

An examination of the role of municipal police service in crime prevention: The case of Gauteng South Africa.

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ABSTRACT

Charlton and Mistry (2020) point out that the role of police in creating safer environments and enhancing community perception of safety, cannot be over-emphasized. This is purely influenced by the significance of the role that the police play in the reduction of crime (Charlton, and Mistry, 2020). Rauch, et al., (2001); Shaw, (1996) further postulate that the escalation of violent crimes in the 1990s motivated the South African government to enhance police capacity in the prevention of crime. This was achieved through the development of the legislative framework that necessitated the establishment of the Municipal Police Service (MPS). The key question that this paper seeks to answer, is how did the establishment of the MPS contribute to the effectiveness of the police's role in crime prevention? In answering this question, a broken windows theory is adopted as a foundation of this article in examining the crime prevention role of the MPS in South Africa. Using the findings of the research study which was conducted by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety in the 2013/2014 financial year, this article draws attention to the divergent interpretation of the triple statutory function of the MPS by the three municipal police agencies in Gauteng. Therefore, this paper submits that the broad definition of crime prevention, to a larger extent contributes to the divergent interpretation of MPS's crime prevention role. Similarly, this paper suggests that this phenomenon is also compounded by the fact that both section 64 of the SAPS Act (Act, 68 of 1995) and Municipal Police Service Regulation of 1999 do not explicitly define the nature of crime prevention service that the MPS are expected to establish. In conducting the above-mentioned study, qualitative research **methods** were utilized to collect data. These subsume the collection of primary data through in-depth interviews with nine participants, which were purposively selected due to their expertise and the analysis of secondary data was conducted to triangulate data sources. Respondents were sampled using the non-probability sampling technique, known as purposive sampling and the data was analysed thematically.

KEYWORDS: Crime prevention, Municipal police, Crime prevention mandate, Policing Strategy, Crime control

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I. INTRODUCTION

Charlton and Mistry, (2020), highlighted that the crime reduction role of the police agencies remain one of the significant tools of government to enhance community safety. This is primarily due to the fundamental position that the police occupy in the prevention of crime (Charlton and Mistry, 2020). A salient example in this regard is characterised by the fact that the central tenant of the government's policies on safety in the mid-1990s was seized with a task of building a police capacity to meet the growing violent crime that the country was experiencing (Rauch, et al., 2001). For Shaw, (1998), this was motivated by a need to increase police visibility in the crime hotspots. According to Shaw, (1996); Rauch, et al., (2001) Newham, et al., (2002) the emphasis to increase police visibility in crime hotspots, paved the way for the development of legislation that necessitated the establishment of the Municipal Police Service (MPS) in South Africa. This culminated in the establishment of five MPS agencies in the country by the end of December 2002 (Newham, et al., 2002; Rauch, et al., 2001). In addition, it is worth noting that Gauteng became home to three of the above MPS agencies that subsume Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD), Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department (EMPD), and Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD) (Newham et al., 2002).

The purpose of this article is to examine the crime prevention role of municipal police agencies in Gauteng, through exploring the factors that influence their divergent approaches in interpreting the crime prevention mandate. Drawing from the study which was conducted by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety (GDSCS) in the 2013/2014 financial year on the role of the MPS agencies on crime prevention in Gauteng,

this article will explore the current legislation and policy framework which necessitated the establishment of the MPS. Here the intention is to recommend aspects that require attention in enhancing the role of MPS agencies in crime prevention.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In examining the nuances of various approaches that the MPS agencies in Gauteng employed in interpreting their crime prevention role, the 2013 study by GDCS used the Broken Window Theory as the foundation of its thesis. This was also motivated by the fact that MPS agencies such as the JMPD adopted the Broken Window approach as the cornerstone of their policing strategies (GDCS, 2014). In this regard, this article will also adopt this theory as its framework in defining the municipal police's role in crime prevention.

