

**Policing in South Africa:
Is decolonisation the answer to democratic policing?**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to critically evaluate the structure and functioning of the South African Police Service (SAPS), and take stock of the difficulties confronting police officers in their day-to-day policing activities. Policing in South Africa tends to draw widespread criticism, much of it directed at the external and internal environments of the police, and a great deal of it levelled by politicians, academics, researchers, the community and the mass media. Prior to 1994, the call was for the rationalisation, restructuring and amalgamation of the police into a single police service that would enjoy legitimacy among all the communities of South Africa. Although the country embraced a new democratic dispensation in 1994, very little was done to develop and implement clear policies and processes to decolonise the police and bring about systemic change. For this discussion, the researcher collected qualitative information by means of a literature study and drew on his personal experience as a former senior police officer with the SAPS. A need for the decolonisation of the structure and functioning of the police service in South Africa was identified, so that police officers may perform their role within the context of democratic principles and restore respect for the country and its citizens.

INTRODUCTION

In this inaugural lecture, I give vent to my latest knowledge, views and insights into my area of specialisation and current research on safety and security issues.

There are quotes which I believe would be of significant value to this presentation. I want to start with a quote from the former Minister of Police, Mr Nhleko;

“The governing African National Congress has always been clear about the role of the police that they should be protectors guided by the best principles of human rights and progressive thinking.” (Annual Police Report, 2015-2016)

Prof Makhanya, Principal and Vice Chancellor of UNISA in his recent interview with Econnect, stated;

“Social justice demands will simply no longer tolerate a resumption of old practices. The time has come to think innovatively and transformatively about a very uncertain future, in which we must nevertheless lay foundations that will ultimately enable us all to prosper into the future. Given our struggle for freedom and our very brief history of democracy, South Africans have learnt to think fearlessly and outside of the box and to listen when others do the same” (Naicker, 22 February 2017).

If the title of this presentation has angered you, or touched a nerve, this is probably because of our individual ignorance, our misperception of policing and the nature and role of the police. This has given rise to misgivings in place of trust, and indifference instead of cooperation. Such

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perceptions further lead to the notion that the police are the most hostile of all colonial agencies. The police in colonised countries are generally more socially isolated from the public than in countries such as the United States and Great Britain. The divide between the public and the police could result in either an underestimation or an overestimation of their role, and hence of the public's expectation of the police (Isokun, 2006: 19).

As South Africa approaches the first quarter of the century of her most revered constitutional democracy, it is time to pause and critically evaluate the structure and functioning of the South African Police Service (SAPS), and take stock of the difficulties confronting police officers in their day-to-day policing activities.

Whenever there is a crime incident, whether violent or not, that requires police intervention, questions about the appropriateness of the police response will always be raised. These usually include whether the police could have prevented the incident if they had been better prepared, reacted more quickly, acted more forcefully, and brought the situation under control. These are difficult questions, irrespective of the context, and it would be difficult to answer them without knowing the mood and mentality of the people in any particular situation.

Policing in South Africa tends to draw widespread criticism, much of it directed at police officers and the state of the police service both internally (organisationally) and externally. Most of the criticisms come from politicians, academics, researchers, the community and the mass media. Prior to 1994, the call was for the rationalisation, restructuring and amalgamation of the police into a single police service that would enjoy legitimacy among all the communities of South Africa. Although the country embraced a new democratic dispensation in 1994, very little was done to develop and implement clear policies and processes to decolonise the police and bring about systemic change. Although many police officials in South Africa are against colonial policing, they are nevertheless central to the success of colonialism because they maintain law and order, acting as instruments of the political order (Miller, 1975:88). Even after the advent of democracy, the police in South Africa continue to see themselves as alienated from the community, and as a colonial organisation in both structure and functioning.

The difficulties confronting police officers in their day-to-day policing activities need to be examined in order to determine whether decolonisation is the answer to democratic policing. If this is found to be the case, the SAPS will then have to undergo a process of decolonisation and orientation so that police officers may be empowered to function within a democratic dispensation.

The structure and functioning of the South African Police Service (SAPS), even in our democracy, still bears this colonial mark. According to Mohler (2009), police leadership should see policing as the enforcement of those laws which have been understood and accepted by the majority of the people, based on the principles of the rule of law. The rule of law encompasses the protection of human rights, the principle of legality, the principle of proportionality, the interests of the people, good faith, and conformity with international law.

Since the early 1990s, the SAPS has been involved in policing a changing society. Despite the police leadership changes since then, society remains concerned about the rising crime rate and the level of violence employed by perpetrators of crimes. Many community members are asking why the number of crimes continues to increase (Marriah, Soobramoney and Somduth, 2015: 5).

Since a democracy is dependent on its police service to maintain law and order, and to facilitate a free society, this presentation will consider democratic policing and the expectations of society, as its point of departure, which includes democratic rights and fundamental commitment within a culture of human rights, societal accountability and transparency in combating crime, organisational/structural expectations of future policing institutions, equality, fairness, protection, consensus, partnership, working together, responsiveness and service (Prinsloo and Du Preez, 1994: 7). These are standards for effective, democratic or, to put it simply, good and professional policing. The entire democratic system is based on the valuing of human rights, which brings us to the point that the consent of citizens should be at the heart of democratic policing. This means that the police should operate with the consent and approval of the people. This research is aimed at encouraging police officials to identify with the citizens of the country, and to respect their values, expectations and obligations as an embodiment of the principles of democratic policing. There has to be an attempt to unmask the traditions of the police, which has been feared for so long.

