Insights on the use of community policing forum for crime prevention: A case study of the Brooklyn police station, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to explore existing insights on the use of Community Policing Forums (CPF) for crime prevention, focusing on the Brooklyn police station in South Africa. With the adoption of the phenomenological research design and the qualitative research approach, about Ten (10) participants were selected purposively at the Brooklyn police station, various data collection methods, such as the documentary sources and unstructured face-to-face interviews, aided with the application of direct observation technique was employed. The inductive Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was employed for data analysts. The findings of this study revealed that the larger part of Brooklyn police station’s officials portrays a professional image despite this demanding career. However, participation on the ground level based on crime prevention actions is not always viable. By utilizing the consulted studies and empirical data, three (03) recommendations for policy intervention are made. Firstly, respective communities should urgently avoid paying for the crime prevention private services to provide detailed crime information to the local SAPS. Secondly, the local ‘Private Security Companies’ should collaborate with the CPFs and SAPS to aid the failing crime prevention responsibilities, while working on the restoration of SAPS’s trust by the local community members. Thirdly, the SAPS management should consider persuasive strategies such as frequent education and training of community members and their officials [Undergoing refresher courses], relating to community safety initiatives and implementations of legislative frameworks and policies.

Introduction

South Africa as a democratic country, one of its main priorities is to provide safety and security to all its citizens. Community safety and prevention of crime is of South Africa’s main important concerns and the establishment of among other things, the democratic SAPS and CPF’s, supported this. The latter is the forum that coordinates police-community relations. The main purpose of CPFs is not to replace duties of the police or for forum members to work as police members, but to join forces with the police so that they can fight crime together and improve service delivery. The CPFs were established as members of the public who work actively with SAPS to solve crime problems in their area, and not as complainant forums. Therefore, CPFs must operate in terms of the legislation that regulates its functioning. The CPFs originated from the reality that police are not able to reduce the level of crime on their own and that community involvement is a necessary, the concept requires the police to integrate into society and cooperate with the community in an effort to solve problems that cause crime, fear of crime or any disorder (Van Rooyen, 1994).
Burger (2007) highlights that the quality of life of the community is greatly defined by the quality of policing to motivate the community to be involved in policing and to have a say in the way problems are solved in their community. It is entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 whereby it places high premium on CPFs and consultation resulting to facilitation by CPFs in every station area. The CPFs requires police respond to the public setting priorities and develop their tactics. Effective community policing requires responsiveness’ to citizen whenever they set priorities and develop their tactics. Effective community policing requires responsiveness to citizen input concerning both the needs of the community and the best ways by which the police can help meet those needs.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which is the supreme law of the country, emphasises the safety and security of South African citizens. Section 198 of the cited Constitution postulates that National security must ensure that South African individuals live in an equal, peaceful, in harmony, free from fear and want to seek a better life (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Crime takes place within the community and committed by certain members of the community; it is of much importance that community members’ work together with the police in prevention of crime. South Africa, just like other countries in the world, also experiences criminal activities that interfere and disrupt communities’ life and their right to live freely. The statistics by the SAPS show increase in crime taking place within the country. The community experiences different types of crime such as robbery, house breaking and theft, rape, and hijacking. The SAPS October/December 2019/2020 crime statistics indicate that Brooklyn experienced 1 712 of various crime (Republic of South Africa, 2020:10).

The study conducted by Salomane (2010) shows concerns with the role of CPF in fighting crime [The selected crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study included] in communities [Brooklyn policing area is no exception]. The National Crime and Prevention Strategy (NCPS), 1996 indicates that, in order to fight crime effectively, communities and the SAPS should work collaboratively and in partnership with each other. Apart from the aim of fighting crime, as stated in the NCPS, 1996, the SAPS Act (No. 68 of 1995) mandates each police station to establish CPFs. The SAPS, from areas such as Brooklyn, has the duty in terms of Section 205 (3) of the South African Constitution, 1996 to fight and act against any criminal act taking place within the specific area. The need to have multi-role-players in fighting crime led to among other things, the establishment of CPFs. The CPFs comprises of various units such as that of community members, organisations, such as the Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), youth organisations, women organisations, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and other stakeholders (provincial government, local government, traditional authority and parastatals). By 2019/2020 financial year, Brooklyn police station experienced a slight increase of serious crime reported of 1 712 (Department of Police, 2020:10).

According to Gordon (2001), the collaboration between SAPS and members of the community working can address the crime experienced by the community particularly in their jurisdictions as the two reside and assigned to monitor area ensuring everyone safety as required constitutionally. All democratic countries see community policing as an important tool in relation to public policing. All members of the SAPS are responsible for the implementation of community policing, while the Provincial Commissioner, Cluster Commander, and Station Commissioner must participate in the establishment of CPFs in their respective areas (Department of Police, 2015:1; Republic of South Africa, 1996; and Department of Community Safety and Liaison, 2011).

The officials attached to the Brooklyn police station, as well as the immediate interested community members be consistently are foreign to advanced training and better public educational awareness campaigns to develop their crime prevention knowledge and analytical skills. Therefore, their improved resources should also be geared towards crime prevention activities, supported by intelligence-led operations, using new radical approaches, involving closer collaborations, interactions, and information exchange by all relevant stakeholders, to readdress current failures. Thus, this study offered insights on the use of CPF for crime prevention, using Brooklyn police station as a case study. This stemmed from the fact that the current crime prevention strategies are not strengthened to eradicate various crimes in the policing area. These existing strategies should be employed in a manner that will discourage potential criminals from committing criminal acts against. These strategies should be adequate to keep community members safe from criminal behaviour through the interventions of relevant stakeholders. Importantly, CPF is a new theory of police administration, consisting of Three (03) core elements, namely: 1) Citizen involvement, 2) Problem solving, and, 3) Decentralisation. Essentially, the local SAPS, cannot minimise crime opportunities through the applications of visible policing and law enforcement, they cannot address the criminogenic causes. In essence, they cannot alleviate poverty, create employment, nor can they provide rehabilitation of substance addictions and they cannot develop people morally and instil integrity at times. The sections to be covered in the sections to follow includes the exposition of the problem and understanding its nature, the formulation and roles of CPFs for crime prevention functions and the existing guidelines, legislative frameworks and policies for the establishment of CPFs under review of literature part. This is followed by research methodology, and study findings and discussions, as well as the conclusions and recommendations sections.
Review of literature