Criminologists in the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, largely James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, and practitioners, such as Los Angeles Police Chief William J. Bratton, have argued that the Broken Windows theory emphasis on the significance of reducing the minor criminal offences in turn enhances the sense of safety (Braga and Welsh, 2016; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). According to Kelling & Coles, (1996); Sousa & Kelling, (2006) cited in Braga and Welsh, (2016), the claims of large declines in serious crime in New York City in the early 1990s, led to the centralisation of elements of broken window theory into the crime prevention strategies of many American police departments. The 1982 broken window theory article by Wilson and Kelling argued that social ills (e.g., loitering, public drinking, and prostitution) and environmental disparities such as vacant lots, trash, and abandoned buildings increase the sense of fear among citizens.

In the context of Wilson and Kelling's Broken Window Theory, the police crime prevention strategies should devise interventions to deal with minor criminal incidents in preventing the proliferation of possible serious crimes (GDCS, 2014). In the case of MPS agencies, this includes the enforcement of by-laws to enhance compliance with the rule of law. For Wilson and Kelling (1982), the Broken Windows framework emphasizes proactive policing strategies, which are aimed at changing conditions that are favourable to possible criminal acts. This is in line with the 1998 White Paper's definition of crime prevention, which highlights the significance of enhancing all efforts that create an environment that is less favourable to crime (Department of Safety and Security, 1998: 24).

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a succinct account of the literature reviewed to understand the fundamental tenants of the role of MPS in crime prevention. This is done by firstly providing a brief outline of the policy and legislative framework that paved the way for the establishment of the Municipal Police Service in South Africa. Secondly, attention is devoted to designating the meaning of the police crime prevention role as defined by various literature sources. Finally, a brief analysis of the current crime picture is used to draw attention to the essence of questions that this article seeks to answer.

3.1 Legislative Framework

Section 206 subsection 7 of the South African Constitution (Act, 108 of 1996) (hereby shall be referred to as the Constitution), stipulates that "National legislation must provide a framework for the establishment, powers, functions and control of municipal police services". In this regard, the Constitution provides a foundation to enable the development of the statutory framework to codify both the establishment and functioning of the municipal police service (Act, 108 of 1996).

This was realized by amending section 64 of the SAPS Act (Act 68 of 1995), with the SAPS Amendment Act (Act, 83 of 1998) (GDCS, 2014). The amendment act succeeds in defining the conditions in which municipalities could apply to establish the MPS (See, section 64 A of the SAPS Act) (GDCS, 2014). In addition, section 3 of the SAPS Amendment Act (Act 83 of 1998), which substituted section 64 (e) of the SAPS Act further stipulates that the municipal police service needs to carry out three main functions, which are traffic policing, by-law enforcement, and crime prevention (SAPS Act, 68 of 1995: as amended). Correspondingly, the municipal police regulations of 1999 further define the manner in which municipal services should constitute their triple functions as follows:

- "The said municipal police service should outline its detailed plan on how it will ensure that the traffic police service remains effective and is not affected by the transformation of the municipal police;
- The said MPS would also have to demonstrate a strategic approach in ensuring effective enforcement of the municipal by-laws, and
- Thirdly the strategic planning division of the municipal police agency would have to establish a crime prevention service" (SAPS regulations on municipal police service of 1999).

Moreover, the amendment act also highlights the significance of establishing civilian monitoring structures to heighten accountability (GDCS, 2014). According to section 64J of the SAPS Act (Act, 68 of

1995), the municipality in question should establish an oversight committee in terms of section 79 of the Municipal Structures Act (Act, 117 of 1998). The role of this committee as per the SAPS Act would be an advisory role to both the political authority of the municipality and the Chief Executive Officer on matters pertaining to compliance of the operational standards of the MPS (SAPS Act, 68 of 1995: 45).

3.2. Crime prevention

In exploring the crime prevention role of the municipal police, it remains critical to distinguish between reactive policing and proactive policing, as defined by various scholars. This shall be achieved through exploring the definition of crime prevention and crime control measures of policing.

Crime prevention is a broader concept, which encompasses various aspects aimed at precluding the possibility of crime (Department of Safety and Security, 1998). Shaw (1998) signals two fundamental objectives of crime prevention, which include measures that are directed at averting or reducing specific types of crime and those aimed at addressing the fear of crime. This is in line with the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security's (WPSS position), which is adopted as this paper's working definition.

