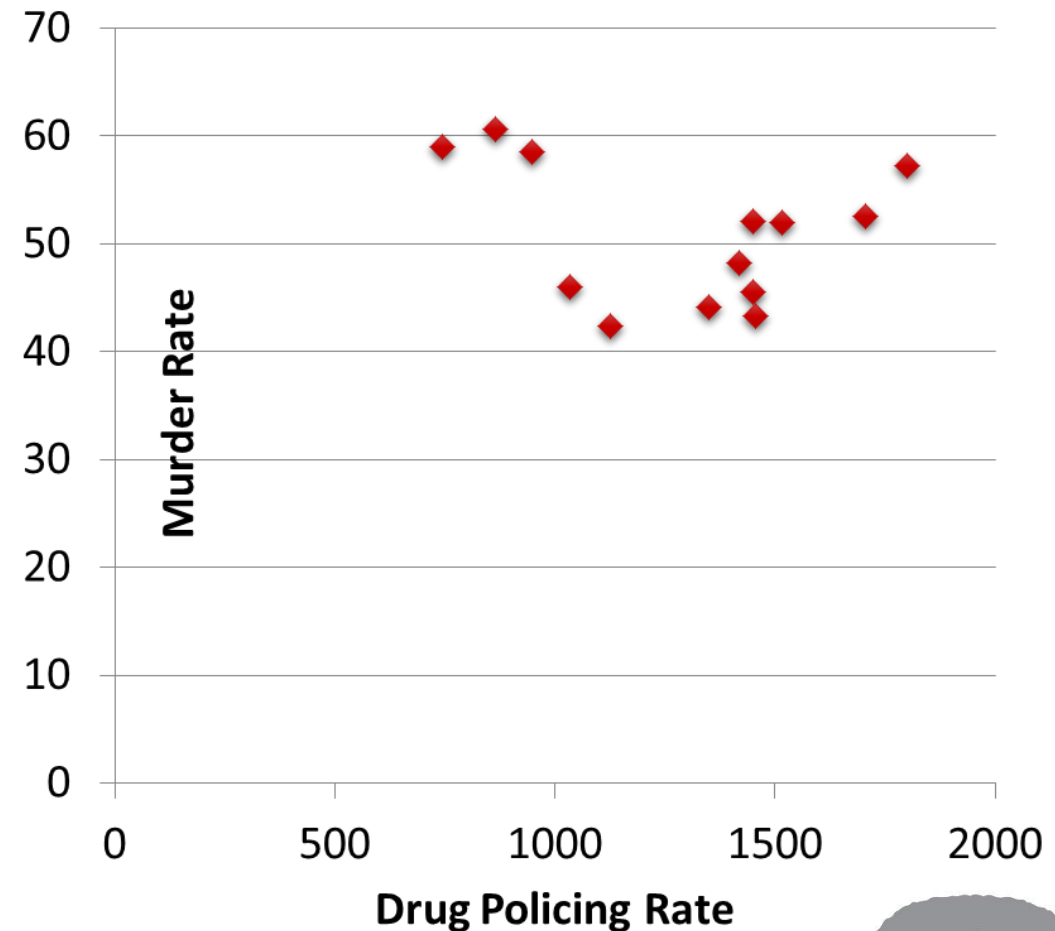
Long term drug policing trends rate

- Exponential increase in drug policing rate – especially in Western Cape
 - Western Cape now polices almost 2 drug crimes for every 1000 people per year or 1 for every 500 per year



