The Role of Identity in Vigilantism & State Involvement: Explored in Khayelitsha, South Africa

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Abstract

Vigilantism is often explained by poverty, high crime rates, and an absent and illegitimate state. Although these factors may play a role, they do not explain all vigilantism. Furthermore, who participates in vigilantism, and who becomes a target of vigilantism, remains under-explored. This paper argues that vigilantism occurs when it is perceived as the most efficient way to protect communities from the ‘dangerous other’. The construction of a dangerous other, or outgroup, is conceptualised as the role of identity. The state mirrors this, becoming involved in vigilantism or utilising punitiveness when deemed efficient in upholding sovereign control. A case study and content analysis were conducted in Khayelitsha, South Africa, over 2012 to 2015. It was found that the limited conventional crime control resources were used on ingroup community members such as Khayelitsha youth. Both state agents and Khayelitsha citizens found it more efficient to utilise vigilantism and punitive tactics against outgroups: gangsters, Somalis, and LGBTIQ+. Significantly, construction of the outgroups was instigated by the state.

This paper explores vigilantism in Khayelitsha, South Africa. Specifically, who is involved in vigilantism, who are the targets of vigilantes, and why does this occur? Khayelitsha, located in Cape Town, is the largest township in South Africa. At the time of this study, it had a population of 2.4 million living in close physical proximity, with residents being predominantly Xhosa and of low socio-economic class (Beyond Our Borders, 2015). In 2015, the author worked with the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Ndifuna Ukwazi. One aspect was contribution to the Khayelitsha Anti-Vigilantism Forum, implemented after the O’Regan Commission of Inquiry (2014) into policing which was due to a high-profile vigilante incident. Through the Forum, it
was found that Khayelitsha residents often undertake their own visible policing, crime investigations, and informal court procedures. This often resulted in the use of punitive punishment; beatings, banishment, and necklacing. There was, on average, six deaths by vigilantism per month at this time. However, not all Khayelitsha residents participated in vigilantism, and not all criminals were subjected to it. The South African Police Service (SAPS) representatives for the Forum believed that the majority of vigilant targets were thieves, and the cause was high crime alongside poor development of the township which made their job difficult. During the Commission of Inquiry, poor policing was said to be the cause. The author perceived that there may be more to the phenomenon. Concrete information was difficult to determine. Although the SAPS counted approximate incidents for the Khayelitsha Forum, there was no mandate for vigilantism to be counted as a specific crime. Incidents rather fell under the category of homicide. It can be difficult to ascertain deaths by vigilantism; even more so when vigilantism does not result in death. It is very rare that perpetrators are known. It must be said that SAPS were not entirely forthcoming with information. Moreover, it appeared that SAPS members and other state agents, at least occasionally, condoned vigilantism.

The author’s experiences with the Khayelitsha Anti-Vigilantism Forum shape the premises by which this research was undertaken. First, vigilantism is defined, and the prior literature on South African vigilantism is analysed. From this, relevant criminological theory is reviewed to form a framework and hypothesis around who participates in vigilantism, who are the targets, and why it occurs. This is tested with a case study and content analysis over the period of 2012 to 2015. The results are discussed with a reflection on more recent events in South Africa, and recommendations are made.

10 Townships are generally informal settlements on land designated for non-whites during apartheid.
11 Placing a tire around the neck, doused in gasoline, and lit on fire.
Khayelitsha, Western Cape South Africa

Defining Vigilantism

Vigilantism has been conceptualised by Johnston (1996), who, by examining the phenomenon in the United Kingdom, provided six characteristics:

1) Planning, mediation, and organisation;
2) Private voluntary agency;
3) Autonomous citizenship;
4) The use or threatened use of force;
5) A reaction to crime and/or social deviance; and
6) To achieve personal and collective security.