This research analysed both the internal (organisational) and external environments of policing, looked at what is expected of a democratic police service, and discusses the systemic changes that need to take place in a free, democratic and dynamic South African society. Since colonisation lies at the heart of the present policing system in South Africa, the question that the researcher wishes to explore in this study is whether decolonisation is the answer to democratic policing.

RESEARCH RATIONALE

The researcher was motivated to undertake this study because of the number of police officers engaging in unethical behaviour, as conduct of this nature often originates in the norms of organizational culture (Kingshott and Prinsloo 2004). A large number of people of indigenous African origin are arrested daily, and kept in custody as remand prisoners for long periods at police stations and as convicted prisoners in correctional services facilities. The continuation of this situation despite a new political dispensation is lamentable. It is clear that the criminal justice system is failing those of indigenous African origin by not providing adequate community policing, social services interventions and sufficient restorative justice platforms to resolve different types of problems (Hargovan, 2009). The number of prisoners increased dramatically between 1994 and 2017, while cell accommodation and prison staff increased only slightly. Overcrowding is largely the result of the increase in the number of unsentenced prisoners between 1994 and 2017, compared with the increase in the number of sentenced prisoners.

After the advent of democracy in 1994, policing in South Africa has grown increasingly complex, and this has been the driver for a more effective and innovative police service directed towards democratic policing. Pretorius (2008: 81) observes that the crime rate in South Africa is high, with crimes including murder, rape, hijacking, and the violent assault and mutilation of victims. The increase in the crime rate is ascribed in part to the high unemployment rate and accompanying social problems, which are associated with poverty and despair. The SAPS, as the only legitimate policing agency in South Africa, is often called upon to reduce the high crime rate in society. When police officials are confronted with situations that require sensitivity, they on occasions use maximum force or more force than is necessary. Violence is met with violence, a situation that on occasion leads to allegations of police brutality or to violent crimes and criminal charges being preferred against the police (Afrika and Hofstatter 2015). South Africa frequently witnesses violent strikes and protests. The 2012 miner's strike

at the Lonmin mining company in the Marikana area, close to Rustenburg in the province of North West, South Africa saw 34 people killed (Marikana Commission of Inquiry 2015). During 2011, Andries Tatane, a South African activist, was shot during a protest held to address poor service delivery by the local government in Ficksburg, Free State, South Africa. (Afrika & Hofstatter, 2015). In many instances, the police find themselves accused of gross human rights violations and abuse (Marikana Commission of Inquiry 2015).

Inappropriate behaviour on the part of members of the SAPS qualifies as unconstitutional. The police have a duty to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to protect and secure the inhabitants of South Africa and their property, and to uphold the law. It may sometimes be necessary for the police to use force in carrying out their duty. The amount of force used must, however, be proportionate to the prevailing situation. Excessive or unnecessary force is prohibited, and could constitute police brutality (De Vries, 2008). Inappropriate behaviour includes assault, verbal abuse, intimidation (including psychological intimidation), racial discrimination, wrongful arrest and detention (Govender, 2015). For democratic policing to succeed in South Africa, the structure and functioning of the SAPS need to change. Police leadership will have to work at removing the hostility and fear that has been in existence for so long. This will also need a specific approach based on the principles of policing. If democratic policing in South Africa is to be effectively and efficiently implemented, attention must be paid to the influence of the external environment and society's expectations of policing (Prinsloo and Du Preez, 1994:7).

In carrying out research on occupational stress, ill health and organizational commitment among members of the SAPS, Jorgensen and Rothman (2008:1-12) found that physical and psychological health; the perceived commitment of the organisation to the member; lengthy travelling time and poor relationships among colleagues were the major outcomes of the perceived stressors. These researchers recommended that improved recovery strategies be introduced to allow effective recuperation from trauma and stress.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study was to critically evaluate the structure and functioning of the SAPS. An ethnographic design was employed; this draws on the theory of organisational culture, which was fundamental to this research, as organizational culture consists of the shared beliefs, values and practices that groups rely on in order to understand their worldview (Creswell, 2009). The researcher collected qualitative information on day-to-day policing activities. The literature study entailed examining media reports, peer-reviewed journals, books, scholarly reports and information accessed by means of keyword searches using Google Scholar and Research Gate. Owing to the nature and extent of the study, the researcher reviewed historical and contemporary literature concerning policing in South Africa and drew on his experience as a former police officer.

ORIGINS OF COLONIAL POLICING IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1652, the first law enforcement officer was appointed in Cape Town, South Africa, to patrol the streets to prevent crime. Upon the British annexation of the Cape in 1795, the new colonial authorities retained the existing policing structures, but recruited police officers mainly from the ranks of discharged soldiers and sailors. Although the British established a modern police system in Britain, the roots of the present policing system in South Africa can be traced back to the structure and processes developed by the colonial system (Dippenaar, 1988). Centrally

controlled colonial policing dealt with serious crime and security, while the locally controlled police stations carried out day-to-day policing activities. The army also had a role to play, and there was always ill-concealed rivalry between the army and the police over questions of security. The army was reluctant to carry out policing duties, while the police service saw their functions as markedly different from those of soldiers. These tensions were vividly exposed in South Africa, and were especially evident during emergency regulations operations, where the army and the police were required to work together in combined operations.

