Implementation of Community Policing Strategy in a South African Township

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ABSTRACT This study investigates the functioning of Community Policing in Soshanguve Township. It utilized a sample of 200 participants whose responses were collected through the survey instrument, questionnaire. The result indicates that a good police-community relationship is a requirement towards implementation of community policing. The result further evinced that community members tend to disagree on whether the police understand their role on or confused about the community policing strategy and principles, as much uncertainty still lies with its proper implementation around the township. Due to peculiar challenges, the community policing strategy in the township is yet to produce the expected results on crime prevention.

INTRODUCTION

Community Policing is defined as a philosophy or an approach to policing which recognises the interdependence and shared responsibility of the police and the public through which crime and community safety issues can jointly be determined and solutions designed and implemented (De Beer and Swanepoel, 2005: 17). It is indeed a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (United States Department of Justice 2014). From these definitions and the general intent of community policing, certain basic principles can be derived: namely, that it is a new approach to policing that implies openness, participation and accountability; seeks to create ownership between the police and the public for community safety; a system where the militaristic culture makes way for a service approach geared towards problem solving and not merely law enforcement.

With the above definition on the background, as the crime rate in South Africa continues to increase geometrically, several reasons have

been cited to indicate that fighting crime is becoming more complicated, especially in areas where there is no co-operation between the two systems, the police and the community. This situation calls for a partnership with unique intervention strategy such as community policing. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) *inter alia* prescribes Community Policing as the style of policing to be adopted by the South African Police Service (SAPS) to meet the safety and security requirements of all people in the country. The first formal reference to community policing as the prescribed approach, style or methodology for policing in a democratic South Africa, is found in Act 200 of 1993 as part of the Interim Constitution of Republic of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1993).

Community policing has been adopted to be the most sustainable, deliverable and effective approach to the enormous challenges facing crime, criminality and victimization in the country. The aim of community policing, according to the Community Policing Policy Framework and Guidelines (South African Police Service 1998), is two-fold. Firstly, this structure should assist the police in creating improved relations with the community they serve; and secondly, it should make policing the responsibility of all South Africans, which in turn will lead to respect of the law.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the acceptance and adoption of Community Policing as a suitable strategy to

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slow down the increasing rate of crime in South Africa and to enhance public participation and ownership of the state apparatus that ensures their safety, crime still remains a major concern in Soshanguve, a designated township for Blacks and previously disadvantaged population in the north of Tshwane Metropolitan area of the Gauteng Province, South Africa. The community blame on the police, the high rate of crime and the unclear participation of the community regarding safety and security issues were identified as a problem (Masogo, 2010). Like in some other settlements and designated townships in South Africa, there is a preconceived notion among community members that crime has become uncontrollable because the police are simply not doing their job. This problem seems to deepen as community members continue to view the fight against crime as the sole responsibility of the government through the SAPS and other safety and security agencies. Moreover, there is a seeming lack of trust between the police and the community, while the fundamental principles of a good partnership are based on trust. As trust forms the cornerstone of any relationship, without the trust, co-operation and support of the community, the prevention of crime is merely a dream and combating it an impossible burden and mission to accomplish.

Historically, the deeds of the police, especially during the apartheid era are still fresh in the minds of many individuals in South Africa (Masogo 2010), including Soshanguve residents. Besides, there is an uncertain feeling from the community members on whether members of the SAPS understand their core business with regard to community policing, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996. Furthermore, recent studies have substantiated previous claims of lack of concern and interest by South African Police Service in policing certain geographical areas that are inhabited by black and other South African population groups, *vis a viz* the white neighbourhood (Mabasa 2012) and community members lack of interest in participating to ensure safety and security of their neighbourhood (Zondi 2012), Bye and large, it is the assumption of the researchers in this paper that some of these highlighted situations could affect or have affected the implementation of the community policing strategy in the Soshanguve township.

Against this background, this paper articulates on the extent to which the community policing strategy has successfully been implement-ed in the township and the challenges that could have affected the outcome of the programme in the area. The working assumption of this paper however include that the implementation of community policing in Soshanguve has led to reduction in crime rate in the township.

RESEARCH LOCATION AND METHODOLOGY

Location of Study

Soshanguve Township derived its name from a specific acronym that reflects the town's cosmopolitan character, as follows: So – Sotho, Sha – Shangaan (Tsonga), Ngu – Nguni (Swazi, Zulu and Xhosa) and Ve–Venda (City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality Geomantic 2004). It has a total population of 664 244 according to 2001 population census (Republic of South Africa 2001), which is made up of mainly of historically disadvantaged Black Africans organised into distinct alphabetical residential blocks. Soshanguve situates 30 km north of the city of Pretoria and one of historically designated township settlement during the apartheid administration in South Africa. It forms part of the city of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. Tshwane is the authentic African Tswana name for Pretoria and it also means "we are together" or "we are one because we live together" (City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, 2004). The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM) was formed at the end of 2000, where fourteen local authorities were amalgamated to form the new municipality as listed in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, (2004).

