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Abstract

With the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, new police service was needed to promote the transition to democracy. Community policing was introduced from the United Kingdom in the 1990s into South Africa as a channel to heal the wounds and injustices of the past. Over Twenty-five years down the road, community policing in South Africa has made little or no impact on the majority of South Africans who will openly admit that they do not attend their local community forums, because they simply do not trust the police because of its oppressive past. It is a widely held view by several South Africans that the Police Service simply cannot change overnight from being a very brutal force to become the protectors of citizen's human rights. This research is a qualitative study; whereby an extensive literature review was carried, exploring the issues and concepts related to community policing. The findings are that community policing has achieved its desired results. All citizens must go back to the drawing board again to bring community policing back on track for the benefit of all citizens to whom the police serve and protect. The author argues that the bitterness and divisions of the past must put be put to one side and that all citizens must co-create a country, where all South Africans are proudly part of and allowed to make their contributions.

Keywords: Barriers, Citizens, community policing forum, Police, Policing, South Africa.

1. Introduction

For a better understanding, the article is separated into several parts. The first part explores the meaning of community policing through international and South African perspectives by explaining what the research is all about, including the research aims. The second part of the article is the development of the article part, which provides a prelude to the build-up of exploring some of the obstacles to community policing in South Africa. The third part of the article is the comparative analogy part using the community policing international best practice model as a guide, providing the reader with several recommendations on how to put community policing back on track in South Africa. While the final part of the article looks at what the government, policymakers must do for community policing to be successfully implemented in South Africa.

Community policing is a difficult concept to define as there is no single agreed definition of it in the field of social sciences. However, common to all the definitions are words such as "mutual understanding" vis-a-vis the relationship between the police and citizens. A working community policing strategy requires the citizen to make contributions concerning the needs of the community [1]. The rationale of community policing postulates that communities can form an association with a common purpose and shared belief in one laudable goal of safety and security. Community policing became the dominant model for policing in many countries towards the end of the twentieth century – including the US, Australia, New Zealand, and the Netherlands – and it is premised on greater interaction between the police and citizens [2].

Jerome Skolnick and David Bayley [3]. identified four elements of community policing as follows:

– police reciprocal characteristics.

This means that police officers are put in a position, where they are forced to work in isolation or silos, detached from the community. To discourage this kind of aloofness, citizens are given a platform to make both their meaningful and voluntary contributions to policing [3]:

– area decentralisation of command.

This type of decentralisation is imperative for efficiency and collaboration with the community. The purpose of decentralisation is designed to create an enabling environment between the police and the public [4]:

– reorientation of patrols.

Skolnick & Bayley [4] provide us with four possible reasons for supporting foot patrols and a reduction in police emergency responses to crime in our communities. They argued that foot patrols should be encouraged for the following reasons: (1) crime prevention; (2) maintenance of order; (3) to generate neighbourhood goodwill; (4) to raise officers' morale whilst carrying out their duties:

– civilianisation.

Skolnick & Bayley [4] argue that the civilianisation of police departments is an operational facilitating factor in building a community's crime prevention strategy. Especially, when civilians are recruited for urban cities, where community members are of predominate multicultural composition. The arguments, proposed by Skolnick and Bayley [4] above, can be translated into the South African police context. The decentralisation of commands to local areas without adequate structures to monitor the type of police service delivery has enabled an atmosphere of corruption to thrive under the radar for many years. The South African Police Service's decentralised command structures have made it possible for corruption to be institutionalised from top to bottom in South Africa [5]; Within the last decade, two national police commissioners have been sacked for corruption. In the United Kingdom, Brogden and Nihar [6] argued that the deployment of community policing officers dates back 800 years, when such an officer was called the "Tythingman" (literally one who collects tithes). They were considered to be community constables [7]. In 1829, Robert Peel, one of the founding fathers of British policing, coined the phrase 'policing by consent', a notion that enabled the community to gain prominence. He argued that modern-day policing needed the full support of citizens and that the police could not function effectively without the support of the citizens [8]. Prevention of crime remains one of the core foundations of policing in our communities today [9]. Police are friends of the citizens, by winning their hearts and minds. In doing so, the police's claim to 'serve and protect' us is sustained and legitimised [10].