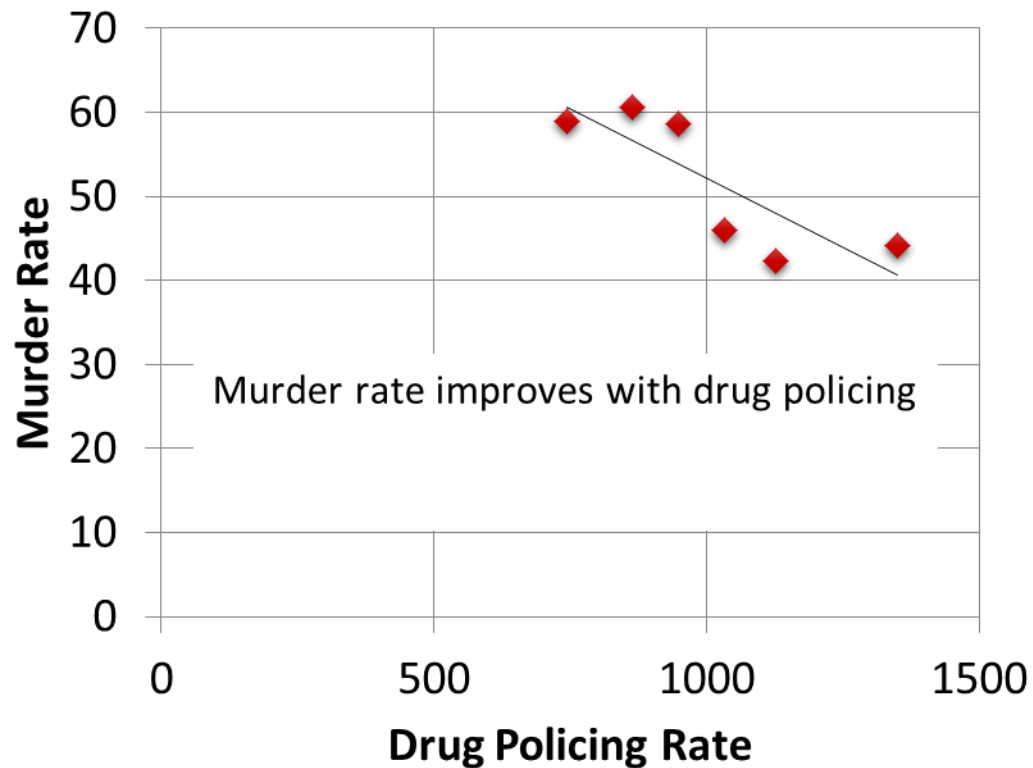
Relationship between drug policing rate and murder rate

- No clear overall trend for the whole period
- No statistically significant relationship
 - However suggestions of two distinguishable periods
 - Separating out two period results in two almost diametrically opposite statistically significant relationships