Methodology

The population of the study included members of the Community Policing Forums (CPFs), community leaders, school learners in the area and police officers stationed within the three police stations, namely Soshanguve, Rietgat and Phuthanang satellite station. A total sample size of 200 respondents was selected from two groups, namely the community members (100) comprising of 52, 15 and 33 subjects from Soshanguve, Rietgat and Phuthanang in that order and police personnel (100) selected from Sohanguve (65), Rietgat (33) and Phuthanang (2).

A quantitative approach was used in this study by utilising a close ended structured survey instrument (questionnaire). The research-

ers were concerned with reaching out to greater number of respondents that would have been otherwise difficult to reach with the qualitative method. The respondents of the study were selected through multi stage sampling technique that involved stratification at the first stage and random sampling at the next stage in locating the respondents. As Goddard and Melville (2001: 36) enunciated, random selection is the basic principle used to avoid bias in a sample. It ensures that each member of the population has as much chance as any other of being included in it. Thus the selection of each respondent from the population is called random when each element of the population is being chosen for the sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conditions Facilitating the Implementation of Community Policing in Soshanguve Township

Police Officers Knowledge and Understanding of Community Policing Philosophy

For police officers to be able to implement community policing successfully, they need to understand its principles and philosophy. The point of departure of community policing is that policing should recognise the interdependence and shared responsibility of the police and the community, to ensure a safe and secure environment for all the inhabitants of South Africa. In view of this statement, members of the SAPS are bound by law to have a clear understanding and working knowledge of community policing to ensure a safe and secure environment. For the successful implementation of community policing, the police are required not only to have a proper understanding of this phenomenon, but to be actively and proactively engaged in performing their tasks in their communities.

The perceptions of police officers on the extent to which the police understand the philosophy of community policing are presented in Table 1. The result shows that irrespective of educational difference, majority of police officers understand the philosophy of community policing and its implementation. This stems from the indication that 92.3% of the respondents with grade 12 and 87.50% of the respondents with a certificate, diploma or degree agreed that police officers understood the philosophy of community policing. It appears a bit surprising, though, that more of those with lower qualifications believe that police officers understand the philosophy of community policing. A large percent-

Table 1: Police officers' level of perception on whether the police understand the philosophy of community policing

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Education	Grade 12 and below	92.31	7.69	100
	Certificate and Diploma	87.50	12.50	100
	Degree and above	87.50	12.50	100
	Total	89.10	10.89	100
Station	Soshanguve	94.92	5.08	100
	Rietgat	78.79	21.21	100
	Total	86.85	13.14	100
Rank	Constable	93.62	6.38	100
	Sergeant	100.00	0.00	100
	Inspector	90.00	10.00	100
	Captain	72.73	27.27	100
	Superintendent	66.67	33.33	100
	Snr. Supt.	100.00	0.00	100
	Total	87.17	12.83	100
Function at Station(Units)	Administration	91.67	8.33	100
	Relief unit	88.89	11.11	100
	Detectives	95.24	4.76	100
	Crime prevention	92.86	7.14	100
	Total	92.16	7.83	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

age (94.92%) of the respondents stationed at Soshanguve police station and 78.79% at Rietgat police station agreed that police officers understood the philosophy of community policing, which reveals the level of confidence and comprehension of most police officers in the implementation of community policing strategy across various stations.

All respondents with ranks of Sergeant and Senior Superintendent believed that the police understood the philosophy of community policing, whereas Constables (93.62%), Inspectors (90%) and Captains (72.73%) agreed. The rank with the least positive response was the Superintendent (66.67%). However, the high positive results point to the fact that police officers of different ranks believe that the police understand the philosophy of community policing. This result indicates that the majority of police officers have a clear understanding of community policing and the reasons behind its implementation.

It also points to the notion of a positive understanding of community policing by police officers, especially members attached to the Detective and crime prevention units who interact with the community on a daily basis and are out there in the community to implement the tenets of community policing compared to members of other units. Almost ninety two percent (91.67%) of the police officers attached to Administration duties agreed that police officers understood the philosophy of community policing compared to 88.89% of Relief duties (Community Service Centre personnel), 95.24% of detectives and 92.16% of officers in the crime prevention unit who understood and agreed that police officers understood the philosophy of community policing.

It is evident from the study that the majority of police officers, from Constables to Senior Superintendents who took part in the study, were in agreement that they understood the philosophy of community policing. However, experience has shown that much uncertainty still lies with the proper implementation of community policing, especially around the Soshanguve Township policing area. This means that the whole idea is there, but the implementation thereof still needs some more efforts. In this regard, the study revealed a bit of contradiction between the perceptions of police and probably what the community members experience regarding the understanding of community policing by the police personnel, where they believe that if the police understand the principles of community policing, they should be visible and active in their communities all the time.