There are four key elements of community policing in the United Kingdom as follows:

– police consultative groups;

– community police officers in communities – predominantly foot patrols, popularly referred to as the 'bobby on the beat';

– community involvement in crime prevention strategies, such as Neighbourhood Watch schemes;

– membership of special constabulary – volunteer police officers (these are called reservists in South Africa).

A police service that does not work in partnership with members of the community will not succeed, when it comes to crime information and investigation [11]. One can argue that, in the absence of such a partnership, community policing was destined to fail from the onset or during the introductory stage of it. Community policing cannot work well in a divided country, when there is no spirit of cohesion [12]. A major objective of community policing is to establish an active partnership between the Police and the community through which crime, service delivery, and police-community relations can jointly be analyzed and appropriate solutions designed and implemented [13, 14].

Community Policing moves away from the incident-driven style of traditional policing by following a more problem-oriented approach [15]. This means that reported crimes, complaints, and telephone calls no longer serve as the primary determinants of how police resources should be used. The police still react to individual complaints, but further, instead of merely waiting for individual calls for service, the police – with the assistance of the community continuously identify and try to solve recurring problems[16]. Community Policing is based on the premise that the police

and citizens can and should work together to identify and effectively solve community problems Community Policing is a department-wide philosophy that requires department-wide acceptance and implementation [17]. Community Policing calls for meaningful organizational change and restructuring. Community Policing requires an improvement in the delivery of service to the community [18].

Next, the author looks at community policing in South Africa.

Community Policing in South Africa.

Monique Marks [19] argues that the term 'community policing' became popular, because it was found in the 1997 South African government policy document, published by the Department of Safety and Security. Marks [19] argues that Community Policing is a joint effort from the police/citizens, coming together under one platform to set up crime prevention strategies that work. The five components of community policing are found in the South African government policy document of 1997 summarised as follows:

– familiar and acceptable service, encapsulated in the provisioning of a professional police service that is responsive to community needs;

– professionalisation and partnership;

– finding solutions to problems that cause crime;

– accountability: law enforcement free from biases;

– empowerment of communities/members to make meaningful contributions in their respective communities.

The South African Government White Paper 1998.

This Paper defined crime prevention as: "all activities that reduce, deter or prevent the occurrence of specific crimes, firstly by altering the environment, in which they occur, secondly by changing the conditions, which are thought to cause them, and thirdly by providing a strong deterrent in the form of an effective criminal justice system."

The Paper also specifically describes the new roles for the Community Police Forums in South Africa as follows:

– cooperation with local government to jointly set crime prevention priorities;

– locate flashpoints, criminal behaviours, and community crime activities;

– to assist in the formulation of crime prevention programmes.

Community Police Forums in South Africa.

The Interim Constitution Act 2000 of 1993 established the Community Police Forums. A Community Police Forum was defined as a group of citizens, coming together for a common purpose, defined by both individual and collective safety. The functional roles for the CPFs are as follows:

– the provision of services to community members;

– the evaluation of service delivery;

– assessing the service about local policing priorities;

– to carry an appraisal of visible policing;

– the selection and recruitment of law enforcement personnel;

– the handling and investigation of complaints from members of the public;

– provision of protective services at gatherings;

– patrolling for personal and business safety;

– to bring offenders to justice.

Objectives of the Community Police Forums in South Africa:

– Promoting a partnership between the community and the service.

– Supporting communication between the service and the community.

– Providing effective service delivery nationwide.

– Improving transparency in the service and accountability of the service to the community.

– Promoting social problem identification and problem-solving by the service and the community. (www.saps.gov.za).

Aim of research. The research has three aims. First, the research was carried out to explore and identify some of the persistent barriers to community policing in South Africa. Second,

to draw a comparative international best-policing practice model, where community policing has successfully implemented to the benefit of citizens.

This research is designed to find some recommendations on how best community policing must be implemented in South Africa.