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Exposition of the problem and understanding its nature

Demombynes and Ozler (2003:265) indicate that the South African crime rate is among the highest in the world and all South Africans citizens are affected by it regardless of their race or gender. The area of Brooklyn continues experiencing serious crimes taking place in its jurisdictional area. According to the SAPS crime statistics (2018-2019/20-21), the Brooklyn police station reported 6 608 and 7 127 cases of various serious crime, such as contact crime, contact related, and property related respectively. The referenced SAPS crime statistics (2018-2019/20-21) indicate the various crimes which citizens of Brooklyn area suffers various serious crime such as the following selected Four (04) crimes, such as the 1) ‘Common assault, 2) Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, 3) Burglary at residential premises, and 4) Theft out of or from motor vehicle (Refer to Table 1 and 2),’ in the last Five (05) years. Mentioned crimes result in community members living in constant fear in the study location. It is also hinted that before South Africa find itself in transition, the style of policing was mainly described as rules-based. During the apartheid period, rules, and regulations and hierarchies, instead of the initiatives, discretion and consultation, were the ones applied to the behaviour of police. As a result, the same police find itself in a position where they cannot apply their discretion, leading to isolation between police and members of the community in dealing and solving criminal activities (Mistry, 1997:12; and Mengistu, Pindur, Leibold, 2000:1).

Table 1: Selected prevalent crimes at Brooklyn police station

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime category</th>
<th>October to December 2017-18</th>
<th>October to December 2018-19</th>
<th>October to December 2019-20</th>
<th>October to December 2020-21</th>
<th>October to December 2021-22</th>
<th>Count Difference</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common assault</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-19</td>
<td>-27,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary at residential premises</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>-61</td>
<td>-32,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-68</td>
<td>-84,0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft out of or from motor vehicle</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>-66</td>
<td>-28,8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SAPS (2020/2022)

Table 2: Fourth Quarter Crime Statistics 2021/2022 of Brooklyn police station

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common assault</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary at residential premises</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>-17,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft out of or from motor vehicle</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>-42</td>
<td>-21,3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SAPS (2018/2022)

From the indicated statistics of the selected crimes on Table 1 and 2 above, the indicated 04 crimes increased drastically over the last 05 years and they have been unstable and disturbing. Therefore, the prevalence of these crimes in the Brooklyn policing area cannot be overlooked nor largely ignored anymore, as the current (2022) Fourth quarter crime statistics refers. The researchers opted for Gauteng Province owing to its proximity from where they reside. However, the researcher envisaged that the findings of this study can be probable transferred to other provinces facing similar crime problems in South Africa.

The researchers submit that fighting crime needs all structures such as the CPFs collaborating with SAPS to be in place and effective. The area of Brooklyn is not immune to high crime taking place within the jurisdiction and the problem shows persisting. The research aim is mainly to determine the impact of CPFs in crime prevention within the area of Brooklyn. The objective is to determine implementation of CPFs and its impact in crime prevention. The research question is on what CPFs is and how it is implemented to
fight crime. The research was conducted applying the qualitative approach, where information was gathered through the literature review approach. The findings of this study presents that the existence of CPFs to collaborate with SAPS in crime prevention is very crucial. The CPFs serve a crucial role in in making a community policing as philosophy to promote collaboration and crime prevention by members of police and community.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of collaborating with CPFs in crime prevention. Further, the importance and positive results of effective implementation of CPFs within the jurisdictional area, Ngoveni (2021). Ideally, the SAPS is busy accomplishing its duties as per the South African constitution, 1996 and the SAPS Act (No. 68 of 1995), crime in South Africa remain a serious problem that affects both citizens and the economy in general. Although, the local SAPS is busy fighting crime as mandated by the South African Constitution, 1996 and SAPS Act (No. 68 of 1995), the SAPS Annual Crime Statistics over ten years period starting from 2007/2008 financial year indicate an increase in crimes such as murder, common assault, and theft. According to 2015/2016 financial year, Brooklyn crime statistics were at 7 222 and 7 409 during 2016/2017 financial year indicating increase in crime (Republic of South Africa, 2018:6). For considerations, the 2021 provincial crime statistics showed crime increase in East of Pretoria as police stations in the region reflected an upward trend in reported cases; ranging from ‘common theft, theft out of a motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicles, house break-ins and armed robberies.’ The Brooklyn police station specifically, was among the top 11 stations with high community-reported serious crimes, which also featured in the National top 30 police stations (Schriber, 2021).

Although various research related to this study were conducted, taking into consideration the high crime the country is still experiencing, the researchers of this study still believe that there is still gap in terms of collaboration between SAPS and members of community in crime prevention. Taking into consideration that gap, this study is conducted manly to focus on existing CPFs Brooklyn police station to determine its effects as a supplementary tool in crime prevention. This will assist in determine the impact of having CPFs in crime prevention. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to offer insights into the use of CPFs for crime prevention by the Brooklyn police station. The South African government, through Department of Police, introduced ‘community policing’ a philosophy aimed at transforming SAPS from the old apartheid traditional policing to a democratic policing where both police and community members work together in crime prevention (Republic of South Africa, 2016:13; and Republic of South Africa, 2017:8).

To this course; Newburn (2005) states that the ‘Police/SAPS’ had come full circle from a tradition initiated by Robert Peel’s principle that the Police is the community and the community the Police, not apart from it, with a clear emphasis on preventing crime, not just responding to it. The CPFs relate to three “P’s”, as the Professional era refers to the three “R’s”. These are:

i. Partnership.

ii. Problem-solving.

iii. Prevention of crime.