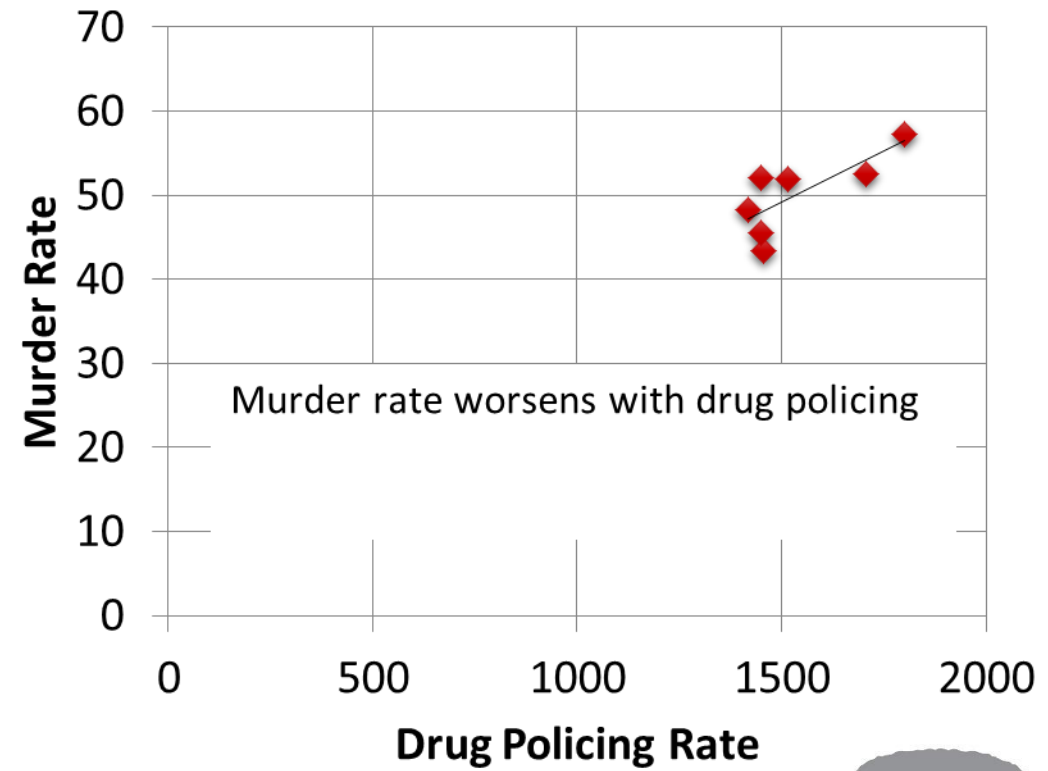


Relationship between drug policing rate and murder rate in Western Cape

2005/06 to 2010/11



2011/12 to 2017/18



Recent trends suggests that in recent years harms of drug policing have overtaken benefits