According to the WPSS 1998, crime prevention could be understood as "All activities which 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 Justice System" (Department of Safety and Security, 1998:24). This definition, in addition to the preventative measures that are aimed at dealing directly with causal factors of crime, also highlights the need to enhance the justice system in an effort to entrench the rule of law (Department of Safety and Security, 1998:24). Furthermore, the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) of 1996 also advocates for enhancement of criminal justice, as it is vital in heightening compliance to the rule of law (Shaw, 1998; Rauch, 2001).

The 2016 WPSS further pursued this trajectory by acknowledging that crime prevention does not only entail dealing with conditions that are favourable to crime but there is also a need to address the risk factors at different stages of human development (CSPS, 2016: 10). According to the WPSS of 2016, a focus on an individual, family and social development has a better chance in nurturing social behaviour that promotes safer communities (CSPS, 2016: 10).

Thus far, attention was devoted to assessing the three key documents, which were instrumental in setting out South Africa's agenda on crime prevention. Even though these policy documents acknowledge the significance of the role of police agencies in crime prevention, they also concede that effective strategies need to take a holistic approach. For Stone, (2017) the revision of the 1998 WPSS was also characterised by a need to move away from traditional "police-centric approaches" to reduce crime. Given the fact that more empirical evidence points to the fact that the police-centric strategies are ineffective in significantly reducing the high rates of crime (Stone, 2017).

3.3 Crime control

Chainey and Ratcliffe, (2005), define crime control measures, as initiatives which are aimed at ensuring that crime levels remain within manageable parameters. These include initiatives such as police patrols in identified hot spots at regular intervals and the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance in the city centres (Chainey and Ratcliffe, 2005). Many scholars argue that crime control measures do not necessarily translate to crime prevention in the long run, this is purely caused by what Clark and Weisburd (1994) refer to as crime displacement. For Clark and Weisburd (1994) crime control measures contribute to the temporal relief that is brought about by shifting crime away from the target of crime prevention initiatives. On the other hand, Minaar, (2007) and Moyo, (2019) submit that for crime control measures to succeed there is a need to ensure that the whole ecosystem of preventative measures is integrated to maximise the benefit of minimising the risk of crime. Moyo, (2019) highlights that CCTV surveillances are critical in enhancing the perception of safety.

3.4 Proactive policing

Goldstein (1979) postulates that proactive policing is mainly aligned with the strategies that are problem orientated. According to Goldstein (1979), a proactive approach to policing is vital in ensuring effective crime prevention initiatives. This entails pre-analysis of the crime situation in order to develop policing measures that will bring about change to preclude further manifestations of violence (Goldstein, 1979).

In addition, Eck, and Spelman (1987) further defined proactive policing as a model that holistically applies a scientific approach in dealing with causes of crime. Furthermore, Eck and Spelman (1987) devised a model for executing initiatives that are aimed at preventing crime, these include Scanning, Analysis, Responding and Assessment (SARA).

- Scanning (S), refers to the process of examining a particular area to ascertain types of crimes that are prevalent and social dynamics that could be contributing to the situation;
- Analysis (A), is the analysis of a crime situation by examining various facets of the situation under scrutiny;
- Responding (R), this refers to the implementation of the response to the identified circumstances; and
- Assessment (A), after implementing the remedial action there is a need to assess its impact in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the response (Eck and Spelman, 1987).

