



**CRIMINOLOGICAL THEOLOGICAL EFFORTS IN COMBATING
CRIME BY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF UMNDENI
OYINGCWELE, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Nondumiso Ayanda Ndlovu declare that:

- (i) This dissertation, except where otherwise indicated is my work.
- (ii) This research has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) The sources have been properly referenced in text and in the reference section.

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

“There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. So, the body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts. Suppose the foot says, “I am not a hand. So, I don’t belong to the body.” By saying this, it cannot stop being part of the body. Suppose the ear says, “I am not an eye. So, I don’t belong to the body.” By saying this, it cannot stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? God has placed each part in the body just as he wanted it to be. If all the parts were the same, how could there be a body? As it is, there are many parts. But there is only one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

With the above biblical verse, I’d like to sincerely pass my gratitude to my family for partaking in different roles and duties in contributing to the person I am today. Similarly, to this biblical verse, some were my eyes, ears and hands, of which I am forever grateful for. I wouldn’t have completed this study without your encouragement. Lubanzi, Siphesihle, Aphelele, Zamani, Luthando, Hlengiwe, Bee, Thobani, Buhle, sis’Ningi, Mrs Mzoneli and Bhut’ Thanda, MaZondi, Mr. Ndlovu this work is dedicated to you.

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“You are the wind beneath my wings”

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“Before you commit, Think. Before you act, Think. Before you talk, Think.”

“One thing I know, is that I know nothing” (Socrates, 1985).

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this one is for you Big Brother! To the Handsome Priest! We started off this mission together, but heaven couldn't wait for you. We don't have words to explain your death, but we can only accompany you with our prayers. Thank you, God, for the existence of such a cheerful, selfless and intelligent person. I can't wait to tell you all about how our study topic unfolded.

Eternal rest grant unto him oh Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him

Amen.

ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study was to explore and gain different perceptions of individuals regarding the role of the church in combating crime within the community of Hammarsdale, Mpumalanga Township. Taking into consideration the Roman Catholic Church as a societal structure that aims to instil morals and values in the upbringing of an individual. The task of the church and its clergy is to continuously restore a sense of civility and responsibility to everyday life and promote crime prevention and genuine rehabilitation. On the contrary, within the community of Hammarsdale, crime is reported to be escalating. Crime such as murder, common assault, car hijacking and house robbery were said to be the most popular among this community. Therefore, this study aimed at closing this literature gap by exploring the role of the Roman Catholic Church of Umndeni Oyingcwele Parish in combating crime.

This study employed a qualitative approach to ensuring that the goals of the study were achieved. The qualitative approach was used in this study to assist in the exploration of the nature of crime present within this community, challenges faced with regards to crime, perceptions of community members with regards to the presence of crime. This approach combined a set of questions that enabled the interviewer to explore further particular themes and responses. In analysing the data collected, thematic analysis method was utilised. The effectiveness of thematic analysis was derived from the familiarization of data by the researcher. This was possible because the researcher conducted tape-recorded interviews and transcribed them, and it allowed the researcher to familiarize with the data for an in-depth and perceptive analysis.

This research considered the common threads that provided an opportunity to ascertain patterns that showed common causes among the research participants. Findings highlighted that the church is indeed a societal structure that does aim to instil morals and values but a structure that has little control of social factors that contribute to crime. It was discovered that the church is not very much active in implementing measures that involve the community to combat crime but is aware of this phenomenon.

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
CJS	Criminal Justice System
FBO	Faith-based organizations
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HMT	Hammarsdale, Mpumalanga Township
ICCS	International Classification of Crimes for Statistical purposes
ISS	Institute of Security Studies
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
PPU	Pacifying Police Units
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Studies
PRONASCI	Brazil's National Program for Public Security with Citizenship
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RCT	Rational Choice Theory
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACS	South African Crime Statistics
SAPS	South African Police Service
SWC	Soccer World Cup
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

1. Introduction

This research brings these disciplines into critical dialogue, fostering interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary relationships in exploring the role of the church in combating crime. The study engages an interdisciplinary approach to explore community experiences and narratives to bring greater understanding of their situation when it comes to the involvement of the church in combating crime. This is because, numerous reports and research, have highlighted church involvement and participation in combating crime and perpetrators of gun and knife crimes, resulting in fatalities over the years, in cities and towns like London Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham and Wolverhampton (Beckford, 2004; Gunter, 2010; McLagan, 2005; Home Office, 2006).

Crime remains a serious concern in South Africa, with reports indicating that the murder rate in the country is the highest in the African continent outside a warzone (BBC News, 2018). The SA crime statistics presented in absolute numbers shows that there are 19,016 murders which occurred from the 2016 to 2017 period at a rate of 34.1 murders per 100 000 (SAPS, 2018). As of 2018, reports indicate that the murder rate had increased by 6.9 per cent, with absolute numbers of 20 336 murders from the 2017 to 2018 period alone, with an average estimate that 57 people are killed a day in the country (Sicetsha, 2018). More, crime statistics indicate that KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province has the highest murder crimes rate in the country with 4382 murders reported in the 2017/2018 financial year (SAPS, 2018). These statistics reflect on the intensity of crime experiences in South Africa. It critically reflects on the need for various alternative platforms to manage and reduce crime in the country. Thus, this research focuses on unpacking criminological theological efforts in combating crime by the church, particularly the Roman Catholic in Umndeni Oyingwele in KZN.

In this chapter, an outline of this research is provided to give a detailed understanding of what this study entails. The chapter presents the background of the study, the problem statement, the rationale of the study, the key objectives and questions and the scope of the study. This helps in showing the basic outline of the research development.

1.1. Background of the study

Criminological and sociological philosophies have long assumed a negative association between crime and religion, especially in secularized contexts and when the religious norms differ from the norms of secular society (Stack and Kanavy, 1983). Data from the European Values Systems covered secularization and moral values among people who attend church and those who do not. This information suggested that there is a negative structural association between the religious factors. For centuries criminal behaviour has been explained by the erosion of religion. In modern society, criminal behaviour is often explained by the lack of true faith (Felson and Boba, 2010). It has also been argued that the criminalization and secularisation of modern society are profoundly related processes (Tunmer, 2005). Against such background, it is surprising that religion has been commonly neglected in research on crime (Stack and Kanavy, 1983).

Criminological theories have pointed out several effective predictors of criminal behaviour, including the use of alcohol and drugs, weak and unstable family ties, and weak community integration (Braithwaite, 1989). The Christian moral value system has often been associated with a family value system, and with a concern for the local community. Therefore, Religious training and involvement are assumed to prevent delinquency by promoting the development of moral values, acceptance of conventional authority and belief in the existence of supernatural sanctions. For example, according to the Christian Bible, the book of Romans chapter 6 verse 13 sin is regarded as a way to everlasting death, while living a rightful life guarantees eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Such writings are said to assist in the prevention of delinquent behaviour.

The overall aim of this research is to contribute to the study of crime and religion with the objective of exploring effecting ways in which the church can be a societal structure used to combat crime. Crime is a substantively important issue in the sociology of criminology and religion. As a theoretical background, this research will discuss different strategies implemented to combat crime and focus on the role of the church in combating crime with the involvement of church leaders.

1.1.1. Gap in research

Crime in South Africa is a serious challenge that legal fraternities on their own cannot address. Thus, communities have a serious role to play in addressing this matter. This study engages on a specific case study of Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale in KZN province. It is essential to note that in the various crime issues, there is sparse literature on what has the societal structures

of Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale have done to combat these criminal incidents form taking place. By conducting this study, the focus is given to members and church leaders of the Roman Catholic Church situated in Hammarsdale that forms part of the community. This raises concern since social structures such as the church aim at instilling morals and values, yet people continue doing crime which is seen as sin according to religious teachings. Societal structures such as the church and community forums exist within this community, but there is little information as to what has been done by the church to attempt combating crime as it is a social phenomenon. Therefore, there is a gap in the creation of knowledge which this study intends to fulfil.

1.2. Problem statement

The problem is that a high number of criminal cases are being reported to the South African Police service (SAPS) within the province of KZN particularly to the SAPS of Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale. According to CrimeStatsSA (2018), the Mpumalanga township crime reports includes all manner of crimes, with the highest reports including sexual assault, rape, carjacking, stock-theft, and burglary and other different crimes. KwaZulu-Natal provincial statistics show that there has been an increase of murder cases reported within the community of Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale. During the years 2016/17 a number of 166 cases was reported to the SAPS Mpumalanga Station, Hammarsdale alone. Crime statistics indicate that 116 house robbery cases were reported during the years 2016/17 in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale. Within two years, the number of house robbery cases increased by 12. In 2016/17, the police recorded 16,717 carjacking incidents in South Africa. This was the highest number recorded in the past ten years. The hijacking of cars increased 14.5% from the 2015/16 figure of 14,602. On average, 45.8 cars were hijacked per day in 2016/17. Over half of the crimes occurred in Gauteng. A total number of 14 cases were reported in 2016, and a total number of 32 cases were reported in 2017. This type of crime has increased a lot during a small period of time, which makes a provision that it has been the most prominent type of crime within the community of Mpumalanga, Hammarsdale (CrimesStatsSA, 2018). This evidence indicates worrisome facts on the rate of crime occurring in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale. It is essential to note the need for community engagement and alternative solutions in addressing these increasing crimes. Therefore, the focus of this research study on the criminological theological efforts in combating crime. This is critical as

explores and unpack the role religion plays in the weaving the moral values of society and re-engineering societal behaviours.

1.3.Rationale of the study

This the researcher needs to be actively involved in sourcing out relevant data. The researcher is concerned here to explore the stories and experiences of community members associated with the issues of crime. Furthermore, the researcher is interested in understanding if the church is actively and effectively involved in combatting crime, engaging and supporting community members, who may be involved or at risk of involvement in crime.

This depiction inspired the researcher to study towards researching, what for the researcher, was not a comfortable or acceptable situation regarding the community's disproportionate involvement in the criminal justice system and fatalities associated with crime (Glynn, 2014; Gunter, 2010). Furthermore, the researcher was interested in understanding the nature or inhibiting factors for the church responding, to what the researcher had perceived to be a crisis with and facing in the communities.

1.4. The key objectives and questions to be asked

This study aims at attempting an inquiry on the following key research question from which the study objectives are derived:

What is the value of criminological theological efforts in combating crime by Roman Catholic Church of Umndeni Oyingwele, KwaZulu-Natal Province?

In order to adequately address the problem and draw informed conclusions the following, objectives have been constructed:

- To explore the nature of occurring crimes in Hammisdale Township,
- To identify perceptions of community members on crimes taking place in Hammisdale Township,
- To assess challenges faced by community members relating to crimes in Hammisdale Township, and

- To identify strategies implemented by the church to combat crimes in Hammarsdale Township.

1.5.Scope of the study

The main focus of this research study is the Roman Catholic Church in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale. The study only covers the role of the church in combating crimes and the challenges around the process. The researcher is very aware that there are various measures that are being engaged and can be engaged to address and combat crime in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale such as community awareness campaigns on combating crime. The decision to conduct this study was taken due to the unique approach this research can take in engaging the ability of religion to transform the community through the biblical values of morality. The research only looks at the role of religion focusing specifically at the Roman Catholic Church in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale, thus participants engaged were interviewed in relation to the activities and roles of the Catholic Church in combating crime. The focus to conduct interviews was driven by the dearth of studies and literature on the role of the Church in combating crime in communities across South Africa in the post-Apartheid era. It should be noted that this study specifically takes a multi-disciplinary approach to give a detailed engagement of how the Christian theological values are being engaged and can be utilised in combating crime in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale. The following is the structure of this study.

1.6.Research outline

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The details of these chapters are well explained as follows:

Chapter One: General orientation

The introduction and background of the study will be provided in this chapter and a brief introduction of the research problem as well as the significance of this study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter will encompass of key concepts of the study and the phenomenon being studied is explained with a foundation of the previously conducted studies (literature).

Chapter Three: Theoretical framework

Chapter will primarily focus on providing the study's findings and analysis, a discussion of data that was collected, using the theoretical frameworks of Routine Activity Theory and Rational Choice Theory as principal theories of this study. Challenges of the community pertaining to crime were explored in detail to find and implement a workable solution.

Chapter Four: Description of research design and methodology

This chapter will provide a description of the research design and methodology as to be used in this study. It will give a description of the research site, population sample and data collection techniques.

Chapter Five: Analysis and interpretation of research findings

This chapter consists of analysing the results that have been produced from the data that will be collected through the research procedure. The reporting of the results will be done in a qualitative manner that depicts the perceptions and opinions of the sample that will be interviewed in this study.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter serves to conclude and give a short summary of the entire dissertation. The findings and recommendations are included to provide a clear understating of how the objectives were met and achieved. It closes the topic off with how the research was conducted in a progressive manner that is not only beneficial to the researcher but also to the participants and community of this study.

1.7.Summary

This chapter has stated the topic with reference to previous foundations set by studies done in the past. Moreover, a summary and breakdown of the following chapters have been provided to guide the reader through the dissertation. The following chapters offer more in-depth discussions of what has been briefly highlighted in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

With South Africa being a developing country, crime is undeniably a very serious issue that affects societies everywhere across the country. Criminality seems to be an issue that no society is immune to. While statistics agencies engage in research to figure out statistical changes in crime which depict increasing crime rates, it has become an area of interest in the academic field, especially in criminology, to research what these crimes that impact society are, what the causes of these crimes are, and what can be done to curb crime. This research focused on crime occurring within the community of Hammadale, KwaZulu-Natal. Such crimes that this study focused on murder, car hijackings, common assaults and house robberies.

2.1. A historical overview of religion and crime

Over the last 25 years, there has been a handful of systematic and narrative reviews on religion and crime. Previous researchers mainly focused on three research areas: the relationship between religion and crime, substance use, and faith-based programming (Freeman, 1986). Further, previous work can be summarized in each of these areas and limitations of these reviews can be noted. A description of how the current study offers a more comprehensive and updated understanding of empirically based research on religion and crime can be offered.

The most recent studies that summarized work on religion and crime were completed 16 years ago (Johnson, 2000; Baier and Wright 2001). Like other research in this area, the findings show that religion is associated with less crime. Baier and Wright's (2001) meta-analysis of 60 studies published between 1969 and 1998, found that religious beliefs and behaviours exert a moderately negative effect on individuals' criminal behaviour. Similarly, Johnson et al.'s (2000) systematic review of the religiosity and delinquency literature analysed 40 studies published between 1985 and 1997. It was concluded that religion measures are usually inversely related to deviance with a higher proportion of more rigorous studies finding this relationship.

Like research on the religion and crime relationship, the three most recent reviews assessing the association between religion, substance use, and recovery, all find that religion negatively affected

these behaviours. Chitwood, Weiss, and Leukefeld's (2008) systematic review of 105 studies published between 1997 and 2006 found a relationship between religiosity and reduced risk of substance use. Likewise, Weaver, Flannelly, and Strock (2004) reviewed the 29 studies published between 1990 and 2003 on the relationship between religion and adolescent tobacco use and found that the majority included at least one significant relationship between religion and tobacco use. In the most recent study of the religion and substance use relationship, Yeung, Chan, and Lee's (2009) meta-analysis of 22 studies published between 1995 and 2007 found that religion is usually associated with less youth involvement with substance use, most notably alcohol, cigarette, marijuana, and other illicit drugs.

While the literature on religion and deviance has greatly expanded since Hirschi and Stark's (1969) classic study, the most recent reviews (Yeung, Chan, and Lee 2009) on religion and substance use examine work that is now nine years old. Similarly, the two most recent reviews (Johnson et al. 2000; Baier and Wright 2001) that focus on a wide range of criminal and deviant behaviours were published 16 years ago. Much has changed since then, including an increase in government-supported faith-based initiatives (Ebaugh, Chafetz, and Pipes 2005). Likewise, the attacks of 9/11 occurred. The terrorists were all extremist/jihadists inspired by radical Islamist beliefs. The events prompted the U.S. government to provide more funding for terrorism-related research, which has contributed to an increase in related journal articles (Silke 2008; Silke and Schmidt-Petersen 2015).

The combination of 9/11 being a high-profile criminal event and religion being a major motivational factor make it relevant to the current review, which is being done more recently than others. Previous reviews, mostly meta-analyses, have largely focused on whether religion is related to crime, deviance, and substance use and abuse. This information was useful 10 years ago when there was still some ambiguity about the religion and deviance relationship. Today, most religion and crime researchers know that there is a relationship. However, many more articles have now been published, and important new areas of interest and additional theoretical perspectives have emerged that warrant the coding of new categories. Additionally, for understanding recent research on religion and crime, it is important to include qualitative studies that do not have effect sizes and are not typically part of traditional meta-analyses. Therefore, this study aims to focus on assessing the role of the church in combating crime. However, such crimes that this study will focus on

include house robberies, car hijackings, common assaults and murder. Within Hammisdale, Mpumalanga Township, these four crimes stood out to be the most prevalent and are still on-going crimes, which is the reason for this study to focus on these crimes. Therefore, it is important to explore the nature and extent of these crimes internationally, nationally and provincially.