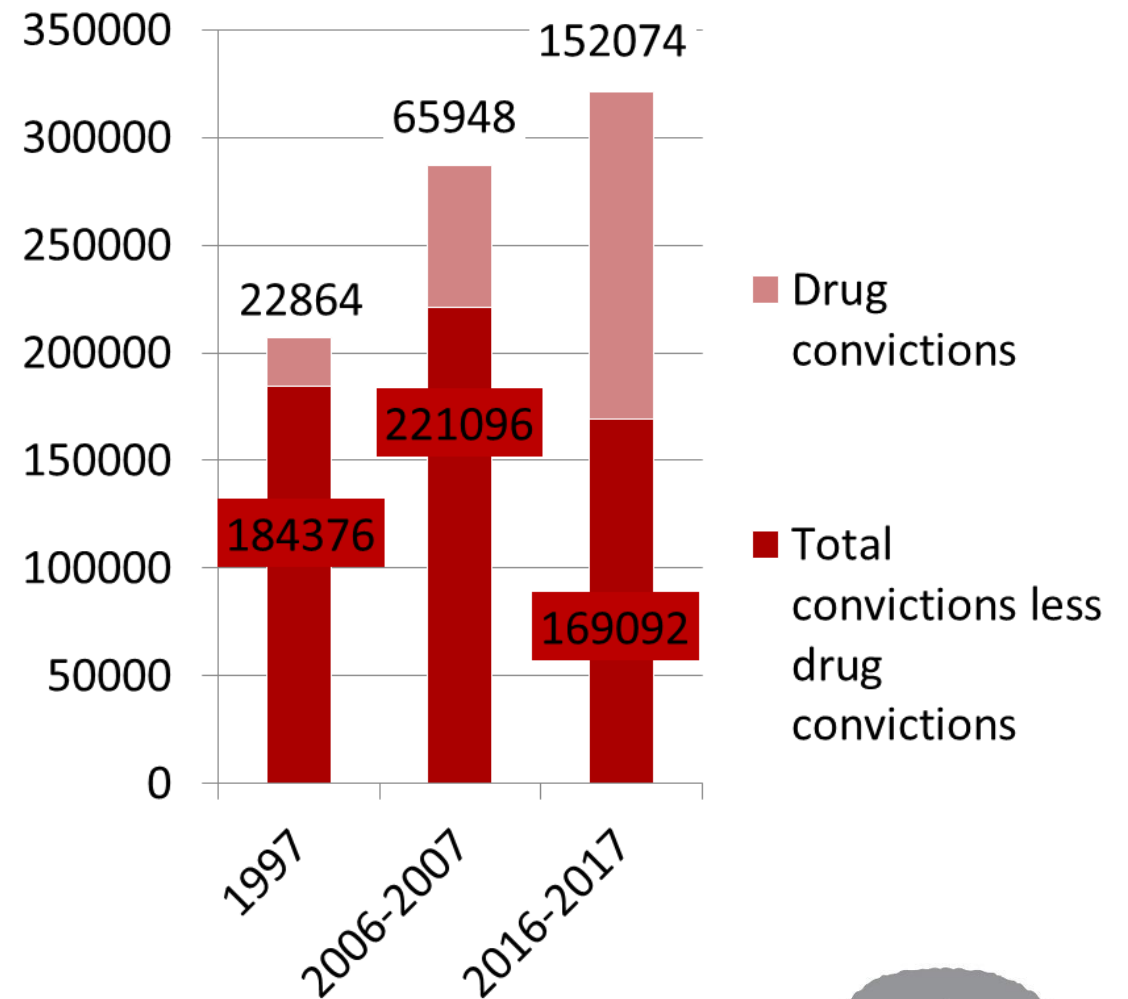
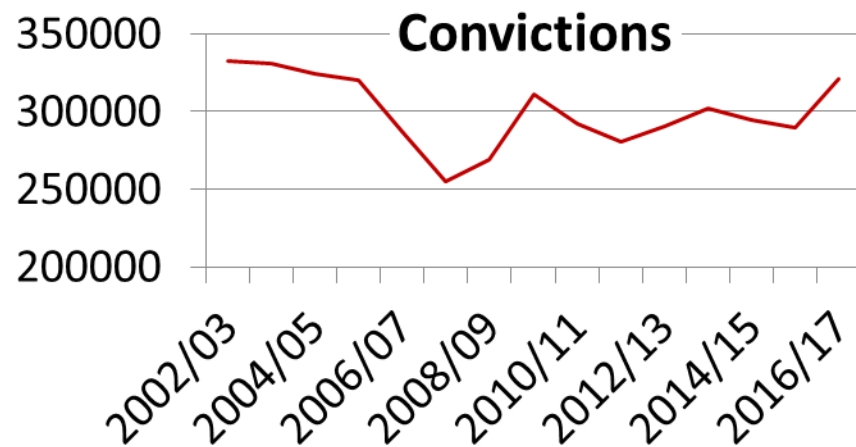
- Why? Evidence suggests that:
 - Drug policing now consumes disproportionate criminal justice system resources.
 - Drug policing is mostly in relation to cannabis, the least harmful of all drugs including alcohol.
 - Drug policing is leading to large-scale exposure to correctional environment.
 - Inconsistent drug policing likely to exacerbate inequality and undermine trust.



"LUCKY FOR YOU MATE, WE'RE ON A DRUGS BUST"