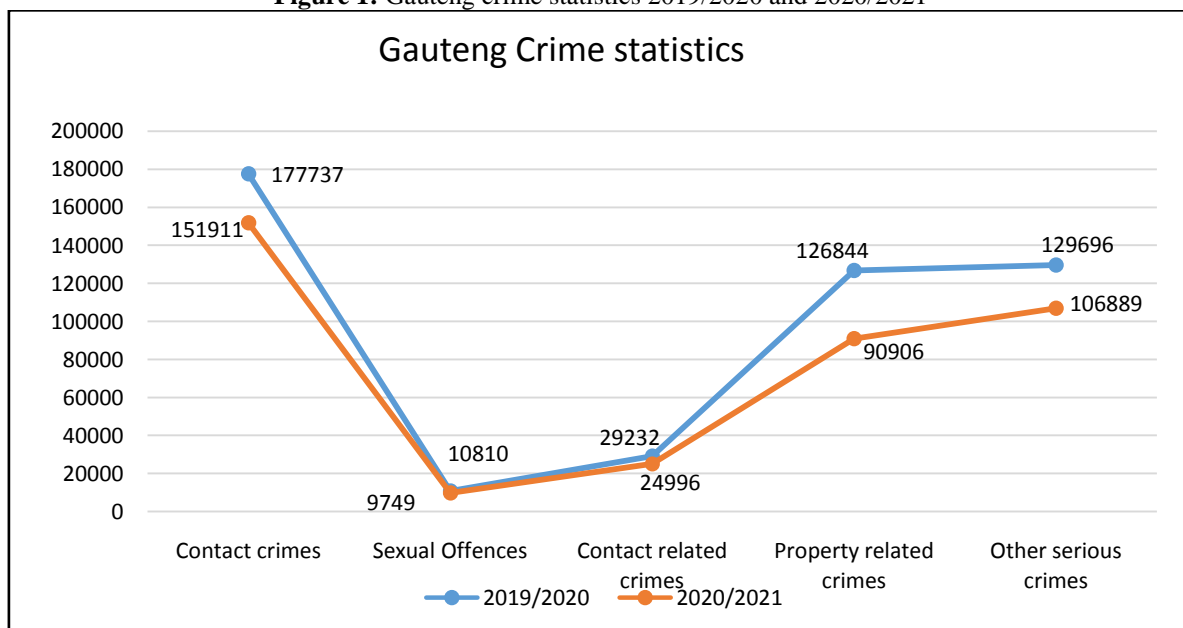
3.5 Reactive policing

Reactive policing is underpinned by conventional policing measures that seek to enhance the response to public complaints (Haskins, 2019). This includes among others, attending crime scenes of reported cases for investigation purposes and intervening in ongoing crime incidents (Haskins, 2019). In Sherman et al (1997) and Weisburd et al (2004), it is argued that this form of policing is regarded as standard policing which is concerned with law enforcement and there is minimal crime analysis. In essence, reactive policing puts more emphasis on utilizing the resources to deal with immediate crime (Sherman et al., 1997; Weisburd et al., 2004). The intention is to enhance access to justice for victims of crime and indirectly contribute to the prevention of future incidents of lawlessness (Sherman et al., 1997; Weisburd et al., 2004).

3.6 Provincial picture of crime

The annual crime statistics presented by the Minister of Police in Parliament on the 20th of August 2021, reflect an overall decline of 18.9% on serious reported crimes in Gauteng, from 474319 in 2019/20 to 384451 in the 2020/21 financial year (SAPS, 2021). Even though this paints a positive picture in terms of an overall decline of reported criminal incidents, it is worth noting that Gauteng is still experiencing constant high levels of serious violent crime. For instance, in the 2020/2021 financial year, Gauteng contributed 37.2% of the total serious recorded crimes nationally (SAPS, 2021). In essence, this means that a third of serious violent crimes were committed in Gauteng and this is far more concerning considering that Gauteng Province has more police resources to deal with crime as compared to other provinces. For example, there are four police agencies in Gauteng that are legally required to prevent crime in their respective jurisdictions that include the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD), the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department (EMPD) and the Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD). All of these agencies are resourced by the government to deal with crime and yet crime is still a big challenge. The chart below illustrates the breakdown of the serious violent crimes which were recorded in Gauteng between the 1st of April 2019 and the 31st of March 2021.

Figure 1: Gauteng crime statistics 2019/2020 and 2020/2021



Source: SAPS Crime Stats 2020/2021.

The chart above depicts that contact crimes have dropped by 14.5% from 177737 in the 2019/2020 to 151911 2020/2021 financial year (SAPS, 2021). Similarly, it is worth noting that the number of sexual offences has decreased by 9.8% from 10810 to 9749 and contact-related crime also went down by 14.4% from 29232 to 24996 in the 2020/21 financial year (SAPS, 2021). In addition, the above figure also shows that property-related crimes displayed a downturn of 28.3% from 126844 in the year 2019/2020 to 90906 in 2020/2021. Finally, in 2020/2021 other serious crimes also declined by 17.5 (from 129696 to 106889 (SAPS, 2021).

