Police and Society: Emerging Dimensions in South Africa

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Abstract
Since the early 1990s, policing in South Africa have been confronted with specific dilemmas. They include demand for increased street policing, complaints about the increase in violent crimes and the growth in private security provisioning. It is within this context that the researcher used qualitative data from primary and secondary sources to study the emerging dimensions from society. Purposive sampling was used to select 30 respondents for interviews during 2018 from the Tshwane district in Gauteng. The results showed the need for more collaboration with the community and other stakeholders to improve street policing, a commitment to tackle and reduce violent crimes and defining the role of private security companies, particularly in the areas of crime prevention and response.

Keywords: Collaboration, Democracy, Policing, Prevention, Violence.

Introduction
In 1829, Robert Peel devised a policing system for the London Metropolitan Police Force. This new policing system identified with the legal system, which respected national sovereignty, restraint of procedural regularities and guarantees of civil liberties (Miller, 1975). In London, the metropolitan policing system achieved remarkable success in controlling crime within a short period of time (Verma, 2005). As South Africa approaches the first quarter of the century of her most revered constitutional democracy, citizens of South Africa are asking for an improvement in street policing, reduction of violent crimes as well as defining the role of private security companies, particularly in the areas of crime prevention and response (Marriah, Soobramoney & Somduth, 2015; Civilian Secretariat for Police, 2016). The purpose of this study was to

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address the dilemmas confronting policing by finding ways to improve street policing, reducing violent crimes and defining the role of private security companies in pluralistic street policing.

Present Situation

The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment (Kelling, Pate, Dieckman & Brown, 1974) was the first to find that general mobile patrols, reactions and investigations do not actually reassure citizens. General patrolling of our streets with large numbers of police officials and vehicles does not reduce crime; it merely displaces it. Different from the Kansas City generalized patrols which tried to create “uniform police visibility” the Minneapolis experiment focused on patrolling small, tightly defined geographic "hot spots" of crime. This crime “hot spot” focused approach showed that police patrols of adequate duration could have a deterrent effect on crime. The experiment also revealed that lesser crime complaints were reported from these hot spot areas during the duration of the patrols (Sherman & Weisburd, 1995).

Crime has always been present in society – and probably always will be – although the patterns of crime have changed significantly over time. Violent crimes have not changed much over the years, as people have always fought each other, stolen each other’s property, abused alcohol and drugs, and generally engaged in various forms of antisocial behaviour and non-compliance (Edwards, 2011). These crimes occur in the vicinity of the streets and public places. They include such offences as robbery, burglary, theft of and from vehicles, drugs and alcohol abuse, prostitution, as well as other miscellaneous thefts and assaults arising from violent incidents.

It has been customary to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of policing by means of annual statistics, annual reports and other methods that have no real scientific basis, but are indicators of performance. Although statistics are important for analysing crime trends, as well as vulnerabilities of particular groups and risk factors, it is necessary to mention that a decrease in the number of reported crimes does not necessarily reflect a decrease in the number of incidents of crime. This is especially important to keep in mind when it comes to assessing the prevalence of violent crimes in South Africa (Civilian Secretariat for Police, 2016).

The researcher felt that it was important to capture this information from a documentary study. Violent crimes are those crimes where victims themselves are the target, or where they are targeted for their property. It is important to know which violent crimes are on the increase. Table1 and Table 2 were designed by the researcher and populated with statistics from the crime situation report (SAPS 2016a; SAPS 2018)

Violent Crime in 2008 to 2012

The total in Table 1 shows a gradual decrease of violent crimes from 2008/2009 to 2012/ 2013, with the highest levels of violent crime recorded in the 2008/2009 period. There is a decrease of Murder and Attempted Murder and the other four (4) categories. Despite the decline in all the categories of violent crimes, the baseline figure still remained at a very high level and has not reduced from the 600,000 baseline, producing an average of 54 per 100,000 of the population (SAPS 2016a; SAPS, 2018).
Table 1. Statistics on violent crimes during 2008–2012