Many continue to use Johnston’s (1996) conceptualisation of vigilantism, including those who look to South Africa (e.g., Bidaguren & Estrella, 2002; Iloh & Nwokedi, 2019; Kucera & Mares, 2015; Martin, 2012; Nina, 2000). Some critique the position that vigilantism requires planning, mediation, and organisation, which excludes spontaneous mob lynchings (Iloh & Nwokedi, 2019; Kucera & Mares, 2015). Indeed, scholars tend to recognise spontaneous mob lynchings as vigilantism (e.g., Adinkrah, 2005; Allen, 2015; Caughley, 1957; Evans, 2003; Iloh & Nwokedi, 2019; Kucera & Mares, 2015; LeBas, 2013; Maunga, Mugari, & Tundu, 2015; Verweijen, 2015; Weston, 2011), as does this current research. From the Khayelitsha Anti-Vigilantism Forum, it was garnered
that both planned and spontaneous vigilante incidents take place in the township.

Another limitation of Johnston’s (1996) conceptualisation with regard to this research is that it completely absolves state involvement in vigilantism by requiring private, autonomous citizenship. As stated, it appeared that South African state agents at least occasionally condone vigilantism, and their involvement should not be discounted. Nevertheless, Johnston’s (1996) conceptualisation is useful, and can be surmised as: vigilantism being the informal use or threatened use of force to achieve security against crime and/or social deviance. This definition prompted the following literature review, which focuses on the previously found reasons for vigilantism, who may be involved, and what types of crime and/or social deviance is targeted.

**Literature Review**

This section brings forth the prior research on vigilantism in South Africa. It showed that vigilantism here is generally explained by an absent state, poverty, and high crime rates (e.g., Benit-Gbaffou, 2008; Bidaguren & Estrella, 2002; Burton, 2003; Buur, 2006; Martin, 2012; Nel, 2016; Petrus, 2015). For instance, Martin (2012) looks at the relationship between South African vigilantism and state failures with regard to “poverty, unemployment, and high levels of crime and insecurity” (ibid, p. 218). By interviews with community members and organisations in the Zandspruit township, he found that inefficient police resources and a lack of situational crime prevention had led to feelings of police incompetence, which in turn led to vigilantism. However, contradictorily, Martin (2012) reports findings of explicit condoning of vigilantism by police and politicians. He does not expand on these findings; he identifies an absent, illegitimate state as the cause of vigilantism but does not look to state involvement in vigilantism and why this occurs.

Buur (2006) too examines South African vigilantism as emerging due to inefficient policing but concedes that this alone cannot explain vigilantism as “intimate relationships have developed between individuals and organizations forming part of both state and vigilante groups” (ibid, 737). He reflects on the vigilante group Amadlozi\(^{12}\) in Port Elizabeth. This group worked with the police, who gifted them a patrol vehicle, and were commended by politicians. In his final interpretation,

\(^{12}\) Amadlozi is the Zulu word for ‘ancestors’.
Buur (2006) suggests that South Africa is a weak state with poor policing, but reiterates that the line is blurred between the state and vigilante groups. He does not provide an explanation for why this is the case. It is also questionable whether South Africa is a weak state; it is not considered so by the Fragile States Index, the internationally recognised list of 178 countries from most weak to most stable (The Fund for Peace, 2016).

Schuberth (2013; 2015) challenges the ‘weak state hypothesis’ – that an absent, illegitimate state, including police – may lead to vigilantism. He disputes this by pointing to the frequency of vigilantism in democratic countries such as South Africa and Brazil, arguing that it is the extreme inequalities in these countries that create areas of alternatively governed spaces. That is, there are areas within the countries where the state is absent, generally areas of low socioeconomic class. This is true of South Africa, and particularly of Cape Town which is often called the divided city as inequalities remain a prominent feature.

Certainly, state illegitimacy, poverty, and high crime rates are present in Khayelitsha. It is a community of low socioeconomic class, with issues such as a lack of roads and lighting, crowding and long distances to shared toilets, all of which contribute to both criminal behaviour and poor conventional policing. There are consistently high levels of crime. In 2014, Khayelitsha had the most cases of aggravated robbery and second most murders in the Western Cape province (SAPS, 2014/15). Khayelitsha also has the third lowest police to population ratio in the Western Cape at 1:1,675, compared to the highest being in the wealthy suburb of Camps Bay at 1:38 (O’Regan, 2014). Police inefficiency, alongside corruption, has contributed to a perception of an illegitimate state.