In many instances, national politics challenged the colonial powers, and colonial police had an awkward role to play. The police were expected to perform their general policing duties, involving the prevention and detection of crime through the enforcement of law and order. They also took on an increased security function in dealing with public order policing, prompted by anti-colonial politics. To deal with this, the colonial police force was heavily armed. Transport and communication systems were greatly improved, armoured vehicles from water cannons to gun carriers were put at the disposal of the police, and new units were established to perform special duties. These units ranged from highly trained riot squads and special operations teams to trained men recruited for guard and escort duties. At the same time, the gathering of political intelligence became a central aspect of police work (Miller, 1975).

Policing in the eighteenth century was in disarray throughout the world. London, the seat of the colonial system of policing, was itself plagued by insecurity and violent crimes. The London authorities were facing increasing political violence amidst the constitutional crisis over parliamentary representation for disenfranchised middle-class citizens (Miller, 1975: 88). The police force charged with the responsibility of upholding the social order and controlling a turbulent population inevitably clashed with the citizens. In 1829, Sir 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 and restraint of procedural regularities and guarantees of civil liberties. The main principles behind the reforms introduced by Sir Robert Peel included the following:

- The police should be a uniformed force, drawn from the local people.
- The police should be totally unarmed.
- The police should be accountable to the citizens.
- The police force should be overseen and bound by judicial control.
- The police force should focus on the prevention of crime by winning the trust and cooperation of the people (Miller, 1975: 88).

In London, the metropolitan policing system achieved remarkable success within a short period. Despite this success, the British were not willing to extend the system to their colonies, especially where they were in the minority (Verma, 2005). Instead, they created another model, the so-called colonial policing system, which was developed in Ireland and based on the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). This system was more centralized and coercive than the subsequent British system. The RIC was designed to police communities in foreign countries in order to ensure the security of colonial interests, and was military in style: it involved an officer, other

rank divisions, and training centres run along soldierly lines and, above all, control was vested in the central government (Jefferson, 1990).

Brogden (1987) identifies the following as the distinguishing features of the colonial model:

- Colonial policing represented the less noted features of metropolitan policing.
- The reserve function was an important duty of the colonial forces.
- Unlike the British and American police, who were accountable to the local communities, the colonial police were accountable to the rulers. In Ireland, the RIC was controlled by Dublin. In South Africa, the police are under the control of a national commissioner who is responsible to the national government. This is in sharp contrast to the local control of the British police and the various states and counties in America.

Despite the success of the metropolitan policing model, the different governments in South Africa did not implement it. The lessons learnt in controlling the Irish population, the objectives of maintaining hegemony and a sense of racial superiority all contributed towards the refinement of the colonial model. The RIC model in South Africa seems to have served the interests of policing, very well, and survived the transfer of power to a democratic rule in 1994. According to the viewpoint of the colonial police, colonialism made life secure for ordinary citizens and the police system of the colonial government proved to be a reliable instrument for the maintenance of law and order, for the South African people the experience was otherwise (Verma, 2005).

Section 7 of the Police Act of 1912 set out the powers and duties of the police force in South Africa, which was established in 1913, as follows:

Every member of the force shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as are by law conferred or imposed on a police officer or constable, but subject to the terms of such law, and shall obey all lawful directions in respect of the execution of his office, which he may from time to time receive from his superiors in the force (Dippenaar, 1988).

Although we are now in the 21st century, with a people's government in South Africa, we still follow the colonial model of policing, even though it is outdated and does not match the performance desired in the new millennium. It is a tragedy to see that South Africa continues to police the country through a mechanism that is not appropriate for an independent democratic nation.

CONSEQUENCES OF COLONIAL POLICING

As Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991:18) remind us, when making decisions, communicating and bargaining, and when managing change and conflict, we need to consider environments.

External environment

Externally, the police operate in a macro environment over which they have no control and little influence. Globalization, politics, the socio-economic situation, cultural norms, technology, demographics and legislation all affect policing at the macro level. Although police

officers have a role to play in the macro environment, their influence on it is minimal. They nevertheless need to know and understand how it functions and how it influences effective policing. The external environment extends from rural to urban communities, and from affluent neighbourhoods to slum areas, and therefore poses an enormous challenge to the police officer (Fox et al, 1991).

Internal environment

Chapter 14 of the Interim South African Constitution of 1993 stated that a South African police service would be established in accordance with an Act of Parliament after 27 April 1994, with structures at both national and provincial level. Furthermore, it was to function according to the regulations of both the national and provincial governments. Provision was made for the appointment of a national commissioner of police and a provincial commissioner for each of the nine provinces (Prinsloo and Du Preez, 1994). The structure was a given and subsequent strategies were to emanate from it. This has been a source of frustration for subsequent generations of police leaders and police officials who had to conform to this centralized police structure at national level. Many of the problems being experienced today might have been averted if decolonisation had been discussed at that point.

With regard to the internal environment, the police management at different levels constantly receive instructions from political office bearers and top management within the structure. These inputs are converted into outputs and returned to the environment in the form of products and services. This implies that the organization is totally dependent on its top structure for its existence (Reynecke and Fourie 2001). It is clear that the political office bearers and top management of the centralised structure have an exceptional influence on the vision, mission and policies of the police organization.