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>18 084</td>
<td>16 767</td>
<td>15 893</td>
<td>15 354</td>
<td>16 213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>18 140</td>
<td>17 247</td>
<td>15 360</td>
<td>14 730</td>
<td>16 236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assault GBH</td>
<td>202328</td>
<td>203807</td>
<td>19 7470</td>
<td>19 1612</td>
<td>18 5050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robbery with aggravating circumstances</td>
<td>120920</td>
<td>113 200</td>
<td>101 039</td>
<td>100 769</td>
<td>105 488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common assault</td>
<td>190 709</td>
<td>194 922</td>
<td>184 103</td>
<td>180 165</td>
<td>171 653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common robbery</td>
<td>58 764</td>
<td>56 993</td>
<td>54 4442</td>
<td>52 556</td>
<td>53 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>678 142</td>
<td>669 928</td>
<td>633 228</td>
<td>615 935</td>
<td>608 724</td>
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Violent Crime in 2013 to 2018

Table 2. Statistics on violent crimes during 2013–2018

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>17023</td>
<td>17805</td>
<td>18 673</td>
<td>19 016</td>
<td>20 336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>16989</td>
<td>17 537</td>
<td>18 127</td>
<td>18 205</td>
<td>18 233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault GBH</td>
<td>182 333</td>
<td>18 2556</td>
<td>18 2933</td>
<td>17 0616</td>
<td>16 7352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery with aggravating circumstances</td>
<td>118963</td>
<td>129 045</td>
<td>132 527</td>
<td>140 956</td>
<td>138 364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common assault</td>
<td>166 081</td>
<td>161 486</td>
<td>16 4958</td>
<td>15 6450</td>
<td>15 6243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common robbery</td>
<td>53 505</td>
<td>54 927</td>
<td>54 1110</td>
<td>53 418</td>
<td>50 730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>611 574</td>
<td>616 973</td>
<td>623 223</td>
<td>608 321</td>
<td>601 366</td>
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Crime statistics in Table 2 for the period 2017/2018 shows that the police are not succeeding in reducing attempted murders and murders in particular. Since 2013, there were about 92,853 murders committed in South Africa. This shows that an average of 18,000 people are being killed annually. This is relatively higher than Australia, France, the United States of America and Mexico, and closer to countries such as Columbia and El Salvador (SAPS, 2018; Mabotja, 2018).

Crime statistics for the period 2015–2016 revealed that crimes, which include murders, attempted murder, assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm (GBH), common assault and common robbery, showed an increase of 1% when compared with the previous period (2014–2015). Although the police feel that the trend has shown a
decrease over the period of 10 years, their data show an increasing trend for the past five years (i.e. from 608,724 incidents in 2012/2013 to 623,223 incidents in 2015/2016). There is an increase in murder, and attempted murder cases for the period 2017/2018 (SAPS, 2018). Domestic violence cases are recorded as assault or assault with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm (GBH), attempted murders and murders. For the purpose of this study, the statistics provided for assault or assault with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm, attempted murders and murders in domestic violence cases were taken into consideration. According to the statistics for these crimes, there was a drastic increase from 2012/2013 to 2014/2015 (SAPS, 2016a). From 2009 to 2016, about 601 police officers were murdered on the streets. Thus, the murder of police officers has reached an unacceptably high level. The 45 members killed off duty were primarily victims of crimes such as vehicle hijacking and robbery (SAPS, 2016b).

Robbery with aggravating circumstances – consisting of carjacking, residential robbery, non-residential robbery, truck hijackings, robbery of cash in transit (CIT) and bank robbery – showed an increase for the period 2016/2017.

The 2014/2015 Victims of Crime Survey, released by Statistics South Africa, raised several issues related to public perceptions regarding the incidence and impact of serious crime, including perceptions that levels of violent and non-violent crime in the country have increased, specifically housebreaking, house robbery and theft out of motor vehicles. Another issue was the underreporting of crime to the SAPS and the fact that violent crime was more likely to be reported than property-related crime. However, this suggests that the measurement of the extent of crime is important. Other issues included a decrease in the number of respondents who felt safe at night and the increasing role of illegal drugs in driving up levels of property crime (Statistics South Africa, 2015).