2. Materials and Methods

This is a qualitative research, where the researcher carried out an extensive consultation, relying on secondary data. Some of the data review processes included the following: books, journals, official documents, media reports, and internet sources [20]. The use of secondary data as the researcher understands it, is to avoid a time-consuming exercise, where the researcher is expected to speak directly to several participants. The data, collected from the literature review, were analysed into emerging themes relating to the research topic of community policing. The researcher ensured that his results were clearly articulated and his findings were highlighted as a basis for further research relating to community policing.

3. Result

The author provided the readers with some of the identified barriers to community policing in South Africa, the author thinks that until these barriers are removed, community policing will achieve little or no progress. The identified barriers to community policing in South Africa are as follows:

a) importation of foreign police ideology and inability to fully transfer community policing to the South African context [12].

Community policing is important because it is a key component of an export drive from Western countries like UK and USA in the development of new policing structures in transitional societies – those that might once have been described as 'Third World' (predominantly African countries and the Indian sub-continent) or (optimistically) as 'developing' and are being forced by economic and social exigencies (such as rising recorded crime rates) to construct new safety and security agencies [6, 7]. The Western police consultants have been able to find a 'niche', to which the Community can be sold and resold [11]

Policing brands can be exported, sold, and profited according to market demand-pull factors [20]. The author identifies that two factors are at play here. First, the host countries to the newly introduced concept of community policing were not aware of how community policing works in these foreign countries or how best to evaluate whether it works or not. The author hypothetically provided the reader(s) with a scenario, where if any person is buying a new car, one expects the car manual to be provided at the time of the sale. The author argues that, in looking at the South African context today, both the exporters and importers of community policing failed to do their research very well and did not take into consideration the needs of South Africans. Because South Africa was very volatile in the 1990s, when community policing was imported from the West, South Africans have not yet recovered from the racial hostilities of the apartheid era, exacerbated by police brutality and political killings [21]. Second, one can safely argue that, from the beginning, community policing was a very risky policing endeavour, hurriedly introduced by politicians, and was bound to fail. The demographical, ecological, and social needs of the host nations were not properly assessed [22]. For example, in South Africa, the importers of community policing may have been motivated by the quest to realise the rainbow nation, made possible by the National Peace Accord. The government of South Africa was put under pressure by the international community. It was hoped, that the creation of the rainbow nation would miraculously take away the pains of the injustices of the past [17].

The author argues that it is very easy to say 'let's forget about the past and move on'; however, the crucial, unanswered question is whether the South African government has put enough psychological and economic support in place to cater to the needs of those South Africans, who suffered both psychological and economic hardship during apartheid [23]. What we do know, however, is that most of the economically displaced and disempowered South African citizens, living in

shacks and informal settlements, are blacks [24]. The author argues that, under the circumstances highlighted above, community policing cannot grow in South Africa as long as economic inequalities, lack of trust, fear, and suspicion, and racial divisions in South Africa persist [25]. Most black South Africans still see members of the South African Police Service as the oppressive apparatus of the state and consequently do not trust the police [18]. The government of South Africa and the police now need to work very hard to win the full support of South African citizens by explaining to them the desired objectives of community policing. Until this message is delivered effectively to the citizens of South Africa, community police forums will continue to experience poor attendance [26];

b) citizens' lack of trust and confidence in the police.

The researcher argues that South African citizens have every right not to trust the police, because the police have a long and shameful history of using violence against them. Examples of the South African Police chequered and shameful history, characterised by brutality, can be deduced from the few out of some incidents as follows:

The author argues that the death of Steve Biko at the hands of the police is just one of several incidents of police brutality in South Africa. Biko [27] described the police as:

The philosophy behind the police action in this country seems to be based on both conscious and unconscious revisitation of oppressive police history... 'the white man, if not intellectually, at least in terms of power. White people, working through their vanguard – the South African Police – have come to realise the truth of that golden maxim – if you cannot make a man respect you, then make him fear you' [27, p. 83];

c) negative media reports and police abuse of human rights.