Nonetheless, these factors alone are not sufficient to explain vigilantism. This phenomenon has occurred in areas of South Africa with low crime rates and efficient police stations. As noted during the Khayelitsha Anti-Vigilantism Forum, vigilantism can occur after a suspect has been arrested. Thus, inefficient policing cannot be the sole reason. Economic disadvantage cannot explain the phenomenon either. Buur (2006) notes that Amadlozi members vary in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and class. Oomen (2004), in her study of South African vigilante group Mapopo a Mathamaga, describes the typical member as being elite, wealthy, well-dressed, Christian, and more often a woman than man. They were generally older businesspeople looking to protect their assets. Furthermore, vigilantism exists in the most seemingly democratic and prosperous areas of the Global North, such as in the
United States of America (Kurz & Berry, 2015) and the United Kingdom (Evans, 2003).

Therefore, the above studies do not fully explain who chooses to participate in vigilantism and why this occurs. They do provide evidence for the premise that state agents can be involved, but do not consider this aspect in detail. Moreover, what remains unexplored is the targets of vigilantism. Research by Smith (2013) and Niehaus (2012) provides some insight. Smith (2013) details how a series of rapes in a South African township led to circulating rumours about a ‘pure evil’ criminal associated with occult powers. As a result, the community organised vigilante patrols, identified two rapists, and mobilised a crowd who beat the alleged rapists to death. Smith (2013) notes the similarity to a widespread fear of migrants and youth leading to South African vigilantism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Although he does not provide theoretical frameworks, such discourses with certain types of criminals targeted is considered in the following criminological theory.

Likewise, Niehaus’ (2012) examination of vigilantism in post-Apartheid Bushbuckridge, South Africa, reveals the targeting of migrants and youth by vigilantes. In this context, the issue addressed by the vigilantes was crime. However, it was a commonly held view that increased crime in the area was due to migrants from other African countries, or from Asia. Discourse was that these migrants smuggled drugs and other illegal goods from across the border. In addition, these foreigners were said to indirectly contribute to crime as they deprived nationals of employment. This was the believed cause for unemployed male youth participating in crime, the other primary target of vigilantes. The focus of Niehaus’ (2012) paper is the similarities between this vigilantism and pre-Apartheid vigilantism against elderly men and women participating in ‘sinister witchcraft’. Again, this points to a potential role of discourse around certain types of criminals or deviants.

A final common argument in the literature on South African vigilantism is that it undermines state sovereignty. Sovereignty is the state’s political system having “supreme authority within a territory” (Philpott 2016, 1), the claimed “right and ability to exercise a plenitude of power over every subject and circumstance” (Garland 1996, 4). This power is actualised through the justice system, including the establishment of state police who are given exclusive powers, equating to monopoly over crime control. As Weber (1946, 77) famously put it, the state is a “human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory”. As such, it is argued that vigilantism undermines state sovereignty as it renders the state illegitimate, and/or
challenges the state’s monopoly of the use of force (e.g., Bidaguren & Estrella, 2002; Buur, 2008; Nel, 2016; Nina, 2000; Petrus, 2015). This is interesting when considering the potential involvement of state agents in vigilantism.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

This paper now turns to criminological theory which may assist in understanding vigilantism. First, it looks to who can be involved in vigilantism and why. The focus is on potential role of state agents, as the prior literature shows that although vigilantism is considered to take place with the absence of the state, state agents have been involved. To this, sovereignty is examined within the frameworks by Garland (1996) and Slingeneyer (2007). Secondly, this section draws upon theory on identity and discourse with regard to victims of vigilantism.

Garland (1996) posits that there are limits to the modern sovereign state with regard to crime, which require new modes of governing. As modern crime rates rise, the state adapts with ‘criminologies of everyday life’ where criminals are viewed as rational beings like anyone else, a risk to be managed. Regulating citizens and reducing the benefits of offending – with methods such as visible policing and situational crime control – become the primary means of crime control. However, this rise in crime puts a strain on resources, resulting in the state delegating responsibilities that were traditionally monopolised. Garland (1996) terms this ‘responsibilisation’ which activates non-state agents in the control of crime, examples being privatisation and community policing. There are media campaigns “to raise consciousness” about crime and “create a sense of duty” to stop it (Ibid, 452).