The ’rapid response (Professional era),’ conform to the responding on calls for assistance against crime, is referred to as merely “putting a bandage” on a wound by Newburn (2005). Equally, effective action is not being taken to solve the causes of the crime. Repeated calls bring the SAPS back to the same address time-and-time again. The CPF enables policing agencies to focus their resources on solving problems long term. Focus is on involving communities in the vision and mission of the SAPS and activate their contributions through active dialogue. The use of CPFs is the tool used for this reason and using of ‘sector policing’ as a strategy entrenched in the philosophy of CPF also focus on the partnership relationship between the local SAPS and immediate communities for this purpose.

The formulation and roles of Community Policing Forums for crime prevention functions

According to the South African Constitution, of 1996, it is the right for every citizen to live freely and safe from any kind of crime. The SAPS are mandated by the Constitution 1996 and the SAPS Act, 1995 to ensure that all citizens are safely all the time. To enforce community safety government introduced community policing that is viewed as a new philosophy rather than just new police work techniques. It is further viewed as the new theory of police administration that consists of three related core elements namely, citizen involvement, problem solving, and decentralisation. Amongst the elements above, the collaboration between police and members of the community was deemed as the critical one because it is the basis of the theoretical foundation of community policing.

Burger (2007) refers to ‘community policing’ as a philosophy of policing that emphasizes a cooperative approach between the police and other citizens focusing on solving community problems and improving the quality of life in the community. Burger (2007) further defines ‘community policing’ as a new philosophy of policing based on the concept that policing officials and private citizen work together in creative ways to help solve contemporary community problems related to crime, fear of crime, social and physical disorder and neighbourhood decay that may lead to crime. This philosophy is based on the belief that achieving these goals require that policing agencies develop a new relationship with the law abiding people in the community, allowing them a bigger say in setting local policing priorities and involving them in efforts to improve the overall quality of life in their communities. If shifts the focus of policing from handling random calls reactive policing to solving community problems pro-active policing that requires greater involvement in decision making by police officials and community policing implies that the police is more transparent and accountable to the community for its actions. Therefore, the community policing philosophy implements the following activities:

i. Verification of the CPFs at all police stations in the province.
ii. Evaluation of the proper functioning of the structures.

iii. Provide capacity building programs to support CPFs with performing their duties efficiently and effectively.

iv. Provide technical and other resources to improve the structures functionality.

v. Facilitate mediation in community conflicts to inculcate the use of negotiation as an alternative to violence in resolving conflict (Dlamini, Dlamini, Madlopha, Mthembu, Dube & Hlatshwayo, 2011).

As more information about CPFs still to be given, in nutshell and as already stipulated, it is important to be aware that CPFs are not complaint forums. They are rather a structure where members of the community will rely-on to actively work with SAPS, jointly aiming to identify and solve crime that is taking place in their residential areas, SAPS (2022). Sithole (2017) concurs that CPFs are structures to promote personal interests of secondary objectives. In addition, Gordon (2001) describes CPFs, which is police partnership mechanism, as a police officer useful ‘eyes and ears’ within the community existing to assist police search out the wrongdoers who are compromising community safety and identify ‘hot spots’ for the new orientation to problem-orientation to problem-orientated policing. Therefore, the following aspects are made by the researchers regarding CPFs to effectively prevent, combat and investigate the showcased crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study in the Brooklyn policing area:

i. The proper implementation of the NCPS, 1996 should be exercised. While noting that this strategy failed due to lack of a shared understanding of crime and policing among politicians, lack of funding, a disregard for socioeconomic conditions, and the inability of police to deliver immediate and visible results on crime prevention.

ii. Good working relation between the local police and community regarding the selected crimes, refer to Table 1 and 2 of this study.

iii. Earlier identification of communal problems through effective communications between the local SAPS and communities.

iv. Restoration of trust and image of the local SAPS and affected communities (Brooklyn policing area in this regard), to be enhanced by public consultation forums.

v. Exercising of tolerance between the local police and communities, to offer support to each other when necessary/at all times, while working together.

vi. Proactively providing of detailed information [The selected crimes in the Brooklyn policing area] to the local police about crimes in their immediate communities, this will enhance the planning phase and reaction/response times.

vii. Transforming the degree of anger from the populace, should be regarded as lessons to be learned for future policing of Brooklyn policing area).

viii. The interventions should go beyond diagnosis of the indicated crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study; however, it should provide possible ways to avert the current situation.

ix. A dire need for preparedness to combat, police, prevent and investigate the outlined crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study, should be efficiently staged, coupled by a new set of skills, a long-term collaborative concrete goals should be seriously sought to deal with socio-economic conditions, like poverty, inequality and unemployment effectively.

x. South African solutions are urgently required, while, not borrowing from other countries, this should be readdressed at all costs.

xi. The observations of the theoretical principles of Rational Choice Theory and the Differential Association Theory should be prioritised to make sense of the causes of the mentioned crimes and possibly constitute the nexus between the mentioned crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study and related causations.

xii. Effective operations under the Community Safety Plan and the National Crime Combating Strategy should be geared towards addressing the highlighted crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study.

xiii. Community and sector policing should be effectively implemented for the wellbeing of Brooklyn policing area residents and to ensure the crime prevention becomes collective efforts, involving multi-agency approaches.

According to Cross (2004), CPFs refers to a philosophy and an organisational strategy that promotes new partnership between people and police. It is based on the premise that both the police and the community must work together to identify, prioritise, and solve contemporary problems such as crime, drugs, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, and overall neighbourhood decay, with the goal of improving the overall quality of life in the area. CP refers to as a philosophy or an approach to policing which recognises the inter-dependency and shared responsibilities of all community members (Reynecke 1997). The CPFs is further explained as working together of community members with the aim of facilitating the partnership between the police and the community and to engage in joint problem identification and consultative problem solving.