De Vries (2008) reports that during April 1997, the national commissioner of the SAPS and the minister for safety and security clashed on the subject of political interference. The clash was never resolved. After the general elections both leaders were removed from their positions, but the development and execution of policy between 1998 and 1999 was affected; for example, the White Paper on Safety and Security of 1998 was not implemented. This important policy document for both the police and the secretariat indicated, inter alia, that the officer accountable for the budget of the Department of Safety and Security, including the budget for crime prevention and policing, should rest in the hands of the Secretariat of Safety and Security and no longer in the hands of the national commissioner of the SAPS (Department of Safety and Security, 1998: 29, 32).

IMPACT OF CHANGES INITIATED BY SAPS LEADERSHIP SINCE 1994

After 1994, the SAPS was involved in policing a changing society. The task facing the new government was to bring about transformation and nation building during a time when crime and public feelings of insecurity were reaching unacceptable levels. Added to this was the burden of having to fast track the process while at the same time operating within a new legal framework based on human rights and respect for civil liberty.

With regard to democratic policing, it was necessary for leaders of the police service to develop clear policies and processes in line with the new legal framework based on human rights and civil liberties. Policing has faced numerous hurdles since the advent of democracy in 1994, as a result of factors influencing both the internal and external environment of the police service. One of the greatest challenges faced by the SAPS was the need to change its perceived role

from that of the strong arm of an unrepresentative government to a legitimate police service that is professional and fulfils the policing needs of all people within a democratic context.

The South African Police Service formally came into being in 1995 with the appointment of a national commissioner, and a proclamation on the rationalization of the SAPS on 27 January 1995, which made provision for the rationalization, reorganization and consolidation of the police service through enabling organizational and post structures (De Vries, 2008).

Since 1995, there have been five permanently appointed national commissioners whose responsibility it has been to provide strategic leadership to the SAPS, namely George Fivaz, who held office from 1995 to 1999, Jackie Selebi from 2000 to 2008, Bheki Cele from 2009 to 2012, Riah Phiyega from 2013 to 2017 and Khehla Sitole, who was appointed in 2017 and was in office at the time of writing this article.

The SAPS vision, mission and objectives require policing to prevent, combat and investigate crime, protect and secure the inhabitants of the republic and their property, uphold and enforce the law and create a safe and secure environment for all people in South Africa (South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995). Each of them provided strategic leadership through their own particular strategies, as a result, a range of crime combating strategies has been implemented from 1995 onwards. Because there was already a structure in place, the strategies followed structure, whereas this should have been the other way around, with structure following strategy.

Many crime-combating strategies have been implemented to improve the public perception of the police service and reduce crime in general. The change in leadership and the vision of the different leaders, accompanied by the implementation of different operational strategies, may have contributed to the present state of crime in South Africa. The social awareness and sense of responsibility of the different national commissioners is reflected in the way they structured policing below provincial level, and the way in which they strategized and defined the functioning of the SAPS at this level.

Police leadership since 1995 has further been characterised by different leadership styles. Leadership is a reciprocal process: not only do leaders influence workers, but workers in turn also influence leaders. Furthermore, other organisational factors, such as the organisation's objectives, finances, technology and the nature of the work also affect leadership (Milkovich and Boudreau 1988).

The SAPS brought in lateral appointments with no police training, police experience or related qualifications, and gave them senior management positions with police ranks to manage experienced police officials performing the core business of policing, instead of giving them civilian support service appointments with applicable salaries. They were given strategic tasks, such as restructuring the police service and drawing up operational plans to support policing. Upon discovering that their strategic decisions had impeded service delivery and demotivated police officials in the policing environment, many of them left the service prematurely (Govender 2010).

Before 1995 South Africa had geo-political policing in KwaZulu-Natal and Lebowa police agencies) and homeland policing in the the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. These policing agencies were amalgamated into a single police service under the leadership of

General George Fivaz. Today there is still differentiated (metro, traffic and military policing) and parallel policing in this country (private security) (Govender, 2010).

The transition to a democratic dispensation in South Africa brought about a restructuring of the criminal justice system through the abolition of a number of laws and the promulgation of new ones. Reform of apartheid-era policing was one of the significant problems facing the new government in 1994 (De Vries, 2008). The effects of apartheid, in addition to years of political violence and continued exposure to violence in the home and in neighbourhoods have produced a destructive culture that manifests itself in violence as a means of solving conflicts domestically and socially.

From 1995 until 2007 demonstrations, strikes, marches and a show of force by unions was common, and these activities were peacefully policed by the Area Crime Combating Units (ACCUs) of the SAPS in terms of the Gathering Regulations. The Gathering Regulations were enforced in an integrated fashion by all role-players ranging from the organisers, local government, and SAPS area commissioners to the local station commissioner and the ACCU. A magistrate gave permission for the gathering to take place within a specific period, on a specific date and at a specific venue, and the organisers and SAPS officers worked together to conclude the event. This approach guaranteed the use of minimum force as opposed to maximum force.

The Resolution Seven restructuring process carried out during 2003 inhibited service delivery because of the centralisation of specific policing functions, including local criminal record centres. During 2006, further restructuring under the same leadership resulted in the closing down of the remaining specialised units and area structures (Govender, 2010). The biggest mistake in this restructuring process was the closing down of specialised units such as the narcotics, vehicle theft and child and family violence units and the area commissioner's offices. This action was tantamount to taking away policing from the people, and resulted in increasingly demotivated personnel at different levels of the organisation and an increase in violent crime levels (Burger and Boshoff, 2008).