The strain on state resources sees the justice system filtering which crimes should be dealt with and to what extent. Garland (1996) details how investigative resources are reduced, with a focus on visible crimes that can be targeted and prosecuted effectively. Due processes diminish. The justice system takes on a “managerialist, business-like ethos which emphasises economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of criminal justice resources” (Ibid, 455). This is reflected in excessive attention to quantitative performance measures, like arrest rates, to measure effectiveness. It can result in punitive measures when seen as a better use of state resources to meet obligations of controlling crime.

Furthermore, although responsibilisation is another form of state control, it poses a challenge to the notion of supreme authority. Thus, the state tries to reassert its sovereignty, its legitimacy, by utilising harsh punishments. Garland (1996) terms this process as ‘criminologies of the other’, in contrast to ‘criminologies of everyday life’. It portrays
criminals as outsiders, a dangerous member of the outgroup with little resemblance to ordinary citizens. Public fear and anxiety are provoked by keywords such as ‘career criminal’, ‘evil’, and ‘predator’. These offenders are offered no sympathy, seen as beyond help. The only practical solution is to “take them out of circulation for the protection of the public” (Ibid, 17). These two criminologies are deployed together to overcome the limits of the modern sovereign state. This “leaves the centralized state machine more powerful than before, with an extended capacity for action and influence” (Ibid, 454).

These two criminologies are evident in South Africa. Criminologies of everyday life and responsibilisation were employed with the arrival of democracy in 1994. Human rights were recognised, and the African National Congress (ANC) focused on community involvement in crime control. Measures like neighbourhood watches and street committees were implemented. The years following saw increased privatisation and a focus on situational crime prevention. In 2010, private security guards outnumbered SAPS at a ratio of 7:1 (Martin 2012). Yet in townships like Khayelitsha, residents do not have the economic resources for situational crime prevention or private security. And arguably, there has been as strain on state resources. The ‘managerialist ethos’ can be found in SAPS’ excessive attention to arrest rates (Altbeker 2007) and decrease in investigative resources (O’Regan 2014). Crime rates have remained high across the country (SAPS, 2014/15), leading to a demand for a harsher state response. In turn, the state has reasserted sovereign control by utilising criminologies of the other. SAPS have undertaken punitive measures, framed as necessary to fight the ‘bad guys’ in the ‘war on crime’ (McMichael 2020).

Slingeneeyer (2007) explains dualistic state measures, like Garland’s (1996) two criminologies, as a corrective continuum. Offenders are categorised by the risk they pose, then this risk is managed. Lower risk individuals are subjected to situational control and surveillance; comparable to criminologies of everyday life. Higher risk offenders are subjected to punitive measures; comparable to criminologies of the other. The state does not aim to address core reasons behind criminality, but rather to control its members or to remove them from society by means of imprisonment or death. Like Garland (1996), Slingeneeyer (2007) sees the state as managerial with the continuum used to determine the efficient use of resources.

This begins to address the second aspect of this paper: who may become a target of vigilantism. Just as the state simultaneously uses the ‘criminologies of everyday life’ and ‘criminologies of the other’ to
decide whether control or removal should occur, so too could citizens. Reviewing Smith (2013) and Neihaus (2012), this appears possible. Witches, rapists, deviant youth, and immigrants were categorised as the high-risk ‘other’ who had to be removed. In townships, vigilantism may become the most efficient method of removal; to both the citizens, who cannot afford private security or situational crime prevention, and to the state who find it difficult to access townships. Interestingly, just as Smith (2013) notes the influence of discourses about a ‘pure evil’ criminal, so too does Garland (1996). When reflecting on responsibilisation, Garland states that activation of non-state actors intends to bring others “into line with socially approved aspirations and identities” (Garland 1997, 179). To consider who (or what acts) may become constructed as a high-risk threat, this paper therefore considers the role of identity and discourse.

Vaughan and Hogg (2011) discuss two types of identity: self-identity and collective identity. These are not mutually exclusive. For instance, self-identification as an Australian confers membership of a collective group. Accordingly, Vaughan and Hogg (2011) define identity as the conception, qualities, beliefs, and expressions that make a person or group. It allows differentiation between those who are similar, the ingroup members, to those who are different, the outgroup members. Individuals hold membership to a variety of groups synonymous with their identity. Some are externally designated such as gender, ethnicity, or social class. There are a range of other groups that one may willingly join. The most common cause of group formation is physical proximity; people living in the same area often form a community group (Ibid. 2011).