2.2. An international overview of the nature of crime

This section explores literature on the nature of crime from an international perspective. This is because crimes are different and occur in different forms such as murder, robbery, rape, common assault or car/vehicle high jacking just to mention a few. This is essential to help in unpacking the nature of crime mostly reflected upon in this study.

2.2.1. The worldwide rate of murder and house robbery

The investigation of deliberate assassination is applicable not just because of the gravity of the offence, yet in addition, because purposeful murder is a standout amongst the most quantifiable and tantamount pointers for checking savage demise's and is frequently viewed as both an intermediary for fierce crime and a marker of levels of security inside nations. As indicated by the International Classification of Crimes for Statistical (ICCS) purposes, deliberate murder is "unlawful demise exacted upon a man with the aim to cause passing or genuine damage". Such a definition gives clear direction to the assurance of whether a specific act of killing is to be considered as purposeful homicide to produce insights.

In Canada, amid the year 2015, police announced 604 crimes, 83 more than the earlier year. This brought about a 15% expansion in the crime rate, which moved from 1.47 murders to 1.68 murders for every 100,000 populaces. This was the most elevated crime rate detailed since 2011, yet at the same time underneath the normal for the earlier decade. The national increment was basically because of increments in the number of murders in Alberta (+27 crimes), Saskatchewan (+19) and Ontario (+18). Moreover, there was a 22% expansion in the rate of endeavoured murder (Allen, 2016).

The accessible information for Latin America and the Caribbean indicates exceptionally large amounts of murder, at around 25 cases for every 100,000 tenants, over the announcing time frame. The general pattern is moderately predictable, even though there is a discernible increment in the

mid-1990s (over 25 occurrences for every 100,000 occupants), trailed by a few decays. The late 1990s again proposes another expansion in recorded cases. The accessible information for sub-Saharan Africa additionally demonstrates relatively abnormal amounts of murder: somewhere in the range of 17 and 20 occurrences for every 100,000 occupants. There is no unmistakable generally drift, yet there appears to be an unfaltering decay from the mid-1990s onwards (Crime-Statistics/Homicide, 2018).

The general pattern for the European Union shows similarly low levels of murder, under three episodes for every 100,000 occupants, with a slight decay being noted in the number of cases being recorded toward the finish of the 1990s. The information for the European Union ought to be viewed as exact, as a substantial number of nations report insights with an abnormal state of unwavering quality. The crime figures for Canada reflect those of the European Union and, as expressed prior, United States murder rates, however declining, are at a superlatively more elevated amount than those for the European Union (Allen, 2006). Of the considerable number of locales under thought, information from Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States demonstrate the clearest increments over the revealing time frame. While in the mid-1980s murder rates in the area were recorded at under five occurrences for every 100,000 occupants, increments happened from the late 1980s into the mid-1990s, cresting amid 1993 and 1994 at around eight episodes for every 100,000 tenants, and from that point indicated slight decays (Crime-Statistics/Burglary-Homicide Rates, 2018)

2.2.2. House robbery

Zinn (2010) holds that house robbery is where the perpetrators overpower, detain and rob the occupants of a residential premise inside their place of residence. Van der Merwe (2008) is of the view that robbery at residential premises should in addition to the aforementioned, include incidents of robberies that take place near the victim's residence, such as in the yard on which the dwelling is built.

The United States of America is the top nation by housebreaking on the globe. As of 2015, housebreaking in the United States of America was 1.13 million that records for 40.01 % of the world's housebreaking rates. The main 5 nations (others are Italy, France, Germany, and Australia) represent 66.33 % of it. The world's aggregate housebreaking was assessed at 2.83 million out of 2015. The high rate of housebreakings maybe seen because of lack of security measures by the

household owners and having poor security features which makes it easy for the perpetrator to have easy access (Crime-Statistics/Burglary-Housebreaking, 2018).

Housebreakings are also very much high within the Palestine nation since the occupation of the Israeli in the land of Palestine causes violence. The violence of the unwanted settler's result in attacking people's homes which causes victimization (Koo and Pierre, 2003). Victimization rates are severely increasing. Moreover, the increasing high unemployment and poverty rates among the Palestinian population seem to be the main reasons for the increasing trend of victimization in Palestine. However, victimization as a new prevailing phenomenon did not receive attention by Palestinian researchers. Yet, victimization rates and risk factors of victimization have never been studied in Palestine. The PCBS published many data sets on this phenomenon, but these data sets have never been analysed to shed the lights on this problem (Pierre, 2003).

Given the astonishingly abnormal amounts of housebreakings in some Latin American nations (for instance, Argentina and Ecuador) the attrition rate in respect of convictions causes concern. Both North America and the European Union show one conviction for every nine instances of detailed instances of housebreakings, simply over the worldwide normal. The information recommends that among every one of the nations that have revealed information to the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, and for the period 1980-2000, a conviction was probably going to be accomplished in one out of each four instances of house break-ins and one out of each eight instances of car hijackings. There are, be that as it may, extensive local contrasts in such rates and the worldwide midpoints mirror the way that a great part of the study information is gotten from created nations. The genuine worldwide average for acquiring convictions is, more than likely, much lower (Crime-Statistics/Burglary Car-and-Housebreaking, 2018).

2.2.3. Common assault

According to section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1998 of South Africa, the common assault may be referred to any act by which a person intentionally or recklessly causes another to apprehend immediate unlawful violence. Such an act must be with the intent being calculated in that person's mind to cause apprehension or fear in the mind of the victim. Therefore, where there is no intent, there will not be an assault, unless, that the person who assaulted another, (and it was conclusive by way of evidence), that the person was indeed reckless as to the other person would probably have indeed apprehended that immediate unlawful violence would be used.

In developed countries such as Europe and Argentina, common assault and battery are summary offences, which means that the matter may only be tried in a magistrate's court, and if found guilty have a maximum penalty not exceeding six months imprisonment or a fine not exceeding £5,000.00 (Penman, 2014). For example, a person throwing a wine bottle at another and misses, will be an assault. A person who uses a dog as a threat only, being an intention that the dog bites, but does not do so, will be an assault.

Assault is one of the more serious violations a Canadian can commit and is delegated a criminal demonstration, which implies it will be attempted in court (Shelly, 2001). If a conviction is anchored, it might result in a criminal record, complete with fingerprint records and other legitimate processing. The essential meaning of assault in Canada is the intention to apply force to another person in an immediate or backhanded way, without that individual's assent. This is a critical point to take note of; the threat of assault is all that is required for an assault charge to be lawfully given. The actual injury does not need to happen for an assault charge to happen. The most imperative purposes of an assault charge are that the individual being charged had guide expectation to incur hurt and that the individual being hurt did not give assent (Allen, 2006). Police-revealed crime rates for a wide range of property violations expanded in 2015, including motor vehicle robbery (+15%), ownership of stolen property (+13%), burglary over \$5,000 (excluding motor vehicles) (+8%) and personality extortion (+9%).

2.2.4. Car hijacking

According to Geldenhuys (2010), Vehicle/Carjacking may be referred to as the unlawful seizure of an automobile by force or threat of force. The typical hijacker would forcefully demand the victim to hand over the car and disarm the vehicle's alarm system or satellite tracking device. The key point in vehicle hijackings is that a vehicle is forcefully taken from a person without their consent. In Stewarts (2012) study of motor vehicle hijacking in South Africa, results showed that hijackers hardly conduct a hijacking crime if they are not armed with weapons such as knives and guns. The USA is the top country by motor vehicle theft in the world. As of 2015, motor vehicle theft in the United States of America was 707,758 that accounts for 38.51 % of the world's motor vehicle theft. The top 5 countries (others are France, Italy, Mexico, and Canada) account for 69.46 % of it. The world's total motor vehicle theft was estimated at 1.84 million in 2015 (international statistics, 2015).

2.2.5. Murder

The crime committed where a person of sound mind and discretion (that is, of sufficient age to form and execute a criminal design and not legally “insane”) kills any human creature in being (excluding quick but unborn children) and in the peace of the state or nation (including all persons except the military forces of the public enemy in time of war or battle) without any warrant, justification, or excuse in law. With malice aforethought, express or implied, that is, with a deliberate purpose or design or determination distinctly formed in mind before the commission of the act, provided that death results from the injury inflicted within one year and a day after its infliction (What Is Murder? 2018). In the United States, special statutory definitions include murder committed with malice aforethought, characterized by deliberation or premeditation or occurring during the commission of another serious crime, as robbery or arson (first-degree murder), and murder by intent but without deliberation or premeditation which may be classified as second-degree murder (dictionary.com murder, 2018). According to the English dictionary (2018), murder may be referred to as homicide, killing, assassination, execution.

2.3. Understanding crime from a global perspective: The Case of Mexico, US & Canada

Crime is one of the most urgent concerns in the world. According to Shelly (2001) there are various crime effects that are noted across North America which have a global effect. In Mexico, issues and concerns related to crime mostly relate to drug trafficking with drugs such as heroin, cocaine and marijuana transiting around the Latin American countries and the US. This has resulted in grievous corruption trends and the rise of organised crime with a deleterious effect on Mexico's Federal Representative Republic (Shelly 2001).

In 2012, Mexico had a murder rate of 21.5 per 100,000 populations. Between 2000 and 2013, there were a total of 26,037 murders in Mexico in 2012. By 2013 there were only 30,800 people incarcerated for murder, showing that there are many murder cases that go unsolved. The state of Chihuahua ranked number one with the most homicide in the country; the least was Baja California Sur. Assault and robbery make up the clear majority of crimes. While urban areas tend to have higher crime rates, as is typical in most countries, the United States–Mexico border has also been a problematic area (Molzahn, Rios and Shirk, 2012).

In 2015, police reported crime in Canada, as measured by both the crime rate and the Crime Severity Index (CSI), increased for the first time since 2003. The CSI measured the volume and severity of police-reported a crime in Canada and had a base index value of 100 for 2006. The CSI increased 5% from 66.7 in 2014 to 69.7 in 2015. The 2015 CSI was 1% higher than the CSI reported in 2013 (68.8), but 31% lower than a decade earlier in 2005. The change in the CSI in 2015 was driven primarily by increases in fraud, house robbery, and homicide. The upward movement of the national CSI was fuelled by notable growth in crime reported by Alberta. Among the violent violations to increase in rate were homicide (+15%), attempted murder (+22%), major assaults (+6%), robbery (+5%) and Criminal Code violations specific to the use of, discharge, and pointing of firearms (+22%) (referred to as violent firearms offences). The overall volume and severity of violent crime, as measured by the violent CSI, increased 6% between 2014 and 2015 to 74.5. This increase was largely the result of increases in house robbery, homicide, attempted murder, and violent firearms (Statcan, 2018).

Crime is seen as a serious problem within the US and Mexico, as prison centres are flooded with residents incarcerated for offences such as murder, burglary, larceny, common assault and hijacking (Molzahn, Rios & Shirk, 2012). Within these countries, murder is classified as the most serious offence of which offenders are liable to face a more severe and serious sentence for. Within the US imprisonment centres, a total number of approximately 75,465 male offenders represent the state in prisons, and a number of 3,203 females are incarcerated (Miller, 2003). Second place and third place offences such as burglary, robbery and assaults are more frequent amongst the city institutions as the total number of offenders charged for these assaults escalates from 21,635 within the state's prison population.

When the US is being compared to other countries such as Mexico, France and New York, the US takes the crown. To quote the Special Committee; "United States so far as crimes of violence is concerned is worse than any civilized country". The most unfavourable comparison of all is in the crime of robbery, including assaults and murder. The exceptionally orderly city of Washington in a single year reported four times as many robberies as London, and Los Angeles more than all in England, Wales and Scotland (Dunn, 1926).

The First Amendment of the US Constitution ensures the free exercise of religion and precludes Congress from passing laws regarding its foundation (Richards, 1974). In a 2013 study conducted,

56% of Americans said that religion played a "critical part in their lives", a far higher figure than that of some other affluent nation (psycnet.apa.org/record/2003-02034-004). In a 2009 Gallup survey, 42% of Americans said that they went to chapel week by week or week after week; the figures ran from a low of 23% in Vermont to a high of 63% in Mississippi (Miller, 2003)

According to Cohen (2016) as with other western nations, the United States is ending up less religious. Irreligion is developing quickly among Americans under the age of 30. Surveys demonstrate that general American trust in sorted out religion has been declining since the mid to late 1980s and that more youthful Americans, specifically, are ending up progressively irreligious (Cohen, 2016). A total percentage of 70.6% of adults in the United States identified themselves as Christians; Protestants accounted for 46.5%, while Roman Catholics, at 20.8%, formed the largest single denomination (Cohen, 2016).

Out of a population of 25,726 persons imprisoned in twenty-seven state penitentiaries, 6028 professed Roman Catholicism and 13,854, Protestantism. These constituted 77.3% of the whole number; the remaining was 22.7% made up of Jews, Mormons and others. With such statistics, it is evidence that the church, society and the family as the foundation of building character in an individual are responsible for the high crime rates. However, crime is not said to be of existence because of these three elements, but it is lack of these three elements that often contribute to the causes and prevalence of crime. Therefore, the church in the United States must deal primarily with the causes of crime by seeking measures to combat crime.

Some of the strategies employed by different communities to combat crime include; hotspot policing and biting back in Huddersfield.

2.4. Crime in South Africa

Within South Africa, crime has been perceived as the most pressing and visible social problem. This has led to the government taking solemn measures to attend to this phenomenon facing South Africa. Crime also features prominently in the public's concern along with issues of poverty, religion and HIV/AIDS.

During the mid-1980s, crime levels recorded in South Africa began to increase. A dramatic increase was noted during the 1990s. Crime in South Africa does not affect all people consistently, although, for instance, the risk of victimization of violent property crimes, such as robbery and car hijacking, is evenly spread throughout the population. However, the likelihood of a person falling victim of crime is strongly influenced by, among other things, gender, age, income and place of residence.

Recent history assists in understanding the context of crime and violence in South Africa, and, South Africans' attitudes to the law, policing and the Criminal Justice System (CJS). The entire sector of the criminal equity framework has experienced substantive change and redesign in the post-politically-sanctioned racial segregation, South Africa. This is especially the case with the police and indictment administrations. South Africa has embraced vital new enactment and techniques in crime prevention and control not just keeping in mind the end goal to confront the difficulties of an expanded crime risk and the dread of crime and frailty, yet additionally to develop the subjects' trust in criminal equity framework, which for quite a while was an obvious image of the oppressive politically-sanctioned racial segregation administration.

Until 1994, South Africans had little reason to respect the law, and no reason to believe in the rule of law. During apartheid, not only were many of the laws unjust and intended to entrench white domination, but unfair laws were also applied unfairly. In addition, the security forces, particularly the police, were used by the state to ensure that all South Africans lived in fear of the state, regardless of their race (Vorster, 2003). The apartheid state was deeply corrupt at all levels, and those who held positions of power, whether as politicians or functionaries, were very seldom called to account before a court for acts of corruption or the abuse of power.

The situation was no different in relation to interpersonal violence and crime. Black men who murdered were more likely to face harsher sentences than white men who murdered, especially if the white murderer's victim was poor and black. Black women who were raped were less likely to

have their cases investigated than cases in which white women were the victims. In this context, few people were to be expected to have much respect for the law or the rule of law.

Composed crime began to increment after the progress of the opening of the fringes post-1994. Since the definitions and criteria for distinguishing proof of sorted out crime changed impressively finished a previous couple of years, the number of composed crime gatherings (named 'syndicates' by the SAPS) shifted also. There seems, by all accounts, to be an accord that they're various and that there was a noteworthy increment in their numbers amid the previous five years. Local organized crime is generally less tightly knit and well-structured than the sophisticated foreign mafias. Crime syndicates in South Africa are respected to be even more inexactly organized and dynamic, adequately constituting a system of people occupied with unlawful exercises, posturing genuine difficulties for the law implementation. Some of the locally organized crime groups have worldwide connections with Chinese Triads, Russian criminal associations, the Italian Mafia, and West African composed criminal congregations.