The existing guidelines, legislative frameworks and policies for the establishment of Community Policing Forums

There are established various documents serving as a guiding tool to the establishment and implementation of CPFs to promote the collaboration between SAPS and members of the community. As a result, the South African National government ensures that community policing activities are accomplished, the Constitution, 1996 entrenched the establishment of CPFs. The SAPS Act, 1995 that mandates all police stations’ Commissioners to establish CPFs at station level, supported this initiative. To this course, Smith (2008) and Roelofse (2007) highlights that various legal and policy documents established by the South African government to
promote the collaboration between SAPS and CPFs in crime prevention efforts, thus, the following guidelines, legislative frameworks and policies, relates to the foundations of establishing CPFs across South African communities:

i. **The Interim Constitution of Republic of South Africa Act (No. 200 of 1993),** focused the role of the CPF on “structured democratic oversight of the police” with the intention of addressing the political legitimacy of the police. It provided the CPF’s with the functions of accountability, monitoring and evaluation of police activities. The Interim Constitution, 1993 directed that this Act of South African Parliament should provide for the establishment of (i.e. CPFs) at police stations.

ii. **The SAPS Act, 1995,** determines the duties of the SAPS in executing its constitutional functions that include cooperation with members of the community in crime prevention. This Act also provides the establishment of community policing supplemented by the CPFs collaborating with the SAPS in crime prevention.

iii. **The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996,** is defined as the most important law of the country. The Constitution states that very person has the right to freedom and security and free from any form of violence. The SAPS, in terms of Section 205 of the Constitution, of 1996 has the constitutional mandate to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to uphold and enforce the law. Section 206 further indicates that each province is entitled to monitor the SAPS and promote good relations between the SAPS and the community in crime prevention.

iv. **The NCPS of 1996** was established to determine that the SAPS and the courts in general cannot prevent all the crime on their own. The strategy expects and requires members of the community to participate in the prevention of crime through the collaboration with the SAPS. Since public education and values are important part of the crime prevention framework, members of the community through CPFs are required to inform and educate other members within their area of jurisdiction about the danger and negative impact of committing crime. The NCPS, 1996 establishes the need for the establishment of community policing in crime prevention.

v. **Community Policing Policy Framework and Guidelines, 1997,** this focused on “collaborative problem solving with an intention to establish a broad partnership with the community to improve police services and reduce crime.” The emphasis was on the establishment of problem solving ‘partnership’ to help improve police services and assist in reducing crime. It detailed the methods for establishing CPFs and its main functions and activities;

vi. **The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (Batho Pele Principle) of 1997,** determines that all government departments must provide good service to all South Africans citizens including crime prevention through the collaboration between SAPS and CPFs. Like all the departments, the Department of Safety and Security as crime prevention structure is required to implement the Batho Pele [People’s First] Principles of consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money in the prevention of crime while collaborating with the CPFs;

vii. **The White Paper on Safety and Security of 1998** determines that the community, the local government and the SAPS must meet in a CPFs collaborating against crime. The CPFs have been regarded as the platform where the members of the community and the SAPS collaborate to prevent crime. The White Paper emphasises the need and importance of CPFs in crime prevention; and

viii. **The SAPS Regulations for CPFs and Boards of 2001,** provides more detailed information about community policing supplemented by the CPFs than the SAPS Act, 1995. This regulation requires all station commander to ensure that CPFs are established within the police stations. The emphasis was on integrating CPF’s with the liaison structures of other departments as part of an overall drive to bring communities on board. This regulation further indicates that in a situation the police station area is very large, such station can be sub-divided into different parts, each with its own sub-forum. Such sub-forum must be attached to a police station and remain accountable to the main forum. More guidance on sub-forum is highlighted by this regulation.

The intention of the indicated guidelines, legislative frameworks and policies was to enhance police and community liaison, to improve legitimacy of the police through community policing, and to focus and integrate government and civil society initiatives to address priority crimes by maximising civil participation in crime-prevention initiatives (Smit & Schnetler, 2004). Their aim was placed on crime preventing crime and violence. To-date [2022]; they are strengthened under the following general principles: equality, access, protection, and service, commitment to citizens’ high-quality service, integrated planning and implementation, and evidence-based planning and implementation (Republic of South Africa, 2016:18).

Subsequently, The Gauteng Province, in line with the Constitution, 1996 and SAPS Act, 1995 became the first province to establish and implement community policing and facilitated it through the establishment of CPFs (Mistry, 1999:4). SAPS managed to establish and sustain CPFs structures in all nine provinces as per the interim Constitution, 1993 and SAPS Act, 1995 promoting community policing through the interaction between SAPS and the community in relation to crime prevention. According to SAPS 2016/2017 Annual Report, there are 1144 police stations and 1137 functional CPFs in all Nine (09) provinces, including Gauteng Province in which both Atteridgeville and Brooklyn police stations are situated. Gauteng Province comprises 142 and 142 of police stations and CPFs above respectively. The remaining number related to CPFs is because certain police stations are situated in a farm area with no community members staying in the policing area (Republic of South Africa, 2017:137).
Research methodology

Through the application of phenomenological research design, this qualitative study purposively selected Ten (10) participants from the SAPS and CPFs stakeholders, distributed as follows; Six (06) from the SAPS and Four (04) from the CPFs. The main decision to select the indicated participants was based on their authority within the police structure and their CPFs respective positions and their assigned powers in relation to their daily operations and crime prevention collaborations. Data was collected through literature reviews (i.e. Books, book chapters, articles, monographs, dissertations, thesis and electronic databases, such as the following - Google Scholar, EbscoHost, Emerald Insight, Jstor, ProQuest, Sabinet, Sage Online and Science Direct) and all the selected participants were subjected to the unstructured face-to-face interviews, coupled with direct observation technique. The inductive TCA was adopted to selects common parts from the conducted reviews and empirical interviews, they were grouped together to integrate themes and concepts into theory and practice to offer accurate, detailed, and reliable interpretations of the collected data. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2011) and Maluleke (2016) suggest that this analysis process reduce the volume of raw information, identifying significant patterns, and construct frameworks for communicating the essence of what the collected data reveals. Therefore, the collected data was analysed so that structured and trusted conclusions are reached.