**Figure 1. Corrective continuum**

![Corrective Continuum Diagram](image)

To this, Khayelitsha residents may feel a shared ingroup identity. Those who are similar and uphold community approved ‘aspirations and identities’ would be considered ‘low-risk’ as per the corrective continuum. Conversely, those who are different would be considered ‘high-risk’ outgroup members. By analysis of the victims of vigilantism in prior research, three categories of potential outgroups are distinguished: ‘evil’ criminals, foreigners, and moral outcasts (accused of legal yet ‘immoral’...
acts like witchcraft). The construction of who falls into the ‘high risk’ outgroup category appears to depend on prominent discourses by the state and citizens in a particular time period. Whether vigilantism is then used to remove these outgroup risks could depend on what resources are available. From this, the following hypotheses were formed:

1) That citizens, as an ingroup (here being Khayelitsha residents), and state agents are involved in vigilantism;
2) That outgroup members (analysed here as ‘evil’ criminals, foreigners or moral outsiders) are more likely subject to vigilantism than ingroup members;
3) That vigilantism and state involvement occurs as an efficient way to protect the ingroup from outgroup threats.

This was tested via a case study and content analysis over the period of 2012 to 2015.

Case Study

The case study utilised interviews undertaken by Gail Super (2016a, 2016b) over the period of 2012 to 2015. Super is an independent researcher who contributed to the Khayelitsha Anti-Vigilantism Forum. Although she did not specifically examine identity and state involvement, these interviews include an array of quotes and perceptions that assist in understanding their role in vigilantism.

Firstly, Super (2016a) outlines how residence in Khayelitsha is regulated by area and street committees. Shacks are to be offered to current Khayelitsha residents first, only after three months can they be offered to others. Any other prospective resident must provide an official letter and two references to the committee for approval. One reason provided was that “we don’t want criminals living in our area” (Super 2016a, 465). This discourse suggests that group membership is tightly controlled, with outgroup members – those from other communities – considered a potential threat. Although not foreigners in a conventional sense, they were foreign to the community and are thus are placed in this category.

Khayelitsha residents may be subjected to banishment by vigilantes, a concept analogous to removal. Super includes curfews, instruction to leave, demolition of dwellings, and murder as banishment tactics (2016a). She found that all banishment tactics were used in Khayelitsha over 2012 to 2015. Instruction to leave and demolition were prevalent when a criminal suspect was released by the SAPS on bail. Importantly, curfews against Somali owned businesses were particularly harsh. As in Neihaus’ (2012) research, foreigners were seen as taking away economic
opportunities from citizens (Super 2016a). Additionally, whether or not
“one survives a vigilante attack depends on how well networked the
person and/or his relatives are” (Super 2016a, 473). No mention was
given of moral threats.

There were signs of SAPS involvement in vigilantism. One interviewee
reported that when the community found and roughly interrogated
suspects, “the police do come but they don’t take that person without our
permission... They are happy because we are helping them to find the
guys” (Super 2016a, 474). Another, when asked why they took a thief to
SAPS after the retrieval of stolen property, said that “the judicial system
must do its duty, we already assisted the Investigating Officer. We made
his job easier” (Super 2016a, 475). In this way, citizens and state agents
support each other. A frequent notion was that of residents reporting
theft to the police to retrieve a case number before community action
(Super 2016a, 2016b). This can be seen as an efficient use of resources;
citizens are more equipped to catch offenders, but SAPS can undertake
administrative tasks and officially label an individual as a criminal.

Finally, Super’s (2016a, 2016b) interviews suggest that although
Khayelitsha citizens partake in vigilantism, with SAPS involvement,
members of local street committees and NGOs do not participate. Super
quoted a chairperson describing how the street committee “told residents
to see about a certain shack. We can’t take the decision to burn it down
but the community can because they are tired of what’s happening in
the area” (2016a, 461). Another member claimed that when beatings
occur, it was from the community and “no one from the street committee
even watches” (Super 2016a, 462). The Khayelitsha NGO Social Justice
Coalition (SJC) also claimed not to participate (Super 2016b). Overall,
this case study provides evidence as to who will become a victim of
vigilantism in Khayelitsha, and who will participate, which may be
determined by identity and the efficient use of resources.