Police Involvement of the Community in Crime Prevention Operation and Activities

A good partnership between the police and the community occurs through consultation, which will determine community needs and policing priorities to promote accountability, transparency and effectiveness. In community policing, the above maxim is one of the cardinal and most important conditions that must be satisfied before an effective implementation of community policing can take off the ground. Police members' perceptions and expression from their experience regarding the real situation on the extent to which the police involve relevant community members in most aspects of their operation are revealed in Table 2.

Among police officers who were respondents at Soshanguve police station, almost all the officials (93.55%) and 85% of their counterparts attached to Rietgat police station indicated that the police involve enough members of the community in crime prevention activities. This obviously points to robust amount of transparency and commitment from police personnel towards creating a safe and secure environment in Soshanguve, by involving community members in policing activities when the need arises. Similarly, most police respondents of different ranks confirmed that the police are prepared to support the community, and are indeed involving the community members and their representatives in creating a safer community in Soshanguve policing area.

Most of the respondents from various police functions and ranks arre inclined to involve the local community members in policing activities, especially those in the crime prevention and relief duties units. This result relates to the principle and the main objective of a partnership between the police and the community which is to facilitate the process of solving problems related to crime in the community. This means that community members could become involved in their own safety and security through detective duties, crime prevention strategies and administrative policing activities. Implementation of

Table 2: The perception level of police members on whether the police involve the community in crime prevention activities

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Station	Soshanguve	93.55	6.45	100
	Rietgat	84.85	15.15	100
	Total	89.2	10.80	100
Rank	Constable	97.96	2.04	100
	Sergeant	100.00	0.00	100
	Inspector	71.43	28.57	100
	Captain	90.91	9.09	100
	Superintendent	75.00	25.00	100
	Snr. Supt.	100.00	0.00	100
	Total	89.22	10.78	100
Function at Station(Units)	Administration	91.67	8.33	100
	Relief unit	90.00	10.00	100
	Detectives	80.95	19.05	100
	Crime prevention	96.43	3.57	100
	Total	89.76	10.23	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

community policing strategy or strategies can only be actualised when community members are involved in all the stages and aspects of community policing, beginning from the conception of strategies, planning up to execution/implementation.

Community Member's Participation in Safety and Security Issues in their Community

The safety of the community requires participation of the community in any safety and security initiatives. Community participation is indeed the partnership that is required from the community members. It is one of the main pillars of community policing. The result from the study in Table 3 indicates that people with higher education levels tend to believe that community members are prepared to participate in safety and security issues and as such are participating in safety and security issues in their neighbourhood. However, the difference between the various levels of education with regard to their perception on the preparedness of the community members to participate in policing is not wide. Most employed respondents, contrary to unemployed respondents are participating and also believe that the community is prepared to participate in safety and security issues. Employed respondents are more inclined to act positively towards the police to maintain their relationship. Perhaps the employed people in the community with steady and regular income

may have more security needs when compared to their unemployed counterparts, who feel that they have little or nothing to protect. This may be to protect their acquired properties, among other things. The reality on ground still remains that property is not the only thing that is protected because there are more other non tangible possessions, such as life that needs to be protected. Most community members who had utilised both police stations in the Township area were prepared to be part of the community policing endeavour based on their experience. The study also revealed that not only respondents who frequently interact with the police, but also those who do not have contact with the police tend to understand the need for co-operation with the police and are therefore prepared to participate in safety and security issues.

Generally, the study indicates that among the community respondents there was a positive buy-in from various categories in terms of community participation, for example among the employed and unemployed categories, people living in their own houses and those staying with their parents, a larger percentage were in agreement that community members are prepared to participate in safety and security issues than those who are not (Masogo, 2010).

The past history of the police force in South Africa is still fresh in the minds of many people. The community still seems to perceive policing as the responsibility of the government through the South African Police Service alone. Howev-

Table 3: Community members' indication of their preparedness to participate in safety and security issues

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Education	Up to grade 12	85.19	14.81	100
	Certificate and Diploma	83.78	16.22	100
	Degree and up	83.33	16.67	100
	Total	84.1	15.9	100
Employment	Yes	86.89	13.11	100
	No	79.31	20.69	100
	Total	80.67	16.9	100
Station Used	Soshanguve	85.42	14.58	100
	Rietgat	76.92	23.08	100
	Total	81.17	18.83	100
Make Use of SAPS	Yes	81.82	18.18	100
	No	91.30	8.70	100
	Total	86.56	13.44	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

er, community policing requires that the police and the community formulate an active partnership, where there will be participation, commitment, mutual trust and respect, support, communication, consultation, service delivery, positive attitudes, transparency and accountability (South African Police Service, 1997: 53). When all these requirements are met, the community will fully support police initiatives on crime prevention. This result indicates that the community expects the police to be responsible, accountable and transparent in all their crime prevention initiatives and activities.

