Does mob justice fit the conceptual theory of justice?

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ABSTRACT

With the recent surge of mob justice in South Africa, this paper investigates whether recourse to mob justice serves a legitimate purpose and especially whether it serves justice or falls within the conceptual meaning of justice. In so doing, the paper undertook a literature review in view first to identify the possible causes of mob justice and whether or not mob justice serves a legitimate purpose in society. The literature reveals that mob justice aims to ensure security and maintain social order due to state inefficiency to provide security to its citizens. Mob justice becomes a mechanism of social control, policing, and society’s expression that the criminal justice system has failed. However, the paper could not find any related literature on the question whether mob justice falls within the philosophical concept of justice. It finds that the current discourse on mob justice literature focuses on the social and economic aspects of mob justice, delving into the possible reasons behind the attacks, or the legal aspects of mob justice. The paper is therefore relevant as its objective is to determine whether mob justice meets the conceptual meaning of justice and if there is a place for such conduct within a constitutional society. The paper found that mob justice falls short of the philosophical understanding of justice and is no more than injustice. It recommends a policy shift in the form of community involvement in policing.

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Introduction

When on 2 October 2022, the notorious “General Muťanganyisi” was burnt to ashes for allegedly stealing R2000 from a neighbour, it sparks our minds about the never-ending occurrence of mob justice. Community members of Tshikuwi Nzelele in Limpopo Province were fed up with ‘General Muťanganyisi’ who had been terrorising them for years as he was always in and out of jail.

Some few weeks before this fateful incident, another mob justice in July 2022, took place in Limpopo. A TVET college lecturer in Limpopo was attacked and burnt to death while transporting goats in Lebowakgomo village. This incident arose as a result of the high level of livestock theft in the province (whether there were correct or not is of no moment). Suffice it to say that this action is a form of ad hoc policing which is less organised than vigilantism (the question of whether mob justice is a form of vigilantism is beyond the scope of this paper). Mob justice, which falls under the general concept of citizen-led policing organisation is prevalent in pauperised and rural areas. The underlying reasons and classification of mob justice are vastly covered in the literature reviewed which is limited to the socio-legal and economic understanding thereof.

The main objective of mob justice is to ensure visible policing, safety and security measures in communities. However, the question of whether in seeking to enforce security and visible policing, mob justice achieves justice does not take the central stage in the academic discourse.

The purpose of this paper is to unpack mob justice in a theoretical manner in light of philosophical perspectives of justice. The central question is whether in ensuring policing and security, does mob justice achieve justice within its philosophical meaning? Before
analysing whether mob justice falls within the philosophical meaning of justice, it is apposite to briefly survey the literature and examine contributing factors and reasons underlying mob justice acts.

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Contributing factors and reasons for mob justice

Mob justice is carried out by community members who administer ad hoc or instant justice by killing or severely beating offenders who have contravened the law (Chulec, 2019). Mob justice is also referred to as vigilantism, which is an organised attempt by a group of ordinary citizens to enforce norms and maintain law and order on behalf of their communities, often by resorting to violence (Abraham, 2002). In South Africa, mob justice actions are referred to as community assaults, bundu or kangaroo courts, mob killings and vigilante justice and occur mainly in townships and rural areas (Medar, Keyes and Stuart, 2021).

Mob justice is a social movement by citizens or community members reactionary in essence leading to premeditated acts of force or threatened force by autonomous citizens. It arises as a reaction to the contravention of the normative framework generally accepted and applicable to all (Johnston,1996).

The aim of this paper is not to do an exhaustive account of the reasons and factors that lead to community members taking the law into their own hands (such has been captured already see in this regard (Tei, 2021). As alluded to in the introductory part of this paper, mob justice seeks to enforce instant policing measures on an ad hoc basis. This means that the main objective of mob justice is to provide safety and security for the community members. To this end, policing is functional for mob justice to assume its essence. Hence, without its policing nature, mob justice is stripped of its objective and essence. Mob justice becomes the vector through which community members enforce security and social order, thereby supplanting the police and or the courts. In this sense, mob justice becomes an instrument of social control (Cooper-Knock, 2014). It signifies that offenders who are found on the wrong side of the law are considered enemies who disrupt social order (Chulec, 2019). The focus of mob justice actions is to regulate crime or social control with emphasis on the provision of security to both participants and other members of a given established order (Johnston, 1996). Mob justice is therefore a response to crime in which offenders are either leniently punished or not correctly held accountable by the state. As a result, the mob substitutes itself with the state’s prerogative to enforce the law by dealing with matters themselves (Tei, 2021).