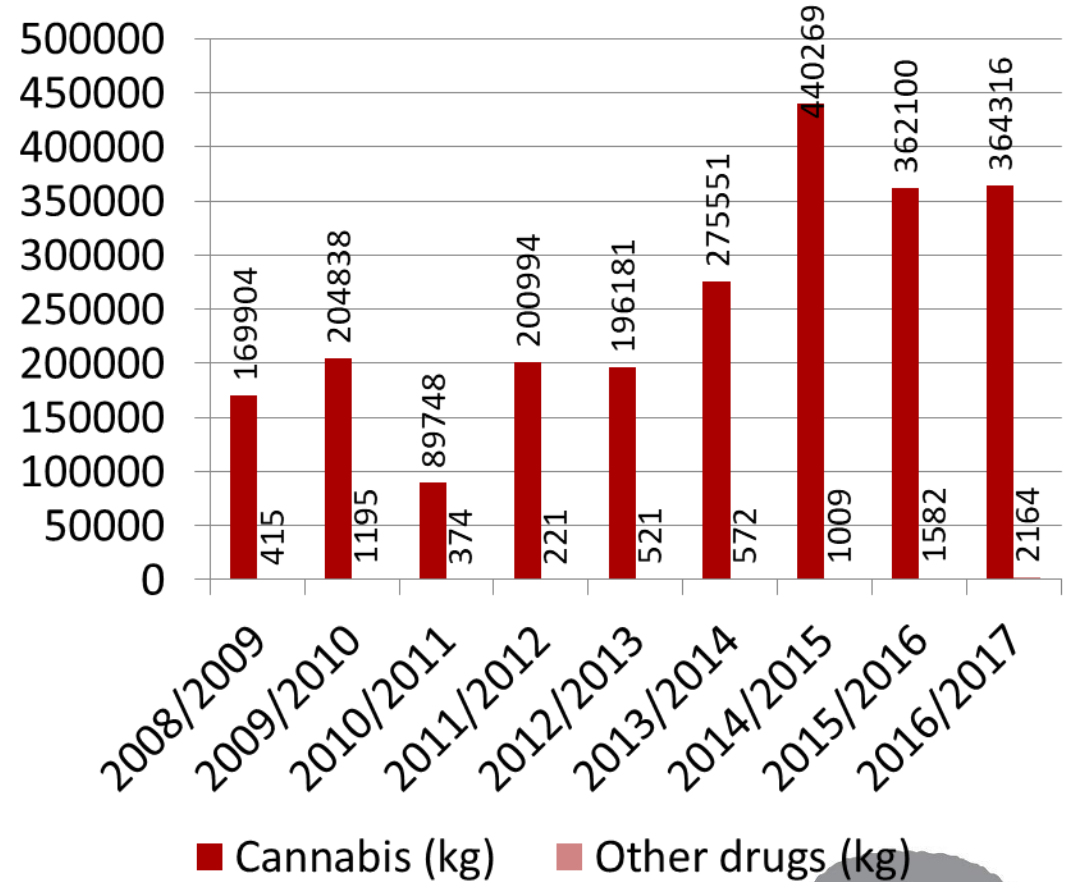
Drug policing consumes criminal justice system resources

- Western Cape drives national figures on drugs (35%-45% of all reported drug crime from Western Cape).
- Increase in drug convictions at the expense of other convictions.
- Fewer total convictions than in 2002/3.