Crime is a worldwide and most complicated phenomenon. In most cases, violence and crime can also be regarded as a sin. The testimony and deeds of the Church of Christ, as well as the doctrine of sound Scriptural theology, are urgently needed in a time of increasing violence and crime (Vorster, 2003). The history of violence in South Africa has been characterised by the occurrence of violence to a greater or lesser extent since the middle of the seventeenth century. For example, between the years 1770 and 1775 the so-called 'free burghers' met the migrating Bantu on the expanding eastern borders of the Cape of Good Hope. The subsequent clashes between the two totally different cultures resulted in border wars and retaliation (Action Stop Farm Attacks, 2005).

With the awareness of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the struggle continued between the black majority and the white minority that formed Government. The ANC was founded in 1912. During the year 1948, the National Party came into power after using the slogan of 'apartheid' in the election campaign. Since then the struggle and structural violence intensified.

The SACC being an interdenominational forum in South Africa was a prominent anti-apartheid organisation during the years of apartheid in South Africa. Leaders of the council included Desmond Tutu, Beyers Naudé and Frank Chikane. However, nowadays, this council is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa. During this time, the council played a role in leading common Christian action that works for moral witness in South Africa, addressing

issues of justice, national reconciliation, integrity or creation, eradication of poverty, and contributing towards the empowerment of all those who are spiritually, socially and economically marginalised (Martos, 2001).

2.5. The role of the church in combating crime across South Africa

According to the Christian scriptures, the word “church” comes from the Greek word “ecclesia”, which means a called-out company or assembly (James, 1915). Wherever it is used in the Bible, it refers to people. It can be a mob (Acts 19:30-41), the children of Israel (Acts 7:38), and the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 5:25, 32). From the 11th through the 14th centuries, a wave of building of cathedrals and smaller parish churches occurred across Western Europe (Bible-study-lessons what-is-the-church historical-background, 2018).

The church can be deemed as a societal structure that is aimed at instilling morals and values (Swartz, 2006). It forms as a social structure that assists in the upbringing of an individual and creation of the character. According to Talcott Parsons (1991:202), the term social structure applies to the arrangement of the interrelated institutions and social patterns as well as the roles which each person assumes in the group. It is the web of interacting social forces from which have arisen the various modes of observing and thinking (Mannheim, 2013). It can be referred to as the external aspect of society that is relatively stable as compared to the functional or internal aspect of society. Social structure is a living structure that is created, maintained for a time and changes. Different scholars have also regarded that social structure is abstract which is composed of several groups like family, church, class, caste, state or community (Swartz, 2006).

Within family structures, children learn how to govern their lives. Churches help to reinforce these principles and strengthen the family in its role. When these institutions are weak or absent from peoples’ lives, society becomes increasingly dependent on the government to impose restraint. Yet government cannot adequately address the underlying problems of criminal behaviour or fill the holes in people’s lives (Parsons, 1991).

Once families are broken, children are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. Being a child that has both mother and father as mutually supporting authority figures in a child’s life to provide leadership and security is vitally important for a child in many ways, both physically and

emotionally. Previous research findings outline that, for example, individuals who attend church regularly, compared to those who attend only rarely or never, are significantly less likely to engage in violent behaviour and individuals who attend church regularly and are more religious have, on average, higher-quality morals, which can serve as a buffer against societal breakdown and the social ills (Demuth, 2004).

Churches teach that there is an authority higher than man-made government and that our rights are gifts from a loving God, not privileges granted by government (Mannheim, 2013). Faithful churches inform the conscience about right and wrong, teach that each life has a purpose and that individuals are responsible for their lives and others', and cultivate virtues that form the foundation of a prosperous society. Research also shows that, for youth, involvement in religious communities and groups may protect them against engaging in delinquent behaviours. Youth who participate in religious activity, such as prayer or reading or watching religious content, are also less likely to display antisocial behaviour (Pearce, 2003).

According to Parsons (1991), a family is the incubator of liberty. It is there that a person learns values, hard work, character, and what is most important in life. Religious congregations reinforce the principles taught in the home and supported the family in its role of raising the next generation (Demuth, 2004). Society thrives when families and religious communities are strong; principles promote daily choices and personal conduct of their members. Government structures cannot replace the kinds of support offered by the family or a religious community. Embracing these twin pillars of social strength ensures that individuals will be stronger, and society will be safer and more stable.

According to Pieterse (1999: 82-83) during the apartheid era, the prophetic church in South Africa, which was directed by South African liberation theology, had an enormous influence on people. The church spoke with a powerful and fearless voice against apartheid. Pieterse (1999) questions the power of the church in present times. It seems the power of the church and its teachings is slowly demolishing as it seemingly tends to fail at resolving present social and moral problems.

It is the calling of the church of Jesus Christ to proclaim the true Gospel to all people and under all circumstances. The real message of the Gospel has remained the same through all times. This is the message of the only true God, who is God of peace (2 Cor. 13:11) and the Gospel of peace (Eph.2:17). The church ought to fulfil this calling by primarily on grass-roots levels, in the local

congregation. The church has a responsibility to educate young people and to equip with sound Biblical doctrine and in so doing foster their growth in faith and holiness. Pastoral care and the development of traditional family values is also part of the church teachings that create a condition for a healthy community. In practical ways, churches can mediate and facilitate among groups by founding centres for counselling, members of the church can co-operate with the police force. Du Toit (1999) emphasises the role of the church in promoting the common good in South Africa. “Building a new South Africa cannot be done without religious support. Churches and religious groups must be mobilized to promote the values needed to strengthen a common good” (Du Toit, 1999)

2.6.South African crime statistics

The following statistics are in line with the aims of this study which focuses on finding the gap between the high rates of crime and what the church has done to combat such crimes. In relation to the study, these crime statistics aim to outline the significance of these crimes and the number of times they tend to occur.

Institute for Security Studies state that there were 827 children murdered in South Africa in 2012/13. That is more than two a day. Added to that is the 21,575 children who were assaulted, with almost half of those assaults being severe. During the same year, 2,266 women were murdered, and 141,130 women were victims of attempted murder, assault GBH and common assault. As horrifying as these statistics are, the number of women and children who were victim to violence is dwarfed by the number of similar attacks on men. In 2012/13 alone, 13,123 men were murdered. At best, half of these cases would have made it to court and not all of those that make it to court result in a guilty verdict and the perpetrator being punished (Singh, 2016).

There are several consequences of this. With each year that violence remains so prevalent, the number of South Africans who have experienced and witnessed violence increases, and so does the extent of national trauma. This also has serious consequences for the health system; the ability to work as a nation, and the ability to raise a new generation in a safe environment.

Based on the above crimes that this study focuses on, the above statistics are in line with what the researcher aims to prove that there are high numbers of murder, assault, house robberies and car hijacking crime incidents taking place internationally, nationally and locally. Which proves that these crimes are not solely the problem of the Hammarsdale/Mpumalanga Township area.

2.7.Challenges faced by Hammarsdale Mpumalanga Township community members

While South African laws have substantially changed for the better, and the Constitution protects the rights of all South Africans and establishes the principle that all are treated equally before the law, in practice, this has been very difficult to achieve (Vorster, 2003:213). For example, it was relatively easy for Oscar Pistorius to pay for good lawyers, to be driven to court, or to see a psychologist to help them deal with trauma or stress. It is also much easier for a middle-class victim of a crime to get to a police station to report their case to the police, insist it is investigated and follow up to ensure that the case receives attention. These are all necessary for a case to make its way through the criminal justice system. But these privileges are not available to most of the 650 000 victims of violent crimes each year (The South African Crime, 2018).

South African attitudes towards the law are demonstrated in small things such as the high number of people who drive without seat belts and who drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol; the many teachers who still beat children at school; police officers who break traffic rules even when it is not necessary; drivers who ignore red traffic lights and so on.

It is difficult to slow this steady erosion of the law when respect for, and confidence in, the institutions of the state, including the police, are undermined by the daily experience of citizens in their interactions with the criminal justice system. Perhaps even more significantly, attempts to change attitudes towards the rule of law are stymied by the disrespect demonstrated for the law and the value of life by the very people responsible for making and enforcing the law.

2.8.Crime in the province of KwaZulu-Natal

According to South African Crime Statistics (2014), between the years 2014-2017 there has been an increase in crime such as murder and car hijacking cases reported to the South African Police Services within the province of KwaZulu-Natal (Crimestatssa, 2018). Murder cases increased from 41 reported cases in 2014 to 57 cases in 2017, and car hijacking cases reported increased from 41 in 2014 to 66 cases in 2017. According to an article was written by Edwards (2010) crime increased after the province hosted the 2010 Soccer World Cup tournament. Edwards outlines the success of the event and how crime increased sharply afterwards. Therefore, the number of cases reported during the years 2014-2017 may be related to the article written by Edwards.

Furthermore, local crime statistics show that within the community of Hammarsdale, Mpumalanga Township. Crime such as murder, house burglary, common assault and car hijacking are deemed

as frequent offences taking place within this community. Murder, car hijacking, common assault and house robbery reported cases have been increasing between the years 2014-2017. From 2014, murder cases reported increased from 92 cases to a few number f 93 cases during the year 2017 and 16 cases reported for car high jacking cases in 2017 (Crimestatsas, 2018).

2.9. Adopted ways to combat crime

According to Mejia (2015) from Australia, any form of crime is unwanted behaviour; therefore it should be treated as a public health concern. Campaigns should be implemented and make use of technology to reach every family and individual in places of concern. Developments of appropriate tools needed to make everybody feel vital and cared for through parenting intervention, family interventions, childhood education and faith-based programmes.

During the 90s, Rio had rates of homicide that would go beyond epidemic levels (over 100 per 100,000 citizens). The introduction of an initiative called PRONASCI was launched in attempt to work to develop a range of new preventative and deterrent strategies for policing, including the expansion of effective citizenship to the lower reaches of society, enhancing the professional status of public security employees, and focusing new resources on areas with high levels of crime and low social cohesion. It took a costly but comprehensive programme to tie up a lot of elements that were drivers of violence in the country, building local frameworks, gun-free zones and fostering a civic culture to reduce violence, which has been the case in Bogotá, Medellín in Colombia and Santa Tecla in El Salvador (Moura, 2000).

Another strategy to combating crime maybe making use of scientific evidence that focuses on hotspots and ‘hot people’ can prevent or reduce violence. This strategy to combat crime also needs to be accompanied by other measures, such as – urban upgrading, better urban planning, situational prevention – especially early childhood intervention (Muggah, 2013).

It is vital and important to make people aware of crime taking place within their area or near-by places. For instance, while people are aware that there are high levels of lethal violence in Brazil, this is often misrepresented by national and international media as a simple cop’s vs robbers dynamic – a misrepresentation that often criminalizes poverty. There’s a need for more work to be done on understanding the official and unofficial social, political and economic structures that sustain these high levels (Platt, 2015).

If for instance, the goal is to reduce homicides, the need to create well-targeted programmes arises. Program selection should be in hotspot areas and focused on the population group most likely to commit violent crimes, often young males between 10-29 years old. The risk factors for why these young men get involved in criminality also needs to be clearly diagnosed and complemented with a treatment plan that involves the family and community structures, such as the church. (Roig, 2000). Such programmes may be the biting back in Huddersfield.

“Biting back in Huddersfield” is a program intended to decrease repeat exploitation in local robbery and robberies from vehicles. The program is evaluated powerful by residents. There was a more prominent lessening in recorded and repeated crimes than the encompassing zones. There was an expansion in fulfilment with police administrations and no confirmation of uprooted crime (Johnson, 1984). A crime-reduction policing technique that uses a disorder policing approach to concentrate with focus on enhancing physical and social request in high-crime areas in Lowell, Mass. There was a measurably huge lessening of the aggregate number of calls for benefit in the treatment territories with respect to the control. The observed disorder was alleviated and calls for service were not significantly displaced into surrounding treatment areas (Johnson, 1984).

Local police from Brazil has introduced a program fighting against crime named the Pacifying Police Units (PPU). This unit was introduced during the year 2008/2009, and the aim is to supplant the community presence of gangs as central community figures. This program has reduced the country’s murder rate and violent crimes in general (Willis & Prado, 2014). Combating crime is not only left at the hands of the police officials but also the responsibility of community members. The police force alone can attempt opposing crime, but it won’t be as effective as having a helping hand from the community. Therefore, the community should also assist in opposing crime and finding effective ways to combat crime. The following may be examples of crime combatting strategies:

Community Policing

Community policing is a proactive approach to law enforcement that goes beyond the traditional policing model of reducing crime by arresting and incarcerating criminals (Terry, 2000). It recognizes that crime does not occur in a vacuum and that the best way to control crime is to address the continuum of human and community issues that lie at the root of most criminal activity (Michele, 2000). This initiative requires police and other social structures to join forces with the

community, forming problem-solving partnerships to develop viable strategies for dealing with the constellation of factors associated with crime and the church (Johnson, 2017).

Situational crime prevention

The Catholic Church has adopted the situational crime prevention strategy. Conventional wisdom holds that crime prevention needs to be based through an understanding of the cause of the crime (Gibbons, 1971). Situational crime prevention can be characterised as comprising measures directed at different forms of crime that involves manipulation of the immediate environment in a systematic and permanent way as possible to reduce the opportunities for crime. Therefore, the church applies this strategy using the penance and reconciliation sacrament.

The Sacrament of penance is the first of two sacraments of healing. The Catechism of the Catholic Church mentions in the following order and capitalization different names of the sacrament, calling it the sacrament of conversion, penance, confession, forgiveness and reconciliation. It is the sacrament of spiritual healing of a baptized person from the distancing from God resulting from sins committed (Martos, 2001). When people sin after baptism, they cannot have baptism as a remedy but can repent (Bouscaren and O'Connor, 1958). According to the canon law 966:1, the sacrament of repentance involves four elements; contrition (the penitent's sincere remorse for wrongdoing or sin), repentance, confession to a priest who has the faculty to hear confessions, absolution by the priest; and satisfaction or penance (Bouscaren and O'Connor, 1958).

O'Connor (1958:180) states that it is through this sacrament where values and morals are revamped and revived. Through this sacrament, the church is able to manipulate members into restoring forgiveness and peace. This may be a strategy employed by the church to combat crime. This strategy does not only aim at combating crime but also may serve as a room for an offender's confession.

Dominant community force

In many troubled urban communities, faith-based organizations function as the echoing force. Churches, synagogues and other spiritual centres frequently become important in the lives of people because members of the church confide and find comfort within the church. Faith-based organizations are a focal point of activity, providing a range of spiritual, social and support services to residents (Connolly, 2017). Similar in small communities outside of urban areas, the spiritual

centres and places of worship also tend to play a significant role in the lives of people providing moral support. According to Statistics (2012), there was a high rate of abuse against children and women in Hammarsdale (Crimestatssa, 2018).

2.10. Extensive understanding of social issues that underlie crime

Faith-based organisations are trained to deal with the special needs of the disadvantaged population. They often lend a level of compassion and understanding that traditional social service does not. That is the mere reason why members of faith-based organizations from disadvantaged backgrounds may find it easier to share their struggles and concerns with their spiritual leader or counsellor (taylorfrancis.com/books/9781351498678, 2018). These faith-based social structures possess some of these attributes;

2.10.1. Voice of moral and secular authority

Law enforcement agencies are among the most important institutions in the community. Police help maintain social order by controlling crime and protecting the public from harm while the church helps in providing room for comfort and growth. In many troubled communities, the church is often viewed as the leader and voice of moral and secular authority. Just as Martin Luther King Jr. and other clergy were the driving forces behind the civil rights movements of previous decades, so too the clergy today can rally their congregations to work towards lasting solutions to problems related to crime and violence (Maguire, 2017).

For example, in the United States of America, there is a community-based initiative put in place to combat crime which consists of personnel from different community units. This initiative is called the Ministers against Crime (MAC), it's a crime watch program staffed by the Fort Worth community. Every evening, several teams of police-trained members drive through high-crime neighbourhoods during peak crime hours.

2.11. Summary

In conclusion, after all these mechanisms, post the apartheid era, the church is very much absent in engaging and being involved in crime combating mechanisms introduced by other social organizations such as the police force, non-organization programmes and community forums. Therefore, there is an urge for this study to be conducted to fill in the knowledge gap between religion and crime. Against the background literature, it is important for the church to have a role

in combatting crime since it is also a faith-based organisation that aims to instil harmony and values to partake in a crime free society.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3. Introduction

A theoretical framework demonstrates an understanding of concepts and theories that are relevant to the study and relates to the broader areas of knowledge being considered. The selection of a theoretical framework depends on its appropriateness, ease of application and explanatory power. Peacock (2013) postulates that a theoretical framework strengthens the study in three ways. Firstly, an explicit statement of the theoretical assumption permits the reader to evaluate the theory critically. Secondly, a theoretical framework connects the researcher to existing knowledge. Therefore, being guided by a relevant theoretical framework, one is given a basis for a hypothesis and choice of research methods. Lastly, having a theoretical framework helps one to limit generalisation. According to Warker (1998) theory provides the patterns and logical frameworks of the relationships that exist within a study environment to interpret and predict the situation. Therefore, the theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under the study exists. Therefore, this research was guided by the Routine Activities theory and the Rational Choice theory. However, other theories such as the Institutional Anomie theory, Freeman's Social Critical theory and the Subcultural theory were used in this study to broaden the lenses of understanding the integration of criminology and religion in combating crime. This helped in providing a rich perspective on the study through multiple viewpoints.