Findings and discussions

This section presents’ study findings and discussions of the collected data through the documentary studies, unstructured face-to-face interviews and direct observations schedules from various stakeholders who had been selected by the researchers to form part of this study. In essence, this section presents the primary findings, as well as their analysis and related interpretations. The researchers view the SAPS and CPFs stakeholders as primary sources to this study, their attitudes, experiences, perceptions, views, opinions and insights on the use of CPFs for crime prevention, using Brooklyn police station of South Africa as a case study. The findings from the documentary study and direct observations were also used by the researchers to solicit correlations depictions from the participants’ responses, contained information, such as the interpreted Acts and policies, as well as the made observations. The indicated interviews were conducted and triangulated with the reviewed documents and observations made; this was done to offer credibility of the applied techniques (i.e., Documentary sources, empirical data and observations made) used during data collection procedures.

The researchers can strongly confirm that the theoretical knowledge obtained in this study could be transferred to areas facing similar problem, as coherent linkages between the collected data and reported findings were ensured. Moreover, detailed record of all reviewed literature studies, fieldwork and observations notes were kept. Thus, the findings and interpretations of the findings of this study did not derive from the researchers’ imaginations, as the results were clearly linked with the collected data. Any arising biasness, motivations and perspectives that were going to influence this study were set aside, as it was completely guided by the literature review, empirical data and observations made. Importantly, the following presentation outlines the Three (03) identified study themes; this was done by means of continuous identifications and comparisons of the emerging from the data derived from the participants’ responses, documentary studies and observations made to ascertain their relationships. The retrieved data was examined by the researchers to identify meaningful collaborations, patterns, relationships and structures involved thereof.

The nexus between crime prevention and Community Forum operations

Sithole (2017) highlights those countries worldwide implement various forms of policing designed to fit the countries’ demographics and types of communities [Brooklyn policing area is n different]. He (Sithole, 2017) further emphasises that the South Africa policing is guided by the Constitution, 1996 as the supreme law. This Constitution, 1996 provides guidance to all Acts, policies, systems, frameworks and guidelines for all public institutions including the SAPS and the local SAPS are expected to fulfil their mandates by observing frameworks, policies and systems while remaining responsive to change in their environment as prescribed by development and advancement in technology. Therefore, South Africa can develop a comprehensive, flexible and applicable policing model by incorporating some of the worldwide good policing practice. Moreover, countries in a transition experience major concern in relation to crime. Different countries, particularly in Eastern Europe struggle to come to grips with elements of crime and to change people’s perception of crime as a survival tool. The issue of crime that South Africa is experiencing was inherited from apartheid government, as it was high even during the period. The challenge of crime during the first establishment of democracy is not unique from other countries that were once oppressed (Schonteich & Louw, 2001; Shaw, 2002; and Shaw, 2000). Crime is explained as an activity that is among the most difficult of the many challenges that are facing South Africa in the post-apartheid era. The report indicates that the South African crime rate is among the highest in the world and all South Africans citizens are affected by it regardless of their race or gender (Demombynes & Ozler, 2003).

Just like other countries around the world, South Africa is still experiencing problems in relation to crime. For example, Britain experienced high rate of crime increase in 1995 by 70%. The South African government, through the Department of Police, acknowledges the negative impact of crime to the entire citizens and highlights crime prevention as one of the most critical priorities. South Africa continued experiencing an increase of crime since in the mid-1980s and this problem dramatically showed an increase even in 1990s prior to the first democratic dispensation. Since the inception of the democratic dispensation in 1994, there was hope and belief that crime will decrease. Nevertheless, crime kept on increasing. The issue of crime continued to escalate instead of deteriorating and affected the well-being of citizens. Since 1994, all major cities within the country have had trouble in relation to
crime and measures to address the phenomenon. The City of Johannesburg, that is regarded the economic hub of the country, is regarded to be in ‘first position’ in terms of crime rate, followed by Pretoria (Where Brooklyn is situated), followed by Cape Town and Durban respectively (Burger, 2007; Schonteich & Louw, 2001; and Republic of South Africa, 2014). The SAPS officers perform two primary functions, namely, law enforcement and community service in relation to crime prevention. As part of their law enforcement functions, the police assume both a preventive and proactive role against criminal acts. Furthermore, the police attempt to provide the public with a comprehensive of security that will act as a deterrent to potential criminals and these measures applied through active patrolling, on foot, horse, and in various state police vehicles. They must regulate, keep control, or keep in order by means of a police or similar force (Taylor & Francis, 2009:59; and Burger, 2007). According to Burger (2007:12), there are three different levels of crime prevention applied by police in crime prevention:

i. **Primary crime prevention**: the prevention takes place in the jurisdiction of CJS and it identifies conditions of the physical and social environment that provide opportunities for, or precipitate criminal acts. Examples are environmental design, neighbourhood watch, general deterrence, private security, and education about crime and crime prevention;

ii. **Secondary crime prevention**: the level is regarded as a form that engages in early identification of potential offenders and seeks to intervene with the aim of making anyone around the area to be aware of them. An example is the identification of high crime areas and areas predisposed to fostering criminal activity; and

iii. **Tertiary crime prevention**: is regarded as a form that deals with actual offenders and involves intervention in such a fashion that they will not commit further offences. Different activities within the CJS (i.e. Corrections: Rehabilitation, social work, psychologist, religious groups and educationist, amongst others) play a part during the tertiary crime prevention level. The information above is important as it informs particularly members of the community about various categories they may experience and can learn more about through interaction with police.