Social order is therefore disrupted by several factors such as crime and Witchcraft. Hence the high level of crime is seen as the primary reason that makes people take the law into their own hands (Barron and Madden, 2004). Similarly, mob justice usually occurs in a context where the mobs allege that an individual has committed acts such as robbery, murder, and witchcraft (Adinkrah, 2005). This is compounded by the failure of the legal system, coupled with the distrust of the police and the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system.

A survey of the literature reveals a unanimous view that crime and the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system trigger mob justice (Godoy, 2002). Mob justice is a worldwide phenomenon (Tei, 2021) which this paper argues is not pecuniary to South Africa. People take the law into their hands because of police corruption, poor police-community relations, ineffective policing, lack of visible policing and corruption within the judicial system (Kriminger, 2016). All these factors lead to people’s frustrations, fear and anger which eventually drive people to commit acts of lynching. As a result, community members doubt whether the state is capable of securing their life against crime. Hence the growing mixed sentiment among communities that the failure of the state to protect them is due either because it does not care at all, or it is incapable of discharging its protective duty (Kriminger, 2016).

Besides the failure of the state to carry out its policing function, there is a growing concern about police trustworthiness. Hence public support for mob justice is informed by citizens’ judgments about the trustworthiness of the police. (Adinkrah,2005). Although the argument is made in respect of Ghana, the finding can easily be extended to all African countries including South Africa. Because of the public perception of police corruption, thus untrustworthy, the public believes that the police are incapable of carrying out justice (Adinkrah, 2005). This distrust of the police indicates that mob justice is a result of the strained relationship between the police and some members of the public and which stems from the perception of police corruption. As a result, community members have lost faith in the criminal justice system (Adinkrah, 2005) which is another contributing factor.

This paper posits that within the South African context, the ineffectiveness of the justice system (specifically the lower courts) contributes to the bulk mob actions. For instance, in communities where the police cannot be depended on or trusted to manage wrongdoing and criminality, the people and community members will be left with no other choice but to go rogue (Levine, 2011).

On this score, (Sekhonyane and Louw, 2002) argue that vigilantism was a sign of helplessness in communities with high levels of wrongdoing, an ineffective police administration, and a law that protects criminals more than they protect people affected by criminal elements. To this effect, (Seekings, 2001) concurs and argues that his study conclusively demonstrates that participants complained that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Constitution) was excessively soft on criminals, and the criminals knew they could be bailed out and return to continue with more wrongdoing. Hence community members are disappointed at the quick release of suspects, who appeared to have been shielded from arrest, arraignment and sentencing (Seekings, 2001).

Overall vigilantism had developed because of rising crime levels, and the government’s failure to enforce its own laws (Buur, 2008). Hence, post-1994, like in most African countries, mob justice is constantly on the rise as the result of the high level of frustration and
anger by members of the public, with the ineffectiveness of the policing and a dysfunctional and disjointed criminal justice system. Episodes of vigilante emphasise police corruption as an instigating factor coupled with dissatisfaction with law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies (Tei, 2021). Thus, the proliferation of mob justice which operates differently depending on the available instruments.

**Modus operandi**

Acts of vigilante commonly consist of brutalities and loss of lives (Attafuah, 2008). Acts of mob justice are unpredictable and dangerous and take place very fast. Incidents of vigilantism take various forms and shapes; for example, spanning suspected robbers to death, slashing suspected criminals; stripping alleged criminals bare and hitting them with blocks, firewood, and iron rods until they die; subjecting alleged criminals to embarrassing and undignified treatment and occasionally setting them alight. Such was the fate of the two incidents referred to in the introductory portion of this paper.

The common trend with mob justice is its trilogy roleplay; that of the police with an instant investigation; that of the judge with the ad hoc adjudication and that of the correctional services with carrying out sentencing. Incidentally, there is no room for a non-guilty verdict and the presumption of innocence until guilt is proven does not also exist. Hence the burden to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the alleged criminal is guilty cannot be taken into account in the instant adjudication of the incident. Thus, police intervention is advertised at all costs as they are perceived as argued above to conniving with and or protecting these criminals.