Impact of Implementation of Community Policing Strategy in Soshanguve Township

Impact of Community Policing on the Regularity of Neighbourhood Patrols by the Police

Generally, it is expected that the introduction of community policing would enhance or impact positively on the regularity of police patrols and the presence of police in the neighbourhood. The results revealing community members' understanding of the situation based on some of their social attributes are presented in Table 4. Irrespective of educational level and qualification, the result from the survey indicates that more respondents believed that the regularity of police patrols had not improved in spite of the introduction of community policing, than those who believed that regular patrols took

place. This perception is very similarly consistent and very strong across the different education categories. From another perspective, one would have argued that employment status of community members could influence how they perceive the impact of community policing with regard to regularity of police patrols or visibility of police officials on duty around neighbourhoods. The result from the study shows no difference in opinion between these opposing categories of people. A significant number of employed respondents believed that they have not seen improvement on police patrols. This perception is the same for unemployed respondents, which is an indication that the community is aware of insufficient patrols and a lack of visible policing, despite the introduction of community policing.

Comparative result between the two major police stations in Soshanguve and Rietgat shows that more clients who had accessed services in Reitgat had not seen the impact of community policing strategy to have improved the regularity of police patrol in their neighbourhood than their counterparts in Soshanguve, though on a very low margin. This result indicates that the majority of respondents, irrespective of the station used, were conscious of insufficient police patrols in their neighbourhood. Amongst the respondents who had utilised police services previously, 25.37% agreed that there were regular police patrols in their neighbourhood, whereas 74.63% disagreed. Of the respondents who had never utilised police services before, 28.00%

Table 4: Community members' perceptions regarding the impact of the regularity of neighbourhood patrols by the Police

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Education	Up to grade 12	37.04	62.96	100
	Certificate and Diploma	17.95	82.05	100
	Degree and up	24.00	76.00	100
	Total	26.33	73.67	100
Employment	Yes	24.19	75.81	100
	No	29.03	70.97	100
	Total	26.61	73.03	100
Station Used	Soshanguve	28.00	72.00	100
	Rietgat	14.29	85.71	100
	Total	56.58	78.85	100
Make Use of SAPS	Yes	25.37	74.63	100
	No	28.00	72.00	100
	Total	26.68	73.31	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

agreed that there were regular police patrols around their neighbourhood, whereas 72.00% disagreed. Again, the use of police services, which could have influenced community members perception on the visibility of police officers has no positive implication, instead the contrary becomes the case.

These results indicate that the presence of police patrols was not yet felt by most residents, irrespective of whether they had utilised police services or not. Most people in the community are not feeling safe within their neighbourhood, due to the lack of police visibility. It could be argued from the result of this study that level of education, employment status, the police station that community members have access to, even the type of residence one lives in makes no difference to one's perception of safety issues, with specific reference to the regularity of police patrols. It is evident that there has not been any improvement on the visibility of police officials and patrolling in the neighbourhood in spite of the implementation of community policing.

Influence of Community Policing on Crime Prevention in the Township

The partnership between the police and the community in the framework of community policing is supposed to result in the decrease of crime. The extent to which this ideal has become a reality or not is presented in Table 5 of this paper. A huge number of respondents of all educational levels indicated that the impact of community policing on crime prevention was not noticeable, whereas a smaller number of respon-

dents indicated that the impact of community policing on crime prevention was noticeable. Similarly, a majority of both employed and unemployed respondents have not noticed any impact of community policing on crime prevention, compared to a lesser number of them who believe that community policing has brought about better crime prevention results.

Of the respondents who had received police services at Soshanguve police station, 18.00% agreed that there was an impact of community policing on crime prevention, compared to 82.00% who disagreed. Interestingly, all the respondents (100%) who had acquired police services at Rietgat police station disagreed that the impact of community policing on crime prevention was noticeable. This result indicates that the implementation of community policing has not yet brought about noticeable impact on overall indicators of crime prevention in the two police station areas, especially in the Rietgat police station area.

While a huge number of respondents staying in their own houses and those staying with their parents have not seen any improvement in crime prevention, lodgers appear to believe that everything is fine regarding the crime prevention effort. This inclination of the lodgers may be because they have not lived for a long time and had not gathered enough previous experience and encounter with regards to the level of crime in the neighbourhood, unlike the regular residents who may have had more detailed experience of crime in the area.