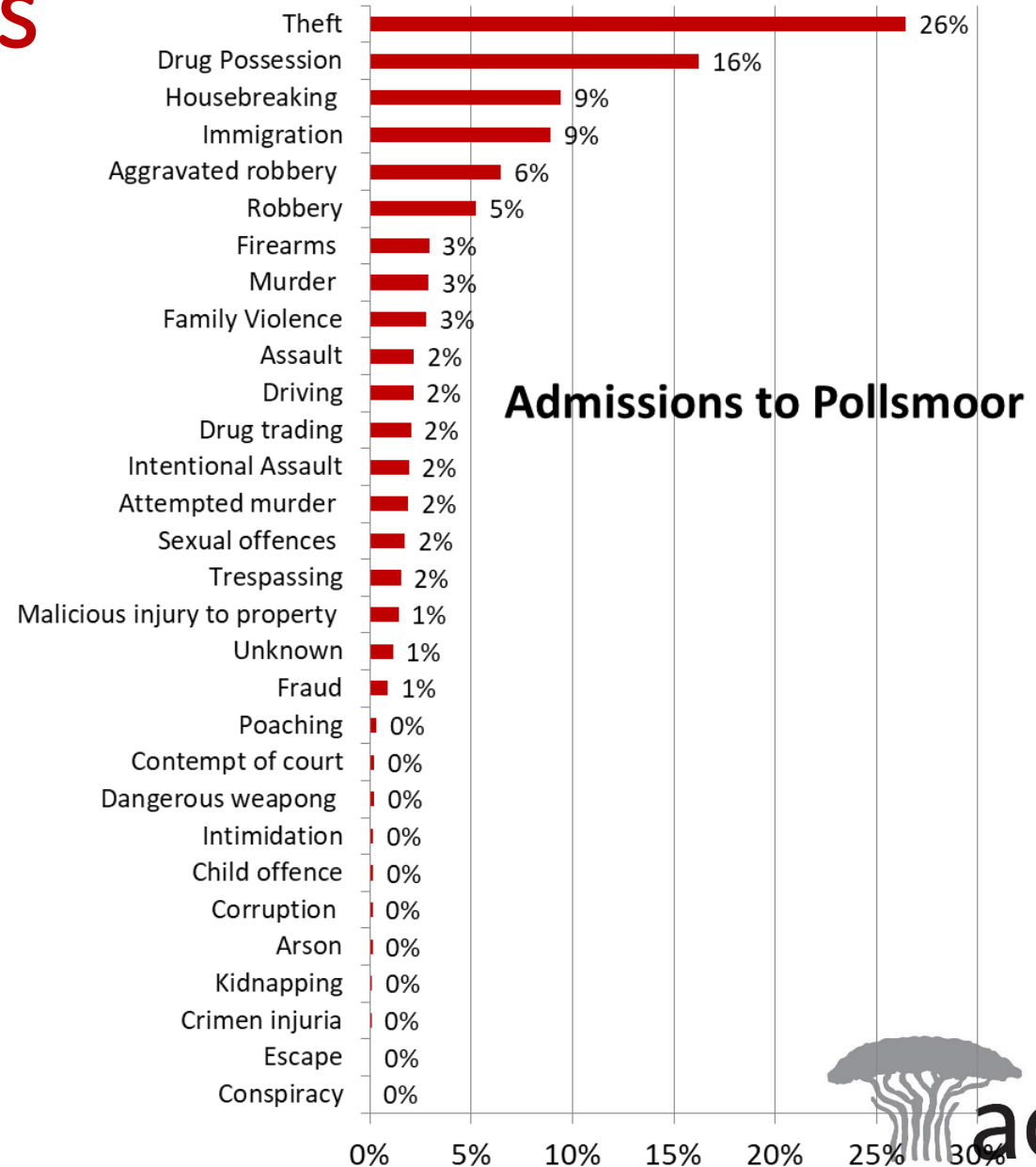
Drug policing confiscations emphasize cannabis

- By mass, from 2012/2013 to 2016/2017 cannabis comprises more than 99% of all confiscations of drugs.
- Confiscations of all other drugs expressed per reported drug crime is between 2 grams and 7 grams per reported drug crime.
- Confiscations of cannabis around 1kg per reported drug crime.



Drug policing increases exposure to prisons

- Western Cape has 11% of SA population but contributes 19% to remand and 16% to sentenced populations.
 - 1 in 12 in custody at Pollsmoor for drug possession.
- Data suggests 1 in 50 adult men admitted to remand in Western Cape each year.
 - 1 in 6 admissions on remand to Pollsmoor are for drug possession
 - Median duration of detention at Pollsmoor for drug possession 24 days, average duration 51 days.



Drug policing inequality

- 80% of drug possession remand in custody at Pollsmoor emanate from just 6 police stations:
 - Cape Town
 - Mitchells
 - Manenberg
 - Woodstock
 - Grassy Park and
 - Philippi
- Only in Woodstock is there an association between drug policing and murder in the “correct” direction
- Philippi and Mitchells Plain in “wrong” direction

Recommendation

- Drug policing should
 - Address drug harms
 - Be focussed on requests from the community
 - “community-reported drug crime”
 - Prioritise problematic use
 - Not be based on numeric targets
 - Not .