Over the years, the media have been highly diligent in exposing police brutality in South Africa. Hardly a month passes in South Africa without police brutality being in the spotlight, with incidents, such as the murder of Andries Tatane in Ficksburg in 2011, following a poor service delivery protest, and the gruesome and horrific murder of Mido Macia, the Mozambican taxi driver, who was tied up and dragged along the road behind a police vehicle. The author argues that this type of policing is barbaric and should have no place in any democratic country. The South African Police have refused to relinquish the culture of violence, inherited from the apartheid past. The orientation is that violence brings quick results, informed by control and power;

d) divided communities and social class.

Because of its history of racial divisions, South Africa can be characterised by racial differences, social class differences, religious and cultural differences, sexual orientation differences, and political differences [28];

e) xenophobic attacks on black African foreigners in South Africa.

Within the last ten years, attacks on black foreigners have increased in South Africa. This increase in xenophobic attacks and derogatory references has resulted in the construction of "other" black Africa migrants, known as "Ama kwere Kwere", meaning "people who speak in difficult and incomprehensible languages". The inferiorisation and construction of the 'other' have become very popular amongst South Africans, in many cases leading to resentment, hostility, and physical attacks, sometimes resulting in loss of lives and property. Black migrants from Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Burundi have all been targeted during the heightened state of xenophobia, witnessed in South Africa, especially in 2008, when xenophobic incidents reached a shameful apogee.

Looking at the impact of social class on community policing in South Africa, Millicent Maroga [29] shows us what it means to live in a country with different types of community policing. Maroga [29] in her research, entitled *Community policing and accountability at station level*, invites us to look at how the implementation of community policing differs from one community to another depending on the community's economic power and social class. In brief, she argues that affluent neighbourhoods with financial strength spend more on resources to assist the police to obtain a better partnership and security than marginalised communities who cannot afford to

purchase patrol vehicles. From her qualitative research into community policing in Parkview, Alexandra, and Brixton police stations, the researcher provides brief descriptions of and a comparison between these three separate police stations in Gauteng, Johannesburg, South Africa, where community policing is operational.

The Parkview Police Station and CPF.

Parkview police station is located in the exclusive white and wealthy suburb about seven kilometres north of Johannesburg. Parkview is described as one of the best-policed suburbs in Gauteng. Members of the community use cell phone numbers of all members of the community as a communication tool to warn members of the community of any criminal suspects in the area, or that a crime has taken place or maybe about to occur. Police also send messages to residents from computers at the police station, warning them about crime.

Alexandra Police Station and CPF.

Alexandra police station is located in the north-eastern township of Johannesburg. Alexandra Township represents the opposite of Parkview. Alexandra is predominately black 'native township'. Black South Africans were restricted to reside in townships under obnoxious laws like the Group Areas Act of 1950, which divided cities and towns into segregated living. Millions of blacks, cloureds, Indians were forcibly removed from their ancestral and original homes, because they were regarded as trespassers in the country of birth. The apartheid successive regimes laid the foundation of some of today's inequalities that still permeates and divides us in South Africa today. The author argues that the apartheid injustices of the past cannot be healed by 25 years of democratic rule in South Africa. The healing process may take more than a century to heal properly. So long as the majority of blacks continue to leave in abject poverty, hunger, and squalor, it is misleading to conclude that South Africans are all united as one community, living in a rainbow nation. With the high unemployment rate amongst black South Africans, trapped in informal settlements "Shacks", made out of corrugated iron zinc houses. Community policing cannot be expected to be rolled out successfully under the bizarre economic and disempowered circumstances our brothers and sisters have lived and continue to live in South Africa.

Mottiar [30] argues that, due to the hallmark of apartheid, Alexandra township was not properly catered. There are pieces of evidence of lack of access to necessities of life. One can argue that little or no economic investments mean that a range of socio-economic challenges persists, despite a decade of democracy in South Africa.

Next, the author looks at the Brixton police station and its CPF.

Brixton Police Station and CPF.

Brixton police station is located in the west of inner-city Johannesburg. The CPF was established in 1993 and has been notable for fundraising and the establishment of a victims center and several drugs rehabilitation centers, set up by NGO's.