It is hard to comprehend how a volatile group of individuals would bestow on themselves powers vested in the executive and judiciary to the extent of arraigning sentences if it is not a lack of education or the understanding of the judicial system. Lack of education is one of the causes of vigilantism as uneducated, or individuals with exceptionally low instructive or educational capabilities, do not understand how the legal framework works. As a result, those with limited or no understanding of the judicial system are frustrated when an alleged criminal is released on bail. This is compounded by the fact that they cannot understand the legal jargon which we must confess is not easy to grapple with for a non-legal educated person let alone an uneducated one or individuals living in rural areas or impoverish townships. This means that obliviousness to the law and the legitimate framework contribute to mob behaviour which is also fuelled by joblessness. The unemployment rate in the country is very high and it should take the central stage in government policy (Seekings, 2001)

All the above indicate one notable feature; that mobs exercise social control when they meted out justice and by so doing usurp powers vested in branches of government. Hence the activities of a mob supplant the duties of the police and other criminal justice system agencies by apprehending and punishing suspected offenders (Adinkrah, 2005). By so doing, the mob ensures a form of social control by providing security within the communities. The thorny question at the heart of this paper remains whether in exercising justice as a mechanism of social control, the term justice is consonant with the theoretical meaning of justice.

**Understanding mob justice within the theoretical meaning of justice**

Justice cannot be captured in a simple formula as it has complex ramifications (Raphael, 2001). The concept of justice in its simplest form is about fairness, unfairness, just or unjustness of one action whether wilfully or through negligence. It is about individual actions that may be detrimental to another human being. The concept of justice provides every society with its most fundamental rule of social order (Burke, 2011). Within the South African constitutional dispensation, the concept of justice appears rather in the form of curing past injustices. This means that the term justice is minimally referred to in the Constitution. However, one observes an extensive recurrent trend in the use of the word “injustices” to mark a clear departure from racial discrimination prevalent during the apartheid era. Hence the preamble of the Constitution clearly recognises past injustices and undertakes to heal them and build a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

These democratic values, human rights concepts and social justice emanate from the Western traditional culture which has found its way into a number of international treaties. Since these concepts emanate from the Western traditional culture, it is not illogical to conceptualise the notion of justice in light of ancient Greek philosophers who undoubtedly some centuries later are still relevant (this paper does not purport to provide a detailed account of each philosophical theory but only selected ones which are relevant for our discussion). The paper also sources from modern philosophers’ concept of justice such as John Rawls and Mill’s in order to analyse whether mob justice practices fit within their understanding of justice.

The first of such Greek philosophers to examine is Plato. Plato through his mentor Socrates in his book *The Republic* grouped society into three social categories: ie rulers, soldiers, and artisans or the governed. His understanding of justice revolves around a sort of social stratification which only allows interaction within each grouping. In his view, every man is inherently adapted to a specific function (Hosten,1995). Hence, in a just society, every man must discharge only the function for which he/she is naturally gifted. And because of the natural predisposition of each individual to work in a particular field, one should not be allowed to change that field. Thus, a physician is fit to heal, a wise man to rule. By so doing, the societal order will prevail. According to Plato, justice is the harmonised principle that keeps the equilibrium when each person does not interfere with another’s function. This means that justice prevails when there is no cross-field movement. Or metaphorically no cross-pollination is allowed so that each breed conserves its originality and remains pure without possible contamination. Therefore, the representational classification of each role within the society creates a balanced sense of justice. Plato’s conception of the meaning of justice entails permanency within functions.
Therefore, injustice occurs when a person changes functions as this will break the equilibrium. Plato’s understanding of justice is far from ideal as it does not permit upward mobility across fields. It is certainly not the kind of justice the Constitution advocates for.

Nevertheless, this paper argues that by usurping the state’s power of policing, arresting and prosecuting alleged offenders, the actors of mob justice disturbed the equilibrium enacted by the state. This, if one refers to Plato’s view of justice whereby the power of apprehending, adjudication and prosecution is vested only in the state, anyone not mandated by the state to act on its behalf and who performs such a duty will certainly not carry out justice. This is to say that those involved in mob justice usurp power that is inherently bestowed on the state. And, according to Plato, justice is served when no one interferes with another’s function. The state has an inherent power to enforce the law and its citizens have the reciprocal duty to comply with the law. The interference of mob justice actors’ defeats justice in the Platonian sense. On this basis, this paper strongly argues that mob justice is not justice and should be averted at all costs.