During 2010, the national commissioner was intent on ending crime by applying the maximum force allowed by law. This era witnessed an increase in incidences of police brutality and the number of police officials killed (Khobane, 2010).

Pruitt (2010) reports that since 1995, the following operational policing strategies have been implemented by the various national police commissioners in South Africa:

National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) – 1996

This was South Africa's overarching policy on crime prevention. It was intended to be the guiding framework for a wide range of interdepartmental programs aimed at increasing safety. The NCPS rested on the four pillars of improved criminal justice functioning, environmental design, community values and education, and transnational crime. At its peak, the NCPS was seen as one of the six pillars of the country's National Growth and Development Strategy, a far-sighted move that recognized the vital role safety plays in development. However, the change of administration in 1999 ushered in a new approach to how government would deal with crime. Public and political pressure was mounting for government to deal with the rampant crime problem, and the longer-term approach of the NCPS was not appeasing the fears of the public or of politicians. Decisive, short-term solutions to the crime problem were needed (Du Plessis and Louw, 2005). In the end, short-range thinking prevailed, and the National Growth

and Development Strategy (and with it the NCPS) was shelved in favour of the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR). With the possible exception of victim support, most of the social programs envisaged by the NCPS never came to fruition (Leggett, 2004:12).

National Crime Combating Strategy (NCCS) – 2000

The NCPS was drafted largely by a panel of civilians, and was widely distributed for comment. The NCCS, on the other hand, was produced in-house by the SAPS, and has never been issued as a public document. The NCPS was, in theory, an interdepartmental policy, while the NCCS is explicitly a security cluster matter. These differences are indicative not only of the shift towards an overtly law enforcement approach to crime reduction, but also of the pressure to respond quickly, which partly explains the lack of consultation and the focus of the NCCS on the police.

The NCCS has two elements. The first focuses on a selection of geographic areas with the highest recorded crime levels. Police resources are directed to these areas, largely in the form of high-density, search-and-seizure type operations. The aim is also to improve service delivery in these areas and, once crime has been “stabilised,” to initiate medium-term social crime prevention programs. The second element of the NCCS focuses on organised crime and involves the investigation of syndicates by task teams of experienced detectives. The strategy has brought a welcome focus on the parts of the country where most crime occurs. The emphasis on service delivery is also critical in improving public confidence – a recent opinion survey in central Johannesburg showed that the high-density visible police operations characteristic of the NCCS made people feel safer (Leggett 2004: 12).

During 2000, the NCCS began establishing Crime Combating Forums (CCFs) at station level, area level, provincial level and national level. These forums mirrored the crime control strategy meetings of the New York City Police Department, during which Compstat was used to compare statistics and initiate appropriate police action, and measure results in the form of successes. The much-publicised drop in crime in New York around this time cemented the popular view that Compstat was responsible for making the city safer: major crime in the city was reduced by half between 1993 and 1998 (Ratcliffe, 2009: 31).

Community policing

Constitutionally, community policing forms 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. Community police forums (CPFs) are legally recognised entities that represent the policing interests of the local community. They are also intended to exert civilian oversight over the police at various levels, in particular at local police station level (Minnaar, 2009: 20-25).

This democratic principle of consultation has been written into the South African Constitution as well as Chapter 7 of the Police Service Act 68 of 1995. Section 221 of the interim Constitution requires the establishment of a community police forum (CPF) at every police station in South Africa. In terms of section 18 of the Police Service Act, the purpose of the CPF is to

- improve the delivery of a police service to the community
- strengthen the partnership between the police and community
- promote joint problem identification and problem-solving
- ensure proper consultation/communication between the police and their clients

- ensure police accountability and transparency

In a nutshell, the legislation directing the functions of the CPFs emphasised three key responsibilities:

- the improvement of police–community relations
- the oversight of policing at local level
- the mobilisation of the community to take joint responsibility in the fight against crime

Community policing encourages community participation through the establishment of CPFs at all SAPS stations. Community participation in local crime prevention thus became important as a means both to identify the crime problems and hotspots, and to assist in solving the crimes. It has also shown that planning against crime is a local government function requiring partnerships between the police, the municipality, and the community they serve. To succeed, this approach to local safety requires an integrated approach (Landman and Lieberman, 2005: 21). Homeowners are likely to participate actively not only in maintaining their homes, but also in ensuring as far as possible that their environment remains pleasant and safe. They are more likely to engage in partnerships between the community and the police, and to engage constructively with the police in their community, hence becoming involved in community policing.

Sector policing

In the face of a great deal of resistance and scepticism from management, sector policing was introduced in the SAPS during 2003 as a distinctive style of grassroots policing. Sector policing entails dividing police station areas into manageable sectors, appointing sector managers and sector teams and convening community-police sector crime forums (SCFs) in each sector. The rationale behind dividing policing areas into sectors is to get small teams of police officials to know particular neighbourhoods intimately. The idea is for them not only to get to know their sector's crime trends well, but - with thought, innovation, and the necessary organisational support – to be able to identify the specific problems that fuel specific trends, and to solve or manage those problems. It is an ambitious policing philosophy. It demands that police officials think creatively, and that an organisational culture driven by rapid response to short-term problems reorient itself to the task of long-term problem-solving. At police station level, crime hotspots are identified and personnel from the station's centralised crime prevention unit are mobilised into high-density saturation teams; they move into hotspots in numbers, erect roadblocks, cordon off areas and search-and-seize (Burton, 2003; Department of Safety and Security 1998).