Few respondents (15.94%) who had utilised police services before, agreed that there was an impact of community policing on crime preven-

Table 5: Level of perception regarding the impact of community policing on crime prevention

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Education	Up to grade 12	29.63	70.37	100
	Certificate and Diploma	12.82	87.18	100
	Degree and up	16.67	83.33	100
	Total	19.70	80.29	100
Employment Status	Yes	18.18	81.82	100
	No	21.88	78.13	100
	Total	20.03	79.97	100
Station Used	Soshanguve	18.00	82.00	100
	Rietgat	0.00	100.00	100
	Total	9.09	91	100
Residential	Own house	19.40	80.40	100
	Staying with parents	11.11	88.89	100
	Lodger	100.00	0.00	100
	Total	55.55	44.44	100
Make Use of SAPS	Yes	15.94	84.06	100
	No	28.57	71.43	100
	Total	22.25	77.74	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

tion, compared to 84.06% who disagreed. Similarly, 28.57% of respondents who had never utilised police services before agreed that there was an impact of community policing on crime prevention, while 71.73% disagreed. This result indicates that the implementation of community policing in Soshanguve Township policing area has not had any positive impact on crime prevention, even for community members who have been utilising the police services.

Impact of Community Policing Strategy on Availability of Police Officers When Needed by the Community

Community policing requires proactive policing at all times, rather than reactive policing. Regular availability of police officers when needed by the community is one of the aims of the community policing framework. Therefore community policing may be taken to be real and successfully implemented when the police officers are available at any time when needed. The community members' perception regarding this reality is revealed in Table 6.

Educational attainment did not make a huge difference in the community members' perception of the availability of the police when needed, as most respondents were inclined to the reality that irrespective of community policing, police officers are not making themselves available when needed by the community. This means

that he police are not proactive as required by the principles of community policing. Further response based on employment status of community members indicates that the police officers are not yet regularly available as they should be in addressing the security problems of both employed and unemployed members of the community. This conclusion is in affirmation with the fact that a majority of people in both employment status believed that police is not readily available to them when they need them.

Based on stations, police services at both Soshanguve police station and Rietgat police station are not different. A majority of respondents who have accessed police services from both police stations are not yet happy about police availability in their policing neighbourhoods. Community members who live in their own houses (71.43%) within their neighbourhood, including those who are still staying with their parents (68%) are not yet happy about police availability, even after the introduction of community policing, compared to lodgers who seem to have the services of the police whenever they need them in their respective lodges and hotels.

Out of the respondents who had received police services previously, 34.78% of them agreed that police officers were available when their services were needed by the community while 70.15% believed to the contrary. Similar perceptions existed for respondents who had

Table 6: Response on availability of police officers when needed by the community

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Education Level	Up to grade 12	33.33	66.67	100
	Certificate and Diploma	34.21	65.79	100
	Degree and up	25.93	74.07	100
	Total	31.15	68.84	100
Employment Status	Yes	34.43	65.57	100
	No	23.33	76.67	100
	Total	28.88	71.12	100
Station Used	Soshanguve	32.65	67.35	100
	Rietgat	20.00	80.00	100
	Total	26.32	73.67	100
Residence Type	Own house	28.57	71.43	100
	Staying with parents	32.00	68.00	100
	Lodger	100.00	0.00	100
	Total	66	34	100
Make Use of SAPS	Yes	29.85	70.15	100
	No	34.78	65.22	100
	Total	32.31	67.69	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

never received police services before, as 32.31% agreed that police officers were available when needed compared to 67.68% who disagreed. This result indicates that police officers are not yet proactive in terms of addressing the community's complaints regarding reaction time and availability when they are needed.

Impact of Community Policing on the Community Accessibility of Police Services

An important barometer in community policing is the accessibility of police services that it has created in most parts of the world where it is practised. Accessibility means not only availability of police officers, but the ability of the community members to obtain assistance and services in terms of time and costs. The extent to which the police services have been accessible to the community members was investigated. The perceptions of the Soshanguve community members regarding this are presented in Table 7. The result from the study indicates a positive accessibility of police stations to members of the community in Soshanguve policing area as a result of community policing practice, irrespective of community members' educational level or competence.

From respondents who had received police services at Soshanguve police station, 69.23% agreed that police stations were easily accessible compared to 53.33% in Rietgat. This result indicates a positive perception regarding accessibility, mostly at Soshanguve police station when compared to Rietgat police station. Riet-

Table 7: Responses on impact of community policing on the accessibility of police services

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Education	Up to grade 12	64.29	35.71	100
	Certificate and Diploma	62.16	37.84	100
	Degree and up	71.43	28.57	100
	Total	65.96	34.03	100
Station Used	Soshanguve	69.23	30.77	100
	Rietgat	53.33	46.67	100
	Total	61.28	38.72	100
Make use of SAPS	Yes	65.71	34.29	100
	No	66.67	33.33	100
	Total	66.19	33.81	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

gat police station is situated within a taxi rank and is close to Mabopane railway station, which makes it difficult for the community members to access the station, especially with motor vehicles due to congestion.

This observation may be plausible but has little to do with the implementation of the community policing strategy or initiative in the area because what is important in this case is not only physical accessibility, which is measured by the frequency of contact with the police but the actual fruitful interaction with the police. Similarly, a majority of community members who have utilised SAPS services in the whole Soshanguve policing area experienced improved access to police stations since the inception of the community policing in the locality.