3.1. Routine activities theory

This study adopted the routine activity theory developed by Cohen and Felson (2017). According to this theory, certain types of crime could only occur when a motivated offender and a suitable target or victim are present at the same place at the same time. In addition, there should be an absence of effective control or protective measures such as someone responsible for preventing crime to occur or people willing to intervene. For instance, a vehicle hijacking could only take place if all these elements are in place. For example, in a scenario when a man drives up to his

poorly lit driveway in his luxury car. He is not vigilant; there are no neighbours or security guards around who could come to his aid should he be attacked. A young man with a history of committing violent crimes is lying in wait behind shrubbery next to the driveway. The young man now can forcibly take the luxury car, and a crime has been committed.

Routine activity theory falls under the contemporary form of the classical school framework thus explains some contributing factors as to why crime occurs (Felson, 2017). Research further state that communities offer numerous opportunities for crime that include a pool of motivated offenders and a lack of supervision, both of which place people at risk (Felson, 2017). Routine activity theory emphasizes the fact that people tend to follow a certain routine and take chances where possible and that most crimes happen daily and occur as a result of the routine habits of people. Criminals then happen to observe these routines and then take the tempting opportunity to commit a certain crime.

This theory has been criticized by Jeffery (1993) by the way it addresses crime. This theory only presents three factors for crime namely the motivated offender, a suitable target and absence of security but neglects attention to address social aspects of committing a crime. Such aspects include personal education and socio-economic status. Scholars state that this theory is simply a “description of crime, not an explanation,” (Jeffery, 1993). While these issues have been pointed out, there is no doubt that the routine activity theory works when used to explain why crime is more prevalent for certain groups, as well as why certain types of crime occur more often.

Critics of this study would be addressed by taking into consideration other aspects that may be seen as causal factors to crime commitment. This was addressed by including the church as a societal structure within the community which includes diverse people of different educational backgrounds and socio-economic status in an exploration of different lifestyle routine activities that may be contributing factors to the high levels of crime.

3.2.Rational choice theory

Rational choice theory is a framework used for understanding and often modelling social and economic behaviour (Clarke, 1986). This theory relies on the premise that the aggregated social

behaviour results from the behaviour of individual actors, each of whom is making their individual decisions. It assumes that an individual has preferences among the available choice alternatives.

In relation to this study, a religious person with strong morals and values would less likely make a choice of committing a crime, since according to the word of the Lord; it is committing sin (100 Bible Verses about Sin, 2018). Therefore, religion cannot be associated with crime since a religious person would not commit sin.

Rational choice theory (RCT) has made important contributions to the social sciences and has become a prominent theoretical model within sociology, psychology, and political science. Although there has been and continues to be considerable interest in RCT within criminology, many criminologists harbour great scepticism about it, particularly its rationalist assumption and its ability to offer a general theory of crime (DeHaan and Vos, 2003; O'Grady, 2014).

The rational choice theory has been criticized for not considering non-rational human behaviour, neglecting influences on it as emotional, pathological and moral ones (Blau and Judith, 1993). A repeated criticism against RCT with respect to its generality has been that a theory that emphasizes the rational weighing of the costs and benefits of actions may be perfectly applicable to financial market decisions but not to criminal behaviour, and even if applicable to crime, the theory is limited to explaining instrumental kinds of criminal acts such as property crimes and simply is not relevant for actions that are laden with strong affect such as violent crimes (Matsueda, 2013). Another consistent criticism of the theory is that it is overly narrow in its conceptual scope: that it is a simplistic model that includes only the financial costs and gains from offending. In criminology, the rational choice theory has been closely aligned with deterrence theory, and so specification of RC theoretical models has frequently included a limited range of variables—those focused on formal and informal sanctions (Bill, 2002).

The above theory explains crime as planned action of which an individual has a space to decide whether to continue or to abolish the idea/ thought. This theory is relevant to this study simply because this study aims to look at crime from a holistic view, different angles of which this theory looks at crime as a planned, processed thought which results into action. Critics of this theory were addressed by considering that in a township, it is most likely that most residents belong to the middle if not the low class, therefore poverty exists. With the existence of poverty, residents would seek easier and quicker means of acquiring survival needs which may result in committing a crime. Therefore, since this study setting was in a township, it was most likely that even though church

doctrines have been taught and instigated, the reality of going to bed hungry took more effect than the church teachings which resulted into crime commitment.

3.3. Institutional anomie theory

Messner and Rosenfeld (2011) contend that culturally and structurally produced burdens to secure financial rewards, coupled with weak controls from noneconomic social institutions, promote high levels of instrumental crime.

Instrumental crime refers to those crimes created for material goals- usually money (Baumer, 2007). The two scholars suggest that the effects of economic conditions on profit-related crime depend on the strength of noneconomic institutions. This exploration evaluates this proposition with cross-sectional data for U.S. states. The nonlinear models show indirect support for Messner and Rosenfeld's institutional anomie theory, revealing that the effects of poverty on property crime depend on levels of structural indicators of the capacity of noneconomic institutions to ameliorate the criminological impact of economic deprivation (Bernburg, 2002).

In relation to the study, lack of implanted morals and values from the three fundamental institutions may result in instrumental crime. The Christian Bible commandments overly emphasize jealousy and greed as a sin. For example; “Thou shalt not steal,” is the seventh commandment which focused on respecting and honouring another person’s possessions. This commandment forbids the act of taking someone else’s property. The Catholic Church believes that this commandment also denounces cheating people of their money or property (Finkelman, 2004). The feelings and thoughts of longing for the neighbour’s possessions have also been deemed as a sin simply because one has no idea of the extent and measures the individual has taken to acquire such possessions. The tenth commandment “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s goods” (Finkelman, 2004) forbids the need to feel entitled to or of being in possession of someone else’s property. This commandment condemns theft, feelings of envy, greed, and jealousy in reaction to what other people have as a sin (Essential Freedom: Catholic Ten Commandments, 2018)

Therefore, the Bible stresses avoiding greed, as stated in this theory that structurally burdens to secure financial rewards may resort to committing wrongful acts such as stealing may contradict religion values and morals. However, religion and other social structures may also be deemed responsible for not instilling strong moral control. This theory was criticized by overemphasizing

material success compared to the cultural means to archiving the desired goal. The relevance of the theory to serious property crime is considered and shown to generate serious problems for institutional anomie theory when evaluated as a general theory.

In relation to this study, critics of the above-mentioned theory were addressed by the researcher being mindful of the fact that participants of the study may be Roman Catholic but have different cultures and lifestyles. With the researcher being aware of such, cultural means to archiving the desired goal was also considered when observing and conducting interviews.

3.4.Freeman's critical social theory

Critical social theorists posit a constitutional relationship between the structures of society such as the church and its members where everyone is affected in different ways and to different degrees (Dant, 2003). Freeman (1986) explains criminal activities as consequences of poverty and ecological inequalities. The theory outlines that an individual from a poor background would most likely seek better ways of uplifting his or her standard of living. This may be by committing criminal activities. Freeman (1986) then arrives at a point where risks and benefits are calculated by the motivated offender. During this stage of calculating risks and benefits, the offender decides whether to carry out the plan or diminish the thought. In the case where benefits overpower the risks, the offender is likely to carry out the act (Bayer & Wright, 2001).

However, Freeman (1986) also states that religion has a role to play. If the individual had a strong belief backup system, subconsciously, the thought would never be entertained since the subconscious system of the person would have prevailed. Therefore, Freeman (1986) has not only paid attention to the relationship between religion and crime but also the positive effect of religion in the social sphere is also stressed. It is not only time spent in church that reduces criminal behaviour, but rather religion through social variables, such as employment and the feeling of being useful in person was considered as ways to reduce criminal behaviour (Freeman, 1986). A common criticism of critical theory is that it pushes toward a predetermined outcome; however, critical theory is primarily a theory that is shaped at interaction with others (Lather, 1986).

Therefore, this study aimed at distinguishing the authenticity of this theory within the community of Hammada, Mpumalanga Township by including ordinary community members and church members. This was to test if the role of religion and its teachings influences who commit a crime.

3.5.Subcultural theory

A subculture is a group that has values that are different to the mainstream culture (Muggleton, 2003). For example, the Roman Catholic Church members would be said to have different values compared to other Protestant churches. Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches may fall under one mainstream category of being Christian churches as a culture but differ as a subculture due to the different values adhered to. The structural theory is based on the premise that deviance behaviour occurs due to breaking off from the society or substructural values (Fischer, 1995).

Subcultural theorists argue that deviance is the result of whole group or individual breaking off from a society that has deviant values (subcultures) and deviance is a result of these individuals conforming to the values and norms of the subculture to which they belong (Cohen, 2003). For example, a group or individual that does not adhere to the values and teachings of the church is likely to engage in deviant behaviour.

In contrast to social control, theorists outline that it is the pull of the peer group that encourages individuals to commit a crime, rather than the lack of attachment to the family or other mainstream institutions. The subcultural theory also helps explain non-utilitarian crimes such as vandalism.

3.5.1. Types of subculture

Williams (2011) expands on Cohen's subculture to attempt explaining the reason behind the emergence of subcultures and differentiate between the two different subcultures. First being a criminal subculture, which is characterised by utilitarian crimes, such as theft. These groups develop in more stable working-class areas where there is an established pattern of crime (Williams, 2011). This provided a learning opportunity and career structure for aspiring young criminals, and an alternative to the legitimate job market as a means of achieving financial rewards. Adult criminals exercise social control over the young to stop them carrying out non-utilitarian delinquent acts, such as vandalism.

Secondly being the conflict subcultures, these emerge in socially disorganised areas where there is a high rate of population turnover and a consequent lack of social cohesion. These prevent the formation of stable adult criminal subcultures. Conflict subcultures are characterised by violence, gang warfare, ‘mugging’ and another street crime (William, 2011). Both approved, and illegal means of achieving mainstream goals are blocked or limited and young people express their frustration at this situation through violence or street crime, and at least obtain status through success in subcultural peer-group values.

For example, a teenager may have a strong religious upbringing however as time progresses, feelings of failure which might be due to not obtaining a matric certificate may surface. Due to those feelings, enduring pressure from friends and surrounding neighbours may drive the individual to commit a crime, with the hope of creating a status for him/ herself and possibly seeking alternative ways at achieving the desired goal. Whereas if adults of the community were integrated and encouraging, the teenager would not have felt discouraged and like a failure, cause he/she would have been made aware that there is another way of expressing his/her disappointments.

Matza (1955) suggested that there were no distinct subcultures among young people; therefore, this theory may only apply to a certain group of people. Rather, all groups in society share a set of subterranean values. These are simply deviant values that encourage people to go against social norms – the urge to party hard, drink too much, swear and stealing.

Postmodernists point out that the nature of subcultures today has changed, in that subcultures are much more common today than they were in the 1960s. Today, subcultures are just a normal part of life. Subcultural theory assumes that there are ‘mainstream norms and values’ which subcultures deviate from. Cohen’s (1986) theory has been criticized as being wrong according to postmodernism – in society today, deviance and hence subcultures are ‘normal’, which renders the whole of subcultural theory irrelevant in helping us to understand crime and deviance (Tait, 1993).

In relation to this study, the above-mentioned theories are appropriate because the latter explains the dynamics of crime in relation to church doctrine's, the environment and societal structures such as the church. These theories did not make discrete the fact that there are more than one contributing factors to crime. However, these theories focused on crime from a holistic approach, which is what this study engaged to do. The researcher found these theories most suitable for the study to a better explanation and understanding the phenomenon under study. In addition, crime is a societally-situated phenomenon that takes into consideration the involvement of the church and societal dynamics of crime.

3.6.Summary

The above theories have relevance in explaining the study on crime and theological teachings because they evaluate all the causal factors that transpire in a community with high crime rates. They are effective in modern day society and can effectively put into perspective the basis of crime in relation to the environmental, social and socioeconomic state of the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4. Introduction

The adopted research methods by the researcher form the backbone of any undertaken research study. These methods make fieldwork possible and provide a systematic guide for data collection procedures, in which the goals of the study can be met. To fulfil the aim and objectives of the study, it was imperative to select appropriate methodological procedures and techniques. Furthermore, the research design of a study provides the framework for aspects related to how the study is to be carried out in the field. In support of this statement, different scholars provide that a good research design encompasses adherence to the rules of scientific investigation along with a level of creativity which allows the researcher to be flexible within the context of the study (Bayens, G. and Roberson, C. 2011).

Considering the above, this chapter outlines the research design and methodology along with the assessment instruments used in the study to fulfil the aim and objectives outlined in Chapter one of this research. This is followed by a presentation of the characteristics of the selected participants to provide a description of the sample of this study. Lastly, the analysis of the collected data is presented and explained in detail.

4.1. Research design

Within the field of academic qualitative research, a research design refers to the conceptual structure within which the research study is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. As such, the design includes an outline of the steps and procedure that the researcher followed to reach the studies final analysis and findings. This includes from the writing of the studies objectives and proposal, data collection stage to the operational implications and the final analysis of data (Russell, 1994).

The goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to describe a lived experience of a phenomenon (Biklen, 1992). Since this study's primary aim was to examine the uniqueness of individuals lived experiences in relation to the role of the church in combatting crime, the usage

of the phenomenological that is both descriptive and explorative in nature was best suitable for this study.

4.1.1. Exploratory research

Exploratory research, as the name states, intends merely to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems. Bryman (2004) holds the view that it is conducted in order to determine the nature of the problem, and is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, but helps to have a better understanding of the problem. Explanatory research indicates a progression in the investigative process as it attempts to explain a certain phenomenon in terms of the presence or absence and nature of certain relationships between key variables.

Considering the above, when conducting this study, the researcher was willing to change his direction because of the revelation of new data and new insights. Therefore, the study ensured the participants' acquaintance with the subject, to increase their understanding of the role the church plays in combating crime in Hammisdale, Mpumalanga Township.

4.1.2. Descriptive research

Descriptive research can be explained as a state of affairs as they are at present with the researcher having no control over the variable. Moreover, "descriptive research may be characterised as simply the attempt to determine, describe or identify what is, rather than establishing why it is that way or how it came to be (Bayens & Roberson, 2011). This means that in qualitative studies, descriptions are more likely to refer to a more intensive examination of phenomena and their deeper meanings, thus leading to a more comprehensive description. Bayens and Roberson (2011:28) define descriptive research as the search for information related to a relatively unknown population or phenomenon for the sake of providing a representative description. The information is often represented in terms of means and frequencies that are used to describe the population or phenomenon for the sake of generalised qualitative comparison across contexts.

This study included relevant stakeholders who understand the phenomenon under investigation. Their understanding was probed by means of an intensive interview schedule guide aimed at ascertaining their viewpoints on the subject, and to provide them with more detailed information on the role of the church in crime combating.

4.2. Qualitative approach background

Qualitative research is the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings. These phenomena can include but are not limited to, how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships. In qualitative research, the researcher is the main data collection instrument. The researcher examines why events occur, what happens, and what those events mean to the participants studied (Bogdan, 2006).

Qualitative research starts from a fundamentally different set of beliefs—or paradigms—than those that underpin quantitative research. Quantitative research is based on *positivist* beliefs that there is a singular reality that can be discovered with the appropriate experimental methods. *Post-positivist* researchers agree with the positivist paradigm, but believe that environmental and individual differences, such as the learning culture or the learners' capacity to learn, influence this reality, and that these differences are important. *Constructivist* researchers believe that there is no single reality, but that the researcher elicits participants' views of reality (Corbin, 2008). Qualitative research generally draws on post-positivist or constructivist beliefs.

Qualitative scholars develop their work from these beliefs—usually post-positivist or constructivist—using different approaches to conduct their research. In this Rip Out, we describe 3 different qualitative research approaches commonly used in medical education: grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology. Each act as a pivotal frame that shapes the research question(s), the method(s) of data collection, and how data is analysed.

4.3. Study setting

This study was conducted in a township situated on the south-east of Cato Ridge and approximately 40km west of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, Mpumalanga Township. This township is under the eThekweni Municipality, and the majority of people residing within Hammarsdale are Black Africans and language of communication most prominent is IsiZulu.