The members of CPFs who are not trained in policing have to be familiar with these levels of crime that can be experienced, and the type of knowledge can be achieved better through collaboration with the police. While interacting with SAPS in crime prevention, CPFs need to acquire information regarding the level of crime above and the prevention measures that can be implemented in each category. Moreover, members of the community through their legitimate CPFs must be aware of actions or activities within their area that can influence crime such as lack of door butler proof and implement measures as recommended. The CPFs need to make sure that other community members are aware of areas identified as high crime zone to remain alert, and again to play a part in rehabilitation process on those individual members released from prison to ensure that they become law-abiding citizens and therefore, prevent recidivism (Burger, 2007:12). The Brooklyn policing areas are still negatively impacted by crime activities daily. The Annual Crime Statistics by South African Police Service (SAPS) over ten years period starting from 2007/2008 financial year indicate an increase in crimes such as murder, common assault, and theft in the selected study location. According to 2015/2016 financial year, Brooklyn crime statistics were at 7 222 and 7 409 during 2016/2017 financial year, further indicating an increase of various crimes (Republic of South Africa, 2018:6).

**The South African Police Service works on Community Policing Forums activities**

Although South Africa is experiencing high crime rate that plays a role in restraining investment, there is still unclear understanding about the actions that might be taken to loosen its grip. Nevertheless, it always remains the duty and right of government to draft policy that will focus on preventing crime (Stone, 2006). To prevent crime effectively, it is important to first transform and reorganise government position and facilitate real community participation, more especially through the establishment of and collaboration with CPFs. The country needs to weave social fabric, which is strong enough to resist the stresses of rapid change in a newborn society. Moreover, government must move beyond the mode of crisis management and reaction and be organised and proactive in successful crime prevention. Like other countries around the world, South Africa experiences various types of crime and these crimes have different root cause. Therefore, various approaches regarding crime prevention are required, one amongst, is the inclusion of members of the community through their established legitimate CPFs (Republic of South Africa, 2017; and Republic of South Africa, Sa).

**The advantages of Community Police Forums for crime prevention operations**

Relevant stakeholders often adopt the CPFs, as an important platform for crime prevention to enhance police and community relations, allowing the latter to continue sharing detailed and reliable information about crime activities in their immediate environments and initiate adequate measures to tackle criminal acts within their vicinities. Moreover, one of the advantages of community policing is to teach citizens to take a stance against crime, CPFs provide communities with a chance to take control of the situation in their neighbourhoods and to do something about it through interacting with the police. Through CPFs, police methods of dealing with crime have changed as it was through interaction with the community. CPFs have brought a turnaround in the crime situation and the way SAPS members tackle crime within their jurisdiction. Local government and CPFs work together to identify flashpoints, crime patterns and anti-crime priorities and provide the information to SAPS members for intervention. Agreed crime prevention priorities and strategies are set through interaction between local government and members of the CPFs. Community-based campaigns and activities and the resources to sustain and ensure its effectiveness are mobilised through interaction between CPFs and local government (Education Student Trust, 2016).
Moreover, the failures of crime reduction are measurable, while the failure of crime prevention are not measurable, furthermore, the success of the latter can only be evaluated against a prediction of what would have happened had the crime prevention efforts not made, Klockars (1991). Burger (2007) also share the same sentiment with Farrell (1991) by stating that it is impossible for the local SAPS to prevent crime alone. Mastrofski (1991) argues that the idea of SAPS proving information and assisting communities to identify problems is feasible, however, the initiation of other programmes which accommodate crime risk factors and socio-economic can be completely beyond their policing scope. Newburn (2005) confirms that as much as the SAPS devote their rare resources to crime prevention activities, and sometimes receive accolades for decreased crime statistics and criticised for its increase, the bottom line is that their efforts did a little difference in reference to crime prevention considering predisposing, precipitating and criminogenic factors that also contribute to crime. This have negative impacts on the ability of the SAPS to prevent crime and makes it impossible for them to effectively fight crime, for example; the local SAPS have nothing to do with poverty, economic conditions sex and ethnic distribution of population, amongst others.

The Brooklyn policing area includes high-end residential properties as well as several upmarket mall developments. This area encompasses high-end residential properties as well as several upmarket mall developments. Brooklyn Mall is one of the most popular and regularly visited malls. It consists of more than 170 awesome and various stores that contribute immensely in terms of jobs to eradicate poverty and crime. Brooklyn is the suburb of the City of Pretoria. It is a well-established, popular area, lying to the east of the city centre. It borders the University of Pretoria to its north and the suburbs of Groenkloof and Waterkloof to its south. The Brooklyn police station is situated in Pretoria area under Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng Province. with the support of four sectors with its individual CPFs, this police station has to enhance safety and security to 4177 citizens and 1810 household respectively as well as business in surrounding area, Ngoveni (2021).

The Brooklyn police station started the implementation of CPFs within their station in 1995. A ‘Sector Forum’ is established in each of the four sectors within the Brooklyn policing area. The sectors chairpersons and other elected executive members will form part of the bigger CPFs Executive Committee. All community members through their CPFs are recognised bodies in which the public can contribute to the fight against crime in a coordinated manner. While performing its duties, Brooklyn CPFs interact with the local police stations and authorities for effective law enforcement and crime prevention. The main objective of CPF is to combat crime, improve policing service delivery through support, establish connection between the police and the community and improve the safety and security for all law-abiding citizens of the area, Ngoveni (2021).