In short, the more funds communities can donate, the more likely they are to be well policed, in comparison to poorer communities. Community policing becomes a pay-as-you-go system, based on affordability. It is safer to reside in affluent communities because they can afford to fund policing needs. This raises a crucial question: Who is supposed to fund policing – citizens or the government? Police use of discretionary powers is well documented by previous police researchers in South Africa [12, 19, 31, 32].

High crime rates in South Africa.

The National Crime Prevention Strategy 1996, one of the policy documents, setting the agenda for community policing in South Africa, clearly explains the impact of crime…dependent on the quality of the relationship between the police and community' [33]. The author provides us with some recent valuable insights using annual crime statistics, released by the SAPS, to show the extent of crime in South Africa as follows:

1. House Breaking.

This remains the number one crime in South Africa. In 2019/2020 year alone, about 1.3 million incidences of housebreaking were reported to the police. This represented 5.8 % of the households in South Africa. Below is a province by province breakdown as follows (**Table 1**).

Table 1

Crime rates in South Africa

Gauteng	336 358	6.81%
Kwazulu-Natal	195 599	6.5%
Western Cape	113 343	6.01%
Limpopo	70 066	4.41%
Mpumalanga	69 207	5.36%
Eastern Cape	67 786	4.06%
North West	59 678	4.95%
Free State	34 800	3.75%
Northern Cape	24 730	7.39%

Source: Stats sa, 2018/2019

What we can deduce from the above diagram is that Gauteng is the epic centre for house-breaking crime in South Africa. It can be argued, that good neighbourliness will go a long way to deter housebreaking. There is a problem, when you reside in affluent suburbs, where your next-door neighbour(s) ever hardly speak with you or know your name. This type of neighbourhood is more vulnerable to housebreaking, because there is no community spirit or social cohesion. When one becomes a victim of crime, your neighbours look at the other side and tell the police that they saw nothing. The author writes us from his shared experiences having been a victim of housebreaking a couple of times in South Africa. Criminals capitalise on lack of community social participation, they easily prey on their target with relative ease. The stronger the community bonds, the much harder it is for citizens to suffer housebreaking. In communities, where there are neighbourhood watches, housebreaking is reduced to the barest minimum. One can argue that effective community policing is needed in South Africa for citizen's safety. As not all citizens can afford the luxury of paying for private armed response security.

The advantages of Community Policing includes: reduces the incidence of crime and fear of victimization through more responsive and effective policing; increased community satisfaction with the services, provided by the police and citizens through functional neighbourhood watches; better coordination and allocation of responsibilities between the police and other criminal justice and social service agencies; the support of the community for efforts, aimed at getting information, supplementing or obtaining more police resources; the active participation of the community in crime prevention; better appreciation of the constraints and problems, facing the police; prioritization of services and the allocation of available resources to meet citizen's list of safety priorities.

2. Home Robbery.

In 2018/2019, about 260 000 home robberies were recorded, affecting 1 % of all households. The most common weapon, used to perpetrate the crime, were guns (54 %), Knives (47 %),

3. Murders: About 12 000 murders were committed in South Africa for the year 2018/2019

4. Car Hijacking: recorded about 32 000 for the same year.

5. Street robbery: for the same year stands at 580 000 [19, 34–37].

The author argues that, the more victims of crime, the lower citizens' trust and confidence in the police. We must return to the drawing board in South Africa to work out strategies, built on crime prevention and community policing, to make our communities safer.

Without the establishment of a working partnership between citizens and the police, the desired goals of community policing will not be realised.

South African Police Service structural defects.

Pelser [28]. identifies some challenges, faced by community police forums in South Africa. They are as follows:

– No consistent implementation and interpretation of community policing.

– Members of CPFs and the SAPS continued to hold different expectations about the core elements and objectives of community policing [29].

– Lack of full government support and allocated budget.