Since the 19th century, the individual police officer on street patrol has proven useful in dealing with crime and local disorder (Edwards, 2011). Visible uniformed policing can be effective against crimes that occur in the vicinity of the streets and public places. Visible uniformed policing in South Africa is subject to considerable demands and expectations.

“Street policing consists of a constant uniform presence on a street to maintain social order” (Van Heerden, 1982). Officers involved in street policing can also respond to incidents reported by the public, with the immediacy of the response being determined by the seriousness of the incident (Civilian Secretariat for Police, 1998). Street policing also includes activities of undercover operatives and detectives in plain clothes (Van Rooyen, 2008). Street policing is related to the service style of policing, where policing is directed towards the maintenance of an orderly state of affairs, rather than the absolute enforcement of the laws. Largely, street policing is directed by public opinion. The power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and their ability to secure and maintain public respect (Pike, 1985). Different types of street policing began to grow in communities, resulting in pluralistic street policing. Some of the types of pluralistic street policing include bicycle patrols, private security street patrols, business watch, neighborhood watch, sector policing, street committees, car guards and, of course,
public policing by the SAPS, the metro police, the traffic police, special investigation units (SIUs) and policing by other government departments with statutory powers to conduct crime prevention and investigations (Govender, 2018).

Since the SAPS is the legislative organ authorised to maintain social order, the question arises: Who coordinates and manages the pluralistic street policing initiatives in our communities? There are different entities performing street policing in a police station precinct. The CPF, as a legislative structure, is also expected to coordinate quality interaction between the SAPS and the public. “Community policing” is the core of transformed policing in South Africa. Community policing was institutionalised by policy-makers in order to police in a more humane and sensitive way, according to the needs of communities. A Community policing forum (CPF) represents the policing interests of the local community. The CPFs are also intended to exert civilian oversight over the police at various levels, in particular at the local police station level (Minnaar, 2009). Whenever crime prevention initiatives are contemplated, the concept of community policing invariably comes to mind as the starting point for such a discussion. In 1997, the community-policing model was implemented as an official policing style in South Africa and its objectives were:

- service orientation
- partnerships
- problem-solving
- empowerment
- accountability

This “adoption of community policing has to be understood against the background of the massive shortcomings of the ‘old’ (pre-1994) policing system” (Mistry, 1997). According to Minnaar (2009), the pre-1994 policing in most traditional township communities was mainly reactive in nature. The police in these communities responded to crime with a quick ‘in and out’ approach to policing. There were no community police forums, nor was any type of street policing in place.

In South Africa, the CPFs exist at many police stations. Yet the extent to which they contribute to the maintenance of social order is unclear. Community policing, which is widely held to be the most promising fundamental change in policing, is costly in terms of resources to address the express wants of the public, even if not solely in monetary terms. The demands of the public for police presence have already stretched the resources of most police services to such an extent that many are unable to cope adequately with their work (Edwards, 2011). According to Burger (2007), the role of community policing and, more specifically, sector policing, is focused more on the monitoring of public complaints than on solving community problems. Community policing in South Africa was originally intended as an alternative policing model to assist the police in preventing crimes in communities, but it soon became subsumed into other forms of policing. Essentially, community policing faded into the background, while sector policing was promoted by the SAPS, ostensibly in support of community policing (Minnaar, 2009). About 99, 64% (i.e. 1136 from 1140) of police, stations have an operational community police forum (CPF) in their police station areas (SAPS, 2016b).
In 2000, as part of the National Crime Combating Strategy (NCCS), the SAPS launched sector policing as an addition to the CPF. This was done to intensify visibility through street patrols. Sector policing entails the division of areas into smaller management sectors and the assignment of police officers to these areas on a full-time basis. These police officers regularly patrol their own sector and are able to identify problems and seek appropriate solutions. Sector policing encourages constant contact with members of local communities (Civilian Secretariat for Police, 2016; Civilian Secretariat for Police, 1998). Sector policing was seen to play an important role in local geographic focus, problem-solving methodologies and community consultations (Dixon & Rauch, 2004). Sector policing was introduced as a an intensive policing and patrol strategy in specific high-crime areas in order to increase police visibility, improve community involvement, build trust and encourage the public to report crime and any suspicious activities in their neighbourhood, as well as to try to address the causes of crime and the fear of crime. Sector policing was established to bring about operational improvement, increase police effectiveness and grow community policing (Minnaar, 2009). About 95, 17% (i.e. 1 085 from a total of 1 140) of police stations implemented sector policing according to the minimum implementation criteria (SAPS, 2016b).