What then about Aristotle’s philosophical theory of justice. For Aristotle, justice is either corrective or distributive. The philosophy of corrective justice is based on individual autonomy and libertarianism (Aristotle, 1911); (the argument that corrective justice is suitable for private law is outside of the scope of this paper). Sufﬁce to say that the theory of corrective justice is restorative in nature. It envisages compensating any victim of a violation so as to place him or her in the same position he or she would have normally been but for the violation that had taken place. Corrective justice is deﬁned as the justice which plays a rectifying role between two parties involved in a sort of business dealings whether through a formal agreement or in a delictual context. (Aristotle, 1911).

According to Aristotle, it is irrelevant to know who the faulty party is as the law places each one on the same footing in assessing the responsibility of each party vis à vis the injury. It is only after determining the offender and the extent of the damages that the judge would rectify the wrong with appropriate remedies. (Aristotle, 1911). And the extent of the rectiﬁcation is commensurate with the extent of the injury or offence. It is at this junction that justice occurs in the Aristotelian sense. It is on this basis that Aristotle postulates that the law takes into account only the distinctive character of the offence, and treats the parties equally in establishing the guilt. Because of the injury (which Aristotle terms injustice) caused by the third party the role of a judge is to bring parity among the protagonists by means of a penalty. (Aristotle, 1911). The underlining principle of corrective justice is to avoid inequalities so that one party would beneﬁt at the expense of another. Aristotle advocates for a win-win situation in transactions. Anything besides that in injustice.

The question which arises is whether corrective justice is suitable within the current constitutional dispensation with an emphasis on mob justice. As argued above, the Constitution aims at correcting the historical injustices of apartheid so that each citizen enjoys all the rights encapsulated in the Bill of Rights. This notwithstanding, when people take justice into their hands by lynching or beating the alleged criminals, does that make it for the wrong that was done by the alleged criminal? This paper argues that corrective justice whether carried out by the state custodian of law and order or by the people is not suitable for the type of justice the paper advocates for. This is because for argument’s sake when an alleged criminal raped a young girl, any retaliatory action of the mob will certainly not wipe out the suffering and trauma of the victim nor will the victim’s sentencing by the courts compensate for the trauma. In any event, by killing the criminal there is no restoration whatsoever as the extent of the remedy is disproportionate to the injury in Aristotle’s meaning of justice. Aristotle advocates for parity of justice when justice is meted out. For instance, when the TVET college lecturer was burnt to ashes for allegedly stealing goats, does his death commensurate with the value of the life stock? The answer is obviously negative. It is in this context that this paper argues that justice is miscarried at two levels: when the mob usurps the powers of the state and the disproportionate nature of the sanction meted out to alleged criminals. Maybe Aristotle’s distributive concept of justice can assist.

In this form of justice, benefits and any other things that should be shared among community members are distributed equally (Aristotle, 1911). Distributive justice is the kind of justice that allocates benefits among community members who should reciprocally bear the corresponding burdens (Aristotle, 1911). This signiﬁes that distributive justice postulates a scenario whereby the beneﬁts and burdens are commonly shared by all community members and are not limited only to the person who is inﬂicted but are extended to other community members. In this sense, distributive justice rewards all similarly situated persons within the society. Distributive justice advocates therefore for the general welfare of the entire community. This is to say that individual welfare is immersed in the general interest of the entire community.

The question that also arises with distributive justice is whether mob justice seeks to reward the entire community rather than the victim. This seems to suggest that by physically eliminating the wrongdoer from society, the interests of the community are safeguarded and protected or that their safety is guaranteed. The question however remains will the death of the wrongdoer resuture in the case of murder or change the victim’s circumstances in the case of rape, theft, and domestic violence for instance. In any event, regardless of whether community members derive some satisfaction to have accomplished some sort of “justice” through the death of the victim as earlier alluded to, one cannot agree that justice is served. The community may feel vindicated because one troublemaker is no longer a problem. By so doing, social order may be restored. However, the manner in which such social control is achieved, this paper affirms is inhuman. Although we are not condoning the wrong-doer’s action, subjecting him or her to inhuman treatment e.g. burning him/her with used tyres, or beating him/her with various objects does not in any way serve justice. Fairness dictates that a wrongdoer notwithstanding his/her ill action should be given some sort of humanly retaliatory action. And this is exactly what mob justice fails to achieve.
Hence Rawls’s theory of justice as fairness advocates for equal basic rights on the basis that each person within a society has equal rights and liberties which he terms the first principle finds application. For Rawls, the second principle upon which the concept of justice as fairness is based is inequalities that are arbitrary within an institution unless they reasonably benefit everyone (Rawls, 1963).