IV. METHODOLOGY

The data that informed the findings of this article is drawn from a study which was conducted by the GDCS in the 2013/2014 financial year titled “An examination of the manner in which MPDs articulate their crime prevention mandate”. The original research study adopted a multi-case study design in examining the above-mentioned subject matter (GDCS, 2014). A non-probability sampling technique was used in purposively selecting nine participants for primary data collection, which included administrative heads of the three MPDs, six (6) Cluster Commanders from SAPS in the province and three academic experts in policing (GDCS, 2014). Participants’ thoughts on the subject matter were explored in the following areas: these include the MPDs approaches in interpreting their crime prevention statutory function, the capacity of MPDs to analyse crime as well as their resource distribution/allocation in executing their triple mandate. In addition to the primary data, document analysis was employed in an effort to triangulate data sources (GDCS, 2014). This was achieved through the review of the following secondary data sources that include literature on policing, newspaper articles, journals and relevant legislation (GDCS, 2014). Finally, the data was firstly thematically analysed to label the key aspects and subsequently, the cross-case analysis technique was applied to designate common and divergent nuances from the data (GDCS, 2014).

V. FINDINGS

As indicated in the literature review above, Gauteng has not seen a significant reduction in violent crime as the 2020/2021 financial year report on crime statistics reflects that “37.2%” of violent reported crimes nationally were committed in the province (SAPS, 2021). Even though the state has put measures in place to deal with the scourge of violent crimes, there is a daunting reality that reflects the minimal effect of crime prevention initiatives to significantly reduce the high levels of crime. In its quest to ascertain the role of the three MPS agencies in Gauteng, the 2013/2014 study by GDCS revealed that there was no common approach in the manner the crime prevention statutory function is being interpreted in the province (GDCS, 2014). The following section outlines the research findings of the 2014 study by GDCS on the role of the MPS agencies in crime prevention.

5.1 Ekurhuleni Municipal Police Department

The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department (EMPD) was established in 2002, in order to enable the city to deal with crime in the city (GDCS, 2014). This police agency was established as a force multiplier to SAPS, which was already operating in the area (GDCS, 2014). According to the City’s website, the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department (EMPD) was transformed from a traffic unit to a fully-fledged municipal police department in 2002 (See, www.ekurhuleni.gov.za). This Department started with 601 personnel, of which 568 were police officers and the remaining 33 were administrative staff (GDCS, 2014). Throughout the past two decades, the EMPD grew, in an effort to accommodate the policing demands in the city ([HTTP://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za](http://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za)).

At the time the research study was completed in 2014, the EMPD was operating in three regions which are headed by Directors that account directly to the Deputy Chief of Police, who in turn accounts to the Chief of Police (GDCS, 2014). These regions are North, East and South. It must be noted that at the writing of this article, the research team was not in possession of an updated business plan from the EMPD. However, the information at the city’s website does not reflect any change from the data which was documented by the 2013/2014 GDCS study. The following services that are documented by Newham, et al., (2002) are briefly discussed as the initial response of the EMPD to the crime prevention mandate. These services include the following items:

- Vehicle patrol
- Foot patrol
- Rapid Response unit
- Motorcycle patrol, and
- Social Crime Prevention unit.

It should be noted that the status quo of these services might have changed, given the fact that when these records were documented in 2002, the EMPD’s structure was not yet completed.

5.2 Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department

The Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) was established in March 2001. It is the second oldest of five Metropolitan Police Departments in its establishment (GDCS, 2014). According to the City of Johannesburg website the JMPD incorporated previous traffic departments, by-law enforcement staff members and municipal security personnel in its inception (<http://www.joburg.org>). Its initial budget was fixed at R258million in both 2001 and 2002, with the bulk of this money spent on personnel remuneration for the Protection Services Cluster, which includes the police department and Emergency Services (Newham, Et al., 2002). According to the GDCS, (2014) the JMPD started with 2500 police officers with the intent of raising the number to 4000 officers within a space of 3 years from 2001. As of 2009, the JMPD had 3000 police officers (GDCS, 2014).