In response to rising levels of street crimes, former President Jacob Zuma, in 2008, encouraged the establishment of street committees to reduce street crimes and to take back the streets from the criminals. The recognised failure of the CPFs, sector policing and the incremental nature of street crime prompted the South Africa government to implement street committees as a policing strategy to combat crime (Minnaar, 2009). Many desperate communities used this opportunity to start their own street committees, operating under the auspices of the community police forums (CPF) or sector policing, without any reference to local police structures or talk of partnerships with the South African Police Service (SAPS) (Minnaar, 2009). Street committees involve the community of a particular area to take a greater interest in, and responsibility for their community. The success of street committees hinges on community involvement and effective communication with all stakeholders. These street committees required the involvement of different stakeholders in a particular area. Such a committee served as a formalised communication channel for the exchange of information to and from the community. It creates a forum for teamwork and cooperation within the community, with a structured process to lodge complaints, obtain information and create accountability when dealing with community problems that require solutions (Vukukhanye, 2009). According to Minnaar, (2009), the institutionalisation of street committees is recognition of ‘failure’ of any real form of Community Policing and Sector Policing.

The street committees are there to help the police in the combatting of crime by providing information, identifying perpetrators and crimes of concern to the community, preventing crime and working together with the police service. Street committees are also expected to engage in social crime prevention activities in their communities, such as the prevention and resolution of domestic violence, attending to social welfare issues and liaison with local business, schools and other community-based organisations (CBO). As such, street committees are important structures that fulfil a
key role in creating strong communities who are passionate about building a strong community and put community interests ahead of their own individual interests (Vukukhanye, 2009).

According to Edwards (2011), a police service must attempt to fulfill all the policing requirements decided for it by the public and other stakeholders. It must deal effectively with these tasks, which – by consensus – are essential policing functions. The police service is also there to implement community policing strategies and to meet the demands of members of the public for police action at all sorts of incidents. The White Paper on Safety and Security (Civilian Secretariat for Police, 2016) recognises the importance of government departments working with the community to establish safety needs and develop strategies to address them. As such, it proposes the development of sustainable forums for coordinated and collaborative community participation; public and community participation in the development, planning and implementation of interventions; and public and private partnerships to support safety, crime and violence prevention (Civilian Secretariat for Police, 2016).

The police have been the subject of social enquiry throughout the history of the United Kingdom (UK), across Europe and even further afield. In today’s societies, the police service, as an institution, and policing, as a key social function, are key components of democratic social order across the world. This societal position makes careful scrutiny of the role and function of the police service necessary (Patterson and Pollock, 2011). Bayley (1994), in his book, *Police for the future*, writes: “The police do not prevent crime. This is one of the best-kept secrets of modern life. Experts know it, the police know it, but the public does not know it. Yet the police pretend that they are society’s best defence against crime and continually argue that if they are given more resources, especially personnel, they will be able to protect communities against crime.” Burger (2006), who questions the conceptual and terminological correctness of section 205(3) of the South African Constitution and argues that the Constitution, which is the starting point for determining the role of the police in combating crime, exacerbates the existing confusion and supports public perceptions that the police must “prevent” crime, supports this viewpoint by Bayley. The erroneous belief that the police are actually responsible for crime prevention shows a misunderstanding about the factors contributing to crime.