As regards the first principle, Rawls holds the view that because justice sets the applicable standard, there must be justification for departing from it. This principle is based on the assumption that rights and or liberties may be infringed. Building on the first principle, the second principle defines the various assumptions by determining the different kinds of inequalities or exceptions which are legally permissible (Rawls, 1963). This signifies that in a constitutional democracy such as South Africa, basic rights are protected and guaranteed. However, there are legally permissible derogations that limit the rights under certain conditions. In South Africa, such limitation is found in section 36 of the Constitution. Hence Rawls posits that inequality is allowed only to the extent that it would be beneficial to all (Rawls, 1963). In this sense, justice prevails because the justification of the limitation is of general application. It means that if the limitation applies selectively or to a section of the community, then the justification is unjust and thus unfair. That is why Rawls’ theory of justice as fairness is based on an egalitarian and just society that promotes respect for liberties. Hence justice demands that any limitations of any citizen’s right must benefit all citizens, and particularly must benefit the least privileged.

It is clear from Rawls’ theory of justice as fairness that one’s right may be limited provided that it serves the interests of the community. In a constitutional democracy such as ours based on the rule of law, any infringement of any right is punishable by law. The law sets the baseline of the category of offences and the corresponding sanctions. When for instance, a person commits murder, the state is allowed to limit that person’s right or freedom of movement by incarcerating that person in a correctional facility. This limitation or inequality of this person’s right to movement is legally permissible and benefits the entire society. This is so because the incarceration of the offender temporarily or defectively as the case may be roots out from society a corrupt-minded person. Also, the imprisonment of a person is a deterrent factor for further criminal behaviour. Incarceration lastly prevents prisoners from committing further crimes if they were allowed to serve their sentences outside a correctional facility.

The question that crops now is whether in substituting itself with the state, mob justice is justifiable in light of Rawls’ theory of justice as fairness. It should be noted that mob justice which is prevalent in our community operates in a constitutional democracy with the law that regulates the society. Therefore, the substitution itself is illegitimate and any action arising out of mob justice will certainly serve anything not justice. The limitation as Rawls puts it does not serve the interest of the entire community but the inner pulse of those involved in the inhuman acts.

Hence, mob justice does not meet the subjective component of John Stuart Mill’s concept of justice. Mill postulates that justice must serve to a large extent the interest of the entire society (Clark & Elliott, 2001). In any event, most of the population has a different view on the manner in which justice is carried out, more so in a democratic society. The divergence of perception by the majority points to injustice. Thus, since vigilantism is associated with some form of violence, South Africans, in general, condemned such action. Justice cannot be said to arise from mob justice as it is of limited view or appreciation.

In addition, mob justice falls short of Mill’s second criterion of justice which is objectivity. In his view, there should be an objective criterion for justice to settle disputes between parties and fairness will be assessed. It cannot be said that by physically eliminating an alleged criminal, justice is served because mob justice is not objective. This is so because the presumption of innocence is of no moment for the mob. Every offender apprehended with or without proof is guilty of the offence accused of. Such a general blanket approach to determining guilt on the say-so of an individual cannot be said to meet the threshold of objectiveness. If that were the case, the TVET college lecturer would not have suffered such a fate as the report later revealed that the life stock was not the fruit of theft. It then follows that mob justice falls short of Mill’s understanding of justice. Perhaps ubuntu may come to the rescue of mob justice.

Ubuntu is an idea that is inherent to South African customs. It embraces the lifestyle and values that characterise South African society. Ubuntu is viewed as a world perspective on the African social order. It denotes obligations that an individual owes to the general public. The idea of Ubuntu speaks to the principle of caring for each other's well-being and the spirit of mutual support (Harris, 2001). A man is an ethical being whose activities cannot be isolated from morality. It means that ubuntu advocates for moral conduct, which is good, ethical, right, honest, decent, proper, honourable, just, and principled within the context of a particular society. Ubuntu is an exemplification of every one of these characteristics in the South African setting. Ubuntu is not merely sui generis within the South African culture as it is typical of most African social orders.