Implementation of Community Policing and Reduction of Crime in Soshanguve

Community policing as an approach is designed to incorporate the community in policing their environment and communities. It is expected therefore that the implementation of community policing will lead to a reduction in crime levels. The perceptions of police officers regarding this statement are presented in Table 8. The result from the study indicates that the police from both stations (Soshanguve and Rietgat) positively believe that together with the community they can combat and manage crime effectively. In other words, implementation of community policing can reduce and has actually reduced crime in Soshanguve and its environs. Over whelming majority (93.65%) and (97.14%) of police officers attached to Soshanguve Police station and Rietgat respectively, agreed that the implementation of community policing has indeed reduced crime in their policing precinct.

Nearly all police officers in various rank categories agree that the implementation of community policing is a form of policing style that will reduce the high rate of crime in Soshanguve Township. This opinion appeared strongest among officers that occupy the rank of Senior Superintendent where all the respondents agreed that the implementation of community policing has long term potentials to reduce crime. The least optimistic group are the Superintendents where half of the respondents in this category did not believe that the implementation of community policing will reduce crime.

In terms of police functions, the result shows a positive understanding of the impact of community policing on crime prevention by most police officers in relevant units, especially those in the Detective and Crime Prevention units who are involved in crime prevention activities on a daily basis. Though the response rate is also high among the police officers attached to Relief duties (76.19%) who agreed that the implementation of community policing will reduce crime, compared to 23.81% who disagreed, this group appeared to be least optimistic about the efficacy of community policing in crime reduction when compared to other police units in the study area.

Table 8: Police perceptions on whether the implementation of community policing will reduce crime

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Stations	Soshanguve	93.65	6.35	100
	Rietgat	97.14	2.86	100
	Total	95.39	4.60	100
Ranks	Constable	84.09	15.91	100
	Sergeant	66.67	33.33	100
	Inspector	72.22	27.78	100
	Captain	90.00	10.00	100
	Superintendent	50.00	50.00	100
	Snr. Supt.	100	0.00	100
	Total	77.16	22.83	100
Function at Station(Units).	Administration	91.67	8.33	100
	Relief unit	76.19	23.81	100
	Detectives	85.00	15.00	100
	Crime prevention	96.30	3.70	100
	Total	87.29	12.71	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

Analysis of these responses by the community members clearly revealed that the impact of community policing had not yet met its expectations in terms of crime reduction, as the predominant perception was that crime rates had not yet been reduced. The community felt that the police were not yet visible enough to ensure the safety and security of the community. The police are still utilising the reactive approach of policing, whereas community policing requires proactive policing. However, most police respondents cited the lack of resources as an obstacle towards proactive policing.

The philosophy of community policing is problem oriented policing. That means, taking the police to the community, so that the police can interact easily with members of the community (South African Police Service, 1997: 2). The police must know the life pattern of the community they serve, which will make it easy for them to understand the crime pattern of the community. Community policing introduces problem-oriented policing as a systematic policing practice (South African Police Service, 1997: 31). Community policing is therefore designed to incorporate the community to police their environment together with the police, which will in long term reduce the crime situation in the Township.

Challenges of Successful Implementation of Community Policing Strategy in Soshanguve Township

The implementation of community policing in Soshanguve policing area of Tshwane Metropolis could be judged to be mainly unsuccessful based on most of the parameters and at the same time successful in few areas. The reasons for the unsuccessful implementation of the strategy can be as a result of the following conditions and factors that were discovered in this study.

Inadequate Resources Available at Police Stations Level in the Township

Resources play an important role in the accomplishment of any given task. Police officers' perceptions on whether resources are sufficient are presented in Table 9. The result from the study confirmed that the provision or lack thereof of resources remains a major problem within the police stations in Soshanguve. This study revealed that the entire range of categories of police officers were in agreement that police officers do not have enough resources to manage and combat crime effectively in Soshanguve. These resources include both human and material aspects, which are essential for successful implementation of community policing strategy in the area. Based on their experience on duty, majority of police officials in Soshanguve police station (73.02%) and Rietgat police station (76.47%) interviewed are inclined to the position that they do not have enough resources to successfully implement community policing effectively. Similarly, officers of different ranks observe the unavailability of resources at their disposal to fight crime as a very strong obstacle, especially the most senior ones carrying the

Table 9: Police members' perceptions regarding resources available at police stations to fight crime

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Station	Soshanguve	26.98	73.02	100
	Rietgat	23.53	76.47	100
	Total	25.24	74.74	100
Rank	Constable	28.85	71.15	100
	Sergeant	50.00	50.00	100
	Inspector	19.05	80.95	100
	Captain	36.36	63.64	100
	Superintendent	0.00	100	100
	Snr. Supt.	0.00	100	100
	Total	22.37	77.62	100
Function at Station(Units)	Administration	15.38	84.62	100
	Relief's	23.81	76.19	100
	Detectives	28.57	71.43	100
	Crime prevention	35.71	64.29	100
	Total	18.72	74.13	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

rank of Superintendent and Senior Superintendent, where none of the respondents indicated enough availability of resources to implement community policing.