Given all the evidence that the incidence of crime is only marginally related to anything that the police do, with whom should the responsibility for crime prevention and community safety lie? Should it remain with the police, who are currently assigned the task and wish to keep it, or should it be assigned to others whose involvement would be appropriate, but who appear reluctant to assume responsibility for crime prevention and community safety. This question has not been decided yet. However, collaboration with communities and private security companies has already started. Police stations also have experienced the benefits of their interaction with communities. So perhaps the nature and extent of this collaboration should be extended and formalised to include other government departments.

The White Paper on Safety and Security reaffirms that building safer communities is a collective responsibility of both the state and its citizens. In this regard, the White
Paper affirms the need for an active citizenry, civil society and private sector to contribute to the ongoing efforts of government in safety, crime and violence prevention (Civilian Secretariat for Police, 2016). This system of collective responsibility, in terms of which every individual is responsible for the behaviour of their fellow-citizens and the group is responsible for every individual, was introduced during the Anglo-Saxon period (600 to 1066) (Van Heerden, 1982).

The politicization of crime has a significant effect on information regarding crime. The statements made by politicians are always newsworthy, whether or not they are of any real value, true/accurate. Therefore, any statements made by politicians about crime or crime-combating strategies are newsworthy and any plan proposed or promise made becomes a matter of public record and raises the expectations of the public that something constructive will be done (Mimnaar, 2009).

The importance of cooperation between law enforcement and private security institutions in South Africa has never been greater, yet the difficulties in establishing effective cooperation between the two agencies, particularly in the areas of crime prevention and response, remain a major obstacle. According to Mimnaar (2009), the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security (Civilian Secretariat for Police, 1998) created an opportunity for the private security industry to engage in crime prevention exercises at community level. However, as in the past, no legal or regulated framework for such initiatives was established or proposed. The implication of this omission is that any such action would occur in a legal and practical vacuum. “Robert Peel’s dream of partnership policing” is being “substantially accomplished” through private security interventions, rather than through community policing structures (Berg, 2008, p.1). In addition, there remains uncertainty in a number of quarters about precisely the kind of support/cooperation or service that should be provided by private security companies (PSCs); and the wide range of services provided by the private security industry in South Africa further complicates the matter. Although a number of joint or cooperative partnership initiatives have already been launched between certain private security companies/individuals and police stations at local level, these have proceeded without the formal recognition or approval of the South African Police Service management, as well as without due acknowledgment of the legal implications of such actions (Govender, 2018).

Although today private security companies are making a contribution to fighting economic crimes, terrorism and cybercrime globally, they have been making significant contributions to crime prevention since the 18th century (Fischer, Halibozeck & Green, 2008). Some of these contributions are discussed hereunder;

In 1748, the magistrate Henry Fielding proposed a permanent, professional and adequately paid security force. His invaluable contribution included foot patrols to make the streets safe, mounted patrols for the highways, a Bow Street Amateur Volunteer Force of special investigators and police courts. Fielding is credited with conceiving of the idea of preventing crime instead of seeking to control it (Purpura, 2013).

In the 1850s, Allan Pinkerton the first detective from the Chicago Police Department, opened what is now one of the largest and oldest private security operations in the United States, namely the Pinkerton Detective Agency. Pinkerton’s
agency provided security services and conducted investigations. Later, they began to offer private guarding services for railroad yards and industries. President Lincoln of the USA recognised Pinkerton’s organisational skills and hired the agency to perform intelligence work during the American Civil War (Fischer et al., 2008).

In 1850, Henry Wells and William Fargo opened the American Express Company to operate a freight service. Since early freight transportation was a dangerous business, the early companies usually had their own detectives and security personnel (Purpura, 2013).

In 1858, Edwin Holmes offered the first burglar alarm service in the USA and in 1874, the American District Telegraph (ADT) followed Holmes’s example by offering an alarm service. Both companies installed alarms and provided response to alarm situations, as well as maintaining their own equipment (Purpura, 2013).

In 1859 in Washington, Perry Brink founded the package delivery service and in 1891, he transported his first payroll – this was the beginning of armoured vehicles and courier services (Fischer et al., 2008).