Content Analysis

A content analysis was undertaken to explore the hypotheses further.
The sources include Khayelitsha newspaper City Vision, South African
news sites Eyewitness News and GroundUp, the SAPS Magazine, and
press releases from the Secretariat for Police and NGO Social Justice
Coalition. These were analysed over the period of 2013 to 2015 and
can be found in the Appendix. Sources from 2012 were not available to
provide an analysis consistent with the case study period.

In line with the identified frameworks, a coding system was employed
to determine prominent discourses and who these were employed by,
and who these discourses constructed as an outgroup threat. As details of specific involvement in vigilantism are hard to come by, code one looks to which types of people rationalised, or justified, the use of vigilantism. This is grouped as average Khayelitsha citizens, state agents, and ‘organisations’ being those like the street committees and SJC as found in the case study. Codes two and three examine the utilisation of criminologies of everyday life and criminologies of the other respectively, to determine whether vigilantism and state involvement occurs due to its perceived efficiency. For example, code two entails references to criminals as normal people to be regulated, and of the need for responsibilisation. Criminologies of the other entails descriptions of criminals or others as dangerous outsiders who require punitive intervention. Codes four through six then identify who are constructed as outgroup threats, categorised as ‘evil’ criminals, foreigners, or moral outsiders. On top of statistical analysis of the code frequencies, qualitative statements are relayed for clarification.

**Table 1.1 Coding System**

| Code one: Rationalisation, or justification, of vigilantism in Khayelitsha. |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Code two:          | Criminologies of everyday life, being phrases and actions that represent normalisation of crime and resulting ‘managerialist’ control measures and strains on resources. |
| Code three:        | Criminologies of everyday life, being phrases and actions that represent reassertion of state sovereignty and demonisation of criminals requiring punitive removal measures. |
| Code four:         | Construction of criminals as a dangerous outsider, a threat to the ingroup. |
| Code five:         | Construction of foreigners as a dangerous outsider, a threat to the ingroup. |
| Code six:          | Construction of moral outcasts as a dangerous outsider, a threat to the ingroup. |
Surprisingly, the justification of vigilantism was found to be most frequently by organisations. However, it must be stressed that this was always on behalf of average citizens or the state. For example, after a vigilante attack in Khayelitsha, the SJC stated that they “strongly condemn these actions – everyone has the right to life and a fair trial. No one has the right to deny another person of these rights – even if that person is guilty of a crime. Our organisation however understand the frustration and anger felt by communities who have lost faith in the State to protect them from criminality” (SJC 2015a). The chairperson for a Community Policing Forum (CPF) said “we understand that residents can get impatient with the police and justice system” (City Vision 2015a, 13). The 2014 analysis found that CPFs passed cases to Khayelitsha taxi drivers (average citizens) who would then undertake vigilantism. Organisations did not participate themselves, but were not completely absolved.

It is interesting to see the different types of justification by different groups. Whereas average citizens and NGOs like the SJC justified vigilantism in terms of state illegitimacy, the SAPS argued that it was poverty and physical structures such as road access and lighting that caused crime and unconventional policing. Converse to the NGOs, community policing groups like CPFs denied any problems with SAPS. Within the state, the governing ANC blamed the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), the head of Western Cape. They quoted the “slow pace
of development” in Khayelitsha (Eyewitness News 2015a). In turn, the DA blamed the ANC-led SAPS. These qualitative accounts point to the absent state; however, they do not provide for why state agents rationalise, or are otherwise involved in, vigilantism. The focus on resources does support the theory of efficiency.

Notably, both average Khayelitsha citizens and the state saw a significant increase in the rationalisation of vigilantism during 2014, the year of the O’Regan Commission of Inquiry into policing. However, this was not sustained in 2015, where rationalisation dropped to its lowest level. A similar trend was found when observing criminologies of everyday life versus criminologies of the other.

**Criminologies of Everyday Life vs. Criminologies of the Other**

**Table 1.3. Code Two & Three**

Analogous to the increase of rationalisation during 2014, the year of the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry, there was a significant increase in the utilisation of criminologies of everyday life by all three groups during this period. The state group had the largest increase, and simultaneously saw a significant drop in criminologies of the other. When faced with public pressure over poor conventional policing and subsequent vigilantism, frequent attempts were made to portray a commitment to due process.