Ubuntu is tolerant of things that exist for the benefit of all. In the event that one cannot fit into the general public, the person turns into a social outfit. What is central is the essence of what one is accomplishing as an individual from the network and society at large. Ubuntu is inflexible in its position because if one’s conduct is unsatisfactory to the community, he/she perpetually becomes an outcast. In contradistinction to the present protected constitutional order, it does not make a difference what individuals believe, as long as one has the right they are qualified to exercise, and the rest have an obligation to watch and not abuse that right. This prompts a circumstance where the community has no say at all like in the conventional circumstance where the traditional community had methods for managing a specific issue. The results are that one's behaviour decides his/her place in the community.

The ubuntu philosophy rejects a one-sided frame of mind which accepts that individuals possess a supreme knowledge of what is correct. To this end, a person who has accomplished something incorrectly is allowed to right the wrong and is given an opportunity
for settling a dispute. This infers that vigilantism is unacceptable and is never supported. To this effect, mobbers swim against the tide when they deliberately eliminate someone for allegedly committing a crime. A true perspective in the African philosophy of ubuntu of togetherness is stripped of its essence when mob justice takes place. Indeed, as the community takes a central stage in the concept of ubuntu, an individual breaks that unity by acting outside the communal norms. In such a case, what is prevalent is remorse in the form of an apology accompanied by restitution. However, this form of sanction is no longer a norm as the traditional communalism values of collectiveness, solidarity and togetherness which are the cornerstone of the concept of ubuntu have been trumped by legal means of sanctioning. Even then, mobbers have substituted themselves for the state. In so doing, mob justice does not echo the value of solidarity which underpins the concept of ubuntu. It cannot, therefore, be said that mob justice fits the concept of justice. And one must agree with Mabovula that mob justice amounts to the erosion of the African communal value of ubuntu (Mabovula, 2011).

From the above, the paper argues that mob justice does not have a place in a constitutional democracy based on the rule of law and justice. When someone is suspected of committing a crime, the normal course of action is to report same to the police which will take further action. It is not the place of the mob to arraign justice on the basis of the failure of the justice system or distrust of the police. We understand that the mills of justice grind slowly but this paper argues that it eventually grinds to completion although not the satisfaction of all (and again, consensus is rarely attained in society). Hence section 34 of the Constitution makes provision for any dispute to be decided fairly before a court or tribunal. Such a tribunal, this paper argues, is certainly not the arena of mob justice. Moreover, the administration of mob justice falls definitely short of fairness and objectivity. This is so because an action or a decision that is taken in the heat of a moment with rage and impulsion is certainly devoid of any objectivity. Mob justice is anything at best the action of some angry residents pushed by their inner pulses to satisfy their instinctive desires.

**Conclusion**

From above, it emerges that mob justice is a phenomenon taking place in many parts of the world including South Africa. The phenomenon gains traction due to a number of factors such as the deficiency in the judicial system, corruption, and distrust of the police. In its vicious form, most justice consists of burning to ashes the alleged criminal. The paper demonstrates that by so doing, mobs usurp the powers bestowed on the state by assuming the function of the police, prosecutors, and judges. Thus, the paper finds that mob justice acts as a mechanism of social control. The question central to this paper was whether mob justice actions amounted to justice. To this effect, the papers tested mob justice with some philosophical and conceptual understandings of justice. It found that in all corners, mob justice was short of the conceptual meaning of justice and the paper argued that if anything, mob justice is a miscarriage of justice. By so doing, the paper adds to the extant mob justice discourse which mainly analyses its legal and socio-political aspects. Thus, with this new angle, this paper clearly posited that mob justice does not serve justice.

In view of the finding of this study provides the following policy recommendations to address the incidence of mob justice in South Africa.

**Recommendations**

A joint task team comprising members of the South African Police Services and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development should be established with the role to intensify efforts in the design and implementation of campaign programmes against mob justice. These programmes must involve all relevant stakeholders, ie community leaders, church leaders, and traditional leaders. It should be a participative forum, not a one size fit forum. All media platforms should be used to air these programmes.

Police must rebuild their image by exercising proximity and visible policing in the community. They should work with local leaders and create a community-based approach to policing with local community. Terms of reference should be entered into with the respective community. A monitory committee should be formed to assess compliance.

. The rule of law must be made sacrosanct and upheld against any mobbers who may be found metering out justice in the community. This calls for the criminal justice system to apprehend, prosecute and sentence anyone involved in mob justice. The successful prosecution and sentencing of mobbers would have a deterrent effect on others to commit mob justice in the future.

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