The study location was conducive for the researcher to conduct research on because crime is drastically increasing; therefore, there was a need for research to close the gap in the literature and to provide recent and reliable information pertaining crime. This study was of benefit to the township of Hammarsdale since it was successful in sourcing out the opinions of the community

relating to crime and finding effective strategies in combating crime which included the need for faith-based organizations such as the churches participation and engagement in fighting this phenomenon negatively affecting the community.

4.3.1. Study population

A population is a group of experimental data, persons, animals, businesses etc. that is made up of elementary units, which cannot be further decomposed. It is a well-defined set that has specific properties and is also a collection of all elements being described or measured by a sample (LoBiondo-Wood and Haber 2014). In qualitative research, the population of a research study refers to the entire aggregate of those that meet a set of specifications (Polit and Beck 2012). The population criteria establish the target population; that is, the entire set of cases (the entire set of individuals or elements) who meet the sampling criteria and whom the researcher would like to make a generalization from (Grove, Gray and Burns 2014; LoBiondo-Wood and Haber 2014; Polit and Beck 2012). The target population for this study comprises of members of the Roman Catholic Church of uMndeni Oyingcwele that reside within the community of Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale and who are above the age of eighteen years. The researcher embarked on a task to seek out people of different responsibilities within the church and community; the parish priest, members of the parish council and church members of the community. This assisted the researcher in being able to gain information from people of a different lifestyle, gender and age.

4.3.2. Study sample

Sampling is the act, process or technique of selecting a representative part of a population, called a sample, for determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Polit and Beck 2012). The goal of sampling is to determine a population's characteristics by directly observing only a portion of the population. Purposive sampling was used in this study, due to limited time and resources, purposive sampling was advantageous to the researcher as it permits data collection and analysis simultaneously (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:46).

For this study to be conducted, a researcher had to adhere to a prerequisite before commencing with the actual collection of data. The researcher had to obtain permission from various gatekeepers to conduct the study. Firstly, the researcher applied for permission and a gatekeeper's letter from the uMndeni Oyingcwele Parish Council or parish priest; secondly, from the University, the researcher had to apply for ethical clearance from the Ethical Committee of the university. A

letter of approval was finally received which authorised, inter alia, the sampling phase of the research project.

According to Kuzel (1992), qualitative studies employ forms of non-probability sampling, such as accidental or purposive sampling as well as snowball and theoretical sampling. These types of sampling techniques don't follow any strict sequence in recruitment; instead, they aim at getting respondents for the study according to purposive sampling processes. This form of sampling enables the researcher to study a rather small number of units in place of the target population and to obtain data that are descriptive of the target population. Therefore, this study employed the purposive sampling techniques and a brief description of the researcher choice follows below.

Purposive sampling was chosen because it was appropriate when finding the most vulnerable and fitting populations (Maree & Pietersen, 2007). Purposive sampling required the researcher to select participants suitable for the study based on the studies aims and objectives. This was done by asking the church leader, preferably the priest to make an announcement notifying the community about the study. After this formal announcement, it then became easier for the researcher to find suitable participants willing to participate with the goal of providing reliable data voluntarily. The overall population of this study consisted of eight church leaders, eight church members and ten community members.

Size is an important factor depending on what the researcher is investigating, and the population involved. The researcher used the largest sample possible because the larger the sample, the more representative of the population, it is likely to be, and a sufficient statistical power can be achieved (Polit and Beck 2012).

To participate in this study, the following criteria were complied with:

- a. be a permanent resident of Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale for a period of five years
- b. be a baptized member of the Roman Catholic Church of uMndeni Oyingwele Parish
- c. be involved in a voluntary leadership role within the church structure

Participants were excluded from this study if they did not meet the above inclusion criteria.

4.4.Data collection

Data collection comprised of both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was sourced through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with community residents and church leaders of Mpumalanga Township, Hammada. Interviews provided the opportunity to clarify issues that are not clear. The employed strategy of sourcing out information also assisted in ensuring a better response rate as those who were having trouble reading or writing were also catered for.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 community members. Participants of the study were recruited using the word of mouth recruitment strategy. According to Ritter (2005), the word of mouth recruitment strategy creates a sense of trust between participants and the researcher since it allows for face-to-face interactions and referrals by a known person. The researcher then used the church announcement period during the Sunday service as a platform to notify community members about this study and recruit participants.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were chosen for the researcher to source out the experiences, feelings and attitudes of participants while conducting group interviews. Focus group interviews often provide a platform for expression of beliefs and it benefited the researcher in gaining more insight into people's shared understandings of everyday life. Focus group discussions were divided into 2 groups which consisted of eight (8) members in each group. In these 2 groups, 1 group comprised of church leadership members and the second group included 8 church members. Secondary source utilized encompassed of journal articles, articles and scholarly thesis and dissertations that the researcher found to be useful for this study. Participants of the study included community residents, members of the church and church leaders.

4.5. Research instruments

One on one interviews and focus group discussions techniques were used by the research for the data to be accurately collected. The researcher had to make sure that the research instruments carried enough strength to probe respondents for valuable information pertaining to the study. Questions asked during in-depth interviews and focus group discussions allowed the respondents to openly share their perceptions or, where relevant, their experiences of the phenomenon being studied — another instrument that was used as a focus group discussion which followed the use of a semi-structured schedule with questions that elicited a discussion around the matter being addressed. Relevant questions, translated to the community's local language were listed on one interview schedule (see Annexure F), but the questions asked in the two different sessions were separated: first, a section for the one-on-one interviews, and second a section for the focus group discussion. From the eighteen participants initially selected, only nine attended the one-on-one interviews and the other nine participated in the focus group discussion.

4.5.1. Facilitation of interviews

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2004) interactions between two or more people, where one is responsible for asking questions pertaining to a theme or topic of formal interest and the other(s) is responsible for responding to the questions is known as an interview. Interviewing can be best understood as a procedure of inquiring characterized by employing spoken questioning as for its main technique of data collection. It is planned and executed in a systematic way with the researcher being the facilitator. This helps to avoid cases of bias and distortion and to ensure that it is related to a specific research question which has a specific purpose. Semi-structured interviews follow a structure depending on the nature and purpose of the research topic, the resources and methodological standards, and the type of objectives that need to be addressed (Burton, 2000).

In this study the semi-structured questions allowed the participants to express their opinions and not to feel limited in sharing their views. These kinds of questions also allowed the researcher to further probe for elaboration in cases where the researcher was not clear what the response meant or perhaps needed more information from the respondent. These interviews were voice recorded using a mobile cell phone and the respondents had first to agree to be recorded.

In a case where the respondent did not consent to be recorded, the researcher had no choice but to jot down extensive notes while the respondent shared his/her opinions or experiences. However,

no participant felt uncomfortable with being recorded, so they all gave consent to the audio record. The researcher facilitated in-depth interviews in an environment that was conducive to uninterrupted conversations between the respondent and the researcher. Times of the interviews were allocated in consideration of the availability of each participant. A clear explanation of what the study was about was given before the interview commenced. The nature of the questions that would be posed was also highlighted prior to the signing of the informed consent form (see Annexure D). Although ten respondents had been identified initially to participate in in-depth interviews, the researcher interviewed nine participants.

4.5.2. Focus group discussion

A focus group is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, voluntary, non-threatening environment (Krueger, 1988). A group environment is most likely, through mutual encouragement, to increase motivation to discuss related topical issues and to follow the facilitator to lead the discussion towards a focal point. Lofland and Lofland (1984) suggest that group interviewing may be most productive on topics that are reasonably public and have the advantage of allowing people more time to reflect and to recall experiences. For this study, the researcher recruited eight participants for each group discussion who were selected from the eleven interview participants. The researcher together with the participants then worked out a suitable time when they would all be available to meet at the same venue for the discussion to take place.

The researcher used eight participants for each group because the general principle for focus groups assumes that there should be 6-10 members in a focus group. As it was deemed unnecessary to probe deeper in multiple focus group settings that would also be time-consuming, only two focus group discussions were held — one group being inclusive of members of the parish council and the other being inclusive of church members of the community. For effective focus group discussions, Lamnek (1988) lists the following steps: being strange, orientation, adjustment, intimacy, conformity, and fading out of the discussion. For this study, the researcher held two focus group discussion with eight participants each. The researcher was comfortable with this because it meant that the group discussions would be controllable and not time-consuming since different date and times were arranged for each group. As the researcher was familiar with the respondents, a brief introduction session helped prior to a brief explanation of the study and

proceedings of a focus group discussion. After introductions and an explanation of the study, the ice was broken. From there adjustments were made in the atmosphere of the discussion as people opened up and then intimacy was established through the sharing of perceptions and experiences. The last two steps, which are conformity and fading out of the discussion, were carefully controlled by the researcher and then the focus group discussion came to an end.

4.6.Data analysis

According to King (2003), thematic analysis is a process of analysing data using themes emerging from the data. In this process, the researcher reads through the data and categorizes key ideas and words into linking themes and views. Making a note of patterns and themes that are depicted in the data strengthens qualitative interpretation. Following the process of collecting data and analysing data was the longest of the entire study since it involved going back and forth from transcriptions of data from the recorded conversations to analysing data obtained from the recordings into the thematic analysis. Through these steps, the researcher was then able to make sense of data obtained and come up with logical explanations that may address the objectives of the study (Coffey, 1996). Only once a holistic explanation had been derived from the bits and pieces of linking information, then the researcher could move on to the step of reporting the general findings of the study.

Since this was a qualitative study, data analysis for the in-depth interviews and focus groups followed the following steps;

- The researcher commenced by listing and explaining each research objective whilst listing each new concept from the theoretical framework which was listed.
- Secondary information was then listed and analysed by the researcher — information such as previous studies and accredited journals, books, reports etc. During this step, the results of the interview material relevant to this key research were acknowledged, listed and analysed. Information obtained by conducting interviews relevant to each broad research area and key research question was presented here.

In terms of the data obtained during focus group discussions, themes related to the key research question and the specific sample group was discussed in relation to previous research and analysed according to the relevant specific key theoretical concept.

Exploratory data was generated through the in-depth interviews through key informant's interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussion (FGDs) schedule; this was presented in terms of a thematic analysis together with percentages and frequency distributions to summarise the data. To gain a better understanding of the role of the church in combating crime narrative accounts accompanied the presentation of data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data as it organises and describes data in detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The effectiveness of thematic analysis was derived from the familiarisation of data by the researcher; this was possible because the researcher conducted tape-recorded interviews (KIIs and FGDs) and transcribed them, and it allowed the researcher to familiarise with the data for expedited and insightful analysis. However, this study looked for common threads from among the participants that provided an opportunity to ascertain patterns that showed mutual cause or commonalities among the research participants. Following this thematic transcription, the scripts were analysed through the utilisation of NVivo version 8 software. This software organised the raw data so that it was possible to link and compare thematic issues within and across documents. The list of "starter nodes" was generated from an initial entry in a project journal in the software where the questions and assumptions brought to the report were outlined. The software gave results that allowed for a deeper examination and management of the qualitative data that might not be possible in traditional coding.

Two distinct types of coding were used in the analysis, namely: (i) the *descriptive coding*, which described the cases in the study. This process related both to the coding of information in categories and the creation of attributes to clarify them. (ii) The second type was *analytical coding*, and it was done by selecting source content to interpret and reflect on the meaning of the data in order to arrive at new ideas and categories. The process entailed gathering material that could be re-thought and reviewed given the growing understanding of the inter-relationship of the categories in the data. Topic coding was not undertaken because the study already had relevant topics under different themes. The original themes had been embedded within an interview schedule (see

Annexure F). The themes generated in the analysis were modified to suit the aims and objectives of this study.

4.7.Ethical considerations

The Catholic moral theology is a doctrine within the church which is equivalent to religious ethics (Freeman, 1986). Moral theology encompasses of the Roman Catholic social teachings and medical ethics. The Catholic social teachings focus on matters of human dignity and the common good in society. Therefore, the researcher obtained a gatekeeper's letter from the priest who is a representative of the church and has the rightful power to grant such.

The researcher employed the UKZN research ethical principles which include protecting participants and ensuring confidentiality. The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity by not disclosing any form of the participants details by using pseudonyms. This was done by applying for the ethical clearance grant which included an attachment file of the research proposal to assist in outlining the study procedure and details. Some of the ethical principles of the University of KwaZulu-Natal include;

4.7.1. Informed consent

It is of paramount importance that the study participants are fully aware of the nature and objectives of the study before engaging and participating in it. Therefore, the need of an informed consent form arises, as it outlines the above-mentioned and aim of the study briefly. According to Simons and Usher (2000), informed consent implies participants to be free of coercion or deception and understanding the following: the process by which the data is to be collected; the intended outcome of the research process; the uses of the research; and as individuals or groups, having the capacity and competence to consent. Respondents are always at a voluntary point of participation, which means that no respondent should be pressured or manipulated to participate in the study.

Before the focus group commence, participants were given informed consent forms to sign in for ethical considerations. These forms served as an agreement to participate in the study, and this document also serves as evidence that focus group meetings and individual interviews were conducted. This form was signed and dated on the same day by participants granting to be a part of the study being conducted.

In this study, the researcher made sure that this was achieved by procuring the written informed consent of each participant (see Annexure D). This form also explained that participants could withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable and that they had the right to contact the researcher and request a copy of the report after the study had been completed. The researcher's and the supervisor's contact details were provided. The informed consent form also highlighted that, in the case where a respondent wanted to remain anonymous, the researcher would use a pseudonym instead of the participant's real name for the in-depth interviews as well as the focus group discussions. All the respondents are referred to by a pseudonym in this study report.

4.7.2. Confidentiality

The value of confidentiality was assured to participants before the focus group, and an in-depth interview commenced. Participants were made aware that information shared during individual interviews or focus group discussions would not be used against them at any time since it was used for research purposes.

4.7.3. Do no harm

Participant's reputation was protected and prevented from being destroyed during the study. This was ensured by not publishing real names of participants and ensuring confidentiality throughout the research study. False names were used when presenting findings, and during the transcript stage, this was also to protect participants from any form of harm, may it be mentally or physically.

4.7.4. The right to withdraw

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study if they wish to do so at any time and stage of the research. This was at the advantage of the researcher since no participant felt obliged to participate then end up providing irrelevant data.

In adherence to these requirements, and the informed consent form were signed by participants before the interviews and focus group discussions were facilitated (see Annexure A, B, C, D, E, F). Moreover, gatekeepers' permission letters to conduct the study were obtained (see Annexure B). Bailey et al. (1982) state that a researcher should avoid questions or issues that may cause embarrassment, guilt, discomfort, hazards, or risk to each respondent. In instances where such

conditions might occur, it becomes the researcher's responsibility to inform the respondents prior to any data collection.

Research works in a systematic manner which includes unwritten standards and principles that should be adhered to therefore professionalism is the main important thing when entering the personal spheres of respondents. However, it is also vital for every researcher that embarks on their study to have a good work ethic just to avoid unnecessary problems. This may be ensured by implementing and adhering to strict research ethical conducts which may include; explaining to the respondents the dynamics of data collection and obtain their full consent to participate in the study voluntarily. Another important aspect was for the researcher and respondents need to have a solid ground of understanding and co-operation since it is of great importance that the researcher is as transparent as possible about the aims and objectives of the study from the beginning.

4.8. Challenges and limitations

Miles and Hurberman (1994) stress the importance of representativeness and point to possible pitfalls qualitative researchers should be aware of. As much as representativeness is not of great significance in non-probability sampling, the research was limited to mostly members under the doctrine of Christianity respondents because it was such participants that the researcher frequently met. Researchers often face challenges in the research field when it comes to general matters of research. These challenges might end up limiting many factors that contribute to the research and may cause the research findings or the report to be flawed. Moreover, due to the purposive sampling technique, the sample comprised respondents from different age groups since leaders of the church are adults with the estimated age range of 38-65, members of the church ranging from 18-35. However, as age was not an inclusion criterion of this study, this issue did not influence the study negatively. Limited local scholarly articles could be traced in publications, and this meant that international publications limited the scope of the literature review and the information the researcher needed prior to the research. At the beginning of a project of this nature, the researcher should be well informed about the topic. Studying a reduced area of a larger continent means concentrating, precisely on the demarcated area of focus and not over exploring literature on other areas.

The scarcity of academic literature was a great challenge which impacted the construction of the thesis. Because the topic had not been under-researched locally, the researcher could not relate

much comparative information to the South African context. For this reason, American studies and legislation were referred to despite the huge differences in culture, environment, and policy provision between the two contexts.