Among police personnel and units in Soshanguve policing area, there is a common perception that serious problems exist as far as the shortage of resources is concerned. This concern is more prominent amongst personnel and units in the administrative duties, compared to the two operational units, namely Detective unit and Crime prevention unit. It appears that the necessary administrative support materials and resources are indeed lacking due to financial and budgetary constraints.

The usual assumption that police officers do not have enough resources to manage and combat crime effectively through the adoption and implementation of community policing in Soshanguve Township is realistic. Generally, Police officers are not happy with the limited available resources at their disposal to fight this cruel phenomenon called crime. It is not an overstatement to imply that resources play an important role in creating a working environment that is conducive to positive results. In terms of police ranks, it was evident that police members from the lowest ranking to the most senior officers who took part in this study, mostly agreed that lack of resources is a big challenge towards service delivery and towards meeting the expectations of the community. It is a fact that every police officer is conscious of the unavailability of resources at their disposal to fight crime effectively.

Community Member's Doubt About Police Officers' Understanding their Role in Safety and Security

The community members are divided in their opinion about whether the officers and men of South African Police Service understand their role in security as shown in Table 10. There is quite substantial prove of doubt from some sections of community members about the knowledge and ability of the police. However, more community members and respondents with first degree and higher qualifications were inclined more than any other category to agree that the police understood their role and responsibility. This result indicates that respondents with higher education have trust in the police services. The more educated the population, the more likely they are to understand the police roles. Respondents with lower education generally seem to have little trust in the police. There is also a huge disbelieve amongst unemployed community members that the police officials understand their role in safety and security. While the employed respondents who are settled and have regular source of income are more inclined to perceive the role of the police in a positive light, the unemployed respondents who do not have a regular income do not value the role of the police in general. This may stem from the fact that the unemployed are probably more exposed to conflict with police and in most cases cannot afford to push or press charges due to lack of finance.

From both police stations in the Township, Soshanguve and Rietgat, a majority of commu-

Table 10: Respondents' perception regarding the police's understanding of their role in policing

Respondent's attributes		Respondents' perception		Total
		Agree	Disagree	
Education	Up to grade 12.	53.85	46.15	100
	Certificate and Diploma.	54.84	45.16	100
	Degree and up.	65.00	35.00	100
	Total	57.89	42.01	100
Employment	Yes	60.78	39.22	100
	No	53.57	46.43	100
	Total	57.17	42.82	100
Station Used	Soshanguve	66.67	33.33	100
	Rietgat	66.67	33.33	100
	Total	66.67	33.33	100
Make Use of SAPS	Yes	62.71	37.29	100
	No	42.11	57.89	100
	Total	52.41	47.59	100

Source: Research Fieldwork 2010

nity members and respondents who visit the stations and have utilised their services are convinced that the police understood their safety and security related duties. Of the respondents who had utilised the police services previously, 62.71% agreed that the police understood their role in safety and security, while 42.11% disagreed. This result simply indicates that when respondents frequently utilise police services, they seem to realise that the police understand their role and responsibility. Respondents who never associated themselves with the police tend to view the role of the police in a negative light, which may be the reason why they have not used police services..

The response from the police respondents is at variance with that of majority of community respondents who had experienced lack of knowledge amongst the police officers in discharging their role in safety and security. According to the study, the majority of police officers, from Constables to Senior Superintendents who took part in the study, were in agreement that they understood the philosophy of community policing as has been indicated previously in this paper.

However, experience has shown that much uncertainty still lies with the proper implementation of community policing, especially around the Soshanguve Township and policing area. This means that while the whole idea and vision exist, the implementation thereof still needs some efforts. In this regard, the study has revealed a contradiction between the perceptions of police and community members regarding the understanding of community policing. If the police understand the principles of community policing, they should be visible and active in their communities at all times. However, the community's perceptions are that police are not visible in their communities, as most of the respondents disagreed that police regularly patrolled their areas. This contradiction between police and community perceptions needs to be explored and possibly investigated in future studies. The police saw their services as being sufficient, whereas the communities believed it has fallen short of their expectations from the police.

The point of departure of community policing is that police should recognise the interdependence and shared responsibility between them and the community, to ensure a safe and secure environment for all the inhabitants of South Africa. In view of this statement, members of the SAPS are bound by law to have a clear understanding and working knowledge of community policing to ensure a safe and secure environment. For the successful implementation of community policing, the police are required not only to have a proper understanding of this phenomenon, but to be actively and proactively engaged in performing their tasks in their communities with the cooperation of the community members and structures.