In 1909, William Burns, a former FBI agent, started the William Burns Detective Agency. It became the sole investigation agency for the American Bankers Association and grew to become the second-largest (i.e. after Pinkerton’s) contract guard and investigative service in the USA. Pinkerton and Burns were the only national investigative bodies concerned with non-specialised crimes in the country until the advent of the FBI in 1908 (Purpura, 2013). Also, in 1909, Baker Industries initiated a fire control and detection equipment business. Prior to that, from the 1870s up until the early 20th century, only private security companies had provided contract security services to industrial facilities across the country (Fischer et al., 2008).

In 1955, security took a major leap forward with the formation of the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS). Today this organisation is called the American Society for Industrial Security International, reflecting its global emphasis on security operations. For most practitioners, 1955 signifies the beginning of the modern age of security. Before 1955, there were no professional security organisations of note, no certifications, no academic programmes and no cohesive body to advance the interests of this field or as a separate training/management discipline (Fischer et al., 2008).

Private security has grown steadily in recent years, during which time it has identified market opportunities in government departments and expanded its influence in the realm of community and neighbourhood policing and community safety networks in South Africa. Today, the state contracts private security companies to protect the SAPS; in addition, some parastatals are turning to private security companies for protection of their infrastructure. For example, Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) employs private security companies for this purpose. In addition, thousands of households subscribe to private security companies (Taljaard, 2008). The SAPS and some key infrastructure parastatals also outsource security work to the private security sector. According to a previous Minister of Safety and Security (the department has since been renamed the Department of Police) during 2005 and 2006 SAPS spent close to R100 million on private security companies (Da Costa, 2007).
The private and public sectors of security services intersect in different ways. Relations between the SAPS and the private security companies have been strained with limited cooperation. There is a degree of tension between the two because the SAPS feel that members of the private security sector are not always well trained and disciplined (Minnaar, 1999). In 2008, prior to his resignation, the then President Mbeki made certain comments in Parliament about the important role of private security in crime prevention, but also in support of the SAPS. It is hoped that these comments will prompt a change in attitude by the SAPS and herald a new era of public–private cooperation between the SAPS and the Private Security Companies (PSC) sector. Supply and demand dynamics are fueling the growth of the PSC sector. Because crime remains a high-priority issue, many turn to PSCs for their protection. PSCs currently protect private homes, airports, harbours, banks, transport systems, industries and other critical areas. Given their growing dependence on this sector, it is clear that South Africans cannot survive without private security provisioning (Taljaard, 2008).

Methodology

The aim of the study was to address the dilemmas confronting policing by focusing on the following objectives:

- To determine the present situation of street policing, increase in violent crimes and the role of private security in policing.
- Recommend strategies to improve safety and security in society.

A qualitative research design was used to conduct this study. The researcher used data from documentary study, academic literature, media reports, observation, interviews and his own experience as a former police officer. Owing to financial, time and other constraints, the researcher decided to limit the study population by doing non-probability purposive sampling to interview respondents with specialised knowledge. Police officers – both uniformed and detectives – and members of the CPF/sector policing/street committee and other community members involved in street policing in the Tshwane district were chosen as the unit of analysis for the study. These interviews were conducted during 2018. An interview guide was used to conduct the interviews with participants from the Tshwane district in Gauteng. The questions included in the interview guide are as follows:

- What is the present situation of street policing, increase in violent crimes and the role of private security in policing?
- Which strategies will help improve safety and security in society?

The researcher sampled thirty (30) respondents for this study. The responses were qualitatively transcribed and analysed using the Data Analysis Spiral, as described by Leedy and Omrod (2001). Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of South Africa to conduct this research, as part of a community engagement project.
Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings and discussion of the qualitative data, which was collected from the participants during interviews and observation.