According to Becker (1989) and Stergios (1991), objectivity requires that the researcher remains distant from and neutral to the research object, the respondents, the methods and techniques of data collection and analysis, and to the findings-requirements that are against the fundamental principle of qualitative research, which encourages inter-subjectivity, closeness between the elements of the research, and involvement of the researcher in the whole research process. This was a difficult part of the study for the researcher since the researcher had been a victim of a crime within the community of Hammisdale, Mpumalanga Township. It was then a challenge for the researcher not to end up being subjective when analysing and reporting the data. However, by remaining within the scope of the objectives for data collection and an analysis of the emerging themes, the researcher was able to engage only the 'voices' of the participants and their views and perceptions, and not her own.

Resistance by participants was an initial limitation that was caused by the issue of trust before the study commenced. Participants might have felt that the researcher worked for some investigative agency and that their participation would lead to harm or negatively impact the image of the church. This called for the researcher to provide the respondents with gatekeepers' letters as well as all the necessary documentation just to put them at ease and ensure their voluntary participation. This limitation was also addressed by making a formal announcement during church services introducing the study and ensuring that the parish priest is fully aware of it, which then gave participants the edge and ease to participate. It also called for the researcher to explain about the confidentiality of the data and their safekeeping until after the report will have been made.

A final and enduring limitation of the study relates to the participant's engagement. During group discussions, the researcher noticed that some respondents were 'shy', therefore the researcher had to intervene by probing for answers from the 'quiet' respondents. Some participants felt shy or inferior when others dominated the conversation. This was a limitation because the researcher might have ended up not being able to get the other participants to speak, which might have distorted data and impacted the accuracy of the data. However, by probing for responses from all

the participants, this danger was averted. The researcher addressed this by using simple and direct probes to get all the participants to speak without feeling picked on.

4.9. Methods to ensure validity, reliability: Qualitative research rigour

In a qualitative study, validity and reliability were ensured by using these four elements, namely; transferability, credibility, conformity and dependability. These elements assisted the researcher in increasing reliability and validity strategies.

4.9.1. Transferability

According to Schurink, Fouche and De Vos (2011) transferability refers to the degree which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. Correspondence transferability conveys that theoretical knowledge obtained from qualitative research can be applied to other similar individuals, groups or situations. The researcher must be able to question whether data obtained can be transferred from a specific situation to another.

About this study, the researcher ensured transferability by providing participants with evidence that the research study's findings could apply to other contexts, situations and times. However, the researcher cannot entirely prove that the research study's findings will be applicable. Instead, the researcher may provide evidence that it could be applicable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

4.9.2. Credibility

Credibility is involved in establishing that the result of the study is believable or credible, it depends more on the richness of the data gathered rather than the amount of data gathered (Kumar, 2011). Since credibility is one of the first aspect or criterion, that must be established. It is seen as the most important aspect or criterion in establishing trustworthiness. This is because credibility essentially requires the researcher to link the research study's findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the research study's findings (Kumar, 2011). Credibility also has the most techniques available to establish it, compared to the other three aspects of trustworthiness. However, the focus is placed more on the two most important techniques which are triangulation and member checking, since these are mostly found in qualitative research (Kothari 2008).

Triangulation involves using multiple methods, data sources, observers, or theories to gain a complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied. It is used to make sure that the research

findings are robust, rich, comprehensive, and well-developed. There are four types of triangulation that the researcher employed for the benefit of this study;

1. *Methods triangulation*: In this study, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were utilised to gain different perspectives and to ensure consistency. Therefore, utilising different data collection methods to check the consistency of the findings was adhered to by the researcher.
2. *Triangulation of sources*: This is inclusive of utilising different data sources within the same method. This was ensured by the researcher using different age group participants and interviewing people at different points in time, from different generations.
3. *Analyst triangulation*: This involves utilising another analyst to review the findings or using multiple observers and analysts. This step was adhered to by including a research mentor in assisting to illuminate blind spots in the analysis process.
4. *Theoretical triangulation*: Using multiple theoretical perspectives to analyse the data. The researcher introduced theories from the school of theology together with theories from the school of criminology in an attempt to explain the causes of crime and the theological perspective of crime.

Member-checking: This is the second important technique that qualitative researchers use to establish credibility. This is a technique in which the data, interpretations, and conclusions are shared with the participants. It allows participants to clarify what their intentions were, correct errors, and provide additional information if necessary .

4.9.3. Conformability

According to Creswell (2014), conformability refers to the degree to which others could confirm the results. Conformability is also like reliability in quantitative research. Results from a quantitative and qualitative study can only be compared if only both researchers follow the process identically for the results to be compared (Kumar, 2011). Guba (1981) argues that steps must be taken to ensure that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of participants. This will be ensured by probing what the participants said and written in the data given to the researcher; this will assist in reducing the researchers' biases and preferences.

For instance, in this study on exploring the role of the church in combating crime, the researcher can cross-check data generated on the number of crime cases reported to the local police station or using online SAPS database and the number of times the church has been reported to be involved or introduced preventative or combating measures within the community. The researcher also referred to earlier studies or research that covered a similar sample, even if the purpose of such study was different and more.

4.9.4. Dependability

According to Trochim and Donnelley (in Kumar, 2011), dependability refers to the stability of findings over time; it involves participants evaluating findings, the interpretation and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are supported by data received from members of the study.

Dependability is like the concept of reliability in quantitative research. Donnelley (2011) argues that it is concerned with whether one would obtain the same results if one observes the same thing twice. Different scholars explain that the researcher must ask whether the research process is presented logically and well documented. Dependability is noted as the alternative to reliability, whereby the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for research to be conducted on.

For instance, in a qualitative study on the role of the church in combating crime in a residential area, local police may witness an unexpected decline in crime cases reported as people go on vacations. A valid research factors in this trend.

4.10. Summary

With the information presented in this Chapter (four), it can be deduced that this study was executed an appropriate research design and methodology to fulfil the aim and objectives guiding this study as outlined in Chapter one of this study. The following chapter will, therefore, present the findings of this study about the said aims and objective based on the captured data stemming from the selected participants through the use of measuring instruments (in-depth interview schedule and FGDs).

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

5. Introduction

Considering the analysis of the data collected by the researcher about the research questions and responses associated with the research aims and objectives, the extent to which the aim of the study has been achieved can now be discussed in this chapter.

5.1. Study findings

The following research findings are based on the analysis of two focus group interviews and in-depth interviews conducted with a sample of church leaders and church members of the community of Umndeni Oyingwele Parish situated in Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale. Each focus group consisted of eight members and in-depth interviews summed up several eight individuals. Questions were designed in a semi-structured manner, which encouraged participation and engagement from participants of the study.

Different venues were utilized for different interview settings; focus group discussion with church leaders were held in the church boardroom, which created a suitable atmosphere for academic engagement and discussion. In-depth interviews were mostly held at the comfort of the home or church hall. Focus group discussions for community members were held at the church hall, which was of a disadvantage since some participants had to cater for their children while being a part of

the discussion. In-depth interviews were conducted at different times and places since participants were interviewed individually to ensure remaining anonymous. Interviews took approximately forty-five minutes per participant while focus group discussions took approximately an hour.

Each participant was given a chance for any questions that needed clarification after thoroughly unfolding the overall purpose of the research including the aims and objectives of the study. Subsequently, participants were given time to read through the informed consent form which none of the participants had questions or uncertainty about. After that, participants were to sign into an agreement granting consent for voluntary participation by signing the informed consent form. Nevertheless, names used in the transcript below are not participants' real name for confidentiality purposes and protection.

5.1.1. Responses regarding the nature and perceptions of crime in Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale.

When asked about their views of the current state of crime within Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale. Participants responded in a very concerning manner.

Participant A: There is a high crime rate within this community, I say this because I come from a family of nine. Out of this number, only two members of my family has not yet experienced crime simply because they are toddlers. So, crime is very bad here, especially car hijackings and common assault against females of any age.

Participant B: As someone who has been born and bred in this community I would say that it is going from bad to worse. I have been residing in this community for the past 35years, and I am witnessing it gradually changing for the worse. I own a car of which that car has been taken from me two times in less than five years. Meaning, I have been car hijacked tow times within the same community. First time around was in 2012 in my yard, just when I was about to switch off the engine, I was instructed at gunpoint to hand over my car keys and silently open my kitchen door. This experience made me realize that if we had people patrolling in my unit, they would have seen this take place because it was still early hours of the night, at about 19h00 on a Wednesday.

Participant C: From my unit of residence, the most common crime there is, is murder. People kill each other as if they are killing flies or mosquitos. That's how bad the situation is. Well, my house is situated near a local tavern, which usually closes at midnight. People under the influence resort

to fighting to solve quarries or old grudge and most likely end up killing each other. For example, early this year a 23-year-old male was found during the early hours of the morning at the roadside near the tavern with his intestines out of his stomach. Later on that day, it was discovered that the victim had been involved in an argument with a well-known drug dealer which resulted in a physical fight which led to the victim's death.

Participant D: Within Hammisdale, crime is something that has become just acceptable. We just live with it without trying to find means to minimize it or to prevent it from happening. It's as if we need it as part of our daily survival schemes. I'm saying this because we are all aware of the increasing number of "ama-phara" (people living on the street) but none of us has even tried initiating some sort of support for these people or to even gather to discuss such matters, instead "ixoxo umazixhumela" meaning one is only focused on his or her own things and belongings, what happens next door is none of my business until the same happens to me, only then will I seek measures to get involved. We live in the "suburbs", wire fences have been replaced with high brick walls, same walls that criminals can easily jump over {laughs in amazement}. My point is, from our left and right immediate neighbours, we isolate ourselves, we build high walls to create isolation, and when trouble comes, we are not strong enough to fight it. Therefore, it is easy for criminals to find suitable targets and an opportunity.

5.1.2. Responses based on challenges faced by community members regarding crime within the community.

Participants were after that asked to engage relating to the challenges encountered with regards to crime in Hammisdale, Mpumalanga Township. The researcher noticed that most of the responses were similar but in a different context.

Participant B: We deal with challenges of crime almost every day, even when indoors. When we go to the local mall, one must be cautious enough not to put their cell phone in their handbag but to find a suitable spot on their body where they can safely tuck in their treasure (cell phone). To me, that is a challenge. With that being said, when I am home, I have to make sure that when I am home alone, I lock every door and gate as if nobody is home, to avoid people pretending to be lost to check on which appliances we have at home or shoplifting in the yard.

Participant A: *I work at Hillcrest and I have to be at work at 6 am. Therefore, I take the 4 am bus daily to Hillcrest, one of the challenges I face is not being able to walk alone to the bus stop because I know there is a high possibility of a group of boys waiting to sneak up on me with a knife. Therefore, it is challenging for me to exit my house without having to wake someone up to accompany me.*

Participant H: *As a male figure residing in this community, I feel like the biggest challenge I have thus far encountered with regards to crime is disrespect. Perpetrators of crime seem to disrespect a man's household simply because they have a gun or are in possession of a dangerous weapon. This affects my self-esteem as at the time of the crime incident I may not be able to fight back due to weapons which leaves me with a longing heart with anger and need for revenge. I see this as a challenge because if it weren't for these crime incidents, the number of "ama-phara" being beaten by community males would not so much be on the rise. Males of the community have taken the law into their own hands, simply because we are tired of feeling useless and being taken for granted by young boys under the influence of drugs and possession of dangerous weapons.*

5.1.3. Responses with regards to strategies implemented by the church to combat crime.

The researcher took time to seek the participant's views and opinions about strategies that the church might have introduced to combat crime. The researcher noticed that some participants were not so keen on responding to this question since it involved the church and therefore was not sure on the impact this information would have on the overall reputation of the church. Therefore, their responses were short and straight to the point.

Participant V: *I feel like the church does not care much about what is happening in the outside world since for the past two years not even one programme was introduced to address the issue at hand.*

Participant L: *The church did attempt at making people aware of crime and encouraging people to be alert. Police officials were invited to deliver talks about crime, a special prayer was done by the parish priest for people in the defence line of work, and they urged us on what to do with regards to helping them to eliminate crime.*

Participant C: *I fully support what Participant L has said since 2012 there has been no active measures taken place by the church to combat crime. Therefore, for the past 4/5 years, the church has not introduced any strategy. We have just been going on with our lives together with crime.*

Participant V: *I don't believe that the church has been successful at implementing or introducing any strategies as there is too much emphasis on money and less on evangelism and community-based programmes. Which is why some people have lost interest in anything that says "church" because it has been deemed as one of those money-making schemes.*

5.2. Discussion of themes

Research findings about the study that was conducted primarily to explore the role of the church in combating crime in Mpumalanga Township, Hammisdale are presented, analysed and discussed concerning data obtained from semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher did multiple and thorough readings of the recorded transcripts; after that, the researcher organized data according to themes. The following themes emerged after reading the transcripts:

- Types of crime that occur within Mpumalanga Township, Hammisdale.
- Nature and seriousness of the crime
- Perpetrators of crime
- Impact of crime on community members
- Social factors that contribute to crime within Mpumalanga Township, Hammisdale.
- Coping mechanisms
- Theological teachings and combating crime
- Measures to combat crime within Mpumalanga Township, Hammisdale.

5.2.1. Theme 1: Types of crime that occur within Hammasdale, Mpumalanga Township

Participants made it clear to the researcher that crime indeed does take place within this community. Crimes such as car hijacking, common assaults and house robbery take place at any time of the day, provided it is “safe” to do so. However, it being safe to do so, collaborates with the routine activity’s theory, that outlines that for crime to take place there must be a motivated offender and a suitable target.

One of the focus group participants outlined the following;

“I have noticed fathers of the church trying to patrol at car parking lots during Holy Mass. This made me realize that we could be praying and occupied with Gods work while other people are getting up to mischief. By this attempt, no matter what time of the day it is or which day of the week it is, criminals do not care even to respect time for prayer.”

Participant F also mentioned the following;

“From the unit I come from, it feels as if the taxi strike and shootings have started all over again. There’s a place we call emadrayini, where there are sharp bends near a river. That’s the place where perpetrators of crime find it easy to target taxi drivers. This place makes it easy for the perpetrators to target them because it is a bit out of the township houses. Therefore people nearby would only hear of gunshots but won’t be able to see what is happening or who is being shot. It is only hours later that we see police vans rushing to the scene, then we would know that someone has been shot. Another way we get to know about this is through word of mouth and taxi stickers notifying the community of the death of one of the drivers. Murder is very much prominent, especially in my unit of residence.”

5.2.2. Theme 2: Nature and seriousness of crimes

The researcher was fortunate enough to gain insight from one of the members of the SAPS Mpumalanga Township police station. Member by the name of Participant G outlined the following about the seriousness of crime reported to the police;

“As I am currently employed by the SAPS of Mpumalanga Township, I have had the advantage of witnessing people that report common assault cases and have the advantage as well to know how police treat such cases. When a male figure reports being assaulted by a female figure, it’s usually a boyfriend-girlfriend situation, the police attending that case is 9 out of 10 likely to try influence the boyfriend not to lay charges and to try sorting out the matter without involving the police. If that’s not the case, police officials most likely don’t take the matter seriously, it turns into a joke most of the time which results in the male figure losing his self-esteem and worrying what people will say about his case. For example, a well-known couple around the neighbourhood had been experiencing problems which resulted in the girlfriend burning an entire four-room house with full furniture into ashes. The girlfriend thereafter went to visit her friend who is a police officer and was on shift that day. The girlfriend sat there until the boyfriend came to report what had happened, only to realize that his girlfriend had friends on that shift which made it easy for them to influence the boyfriend into not opening a case and the guy ended up not opening the case.

This insight is critical in understanding the nature of crimes that take place in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale. There is a reflection of the patterns of behaviour that police often follow when crimes are reported. This is important in outlining police reaction to certain crimes particularly in cases of assault mentioned by Participant G. In such cases it may impact on the trend of reporting assault crimes victims by victims since Police often discourage them from laying charges as highlighted above. This shows a trend of unprofessionalism that perpetuates criminal offences that might end up in death situations.

5.2.3. Theme 3: Perpetrators of crime

Due to the nature of the study, the researcher could not ask the respondents in the focus group directly who the perpetrators of crime were. This was mainly to avoid victimization after the study from divulging crucial information in a group. However, in the one-on-one interviews, the respondents reported that it is likely people that are well-known in the community that might be the perpetrators of crime. These well-known crime perpetrators might be ex-offenders that have returned from serving their jail period, youth under the influence of drugs and people that may view the church as a money-making scheme.

During the one-on-one interviews, out of eight participants, six concluded that youth under the influence of drugs and other illegal substances such as wonga are always the main suspects when it comes to crimes such as car hijackings and house robberies. These six participants believe that these culprits crave a substance which is found in plasma television and car engines. The urging need to obtain this substance makes it easy for them to commit a crime. One of the participants who is a victim of house robbery outlined that thieves broke in her house and only stole the plasma television and some groceries from the fridge. This served as evidence to the above statement that *whoonga* boys seem to be owning this field of crime.