In saying that, code two by state was additionally in reference to poor investigative capacities by the SAPS, such as overburdened detectives
(GroundUp 2014a, 2014b, SJC 2014a), poor forensic capabilities (GroundUp 2014b), and non-engagement in crime intelligence (SJC 2014a, Secretariat 2014a). This draws resemblance to Garland’s (1996) theory and may translate to punitive measures as an efficient way to achieve results. Indeed, excessive attention to quantitative performance measures was found. Code two also reflected responsibilisation. Khayelitsha residents recounted that the SAPS refused to take their cases, advising them to report victimisation to family or community leaders instead (Eyewitness News 2014Aa.

Interestingly, all three groups used surveillance and control measures – criminologies of everyday life – on the youth of Khayelitsha, with awareness programs, police patrols and CCTV implemented at schools (GroundUp 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). The CPF chairperson said that “we [the CPF] meet every month to discuss ways we can stop our children from joining gangs” (GroundUp 2013a). It appears that the limited legal crime control resources available were used on the ingroup youth. Moreover, organisations solely used criminologies of everyday life, giving evidence that it is the state and Khayelitsha citizens who view outsiders as requiring punitive action such as vigilantism.

There was a dualistic use of both criminologies by the state. For example, the Minister for Police declared that “police alone can’t drive down the country’s murder rate… collaborative social effort is needed” (Eyewitness News 2015b). The SAPS then reasserted sovereign control, stating that punitive sentencing “will send a clear message that the police will deal effectively with those who commit crime” (SAPS Magazine 2015a). The state had the most frequent use of criminologies of the other, outweighing criminologies of everyday life in both 2013 and 2015. Moreover, it appears state officials instigated punitiveness. Evidence also showed an increase in vigilantism when a CPF was chaired by Andile Lili (Eyewitness News 2014b). Lili is leader of the political party ‘Ses’khona Peoples Rights Movement’ and is an ANC executive committee member in Gauteng province. His view is that “criminals must be killed immediately and brutally” (SJC 2015b).

Khayelitsha citizens also used both criminologies, with criminologies of the other consistently outweighing criminologies everyday life. Punitive measures against the outgroups were called for, and vigilantism was undertaken against this threat. When vigilantes were arrested, the community called for their release (Eyewitness News 2013a), showing ingroup solidarity. The construction of the outgroups – the targets of punitive measures such as vigilantism – is explored further in the following section.

ARAS Vol. 41 No. 2 December 2020 137
The most commonly constructed outsider, the evil outgroup to be removed from the Khayelitsha community, was the gangster (a career thief and drug dealer). The state played a role in this discourse. The Minister of Police proclaimed a need for a “tough stance against crime and all its evils... almost on a daily basis our members face dangerous and vicious criminals, who will not hesitate to kill them or even injure and kill innocent law-abiding citizens” (Secretariat 2013a). The Minister for Police stated that “Drug lords are evil people who simply do not care that they are destroying the lives of South African youngsters. They even recruit children to do their dirty business for them, so that they can remain hidden in the shadows” (Secretariat 2014b).

In 2013, the Saps undertook punitive drug raids, with the arrests used to reaffirm state legitimacy (Secretariat 2013b, 2013c, 2013d). The Minister for Police then contradictionly stated “We need you as the community to work with government to tackle the scourge of drugs” (Secretariat 2013d). Fear against thieves and drugs became widespread, translating into the vigilante group ‘People Against Gangsterism and Drugs’ conducting a protest march across Khayelitsha and surrounding townships (Eyewitness News 2015c). This protest had support from state officials, the opposition parties Economic Freedom Fighters, Pan African Congress, and Azanian People’s Organisation (Eyewitness News 2015c). State agents openly supported vigilantism against the
gangster threat.