Minaar [30] provides us with some of the reasons why community policing was abandoned in South Africa. He argues that 'this abandonment, with SAPS personnel strongly believing it to be "too soft" for the tough crime conditions in South African townships, was also due in part to several inherent constraints. At community policing, inception, personnel of SAPS were still largely undertrained and under-skilled although not initially apparent, while still paying lip service to a community-oriented approach (using all the appropriate terminology) the SAPS, as early as the launch of the Community Safety Plan 1995, had already demonstrated – if one read between the lines and observed the special operations, launched as part of this plan – "their intentions to revert to more traditional methods to combat crime"…the implementation of Operation Sword and Shield with its "return to basics" policing approach… Community policing per se, faded into the background.

Meanwhile, Marks [19] argues that 'members of the SAPS have always been undermined by members of the public whilst attending Community Police Forum meetings. They are opined that they have to hold the police to account for every operational decision taken. In reality, we do know that it is practically impossible for the police to dialogue with citizens always before operational decisions are taken. These arrangements will cost lives on an unimaginable scale if allowed as a standard procedure. The police is not a 9 am-5 pm everyday job. Certain split decisions have to be taken sometimes to save lives, spontaneous decisions have to be taken using one's discretion. The infallibility of human beings places the onus on police management to be extra conscious when taken such decisions. Marks [33] argues that police officers, who have been witness to endless violent crimes and come face to face with previously known suspects they have arrested in the past, are underpaid. Policing is one of the most visible government organisation, found in most democratic countries of the world [38].

It is necessary to clearly define what 'community policing' actually means in South Africa for a better understanding of it. The desired benefits and roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders need to be clearly explained to all citizens. The police must re-evaluate their communication mode and medium with the public. The use of violence should be discouraged and replaced with verbal communication skills to win the hearts and minds of South Africans. CPF attendance and participation should be made mandatory for the police and citizens alike. Lack of attendance should be reported to oversight committees and with a follow-up. Police in South Africa cannot police the country effectively without the community partnering and supporting the police. Policy-makers should facilitate more community consultative forums and participation between the police and citizens [39]. The South Africa government must facilitate and encourage research-led policing. It is necessary to examine why community policing failed in South Africa and what might be done to make it work. The police service should be encouraged to open its doors to independent academic researchers, as it is currently done in Australia, the UK, the USA, Canada, the Netherlands, and New Zealand [40]. The author argues that there is more to be gained from such collaborative partnerships with both researchers and research institutions. Finally, the contentious issue of the use of firearms and public order control needs to be looked at as a matter of urgency, because some of the current discontents arise from fatal shooting incidents and deaths of relatives in police custody. Community policing only works in countries with similar histories, demographics, and the same social context [41–44]. Community policing was poorly implemented in South Africa. The expectation that community policing was going to be waving a magic policing model to heal the wounds of the apartheid past turned out to be wishful thinking [6, 12]. The historical antecedents and racial injustices of the past governments in South Africa make it complicated for community police to grow in South Africa. Community policing though was transferred from abroad [45], but did not have the time to bear fruits and was not properly nurtured [46]; Hence its foundation in South Africa was shaking and not deeply rooted enough to realise its desired objectives.

4. Conclusion

Community policing is deeply rooted in the notion of partnership between police and the community. It is designed to make the police responsive to the needs of the community. The closer the police are to citizens, the more they will be able to deal with crime effectively.

The author argues that we cannot comfortably talk about the implementation of community policing, when some sections of society are feeling marginalised, discriminated against, persecuted, ostracised, and not protected equally in law, and when they perceive that they are not being given equal opportunities to employment and the necessities of life. You will fully participate in it. Police forces are tightly closed organisations, and very few people in the outside world clearly understood police culture and the extent of its pervasiveness. In some countries, the police and the public have become so detached from each other that in some communities the relationship has broken down and been replaced by antagonism, resentment, and anger. Community policing cannot thrive under these circumstances. Community policing is a philosophy that guides and informs police management styles and operational strategies both internationally and in South Africa. It focuses more on the establishment of police-community partnerships and a problem-solving approach. The truth of the matter is that we have not got the implementation of community policing right in South Africa. We must go back to the drawing board to correct our mistakes.

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