Ngoveni (2021) establishes that all Four (04) sectors emphasise the necessity of all community members to participate in crime prevention strategies by working together with SAPS and their legally established CPFs. The police with office to meet and operate their crime fighting daily activities provided members of the community through their CPFs. The CPF was sponsored by business community members with car to assist with patrol and administrative transport to perform effectively in their task of crime prevention while interacting with police. According Brooklyn police officers, all levels of CPFs in the Brooklyn police station jurisdiction are active, but none is 100% effective enough owing to lack of interest of public as some are still short of executive members and additional members. Some community members fail to attend meetings, making their CPFs to find it hard to deliver their task owing to less support and engagement from members of the community as expected. Insufficient awareness campaigns are run by the combined effort of CPFs and SAPS owing to lack of resources. There is a shortage of resources in enforcing the interaction between SAPS and community through CPFs. Daily interactions in crime prevention between the Sector Chairperson and the Sector Manager are taking place if there are urgent issues to address, such as new crime trend taking place. Brooklyn CPFs newsletters are sent out daily to all the four Sector Chairperson with crime information, tendencies, hotspots, lookout, and security measures to consider in their cars and homes to enhance the flow of communication between the community and the CPFs.

In 2008, the Brooklyn CPF (Sector 4) has launched the Community Safety Operations Centre (CSOC) 6x3 mitre (m) office unit situated in Monument Park Shopping Centre. The CSOC Office has been established as a centralised operations centre to improve and make police-community relation effective. In a situation where residents in the area recognise a crime or suspicious activity, they immediately contact the CSOC through given cell phone contact numbers. The person operating the CSOC contacts a security company, police, or other community members through the phone or radio for assistance. The CSOC does not operate for 24 hours. However, the emergency number is always effective as crime deterring tool. Other effective measures, sector 4 projects focused on crime prevention include the radio companion system in which residents purchase handheld radios and communicate emergencies with each other. Sector 4 CPF concurs with the Constitution that crime can be greatly reduced through the coordinated effort of the community, security companies, and the SAPS (Department of Police Station, 2017) and Ngoveni (2021).

Practically, with the aim to ensure effectiveness of CPFs in addressing crime at local level, Brooklyn police station established an operation called “police station-CPFs operations room” and where 60 minutes has been spent on providing both SAPS and CPFs members with training. Three (03) separate classes provided to a 70 SAPS members force, 20 CPFs members, and two private security companies, and near real time statistics were used to manage the operation (Greeff, 2012). The relationship between SAPS and CPFs is classified as well owing to proper communication on Executive Committee level. Brooklyn police has joint crime prevention operations that take place on nearly a weekly basis with different security companies that are operating within the different sectors. These security companies form part of the Sector Forums. Sector Forums identified areas where operations are needed, which can be included into the SAPS’ operational planning. Sector 1 and Sector 3 have some community patrollers that are managed by the CPFs. However, these patrollers did not receive any formal training only knowledge in terms of crime prevention measures.
Some CPF members join clean-up operations and roadblocks in a monitoring capacity. In ensuring compliance and promoting effective collaboration between the police and CPFs, the following support is provided:

i. The police brief patrollers of operations and conduct thereof;

ii. SAPS give regular feedback to CPFs in terms of their crime prevention activities;

iii. SAPS react to complaints and plan operations together with CPFs;

iv. SAPS inform CPFs’ management of crime tendencies so that CPFs in turn can alert and educate the communities they serve; and

v. SAPS provide regular crime stats to CPFs so that they can plan or adjust their safety plans for their communities (Brooklyn police station, 2017) and Ngoveni (2021).

Conclusions

Stemming from the reviewed literature studies, conducted direct observations and unstructured face-to-face interviews with the selected participants of this study, it is concluded that the larger part of the Brooklyn SAPS’ community members are professionals with demanding careers. As a result, participation on ground level in crime prevention actions is not always possible. Twenty (20) security companies are active within the precinct. The community will rather pay for the crime prevention service and expect these security companies to fulfil crime prevention responsibilities owing to their less trust on SAPS. Equally, the SAPS, from areas such as Brooklyn, has the duty in terms of Section 205 (3) of the South African Constitution, 1996 to fight and act against any criminal act taking place within the specific area. In order to effectively fight such crime, it is required that the multi-role-players involved in fighting crime prevention, Ngoveni (2021).

For recommendations; to ensure its effectiveness, CPFs must be established taking into consideration its required components. the CPFs has to be legally established comprises of various units such as that of community members, organisations (I.e. CBOs, NGOs, FBOs, youth organisations, women organisations, SGBs and other stakeholders (provincial government, local government, traditional authority and parastatals). The necessity of safety, as postulated by Section 198 of Constitution, 1996 should be highly considered by relevant stakeholders, the National security must ensure that South African individuals live in an equal, peaceful, in harmony, free from fear and want to seek a better life (Republic of South Africa, 1996; and Ngoveni, 2021). In emphasising the statement herein, the establishment and utilisation of CPFs in crime prevention resulting in visible outcome. As stipulated in Section 3.6, in order to prevent crime effectively, transformation within the National Government crime prevention unit and ensuring public participation is vital. By 2019/2020 financial year, Brooklyn police station experienced a slight increase of serious crime reported of 1 712.

This study concludes that the guidelines for future research studies should notes that various factors exists for making CPFs for crime prevention a success or a failure. To this end, problem solving is an interactive process, involving the local SAPS and community members to identify existing crime problems, as witnessed in Brooklyn policing area (Refer to Table 1 and 2 of this study) and developing appropriate solutions. To this course, problem solving is essential in the use of CPFs for crime prevention and, as such, the identified crime problems in Table 1 and 2 of this study should not be limited to crime combating, prevention and investigation nor maintenance of order and making possible arrests. Therefore, the local SAPS and Brooklyn residents should be empowered to adopt problem-solving techniques, and take every opportunity to address the conditions that cause incidents. It is also recommended that crime intelligence can offer ‘end product’ to this process, to make sense of complex, physical, and intellectual commissions of the indicated crimes in Table 1 and 2. Relevant information should be collected, analysed and evaluated in order to prevent crime the crimes in question and to secure apprehension of potential offenders. From these key concepts, it is obvious that the goals and objectives of strategic intelligence is something, which the local SAPS and Brooklyn community members need to clearly understand, as well as identify and discuss goals and objectives of intelligence gatherings.