During the focus group discussion with community members, Nosihle mentioned that it is not only the *whoonga* boys involved in committing a crime, but the girls are slowly joining the force.

Participant T stated the following;

“In KwaMcoyi, there is a homeless girl that is always carrying a child. She works in collaboration with the big gang of whoonga boys that reside in the KwaMcoyi Taxi Rank. So, one day, this girl approaches me, begging for food and clothes for her baby boy. I advised her to look for a job instead because she looks young enough to be able to work doing laundry or the garden. So, I politely spoke to her, but she seemed offended, which left me unsettled because I was only suggesting something better for her. After engaging in small talk with her, I then walked back home. Only to realize that I was then followed by a group of whoonga boys, instructing me to slow down. I kept on walking till they caught up with me and demanded I gave them R2 for insulting the mother of their child. So, in conclusion, I guess it’s not only boys but girls as well.”

Perpetrators of crime have affected the number of people going to church within one family since some members of the family have to stay behind to be guardians. Participant T shared her views of this by stating the following;

“My family came up with a timetable as to who leaves at what time and day to avoid leaving the house unattended and empty. This timetable is inclusive of Sundays, which makes one absent from church at least twice a month.”

With the testimony given by Participant T, church attendance is then affected by crime since residents of this township believe that having someone at home prevents a motivated offender from committing a crime.

A number of the studied participants mentioned that they're well-known criminals within the community. People that know these criminals are often afraid of reporting them since they are from the same community which might create tension and hatred between families of the offender and person that reported them. Therefore, these criminals roam the community freely and commit crime numerously as they are feared by the community.

“In order to be safe from falling victim of a crime within this community, it is best that you become friends with the criminals themselves, in that way they would protect you from other criminals that might not know you or your family”.

5.2.4. Theme 4: Coping mechanisms

Agnew (2017) distinguishes between positive and negative coping mechanism strategies. Positive strategies include information seeking, emotion-focused coping and getting support while negative coping strategies include avoiding reminders of crime, dissociation and behavioural avoidance. This theme emerged during focus group discussions with church leaders of Umndeni Oyingwele Roman Catholic Parish. One of the leaders stated the following;

“...ever since I was a victim of assault, I tend to avoid dealing with such cases, and whenever I hear about it, I do not respond but quickly change the subject. I still regret the day I allowed him into my life, more especially into my home.”

Says Participant X.

As the discussions continued, Participant W adds;

“... I strongly feel that the church must work with young people, give them leadership responsibilities so that they will learn to be responsible and introduce classes that tackle anger management so that, as long as you're still within the community you know how to manage your anger because in nowadays, as soon as someone gets angry, they fight. Of which that creates hatred and further perpetuates the unresolved issue.”

Gathering from the comment Participant W made, people, especially the youth of Hammadale, Mpumalanga Township lacks forgiveness and compassion towards another. Therefore, the researcher continued to probe another question which unfolded the following;

“...another issue is with the belief that if one steals my phone today, tomorrow I must pay back by doing the same to another. This mentality also encourages crime; therefore the church as a societal structure should, by all means, attempt instilling and reviving morals and values within the youth especially.”

Introducing innovative programs of restorative justice that provide the opportunity for mediation between victims and offenders and offer restitution for crimes committed was mutually agreeing upon by community members as means of coping and dealing with the after-effects of crime. Restorative justice also reflects on values and tradition. Catholic faith calls to hold people accountable, to forgive, and to heal. Focusing primarily on the legal infraction without a recognition of the human damage does not advance values.

It was also agreed that one possible component of a restorative justice approach to be implemented is victim-offender mediation. With the help of a skilled facilitator, these programs offer victims or their families the opportunity to share the harm done to their lives and property and provide a place for the offender to face the victim, admit responsibility, acknowledge harm, and agree to restitution. However, it was acknowledged that victim-offender mediation programs should be a voluntary element. Victims should never be required to take part in mediation programs. Sometimes their pain and anger are too deep to attempt such a process.

Within Mpumalanga Township, Hammisdale the researcher discovered that there are an attitude and belief that punishment is just an exercise to degrade and humiliate the offender. Therefore, participants came up with opinions that expressed the need for insist that punishment has a constructive and rehabilitative purpose rather than it just being an exercise to humiliate. The criminal justice system should punish offenders and, when necessary, imprison them to protect society. Their incarceration, however, should be about more than punishment. Since nearly all inmates will return to society, prisons must be places where offenders are challenged, encouraged, and rewarded for efforts to change their behaviours and attitudes, and where they learn the skills needed for employment and life in the community. A call upon the government to redirect the vast amount of public resources away from building more and more prisons and toward better and more effective programs aimed at crime combating, rehabilitation, education efforts, substance abuse treatment and programs of probation, parole, and reintegration were made.

In addition, participants expressed the need for encourage spiritual healing and the renewal for those who commit a crime. Prison officials together with local priests should encourage inmates to seek spiritual formation and to participate in worship. Attempts to limit prisoners' expression of their religious beliefs are not only counterproductive to rehabilitation efforts but also unconstitutional.

“As priests, we will continue to press for expanded access to prisoners through our chaplaincy programs, including by dedicated volunteers. We oppose limitations on the authentic religious expression of prisoners and roadblocks that inhibit prison ministry.”

The denial of and onerous restrictions on the religious presence in communities and prisons are a violation of religious liberty. Every indication is that genuine religious participation and formation is a road to renewal and rehabilitation for those who have committed crimes. This includes contact with trained parish volunteers who will help nourish the faith life of inmates and ex-offenders.

5.2.5. Theme 5: Social factors that contribute to crime within Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale.

Freeman's critical social theory of crime explains criminal activities because of poverty and ecological inequalities. Freeman's theory outlines that an individual from a poor background would most like seek better ways of uplifting his or her standard of living in one way or another. However, participants of this study were in full agreement with the above statement, as they expressed their views on what could be the possible contributors to the high levels of crime within their community.

“...the church can only do much to instil morals and values to the upbringing of an individual since the same church is not present when it's time for supper, and there is no food on the table.”

Says Participant ZP.

The issue of child-headed families also emerged during focus group discussions which led to the following expressed opinions;

“Nowadays, older people die due to stress and illnesses, which leaves youngsters as bread-winners. This also contributes to crime as these youngsters often do not complete school and left to hustle for a living.”

Participant P adds;

“By hustle ling, she means being involved in crime or merely being an undercover streetwalker. In this manner, youngsters are able to provide for their younger siblings. Others resort to drugs due to stress and not being able to cope.”

In this instance, it was palpable enough that the crime situation in Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale is exacerbated by high rates of poverty and unemployment.

5.2.6. Theme 6: Theological teachings and crime combating

During focus group discussions with church leaders, Participant X expressed the following

“...we as church leaders can only do so much for the community. There’s a Zulu saying that goes by; Izintantane zahlula amaRoma. Similarly, to this case of crime.”

Participant R adds;

“...yes, the church offers biblical classes, confirmation classes that indeed aim at instilling morals and values in upbringing the community youth and adults. As teachers of these classes, we cannot or fail to continuously check on whether our candidates do indeed carry out these teachings, which is why we have the ‘ummeli’ (a person besides the parent that would help monitor, mentor and encourage the child/candidate).”

Participant Q in agreement with the above mentioned added;

“This scenario is like going to school, children of today learn with the aim to pass and move on without actually mastering and attempting to apply what is learnt in class to real-life situations. With that being said, the church can teach day in and day out but at the end, its left to the individual.”

The researcher then introduced sin to the discussion. Of which members were in full agreement that crime is indeed a sin which a Catholic member is bound to confess to a rightfully ordained priest and ask for forgiveness.

“...As a Catholic rightfully ordained a priest, I usually advise the culprit to show acts of remorse, by maybe doing laundry for others or engaging in community work such as cleaning the community hall or escorting children to school in the morning. That does not in a way gives back to the victim directly, but somehow the universe is positively affected by the offender’s actions of remorse.”

Participant M also mentioned that the sacrament of confession within the Catholic church is not only for Catholic members but for everyone willing and believing that it would make a difference in their lives. However, the priest is restricted on what to do with the information shared as the priest is obliged to confidentiality.

Every day Christians pray for justice and mercy in the prayer that Jesus taught us: "Thy kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Every day Christians recognize both that we are guilty of sin and that we are forgiven: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." This prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, recognizes failures and offences, acknowledges the dependence on God’s love and mercy. Catholic faith assists the faithful and others to go beyond the current debate and gain a deeper understanding of how to reject crime, help heal its victims, and pursue the common good. This form of faith aims to move away from the so-called "soft" or "tough" approaches to crime and punishment offered by those at opposite ends of the political spectrum. St. Paul outlined the task when he told his followers to "test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil" (1 Thes: 5:21). He calls his followers to affirm the demands of both justice and mercy, the place of punishment and forgiveness, and the reality of free will and poor choices.

However, an approach to criminal justice that is inspired by a Catholic vision is a paradox. The faithful cannot and will not tolerate behaviour that threatens lives and violates the rights of others. These people believe in responsibility, accountability, and legitimate punishment. Those who harm others or damage property must be held accountable for the hurt they have caused. The community has a right to establish and enforce laws to protect people and to advance the common good.

At the same time, a Catholic approach does not give up on those who violate these laws. It is believed that both victims and offenders are children of God. Despite their very different claims on society, their lives and dignity should be protected and respected — the need to seek justice, not vengeance. It is believed that punishment must have clear purposes: protecting society and rehabilitating those who violate the law.

Therefore, there is a belief that a Catholic vision of crime and criminal justice can offer some alternatives. It recognizes that root causes and personal choices can both be factors in crime by understanding the need for responsibility on the part of the offender and an opportunity for their rehabilitation. A Catholic approach leads to encouraging models of restorative justice that seek to address crime in terms of the harm done to victims and communities, not simply as a violation of the law.

5.2.6.1. Scriptural foundations

The Old Testament provides a rich tradition that demonstrates both God's justice and mercy. The Lord offered to his people Ten Commandments, very basic rules for living from which the Israelites formed their own laws in a covenant relationship with God. The punishment was required, reparations were demanded, and relationships were restored. But the Lord never abandoned his people despite their sins. And in times of trouble, victims relied on God's love and mercy, and then on each other to find comfort and support (Isiah 57:18-21; Psalms 94:19). Just as God never abandons us, so too we must be in covenant with one another. According to the Christian teachings, every human being is a sinner, and the response to sin and failure should not be abandonment and despair, but rather justice, contrition, reparation, and return or reintegration of all into the community.

The New Testament builds on this tradition and extends it. Jesus demonstrated His disappointment with those who oppressed others (Mathew: 23) and those who defiled sacred spaces (John: 2). At the same time, He rejected punishment for its own sake, noting that we are all sinners (John: 8). Jesus also rejected revenge and retaliation and was ever hopeful that offenders would transform their lives and turn to be embraced by God's love. Jesus, who himself was a prisoner, calls us to visit the imprisoned and to take care of the sick (including victims of crime), the homeless, and the hungry (Mathew: 25). His mission began with proclaiming good news to the poor and release

to captives (Luke: 4). Nowadays, we are called to find Christ in young children at risk, troubled youth, prisoners in our jails and on death row, and crime victims experiencing pain and loss.

The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke: 10), who did all he could to help a victim of crime, a stranger, is a model for us today. We must be willing to stop and help victims of crime recover from their physical and emotional wounds. The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke: 15) shows God's love for models and us how we should love one another. Despite his younger son's reckless life and squandering of his inheritance, the father celebrates his return home, recognizing that his son has shown contrition and has changed his life. The lost who have been found are to be welcomed and celebrated, not resented and rejected. Pope John Paul II said; "What Christ is looking for is trusting acceptance, an attitude which opens the mind to generous decisions aimed at rectifying the evil done and fostering what is good. Sometimes this involves a long journey, but always a stimulating one, for it is a journey not made alone, but in the company of Christ himself and with his support. He never tires of encouraging each person along the path to salvation." (Paul, 2000).

5.2.6.2. Sacramental and Historical Heritage

The Catholic sacramental life can help in making sense of the paradoxical approach to crime and punishment. The sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist are real encounters with the Saving Lord and central Catholic signs of true justice and mercy. Sinners are encouraged to take responsibility and make amends for their sins, yet never give up hope that they can be forgiven and re-join the community. The four traditional elements of the sacrament of Penance have much to teach about taking responsibility, making amends, and reintegrating into the community:

- **Contrition:** Genuine sorrow, regret, or grief over one's wrongs and a serious resolution not to repeat the wrong
- **Confession:** Clear acknowledgement and true acceptance of responsibility for the hurtful behaviour
- **Satisfaction:** The external sign of one's desire to amend one's life (this "satisfaction," whether in the form of prayers or good deeds, is a form of "compensation" or restitution for the wrongs or harms caused by one's sin).

- **Absolution:** After someone has shown contrition, acknowledged his or her sin and offered satisfaction, then Jesus, through the ministry of the priest and in the company of the church community, forgives the sin and welcomes that person back into "communion".

Centuries ago, St. Thomas Aquinas taught that punishment of wrongdoers is clearly justified in the Catholic tradition but is never justified for its own sake. A compassionate community and a loving God seek accountability and correction but not suffering for its own sake. Punishment must have a constructive and redemptive purpose. Today these traditional teachings still shape our understanding of punishment. Beginning with a belief in the existence of a natural moral law that resides within the hearts of individuals and within the life of the community. This moral code is common to all peoples and is never fully excused by external circumstances. All are born with a free will that must be nurtured and informed by spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical disciplines and by the community (Paul, 2015). Although not everyone has the same ability to exercise free will, each person is responsible for and will be judged by his or her actions according to the potential that has been given to him or her. Religious people believe that God who ultimately judges a person's motivation, intention, and the forces that shaped that person's actions.

5.2.6.3. Human life and dignity

The fundamental starting point for all Catholic social teaching is the defence of human life and dignity: every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and has an inviolable dignity, value, and worth, regardless of race, gender, class, or other human characteristics. Therefore, both the most wounded victim and the most callous criminal retain their humanity. All are created in the image of God and possess a dignity, value, and worth that must be recognized, promoted, safeguarded, and defended. For this reason, any system of penal justice must provide those necessities that enable inmates to live in dignity: food, clothing, shelter, personal safety, timely medical care, education, and meaningful work adequate to the conditions of human dignity (Roman Catholics Bishop Conference, 2012).

Human dignity is not something that is earned through good behaviour; it is something we have as children of God. Religious people believe that because we are all created by God, "none of us is the sum total of the worst act we have ever committed. As a people of faith, we believe that grace can transform even the most hardened and cruel human beings." (Paul, 2000).

Victims, too, must have the help of the faith community in recovering their dignity. To be excluded from the proceedings against their offenders, to be ignored by friends and family, or to be neglected by the community of faith because their deep pain is unsettling only serves to isolate victims further and denies their dignity. All of us are called to stand with victims in their hurt and in their search for healing and genuine justice. This includes, of course, the children of the incarcerated, who themselves are seriously harmed by their parents' misdeeds.

5.2.6.4. Family, community, and participation

The human person is social. Our dignity, rights, and responsibilities are lived out in a relationship with others, and primary among these is the family. The disintegration of family life and community has been a major contributor to crime. Supporting and rebuilding family ties should be central to efforts to prevent and respond to crime. Placing prisons in remote areas diminishes contacts with close relatives and undermines the family connections that could aid in restoration, especially for young offenders.

Likewise, maintaining community and family connections can help offenders understand the harm they've done and prepared them for reintegration into society. Isolation may be necessary in some rare cases; but while cutting off family contact can make incarceration easier for those in charge, it can make reintegration harder for those in custody.

The principle of participation is especially important for victims of crime. Sometimes victims are "used" by the criminal justice system or political interests. As the prosecution builds a case, the victim's hurt and loss be a tool to obtain convictions and tough sentences. But the victim's need to be heard and to be healed are not really addressed.

5.2.6.5. The common good

The social dimension of our teaching leads us to the common good and its relationship to punishment. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, punishment by civil authorities for criminal activity should serve three principal purposes: (1) the preservation and protection of the common good of society, (2) the restoration of public order, and (3) the restoration or conversion of the offender. (Paul, 2000).

The concept of "redress," or repair of the harm done to the victims and to society by the criminal activity, is also important to restore the common good. This often-neglected dimension of

punishment allows victims to move from a place of pain and anger to one of healing and resolution. Traditionally, restoring the balance of rights through restitution is an important element of justice.