Intelligence led policing

This approach has its origins in the UK, and was established when traditional reactive methods of policing failed to cope with the rapid changes in globalisation, giving rise to greater opportunities for transnational organised crime. In the late 1990s, intelligence led policing was beginning to be practised in Australia, driven by a number of police commissioners. Local adoption included new accountability structures at local level, a greater integration of intelligence and investigation, and improved direction of daily police efforts through intelligence dissemination. The UK National Intelligence Model (NIM) bases the implementation of intelligence led policing on four elements, namely:

- Targeting offenders (especially targeting of active criminals through overt and covert means)
- The management of crime and disorder hotspots
- The investigation of linked series of crimes and incidents

- The application of preventive measures, including working with local partnerships to reduce crime and disorder

The emphasis was on targeting the criminal and not the crime. This is because research has shown that a small percentage of repeat offenders (recidivists) commit a large percentage of crime (NCIS, 2000: 14). Intelligence led policing was first implemented in South Africa in 1995 as a means to counteract organised crime syndicates.

Back to basics

During 2015, the acting national commissioner of the SAPS emphasised the need for a back to basics approach focusing on elements such as the wellness of police officers, and intended to raise the morale of all police officials, “so that their primary preoccupation remains fighting crime. The Back to Basics approach includes emphasis on police visibility in all public spaces” (South African Police Department, 2015).

Since 1999, the government’s focus has been on tough law enforcement interventions and on passing new laws aimed at improving criminal justice functioning. South Africa’s criminal justice system has performed well, considering the hurdles it has faced since 1994. However, while this success must be acknowledged, it must also be pointed out that there remain many obstacles to overcome, and that more could be done to solve some of the problems that remain. The task now is to overcome increasingly negative public perceptions of safety and renew efforts to prevent crime by tackling the social and developmental factors (Du Plessis and Louw, 2005: 427).

The police are required to deal with political volatility, criminal justice policy changes and rapid technological change, which introduces new complexities and uncertainties into the policing environment (Manning, 2003: 164–170).

According to Ayling, Grabosky and Shearing (2009:11), political needs, such as the translation of private sector mentalities and methods into public sector activities have over the past three decades or so driven changes in the way in which the police strategise and implement resource decisions. These are just a few of the difficulties to be overcome in the criminal justice environment.

The intensity and magnitude of crime in South Africa generally extends beyond the parameters of normal law enforcement, and as a result, civil society has a significant part to play in crime prevention and the investigation of crime.

Police officials operate in environments that demand adaptability to match their ever-changing situations. There has to be aptitude to acquire, interpret, share and retain information and adjust their organisational mindset to respond to new information and insights. To understand the barriers, the organisation has to create a culture of lifelong learning by undertaking a study in this regard. Experience has shown that these barriers include leadership style, lack of government support and business support to implement change, a reluctance to share information and lessons due to sensitivities, and a culture of blame.

The theory of constructivism, which relates to experiences gained and internalised prior to, during and after an event, with discovered oversights highlighted as potential lessons and then integrated with previous knowledge in order to develop new insights, is particularly relevant. The frequency with which new national commissioners have been appointed and the number

of acting appointments in the SAPS have required enormous adaptability on the part of every police officer (Novak, 1993; Rostis, 2007).

DILLEMAS CONFRONTING POLICING

Despite changes made by police leadership, there is concern about the public demand for visible uniformed policing presence; poor success on generalized patrols; public complaints on the increasing crime rates especially contact and property related crimes; the level of violence perpetrated by perpetrators of violent crimes; growth of private security provisioning and where the responsibility for crime prevention and community safety should lie.

Victim survey trends show that levels of reported experiences with crime are exponentially higher than what is reported to the police, and therefore higher than what is included in the crime statistics (Mattes, 2006:9). Victim surveys conducted from 1994 show that the poor are most at risk of falling victim to murder arising from interpersonal violence, and that the wealthy living in the suburbs are most at risk of residential robberies and burglary (Mc Cafferty 2003). The victim survey for 2016 shows that households headed by white people were more likely to experience a large number of incidences of crime than those headed by other population groups, while households headed by coloured people were most likely to be victimised compared with those headed by other population groups (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

In 2005, the World Health Organisation found South Africa to be no different from the rest of the world in that domestic violence in South Africa is committed across geographical, religious, racial and gender boundaries, and is prevalent in both urban and rural areas (World Health Organisation, 2005). Former UN high commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay, has said that the levels of violence against women and children in South Africa are “appalling” (Soobramoney, 2014b: 1).

Recidivists re-offend owing to a variety of personal reasons and circumstantial factors, such as the individual’s social environment, consisting of peers, family and community, as well as a lack of support systems and appropriate policies to assist in the re-integration of offenders into their families and communities. It is sometimes suggested that recidivism is an indication that prison is somehow attractive or ‘not too bad’ (South African Catholics Bishops Conference, 2012). It is estimated that 20 percent of criminals are responsible for 80 percent of all violent crimes in South Africa (Montesh and Berning, 2014). Although there are no accurate statistics relating to the rate of recidivism, it is estimated by the Department of Corrections in South Africa to be about 47% (South African Catholics Bishops Conference, 2012).