Moreover, according to the Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) for the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department for 2013-2014 three of its nine directorates had a direct contribution to crime prevention (COJ, 2013). The By-laws and Operations Units were tasked with the mandate of ensuring that the operations have an impact on crime prevention, through increasing police personnel to enhance visibility in crime hotspots (GDCS, 2014). The JMPD also indicated that it is increasing its efforts in implementing traffic policing and by-law enforcement functions (COJ, 2013).

In essence, the JMPD used its existing functions such as traffic policing and by-law enforcement to contribute to crime prevention (GDCS, 2014). According to the COJ (2013), the Broken Windows Approach informed the implementation of the JMPD's crime prevention mandate by targeting minor crimes to prevent more organised crime (COJ, 2013). Moreover, the 2013 SDIP for JMPD highlighted the following key points as the focal areas of its strategy in the 2013/2014 financial year:

- Increase communication between the agency and the SAPS, through the development of a memorandum of understanding on crime prevention operations
- Increasing visible policing on the identified crime hotspots in the city
- Enhancing community relations through the ward-based policing strategy, and
- Strengthening public safety education through social crime prevention campaigns

In addition to that, the JMPD highlighted that it planned to increase the level of research on crime prevention and the evaluation of the social crime project in an effort to enhance its contribution to crime-related operations (COJ, 2013).

The JMPD further highlighted that its response to the crime prevention mandate was characterised by the implementation of Visible Policing, the establishment of the Canine (k9) Equestrian Unit as well as the Public Order Policing Unit. Also introduced was the installation of surveillance (CCTV) cameras, the roll-out of community crime prevention awareness programmes as well as participation in Community Policing Forums (City of Johannesburg, 2003). These programmes were defined in the City's Safety Strategy. At the completion of the study by GDCS in 2014, the City of Johannesburg had a safety strategy which was aimed at defining a coordinated approach to dealing with crime, violence, safety and security in the city (GDCS, 2014). It is also argued that the strategy is a basis for the programmes of the JMPD as well as those of other agencies in dealing with crime in the city (City of Johannesburg, 2003).

When asked about how this strategy is being coordinated, JMPD stipulated that the Public Safety Department of the COJ facilitates the coordination of the city safety strategy, given the fact that the city's departments work hand in hand in ensuring that the strategic goals of the safety strategy of the city are achieved.

5.3 Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD)

This section discusses the role of the Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department in the context of the crime prevention strategy of the City of Tshwane. The Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department was established in 2002. At its inception, the Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD) had a total of 1400 personnel, 560 of which were police officers and the rest were municipal court personnel and administrative staff (GDCS, 2014). In its presentation to the DCS in a Quarterly Review Session in January 2014, the TMPD stated that it is in the process of increasing its police personnel with 500 more police officers (GDCS, 2014).

It is stipulated that the Crime Prevention Strategy of the City of Tshwane seeks to achieve six objectives. Firstly, the strategy is intended at facilitating a multi-agency approach, that puts more emphasis on providing a proactive instead of a reactive approach to policing as will be discussed in the subsequent sections. Secondly, there is an explicit intention on the part of the city to determine and address the underlying causes of crime (GDCS, 2014). Furthermore, the City of Tshwane's strategy intended to provide services and establish facilities for groups at risk of both engaging in criminal activities or becoming victims of crime. The strategy also intended to address crimes that are not easy to police, such as domestic violence.

In addition, the city also aimed at reducing the incidence of crime through crime prevention education and awareness initiatives (Burgmer, 2007). In order to realise the objectives of their crime prevention strategy,

the City of Tshwane also engages in crime prevention measures which include, among others, visible policing, the utilisation of CCTV cameras to prevent crime and social crime prevention.

5.3.1 Improving Visible Policing

It was stated that the City of Tshwane intends to improve visible policing through the implementation of the Ward-based Policing strategy. This policing approach entails deploying officers of the Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD) on foot and bicycle patrols for crime prevention and enforcement of by-laws (Ramokgopa, 2013). According to the TMPD, the Ward-based Policing strategy was in its infant stages and was recently introduced, at the time of completing the research study in 2014. It was further stated that the TMPD needs to be well capacitated in order to implement the strategy effectively. TMPD's plan was to have 10 officers per shift in a ward, and at the time of completing the data collection, this was yet to be achieved.