1. Street Policing

The community members interviewed stated that the quality of street policing was declining because of inadequate resources (vehicles and personnel). There are no marked police vehicles or uniformed foot patrol officers doing generalised patrols on the streets. Majority of the respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the street policing initiatives provided by the police in their areas. The police, in turn, stated that they have strategic, tactical and operational plans to reduce and combat crime and improve the police’s response times, community mobilisation and partnerships and victim empowerment programmes. The community respondents disputed this because of a lack of visible police presence in their neighbourhoods. The community members claimed that the community does not form part of the SAPS’s planning and, in many instances, the police plans do not address the needs of specific communities. In some police precincts, the SAPS is not represented at the CPF meetings. According to the SAPS, crime prevention operations include planned policing operations based on available intelligence and consist of a variety of police actions, such as roadblocks, patrols, cordon-and-search operations, visits, compliance inspections and searches of premises, persons and vehicles. According to some the respondents from the community, they are normally excluded from these operations and are asked to conduct their own general patrols within their policing blocks and sectors. These joint crime prevention operations are done within clusters, with the local police stations providing policing in their own precincts.

The SAPS claimed that they have sufficient K9 (police dog patrols) units countrywide, yet the community members alleged that they see these K9 vehicles patrolling their areas only when a crime is in progress in a station precinct; otherwise, they are rarely seen in the communities. The majority of patrol vehicles in communities are from private security companies and some from the metro police. SAPS vehicles are seen only when there is a complaint of suspicious persons in vehicles or when a crime is reported. Even when a crime is reported, the community members summon their private security service provider, who normally arrives at the scene before the police. The detectives also arrive later. In most cases, the police arrive after the suspects have left the crime scene. The local fingerprint officers usually discuss the case with the complainant to find out if the scene has been tampered with and how unlawful entry was gained to the premises before they actually respond in person.

According to the SAPS, their response times are based on the severity of the crime and are classified according to the Alpha, Bravo and Charlie system. Alpha complaints are crimes in progress and all incidents of serious crime that require immediate police response/action. Bravo complaints are crimes that have already taken place, with no immediate threat to the complainant or property, such as a housebreaking that has already occurred. Charlie complaints are crimes of a less serious nature, such as loitering and trespassing. According to the community members, they want more street policing
presence in their areas. Yet in many respects, the police are not in favour of the operational effectiveness of generalised patrols. Furthermore, the police cannot provide the resources to make generalised patrols possible. According to the police officers, sector policing was implemented by the SAPS as a community policing approach to enhance service delivery and police response, as well as for interaction and participation of the community in crime prevention. However, sector policing is not implemented in the same way in all station precincts. The communities want SAPS to collaborate with all stakeholders so that street policing may be strengthened.

The South African Police Service continues to make an effort to improve services to victims of sexual offences and domestic violence in communities by ensuring that victim-friendly services are rendered in communities and victim-friendly rooms (VFRs) are established at all police stations. Victim-friendly services are rendered to reduce secondary victimisation and enable victims to provide details that assist in the investigation. A VFR is a dedicated room at a police station to provide a space for victims of intimate violence to make their statements in private. The purpose of a VFR is to ensure that victims can report all forms of violence or sexual offences and be interviewed and give statements in a private place, where their rights to dignity and privacy can be protected. The community members are happy with the services rendered to victims of gender violence.

The police also provide public education and awareness programmes in communities to sensitise communities to crimes against women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. These campaigns are conducted on streets and at police stations in support of special events arranged by provincial and national offices. The community are of the view that these events should be part of social crime prevention activities on a daily basis, depending on the specific crimes being committed in the station precincts.

According to the community, metro police do not work with them, neither do they collaborate in community crime prevention activities. The metro police on the other hand state that they attend safety and security meetings arranged by the SAPS and offer their services in joint police operations, whenever the need arises. They do not conduct foot patrols in residential areas.

During observation of the areas being studied, the researcher noted a very limited number of SAPS patrols with marked police vehicles. No foot patrols officers in uniform were observed on the streets. There were more private security vehicles in urban residential areas and more metro police vehicles in outlying residential areas enforcing traffic laws.