From the foregoing, this study has revealed quite interesting aspects of the community policing strategy in Soshanguve Township in South Africa. The outcome of the study substantially indicates that there are some conditions within the police and the community that have facilitated the successful implementation of community policing in the Township. Similarly, there are also impeding factors and conditions that have negatively affected the implementation of the strategy.

Community members' indication of their preparedness to participate in safety and security issues in their communities was interesting. Possibly, for the sake of their safety and the protection of their properties, community members in most categories indicated that they were prepared to participate in safety and security issues. This to a large extent validates the assumptions that human beings are usually inclined to where there is something to gain or protect. It then becomes irrational to embark on an exercise that will neither amount to any profit or gain. This is the case with the community involvement and preparedness to be part of the community policing because most people calculate the long term gain that will accrue to them in form of protection of their lives and property. It also came out very clearly from this study that the employed members of the community are more eager to cooperate with the police to ensure the success of the community policing compared to the unemployed.

However, the main question is whether the police officers and structures involve the community in crime prevention activities? Obviously, study revealed that the police value the community's assistance as the answer to managing crime effectively. They are also aware that good understanding with the community members is a panacea for effective implementation of community policing strategy in the study area. Most

police respondents indicated that the police expect the community to have a positive attitude and participate in safety and security initiatives to improve service delivery in return to their effort in fighting crime and involving them in the process.

The level of success in the implementation of community policing strategy in Soshanguve Township was achieved and tends to be sustained due to the level of knowledge and training that the police officers have on the philosophy and practice of community policing. In this regard, most police officers believe that they are sufficiently trained to manage community policy to full success. Even the most junior police officers were satisfied with the current police training, compared to their senior counterparts who were not as satisfied. This means that the lower the police rank, the more confident they are in terms of current police training that they receive, including those that are tailored towards community policing.

It should also be noted that while the implementation of community policing as a strategy in Soshanguve have been facilitated by some conditional advantages that are both inherent and achieved by the South African Police Service, the implementation of the strategy has been perceived as having not made significant impact. Quite a number of Soshanguve community members believed that the regularity of police patrols had not yet improved in spite of the introduction and implementation of community policing. This perception was virtually the same across all categories of respondents who took part in this study. This means that despite the implementation of community policing in Soshanguve, residents had not yet observed police visibility, except possibly in cases where the police attended to occurred incidents in more or less reactive form. This revelation may not be a surprise given the fact that the study area is a predominantly Black neighbourhood, which may be a disadvantage to attract regular police patrol and visibility, as has been validated in Mabasa (2012) study in the Eldorado park. Similarly, the impact on crime reduction has not yet been positively noticed in the various neighbourhoods in the Township. Perceptions of crime rates are still high despite the introduction of community policing to enhance police efforts in crime prevention. This however contradicts the assurance and confidence from the police who positively believed that they, together with the community would be able to combat and manage crime effectively.

On a positive note, with reference to the findings on the impact of community policing on the accessibility of police stations to community members in Soshanguve, most respondents indicated a positive perception regarding accessibility of police stations, possibly as a result of community policing practices. Understandably, while the police have the zeal and laws to implement the community policing strategy effectively, the success rate has been hampered by various materials and other resource availability. The community members are not yet convinced that the police are as proactive rather than reactive as they should be in the new dispensation. Based on this ground, most community respondents indicated that irrespective of community policing, police officers were not making themselves available when needed by the community. The unavailability of the police or the non proactive nature of the police may be as a result of some factors and conditions that are entirely out of control of the police personnel, as has been corroborated in one of the recent studies in this subject matter (Zondi 2012). This study revealed very clearly that the police do not have enough resources that they require to successfully implement the community policing strategy as most of the respondents across the police officers, from Constables to Senior Superintendent who took part in the study strongly indicated that there were not enough resources available for them to combat crime.

CONCLUSION

The study has vividly revealed the areas of strength, weaknesses and opportunities in terms of facilitating factors and conditions for successful implementation of community policing in South African context from one of the metropolitan based Townships, Soshanguve. The specific findings of this study is aligned with past experience which authenticated that for the police to be effective and successful in crime prevention there must be an active partnership between them (police) and the community members and structures. The police need to mobilise the community to participate in safety and security issues. The government also needs to put the issue of crime prevention on its agenda to

formulate some guidelines and other policies on crime and the prevention thereof.

The findings clearly indicate that the police need the community, and the community needs the police and if the two parties can work together and trust each other, crime will definitely be minimized in Soshanguve. On the other hand, the police in Soshanguve need to be allocated with enough resources by police management to be able to fight crime effectively in the Township, like in other police precincts and spaces in South Africa. The study therefore recommends police officials' proper training and understanding of the community policing principles in order to convince the community members, whose cooperation is essential in success of community policing.

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