5.3.2 Social Crime Prevention

Social crime prevention initiatives adopted by the City of Tshwane are classified into community projects, awareness campaigns as well as the safer schools project.

5.3.3 Community Projects

The City of Tshwane was implementing three community projects, namely: the Church Awareness Project, the Neighbourhood Watch as well as the Peace and Development Project (City of Tshwane, undated). The Church Awareness Project focuses on educating community members about housebreaking and the effects of substance abuse (City of Tshwane, undated). The Neighbourhood Watch in turn, focuses on the establishment of community-driven initiatives. These are aimed at preventing crimes such as housebreaking, armed robbery, motor vehicle theft, theft in and outside vehicles, murder, rape, domestic violence and child abuse (City of Tshwane, undated). In describing this initiative, the respondent from TMPD stated that their main focus on this programme is to mobilise the community to be observant of anything that is happening in their neighbourhood.

Lastly, the City of Tshwane also had a Peace and Development Project. This project makes use of the concept of peace workers. The peace workers are known and trusted members of the community who are readily available to resolve conflicts. The focus of this project is on reducing crime by means of timely resolution of family conflicts with a high potential for becoming violent crimes (City of Tshwane, undated).

5.3.4 Community Awareness Campaigns

It was further stated that the City of Tshwane rolls out awareness campaigns through Road Shows for the 16 days of activism of no violence against women and children, Cable Theft Awareness, Youth month, Safety and Security month as well as Transport month. Community awareness campaigns also entail distribution of safety tips through local newspapers (City of Tshwane, undated).

5.3.5 The Safer Schools Project

The Safer Schools project is dedicated to learners in pre-primary, primary as well as secondary schools. The project is intended at educating learners about reporting child abuse and other criminal activities through safety talks. These initiatives also focus on Road Safety Education and the Scholar Patrol Programme (City of Tshwane, undated). When asked how they carry out this venture the TMPD stated that these awareness sessions are a result of the partnership between TMPD, SAPS and the Community Police Forums. In addition, the social crime prevention unit at the TMPD ensures the coordination of these initiatives.

Furthermore, it was indicated that the TMPD utilises ICT equipment such as surveillance cameras or what is commonly referred to as CCTV cameras, and as well as crime information management systems (Ramokgopa, 2013). This equipment, according to TMPD, enhances the ability of the police to deal with crime.

5.4 Discussion of Findings

Elsewhere in this article, an effort was dedicated to outlining the working definition of crime prevention that this paper adopted. Drawing from the three documents that include the WPSS of 1998, NCPS of 1996 and the revised WPSS of 2016, this article manages to designate the fundamental blocks of crime prevention as envisaged by the policy framework that South Africa adopted in the dispensation post-democracy. In essence, the crime prevention discourse is underpinned by a threefold approach that establishes a multifaceted strategy to reduce the high levels of crime (Shaw, 1996). According to the White Paper on Safety and Security, these three fundamental elements of crime prevention include the following aspects: the alteration of the environment within which crime takes place; changing the conditions which are favourable to causal factors of crime; and enhancing the effectiveness of the justice system to provide deterrence (Department of Safety and Security, 1998:24).

In addition, the UNODC's definition of crime prevention, highlights a need to ensure that all programmes that are geared towards reduction of crime should encompass a comprehensive strategy that addresses the multiple causes of crime (UNODC, 2002). In contrast, the 2013/2014 GDCS study concluded that the three MPS agencies in Gauteng approaches are mainly confined to emphasis of police visibility in crime hotspots as a tool to prevent crime (GDCS, 2014). Moreover, the UNODC further suggests that crime prevention initiatives should be based on empirical evidence to ensure the effectiveness of the interventions (UNODC, 2002). The study further concluded that none of the MPDs in Gauteng had the capacity to develop independent crime statistics which inform the planning in their respective jurisdiction (GDCS, 2014). This is mainly perpetuated by the fact that the MPDs are expected to rely on SAPS in planning crime prevention initiatives (GDCS, 2014).