2. Violent Crimes

Policing violent crimes in South Africa has grown increasingly complex and this has prompted the need for a more effective and innovative police service. According to the respondents from the community, the police are not providing an effective and efficient policing to reduce violent crimes. As a result, many community members are questioning why violent crimes are still on the increase. It seems that the police and other government departments are not doing enough to combat these crimes and address the causes of these crimes and the violent behaviour of the perpetrators.
However, the police respondents cite socio economic factors to explain South Africa’s high crime and the level of violence used by perpetrators during the commission of these crimes. This may be attributable to the culture of violence originating from the apartheid era. The community are of the view that the police should address drug and alcohol abuse and possession of illegal firearms through roadblocks and stop and search operations. The private security companies feel that some of the homeowners have inadequate physical protection systems, which creates opportunities for residential burglaries and robberies.

The researcher is aware of many proactive and reactive strategies used by SAPS to combat crimes at police station level. These include the use of police–community forums, private security companies, use of non-governmental organisations, (Human rights groups) and the use of specialised investigation teams. Because of poor information / intelligence collection, coordination, analysis and utilization these interventions become meaningless (Govender 2015).

3. Role of Private Security in Policing

According to the SAPS, they entered into a partnership through a formal agreement with the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) to enhance collaboration between the PSIRA and the SAPS, as well as to enhance cooperation and control over the private security industry. As of 22 October 2010, 7 459–security companies have been registered with the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) in South Africa. These companies employed 387 273–security officers to work in South Africa, since 4 October 2011. By the end of 2015, this figure had grown to 488 666–registered (active) security officers and 8 692–security companies registered on the PSIRA database (Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority [PSIRA], 2016). Private security companies (PSCs) in South Africa perform the following functions:

- They provide a cash-management service in South Africa.
- They guard the mines of large mining houses and the business interests of corporates that invest on the continent.
- They provide close-protection services for individuals travelling to certain destinations.
- They are employed by Airports Company South Africa (ACSA).
- They provide armed response services to private households and businesses.
- They are employed to ensure crowd management.
- They also help to manage natural disasters, such as fires, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes and other acts of nature.

According to the community members, private security companies in South Africa provide street policing together with citizens as an initiative of the community police forum (CPF) structures. They receive minimal guidance from the local police station in this regard. Instead, these activities are driven by the local CPF structures. Interviews with homeowners and business owners indicated that about 90% of them are using the services of the private security providers. As a result, the private security providers’ vehicles are present and visible in almost every residential and business area.
So how should the growth of private security provision be handled? Should the private security companies be encouraged and accepted into the policing fold, or should they be resisted on the ground that they work for profit and represent homeowners and businesses whose association will undermine the integrity of the state?

The involvement of private security companies in pluralistic policing is growing by the day. Many businesses, homeowners, SAPS and other government departments use the services of private security companies to guard their assets.

Recommendations

The operational independence of the police should be addressed, since political partisanship in decision-making leaves very little room for the use of discretion and independent decision-making by the police for them to be held accountable for their actions. Police officers should see themselves as protectors of the constitutional rights of citizens and collaborate with communities and stakeholders to meet their policing needs. Community education should be expanded/enhanced to reduce violent crimes in society. The local police should not wait for specific calendar events to conduct social crime prevention activities. In addition, they should focus on offering life-skills programs to the youth.

To effectively combat violent crimes there should be timely intelligence, relentless follow up of clues/evidence and rapid deployment of response teams to arrest the perpetrators.

The need for cooperation between law enforcement and private security in South Africa has never been greater, yet the difficulties in establishing effective cooperation between these two agencies – particularly in the areas of crime prevention and response – remain a major obstacle, which requires urgent attention.

Conclusion

There is widespread concern about the quality of service and the overall professional conduct of the police service in South Africa. Some members of the public view the police as incompetent, corrupt and poorly trained and they feel that the criminal justice system is in a state of turmoil. This leads to public mistrust and lack of confidence in the ability of the criminal justice system to deal effectively with society's concerns regarding safety and security. The researcher believes that the police should not be solely responsible for providing policing; this function is simply too important to be left in the hands of the police alone. There should be direct public accountability to an executive police council on which members of society are represented. This will give substance to the notion that 'the police are the public and the public are the police'. Policing accountability should consist of judicial and parliamentary control in association with community control.

References