The increased use of drugs and/or alcohol and the commission of violent crime remains an enormous problem. This does not mean that users of drugs and/or alcohol are ordinarily violent; however, there is a perception that perpetrators under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol are more likely to be violent, aggressive and out of control. The most common drugs seized in South Africa are mandrax, cat, cocaine powder, dagga (marijuana) and a mixture of drugs known as nyaope. Many of the marginalised youth and the homeless would commit any crime to obtain cash to buy drugs (Naik and Serumula, 2015).

About three and a half million South Africans legally possess some four million firearms, of which slightly more than half are handguns. It is estimated that a similar number of illegal firearms are circulating in South Africa. South Africa’s porous borders allow arms smugglers to bring large quantities of illegal firearms into the country. Because of an oversupply of small

arms in the region, these sell cheaply, making them accessible to petty criminals and juveniles in South Africa, who frequently use them to commit violent crimes or resolve personal disputes (Schönteich and Louw, 2001).

In the absence of visible physical protection systems, a residence may be perceived as a relatively easy target and, therefore, more vulnerable to burglary than residences that are well protected through a range of security measures. Physical protection systems may include all the means that could be used to protect the household and its residents, such as access control, fences with spikes, electrified or barbed wire fences, entry phones, burglar-proofing at windows and doors, locks, security guards, armed response services, security lights, dogs, and CCTV surveillance systems. Physical protection systems are implemented for the protection of assets or facilities against criminals, terrorists, commercial or industrial competitors, malicious people or unlawful attacks (Van Zyl, Wilson and Pretorius, 2003; Govender, 2013).

According to Montesh and Berning (2014), there is a close relationship between age and crime, with the majority of people arrested being marginalised youth and the homeless. High crime in South Africa negatively affected businesses and personnel, while profits and productivity go down. Investor confidence becomes eroded. Violence experienced at home affects the ability of victims to work and increases fear. Children are affected in their ability to do well at school and their health suffers in the long-term.

NEED FOR DEMOCRATIC POLICING INTERNATIONALLY

During 2014, senior police officers from Germany, United Kingdom, Finland, Nigeria, South Africa, USA, Malta, Canada and Trinidad were interviewed to obtain their views on democratic policing based on their policing experience. The majority of the respondents mentioned that it is the democratic right of those elected in power to determine the relationship between the police, and the public, and that's been one of our great strengths since the days of Sir Robert Peel". "We need to be the protectors of the community, because once you give up that right, you are not getting it back. That's an awesome responsibility we should not take lightly". "Policing must support democratic values including, but not limited to, inalienable human rights such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" As the police, we are not elected but appointed to deliver a service. There should be no issues about partnership development and promoting a human rights ethos in our policing" It is evident from the responses given by the interviewees, there is in fact a need for democratic policing in the world (Baker & Das, 2014)

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC POLICING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Below are some suggestions for democratic policing as they emerge from the above discussion.

Legitimacy

In the early 1990s, policing had a lot to do with political legitimacy (Radelet, 1977: 429; Du Preez, 1991: 3). Since 1994 there has been some transformation, brought about by the new political order, but this is far from democratic policing: the new order really simply resulted in a bloated top structure and weakened policing capacity at grassroots level. Since 1994, leadership has done very little to decolonise the police, instead coming up with uninformed policing strategies and taking policing away from the people by centralising specialised policing functions out of reach of communities and going back to basics, which in reality has entrenched colonial policing. This was done without the consent of the communities, as a result

giving rise to a new form of legitimacy crisis that is currently having an adverse effect on policing. As a result, the police officer has to decide whether to do community policing at his or her own discretion, or to work under the orders of political masters and pressure groups (Smit, 1991: 10-12).

Public education programs

Public education programs should be reinforced as a means to reduce crime in society. Public education should be aggressively implemented in communities, schools and the workplace (Govender, 2015: 466). To overcome the problem of public ignorance regarding the nature and role of the police, there is a need to re-educate the public from pre-school, primary and secondary school levels. This will go a long way towards appreciation of the police by society.

Collaboration

Crime prevention requires collaboration, and so it is important that there should be continuous collaboration between criminal justice system departments and the government departments responsible for different types of policing, and interdepartmental cooperation among departments responsible for local government, education and social services. Many government departments are also legislatively empowered to conduct some form of policing for example, Department of Home affairs. They arrest offenders and play a role in the reduction of crime, which is not accounted for by the SAPS. Community policing should be encouraged and managed by the local police, who should become involved with the local institutions of social control. This function should not be left in the hands of private security companies and political office bearers to manage.

Prevention of crime is the responsibility of everyone in the country, not only the police. Bayley (1994:3-4) also expresses this view in his book, *Police for the future*, when he 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 (2006:116), 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.

Socio-economic conditions, inequality, child abuse, negative parenting, easy access to firearms, alcohol/drug abuse and corruption in the criminal justice system are just some of the societal factors that support violence (Seedat, Van Niekerk, Suffla and Rateele, 2009). Each police station area in South Africa should develop a crime risk analysis document for the development of strategies to reduce prevalent crimes (Marais, 2003: 37–48). In a democracy it is vital for communities to identify problems, become involved in the CPF, and work together with the police.