In summary, the lack of a clear policy position on the crime prevention mandate of the MPDs impacts the manner in which this role is being articulated. In essence, the impact of policy ambiguity on key aspects of the crime prevention mandate of MPDs contributes to divergent approaches in the interpretation of this role by the three MPDs in Gauteng. Drawing from the work of Burger (2005), the key challenge of police agencies' interpretation of their role in crime prevention is characterised by an emphasis on the crime control measures as their contribution to crime prevention. This is evident in the emphasis of the MPDs on police visibility as a response to their requirement to do crime prevention. For example, the JMPD started zonal policing which is similar to ward policing that emphasises police visibility. The contention in this regard is that visible policing is an element of crime control as it deals with ontological aspects of the crime situation, given the fact that it focuses on the identified hotspots, and it does not entirely deal with causality, which is the critical component of crime prevention (Burger, 2005).

In summing up this thesis on the aspect of the response to the crime prevention mandate of these MPDs, it becomes evident that some attempts are being made to respond to the legislative function of the MPDs to prevent crime. The critical point that this article seeks to highlight is that all of these agencies employed a divergent approach in complying with the legal mandate of preventing crime. In addition, the bulk of these initiatives that are highlighted as responses to the crime prevention mandate are mostly concentrating on traditional policing approaches.

Moreover, this article submits that the unclear policy guidelines on how the crime prevention service of MPS should be constituted, present the management at the MPS agencies with a complex task of crafting suitable approaches to fulfil their crime prevention statutory function (GDCS, 2014). This results in what Burger (2005) refers to as the constant change of approaches in response to the pressure from both the public and from political formations. According to Burger, (2005), it is against this backdrop that the police agencies rely on popular policing approaches that only focus on crime control measures such as police visibility. It is further argued by Burger, 2005; Haskins, (2019) that these crime control measures are not necessarily dealing with the causality of crime, which is the key aspect of crime prevention. The second aspect that this article seeks to highlight is the fact that at the time of completing the data collection in 2014 none of the three MPS agencies had capacity to analyse the extent of crime in their jurisdictions.

According to the Municipal police regulations of 1999 the MPS agencies are required to constitute a crime prevention service in addition to their traffic policing and by-law functions. The key question in this regard is how should this crime prevention service be constituted in order to achieve the requirement of their statutory function. The work of Newham and Rappert (2018) highlights that proactive policing is characterised by the ability of the police service to have evidence-based strategic approaches. As indicated in the literature review Eck and Spelman (1987) postulate that scientific-based policing is the key element of preventative measures of crime. However, it has been noted that the heavy dependency on SAPS crime statistics further limits the MPS capacity to independently execute their crime prevention statutory role (GDCS, 2014). Even though the TMPD and JMPD adopted strategies to enhance their contributions to their cities' social crime initiatives, at the time of finalisation of data collection in 2014 there was no indication of the effect of these strategies (GDCS, 2014).

Finally, it should be noted that there is no attempt at this stage to capacitate the MPS agencies to develop evidence-based crime prevention strategies as envisaged by various criminology scholars. This is particularly due to the fact that the proposed amendments to the SAPS act seek to regulate coordination between SAPS and MPS agencies. For instance, the only proposed amendment to section 64 E paragraph C that outlines the crime prevention function of the MPS is the addition of enforcement of regulations for the Gatherings Act (Act no, 205 of 1993) (SAPS amendment bill, 2020).

VI. RECOMMENDATION

It is imperative that the current regulations be reviewed in clarifying the definition of crime prevention role of the MPS, as the proposed review of the regulations will assist in defining the elements of the MPS's

approach in constituting the crime prevention function. Lastly, the review will also assist in ensuring that the MPDs plan accordingly, based on a clear legislative mandate.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study established that the crime prevention mandate of MPDs is not clearly defined in the legislation, thus making it difficult for MPDs to contribute effectively to crime prevention. This is perpetuated by the lack of a clear indication of what should constitute the crime prevention service of each municipal police agency as envisaged by 1999 regulation on municipal police. This article further argued that ambiguity of the role of MPDs led to all MPDs in the province to use crime control measures as their primary response to crime prevention.

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