Sithole (2017) submits that strengthening relationships with sister departments, such as the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ & CD), Department of Health (DoH), and Department of Social Development (DSD), amongst others to excessively deal with unexpected and new organised forms of criminal activities, as Table 1 and 2 of this study refers and there is a need for a continental approach to policing to determine the root cause of crime, especially the Modus Operandi (MO) and there is also a dire need to conduct an intensified research on why all South African National Police Commissioners do not complete their terms of office, especially post 1994 as that may impacts negatively on evaluating the successes and failures of any SAPS models.

The criminal activities associated with the crimes under research should not be tolerated, the local SAPS and Brooklyn community members should be guided by the ‘rule of law,’ and the Constitution, 1996 should reign supreme, recognising possible contributory factors to the mentioned crimes, this should be largely considered, with the adoption of an integrated strategy involving the National governmental and NGOs to address these conditions and political factors associated with the outlined crimes, as well as prevalent crimes in the study location. Proper implementation of the NCPS, 1996 should be always exercised. While noting that this strategy failed due to lack of a shared understanding of crime and policing among politicians, lack of funding, a disregard for socioeconomic conditions, and the inability of police to deliver immediate and visible results on crime prevention, and transforming the degree of anger from the populace, should be regarded as lessons to be learned for future in the urban area, like Brooklyn. Moreover, it is also
stated that the most important element of CPF is that officers identified the underlying causes and contributions to the highlighted crimes in the Brooklyn policing area, to ensure that the available strategic intelligence provide the local SAPS investigators with means of understanding the structure and movement of the stated crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study. This strategic intelligence accommodate the following important aspects:

i. It provides a strategic context within which to understand emerging threats of the mentioned crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study.

ii. Provide a foresight capacity to allow the development of targeted strategies (Providing warning of the need for new or different policies, responses, priorities, and powers, among others).

iii. Due to the high levels of the indicated crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study, this situation is not highly conducive to public or National government support, based on given to measures to combat the resulted practices. Efforts to tackle this problem requires improvement in tackling crime [Preventing, combating and investigation], this should be formulated in such a way as to support the local SAPS in meeting their objectives, while working together with the local communities to provide more detailed information regarding criminal elements in Brooklyn policing area. Furthermore efforts to engage with these crimes needs to be combined and integrated with measures of addressing the current ineffective relationship between the local SAPS and Brooklyn native residents.

Moreover, the researchers further offer the following recommendations to the relevant stakeholders to enhance CPFs as tool for crime prevention:

i. A comprehensive research strategy to be formulated by the Department of police with the goal of providing valid and reliable data concerning the crimes shown in Table 1 and 2 of this study.

ii. Restoring the relationship between the local SAPS and affected Brooklyn policing area.

iii. The introduction of a judicial commission of inquiry to investigate police conduct and assist the SAPS National commissioner to deal with inefficient relationship between the local SAPS and residents of Brooklyn policing area.

iv. Individual local SAPS official can avoid negative attention and exemplify the professional ethos of the SAPS by gaining more knowledge in their field of expertise. In addition, police officials are servants of the State, they must therefore ensure that their conduct is exemplary at any given time and they uphold the rights of the public, victims and perpetrators. To be a good police official not only requires compliance with the law. It also requires basic human qualities such as good manners, punctuality, discipline, leadership, good interpersonal skills and a positive attitude. As knowledge of one’s professional environment needs constant nurturing and development, so do these qualities, Iqabane (2006).

v. Acknowledging that the SAPS is a professional institution and its members must therefore, at all times, project a professional image. A police official is not above the law. In fact, society demands more from his/her because of his/her profession. It is incumbent on every police official to earn the respect of the community he/she serves. It goes without saying that rudeness, lack of empathy, dishonesty, incompetence and an arrogant attitude will not earn you the respect and credibility you seek, Iqabane (2006).

vi. Any attempt to clarify the values of the SAPS in relation to the use of force is however likely to be in vain unless this is combined with an attempt to resolve the current conundrum relating to the legislative framework regarding Section 49 of the Criminal Procedure Act [CPA] (No. 51 of 1977) and the use of lethal force in affecting arrest, Bruce (2012).

vii. Improved powers and resourcing for the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID). It is clear that the IPID is severely under-funded and is lacking the necessary powers it needs to enable it to fulfill its mandate adequately in addressing the mentioned crimes in Table 1 and 2 of this study.

viii. The development of effective internal SAPS systems for the lodging of complaints against police members by the Brooklyn community members and improvements in the functioning and effectiveness of the internal investigative and disciplinary systems within their police station.

As highlighted by the SAPS (2022), the future directions nor way forward should ensure that the Civilian Secretariat for Police (CSP) lead a process for the implementation of payment of stipends to CPF structures and formalise the Expanded Public Works Programme for sub-forums. A funding model should be developed and it must be inclusive of the non- state organs in the fight against crime. The immediate focus must be given to the development of portable skills for the benefit of CPFs to building safer communities; a ‘National Instruction’ must be issued on improving the quality of SAPS participation. The CPFs must be engaged on responding to and educating communities on the impact of protest action particularly where this protest action results in violence and destruction of community centres and infrastructure, the CSP must develop a concept to engage CPFs on oversight of SAPS at station level. (This will assist the CSP considering that there are 1137 police stations and will allow a footprint at each of these). The drafting of a National CPFS/Boards Constitution, 1996 and a national patrollers policy should be developed; while embracing strategic planning session must be held for the National Community Police Board and the CSP must develop a concept to engage CPFs on oversight of SAPS at station level, it is envisaged that this will assist the CSP considering that there are 1 123 [By the time of drafting this study]
police stations and will allow a footprint at each of these. The Drafting of a national CPFs/Boards Constitution is highly sought and a national patrollers policy be developed; while an evaluation tool for functionality of CPFs is urgently developed. The Minister of Police is requested to endorse this document and direct the South African Police Service and the CSP to ensure that all issues raised as per recommendation, herein, are complied with and must be implemented.

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References


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