Police independence and accountability

In the colonial system of policing we still have politically partisan decision-making, which leaves very little room for the independence of the police that would allow them to be held accountable for their actions. This is still the norm in the SAPS, and in many other countries

where entrenched colonial systems of policing are in existence (Verma, 2005). Democratic and accountable policing are regarded as important hallmarks of any democracy. In a healthy democracy, a police officer is there to protect and support the rights of the community, not to repress or curtail freedom and ensure the power of the governing regime. Holding the police accountable for their plans, actions and decisions provides the necessary balance to the exercising of professional discretion by these officials. Accountability also provides a means by which the relationship between the police and the state can be kept under scrutiny – a way of providing insulation against internal and external interference with the proper functioning of the police (Montesh and Dintwe, 2008: 163). Prinsloo and Du Preez (1994: 16 -17) found in their study that the large majority of the population were of the view that the police are accountable to the public in terms of the way policing is carried out. There should be direct public accountability in the form of 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’, and to the premise that policing is a service from and to society.

Police discretion

Police discretion has always been a debatable issue in policing. Although this is left mainly to the good sense, training and judgment of the police officer, it should be qualified by a number of factors and conditions. Discretion should be applied firmly and fairly and with sensitivity. It should not conflict with any principle of legality or the rule of law. Police discretion is an element of the principle of consent and balance, and by applying this principle; police officers will be able to act consistently so as to reduce the risk of abuse and arbitrary action. Restorative justice in instances of specific crimes should be applied at the discretion of the police official (Pike, 1985: 63).

Pike (1985: 155) is of the view that neither politicians nor pressure groups may tell the police what decisions to take or what methods to employ, whether or not to enforce the law in a particular case, or how to investigate a particular offence. The exercising of police judgment has to be independent in the same way that the exercising of professional judgment by a doctor or lawyer is; if it is not, the way is opened to manipulation and abuse of the law, whether for political or private ends. Although some sectors of the police service strive to improve their credibility by rendering an unbiased, professional service to all people in South Africa, there are still many who do not understand the concept of democratic policing. Problems arise mainly during the performance of crime-oriented policing, and order maintenance functions.

Service style of policing

For decades, bureaucrats, academics and society demanded that the police change its ways in terms of its structure and functioning, yet whenever such changes have been suggested, they have been ignored or simply not implemented. The police are, fundamentally and historically, a civil service, not a military force (Smit and Botha, 1990: 39). The police force in South Africa has always been associated with a military style because of its structure, training and weapons. The reactive and coercive approach should be replaced with a persuasive approach that entails a service style of policing. The true philosophy of policing includes the idea of giving support and assistance to all, and is not focused on the negative in the form of prohibition and punishment. The police official no longer be merely a suppressor of crime, but should be the social worker of the community as well (Du Preez, 1991: 17).

There are considerable demands on, and expectations of policing in South Africa. Most demands come from the taxpayers and those who allocate funds for policing. These investors are concerned with the return on their investment in policing – the question most frequently

asked is, “are we getting a return on our investment?” The art of police management in the 21st century lies in meeting the public’s needs efficiently, in part by involving the public in policing, and in part by channelling policing resources to the most important issues. The first and major expectation that the public has of its police is that the police should always be available. This expectation is certainly fulfilled, as the police do indeed provide 24-hour service, 7 days a week, all year round, but their visibility seems to be a problem in many communities (Edwards, 2011: 142–148).

To enhance service delivery, the right calibre of police officers must be recruited (Civilian Secretariat of Police, 2013: 43). To develop specialised knowledge, skills and attitudes, police officers will need to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of policing crimes in a democracy. This can be done through training, education and development (Newburn, Williamson and Wright, 2008: 628). Police officers should see their main function as being the protection of constitutional rights (Barnard, 2011).

The SAPS should consist of units with specialised knowledge and skills to investigate the various forms of crime, including organised crime, at police station level. These units should be seen as a necessity, given the complexities of the various types of crimes confronting society (Burger, 2015: 1).

Crime intelligence led policing should be encouraged as it entails getting to know the enemy’s activities, a way of handling new and complex processes, or simply the application of knowledge or information to deal with a given task (Marais, 2003; Govender, 2015).

In some instances, after committing a crime, criminals move to a country where extradition is difficult, which is why it is important to build good international relations and ensure harmonisation of domestic laws (Newburn et al, 2008; Ratcliffe, 2009).

A multi-agency approach should be introduced to take cognizance of the biological, psychological and social factors giving rise to the commission of crimes, and to further provide counselling and treatment for both victims and the witnesses, where necessary (Sheptycki, 1993; Thomas, 2007; Thorpe, 2014).

RECOMMENDATION

The police system in South Africa needs to undergo rapid transformation. It is suggested that for the sake of rapid transformation the government should establish a national police commission (NPC) to examine the current policing system and recommend far-reaching changes, similar to the NPC that was commissioned in India in 1977 to decolonise the Indian police. According to Verma (2005), the NPC produced eight reports on the structure and functioning of the Indian police, including a set of recommendations.

CONCLUSION

Decolonisation is much more than implementing democratic policing; it will help restore respect for the country and its citizens. The ultimate challenge for the police official is to change the SAPS into a legitimate and professional policing service, which fulfils the policing needs of all the citizens in a democracy. Pluralistic street policing and more accountability to society is the answer to reducing crime in the 21st century. Policing crime should start with minimising the opportunities and reducing the criminal’s state of readiness to be involved in crime. There

is widespread concern about the quality of service and the overall professional conduct of the police service. Many members of the public view the police as incompetent, corrupt and poorly trained, and perceive the criminal justice system as being in turmoil. This leads to mistrust and a lack of confidence in the ability of the criminal justice system to deal effectively with society's concerns about safety and security.

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