5.2.6.6. Subsidiarity and solidarity

These two related principles recognize that human dignity and human rights are fostered in the community. Subsidiarity calls for problem-solving initially at the community level: family, neighbourhood, city, and nationally. It is only when problems become too large, or the common good is clearly threatened that larger institutions are required to help. This principle encourages communities to be more involved. Criminal activity is largely a local issue and, to the extent possible, should have local solutions. Neighbourhood-watch groups, community-oriented policing, school liaison officers, neighbourhood treatment centres, and local support for ex-offenders all can be part of confronting crime and fear of crime in local communities.

Solidarity recognizes that "we are all really responsible for all"(Roman Catholics Bishops Conference, 2012). Not only are we responsible for the safety and well-being of our family and our next-door neighbour, but Christian solidarity demands that we work for justice beyond our boundaries. Christians are asked to see Jesus in the face of everyone, including both victims and offenders. Through the lens of solidarity, those who commit crimes and are hurt by crime are not issues or problems; they are sisters and brothers, members of one human family. Solidarity calls us to insist on responsibility and seek alternatives that do not simply punish but rehabilitate, heal, and restore.

5.2.7. Theme 7: Measures to combat crime within Mpumalanga Township, Hammisdale.

This study also found out that the religious organisations can also contribute various measures towards combating crime. Participant E, who is also a Priest outlined that the clergy has a critical role to play in this regard. He emphasised on this matter and said,

“As priests, bishops and teachers, we seek to offer a perspective inspired by our Catholic tradition to the national discussion on crime. For us, crime and the destruction it brings raise fundamental questions about the nature of personal responsibility, community, sin, and redemption. A distinctively Catholic approach to these questions can offer society another way to understand and

respond to crime, its victims, and its perpetrators. We approach this topic, however, with caution and modesty. The causes of crime are complex. The ways to overcome violence are not simple. The chances of being misunderstood are many.”

He further continues;

“In developing these reflections, we have consulted with Catholics who are involved in every aspect of the criminal justice system: prison chaplains, police officers, prosecutors, defence attorneys, judges, probation and parole officers, wardens, correctional officers, crime victims, offenders, families of both victims and offenders, and treatment personnel. In our parishes, schools, and Catholic Charities agencies, Catholics see first-hand the crushing poverty and the breakdown of family life that often lead to crime and at the same time care for prisoners, victims, and their families. All of their experience and wisdom has been helpful to us.”

During this discussion, the fact that some Catholics have been convicted of house robbery, car hijacking and drug dealing, spousal and child abuse, even rape and murder came into factor. This drove the discussion to opinions of how each member of different positions within the community can assist in combating crime.

“..As ordained ministers committed to service, deacons and priests should be especially drawn to the challenge of Matthew 25: "For I was . . . in prison and you visited me." We as community members also wish to stand in solidarity with crime victims in their pain and loss, insisting that all our institutions reach out to them with understanding, compassion, and healing.”

Participant Y concluded.

5.2.8. Summary

In conclusion, all those whom the researcher consulted seemed to agree on one thing: the status quo is not really working—victims are often ignored, offenders do not implement what is learned during rehabilitation programmes which leads to an unsuccessful rehabilitation, and many communities have lost their sense of security. All these committed people spoke with a sense of passion and urgency that the community together with its structures does not work in solidarity to

tackle such social issues. The researcher shared their concern and belief that it does not live up to the best of our nation's values and falls short of the religious principles.

Considering the above, the need to seek the following reflections arose:

- Explore aspects of crime and punishment in our society
- Apply principles of Catholic social teaching to the criminal justice system and suggest some directions for policy on crime and punishment
- Encourage action by Catholics to shape new alternatives

Continues support is encouraged and support those called by the community to minister to prisoners and victims and all other people who work directly in the criminal justice system. Suggestions of how the use of these reflections to assess how the system can become less retributive and more restorative were included

Several themes such as the guide of the paradoxical Catholic teaching on crime and punishment emerged which resulted in the urge to seek both justice and mercy. Working together, the faith of the faithful calls to protect public safety, promote the common good and restore community. Consequently, the belief of Catholic ethics of responsibility, rehabilitation, and restoration can become the foundation for the necessary reform of the broken criminal justice system and community.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of this research study and the conclusions drawn from the findings. It also reviews the study limitations and makes recommendations for future research. The purpose of the study was to explore and assess the value of criminological theology in combating crime by Roman Catholic Church of Umndeni Oyingcwele, KwaZulu-Natal Province. In assessing the role of the church in combatting crime, the study objectives aimed at gaining insight into the community members perceptions regarding the nature of the occurring crimes, challenges faced due to the presence of crime and examine if there are strategies in place implemented by the church to combat crime within the community of Hammasdale, Mpumalanga Township. This chapter highlights the general conclusions that were drawn from the analyses of the collected data including recommendations based on the findings of this study.

6.1.General conclusions

Underpinned by the methodological framework of this study, general conclusions were drawn which were guided by the following objectives that the researcher aimed to address:

- To explore the nature of occurring crimes in the Hammasdale Township
- To identify perceptions of community members on crimes taking place in Hammasdale Township,
- To assess challenges faced by community members relating to crimes in Hammasdale Township, and
- To identify strategies implemented by the church to combat crimes in Hammasdale Township

6.1.1. The nature of occurring crimes in Mpumalanga Township, Hammasdale.

Traditionally, however, the maintenance of law and order in any society has usually been the exclusive role of conventional police and other law enforcement agents in the absence of active

participation of the wider members of the community (Skolnick, 2011). From gathering different opinions from participants, it was evident that a minority of participants believed this social phenomenon to be only at the merciful hands of the police and other law enforcement. According to the Bible scripture Romans 12:4 “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness”. In addition, most participants adopted this mentality; mentality and attitude of being members of the “body” that aim to combat crime and fights against crime for the benefit of every member of the community.

This study shows that the perceived types of crime that occurred in Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale were serious in nature. This was gathered from the reports the participants made, that, to their knowledge and lived experience, these crimes affect their lives on a day to day bases. It was observed that the types of crimes that affected community members were common assaults and house robberies in which home appliances were mostly stolen and sometimes groceries from the kitchen. Participants and police officials that partake in this study confirmed that perpetrators of such crimes are usually boys under the influence of drugs and other illegal substances. Therefore, the occurrence and frequency of these crimes depend on the urgent need to quench their addiction to the substances.

However, the perception among members that they were victims or potential victims of crime resulted in trauma and fear that caused stressed and anxiety which drove some participants to take serious note of possible ways in which this phenomenon could be addressed. It could, therefore, be established that although incidents of crime did occur within this community, the nature of these crimes mostly derives from offenders under the influence of drugs and illegal substances such as woonga.

6.1.2. Perceptions of community members on crimes taking place in Mpumalanga Township, Hammadale.

Members of the community were perceived by the researcher as people living in fear and faith. Participants often quoted biblical verses such as the scripture from Romans 8:18, which speaks

about the world coming to an end. This scripture outlines the disruptions and sufferings that will take place on earth when the end of the world is near. The faithful were under the notion that the scripture referred to sufferings such as crime, incurable diseases such as HIV and killing of another which is very much present in this generation.

“Killing people is easier staying alive is harder”, Anderson, 2018. Community members of Hammarsdale seem to have adopted the above quotation due to the rate at which murder takes place within this community. When asking questions relating to murder for the benefit for this study, the researcher noticed that it had become a norm to hear a gunshot, may it be during the early hours of the day or late in the dark night. Participants expressed their concerns as taxi passengers, of how fearful they get not knowing if their taxi driver is the wanted man for the day which poses a possibility for them to be victims of crime daily.

Fearful participants expressed their concern about the lacking virtue of freedom and privacy. Offenders are said to invade their property at any given time, provided there is lack of guardianship. These participants felt the urge to be actively involved in combating crime, seeking measures to prevent crime and catering for those in need to minimize the need to steal and engage in criminal behaviour in hope to acquire survival needs.

The faithful also expressed how the church has also been a target for criminals. Recently, the church wireless microphones had been stolen, not realizing that the power bank had been locked in another office. Given this incident, members of the church found it useful to include the church as one of the targeted places for criminals, of which that makes them feel unsafe within church walls. Nowadays, being at church feels like being at a soccer stadium, the difference is people occupying the church walls at that time only hope and pray that they themselves are safe so as their belongings such as cars at the parking lot and household belongings. During interviews, both in-depth and focus group discussions it was evident that participants had an element of anger towards crime taking place. There was an element of frustration as well from church leaders since they held a position of being leaders of different solidarities within the church but could do little with regards to tackling the issue of crime and safety within the church and community.

6.1.3. Challenges faced by community members relating to crimes in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale.

Crime causes social, economic, health, and psychological effects on victims and society at large. It is a serious social problem that directly reduces the quality of life of individuals and the community (Lewis, 2017). Members of the community said to experience challenges related to the presence of crime daily. Their lifestyle routine has changed due to the subconscious alert that at any minute they could be victims of crime, therefore, by all means, safety measures should be taken daily.

The Roman Catholic Church Fathers of the Parish (*Amadoda eBandla*) initiated a patrolling group for every Sunday during mass times. One of the challenges encountered was of lack of equipment. These male figures are willing and eager to protect and serve the community but have to necessary equipment to carry out this forum. Equipment such as bulletproofs, paper sprays, uniform for easy identification and other necessary equipment is not provided of which it makes rather difficult for them to carry out this duty.

Another challenge faced by community members is the challenge of not knowing whom to contact in case of emergency. For example, a group of six boys invaded home of four girls, took all their cell phones and left. It took some time for the girls to call for help since it was late at night and the girls were afraid to go outside not knowing if the gang had left or still observing their next move from a distant. Therefore, it was suggested that in such cases each member of the community should own a whistle. In that way, it would be easier to call for help in case of emergencies.

Several challenges were expressed during the data collection phase which utilized in-depth interviews and focuses group discussions. It could, therefore, be established that challenges faced by community members often differ, depending on the societal class, lifestyle and how well-known one is.

6.1.4. Strategies implemented by the church to combat crimes in Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale.

Recently the Catholic church of Umndeni Oyingewele had organized a special prayer and mass petitions towards crime, defence force and perpetrators of crime. On this day people of different positions of the local SAPS were present to educate the community regards to different ways to combat/prevent crime, what to do in the case of being a victim and how to assist others when witnessing a crime taking place. By this occasion, the church was said to may have implemented a strategy in alerting the community of the increasing rates of crime but there were no active measures introduced by the church to combat crime. Participants felt as if there is more talk than action from the church of which it feels as if it has done nothing to address the issue since offenders are doing the opposite (less talk more action).

6.2.Implications for future research

Further research is desirable to evaluate the effectiveness of various programs that aim to combat crime within communities that address the broader issues in the hopes of creating climates where crime does not occur. Studies could also be conducted evaluating the effectiveness of the role of the church and other societal structures that are involved or attempt in combatting crime. These studies would be of benefit to the community because it would close the gap in the literature.

This research simulated a realization that there is a need for future research that would aim at exploring the effectiveness of programmes implemented by different societal structures to combat crime not only within the community of Hammarsdale, Mpumalanga Township but also other local townships such as eMsunduzi, Haythorne and Ntuzuma. Including other townships for further research would allow the opportunity for finding similarities and differences between places of different local leadership structures and culture. Besides looking at the effectiveness of these programmes, it may also be an advantage to examine the lifespan of these programs. In addition, comparison research could also look at the various contexts in which programmes are implemented to find common themes, explanations, and possible solutions.

A research question such as “Who are the victims of common assault and why?” could assist in identifying people who victims of such crime are, as well as potential victims. Related, it would also be of great value to consider what influence race and gender may play in common assault

cases. While some participants did mention race, gender and culture, many did not directly mention it. Research should address issues of race, gender and culture in incidents of common assault to better understand all aspects of the problem. Since some of the data in the current study suggest that some participants stand up for others who are victims, it would be useful to know who stands up for victims of assault.

Because of the timing, location, the people involved, and the results of this study, it would be meaningful and insightful to study empathy after a tragic event. One possible research question would be: “After the ambush shootings that occurred on the R74 in KwaZulu-Natal, July 16, 2018, has life changed for residents of Harrismith and Ladysmith?” Answering this question could show if there were positive or negative changes in the lifestyle of residents because of that tragedy, as well as other perceptions of community members regarding such events which resulted in eleven dead men. A comparison of community members perceptions before the tragic event and after may provide insight into how such events can change a community and how people treat each other.

6.3.Limitations and recommendations

Due to the breadth of the field of crime and theology, as well as the exploratory character of this dissertation, it intended to, and could, only contribute with a small insight. To truly understand theological teachings in relation to crime and combating crime, define integration as well as to develop useful insights for the police structure and prevention sector in practice, the area would need to be studied more in-depth and from different angles. For this reason, in this last point of the dissertation some limitations of the study and recommendations for future research will be made, firstly, regarding crime as a societal phenomenon, secondly, crime in relation to moral theology, finally, the role of the church in combating crime.

The use of semi-structured interviews proved very useful in gaining in-depth and meaningful data from the participants. While the method of interviewing is a time-consuming process, it proved to be an extremely efficient means of extracting information from individuals in an open and honest way and thus allowed the researcher to gain an invaluable insight into the participant's personal experiences of crime and the role of the church in combating crime.

Another limitation relates to researcher bias which is always a risk in any type of research study, more so, the less structured the data collection is. The researcher was aware of and very vigilant of researcher bias. Although it is impossible to eliminate research bias, the researcher is confident to have achieved valid findings, which can be used for larger populations. Furthermore, it could be argued that the type of data collected leave more room for interpretation than for example numeric data would.

This study had its limitations regarding the number of cultures that collaborated. The community of Hammisdale is dominated by people that adhere to the Zulu culture. Therefore, this study included only participants currently living in a single receiving community. The study is aware of and did consider the influence the location this study might have. However, for future research and to understand the role of the church in combatting crime, comparing the results of the study with findings from another location seems highly recommendable. This would provide better insight inclusive of other parishes, which would provide an overall overview of the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in combatting crime.

The same research in, for example, a place with a much more multicultural society, might deliver different insights into the concept and underlying processes of integration as well as the resulting findings of the study. Similarly, different cultural groups could be compared when exploring the role of the church in combatting crime. In connection to that, it might be interesting to measure the degree of the cultural distance of these groups as well as to the receiving society by means of the dimensions provided in the literature.

To consider the perceived cultural distance, as done in this dissertation, turned out to be a decent measure to understand the role of the church in combatting crime, but it is not necessarily a clear measure for cultural distance.

Regarding the background of the interviewed participants and members that were part of the focus group discussions, it seems relevant to point out that most of them were fluent in isiZulu and English. Majority of them had experience of being a victim of crime, of which they were not willing to share on which type of crime they were victims of. Being victims of crime made some of the participants to be willing to engage in this study, in the hope that something will be done about this phenomenon after voicing out their opinions and concerns.

Furthermore, coming back to the characteristics of Hammisdale, Mpumalanga Township as a host, being fluent in IsiZulu already facilitates to make first contacts with the locals without needing to speak any other foreign language. This dissertation focused on the opinions and lived experiences of individual participants. However, responses of individuals might be influenced by their spouse and family and the processes of counselling they might have taken after being victimized (Dubois-Arber and Haour-Knipe, 2001). Hence, further research could firstly, include spouses and other family members.

In conclusion, the youth of Umndeni Oyingcwele could start programs and initiatives aimed at combating crime, actively making the community aware of precaution measures and preventative measures. Mothers of different solidarities could extend programs of mentorship for victims and teenagers. The parish council could also fundraise capital to purchase the necessary equipment for the patrolling fathers of the parish. Furthermore, it seems recommendable for the local councillor to be made aware that the church is also a societal structure that aims to create a peaceful environment in collaboration with other societal structures such as the SAPS, community forums and security companies.

6.4. Summary

The aim of this research was to determine the role of Umndeni Oyingcwele Catholic Parish in combating crime within Hammisdale, Mpumalanga Township. The foregoing chapters examined the nature of crimes that took place within this township, the perceived views of community members with regards to such crimes, the challenges faced by community members resulting from such crimes and strategies implemented by the church to combat crime. In addition, the coping mechanisms which people utilize to cope with this social phenomenon.

The research questions were examined through a qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The use of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions allowed for more in-depth insight into the personal experiences of community members allowing the advantages and disadvantages to be discussed in an open and candid manner, which made the interpretation and analysis of the findings more meaningful. A review of the literature was presented corresponding to the research topic on the role of the church in combatting crime.

Finally, an interpretation of the findings obtained was provided, along with why the findings were relevant to the research with comparisons to other similar research carried out to date. The findings of this research are relevant to the wider study of the criminology and theology discipline as they are interrelated and highlight the impact of moral theology with regards to crime. The importance of society to understand the role of the church in combating is crucial so that those who are not personally affected by crime yet understand and are cautious. This study highlighted that the church is rather absent in actively partaking in a societal role in combating crime within the community of Hammisdale, Mpumalanga Township.

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