Reports of punitive vigilantism against gangsters by average citizens were frequent (GroundUp 2014c, 2014d, 2014e; Eyewitness News 2015d; City Vision 2015b, 2015c, 2015d). When I attended the Khayelitsha anti-vigilantism forum in 2015, SAPS estimated that 95% of incidents were against thieves. In this analysis, it was also found that they burnt down alleged thieves’ shacks saying, “thugs must move out of this area” (City Vision 2015c). This is direct removal of a high-risk threat from the Khayelitsha community. Although some citizens were arrested for burning down the shacks, they were released after community leaders spoke to SAPS (City Vision 2015c). Another banishment incident was removal of those who supported an ANC councillor who was rumoured to be corruptly allocating houses to friends and outsiders (City Vision 2015e). As a significant risk to the ingroup, mere association with this threat was deemed sufficient cause for removal tactics to be deployed.

Regarding foreigners, it was solely the SAPS who constructed this group as outsiders in 2013. They continued to frequently do so for the period examined, with average citizens following suit in 2014. Somalis were the predominant target. Statistical evidence showed that 96.5% of business robberies reported to the Khayelitsha police were of foreign-owned stores, despite representing not even half of all stores (GroundUp 2014f). Moreover, 40% of business robberies involved murder or attempted murder (GroundUp 2014f). One citizen claimed that “foreigners are increasing the rate of unemployment... [foreigners are a] direct threat to the future of South African economy” (GroundUp 2014g). SAPS failed to take foreigners’ victimisation seriously, and sometimes extorted Somali business traders (GroundUp 2014f, 2014g). A letter to the editor held the view that foreigners “are the biggest drug dealers and fraudsters”, and “everyone seemed to agree that they (foreigners, particularly Nigerians in this case) were the worst offenders when it came to crime in our country” (City Vision 2015f).

By 2015, the state launched punitive Operation Fiela, targeting illegal immigrants. This paramilitary operation was authorised by President Zuma. The Minister for Police could not account for the whereabouts of over 9,000 people who were arrested, however the high court allowed the operation to continue (Eyewitness News 2015d). There was an additional focus on border control, with SAPS citing the need to “optimise the territorial integrity of the RSA [Republic of South Africa]” (SAPS Magazine 2015b). The SJC (2015c) stated that “it would appear as if SAPS management has decided to single out foreign nationals as a scapegoat for crime”. Constructed as a major threat to society, removing
this group was viewed as necessary by the state and citizens.

In terms of general outsiders to the Khayelitsha community, a resident stated “they [vigilantes] don’t always burn people, but some people come from other informal settlements to commit crime here, those are the ones that usually get burned. Or if someone is caught more than once after he was warned” (GroundUp 2014d). An important finding was that targeted criminals who were Khayelitsha community members were those repeatedly pre-warned; they could be considered a higher risk as per Slingeneyer’s (2007) continuum. Significantly, organisations did not portray either foreigners or moral outcasts as outsiders.

Moral outcasts such as those accused of witchcraft were targeted by the state and Khayelitsha citizens. Citizens burnt down a foreign witchdoctor’s house (City Vision 2014a), counted as both code five and code six. The SAPS Magazine also reported incidents of vigilantism against witchcraft (2014a). However, the main outgroup coming under Code six was the LGBTIQ+ community, shockingly instigated by SAPS. All counts of code six in both 2013 and 2015 were against this community. Citizens conducted vigilante attacks against both queer men and women, and SAPS made homophobic remarks and failed to intervene. In 2014 and 2015, SAPS saw a drop in targeting this outgroup, likely because they were warned against this behaviour during the 2014 Commission of Inquiry. In all, the targets of vigilantism and punitiveness were found to be predominantly gangsters, Somalis, and the LGBTIQ+ community.

**Discussion & Recommendations**

Vigilantism is often attributed to high crime rates and an absent, illegitimate state. Although these factors may play a part, this paper provides an in-depth look into the phenomenon. It argues that vigilantism occurs due to its perceived efficiency. Rather than being in the absence of the state, the state is actively involved for this reason, becoming complicit in vigilantism to uphold sovereign control when resources become strained. The case study and content analysis reveal utilisation of Garland’s (1996) criminologies and Slingeneyer’s (2007) corrective continuum. The outgroup is considered a high risk and is thus punitively removed, whereas ingroup members are controlled with the limited resources available. Whether someone is constructed as an outgroup member is conceptualised as identity.

In the township of Khayelitsha, South Africa, the limited police resources and situational crime control were used on ingroup members such as Khayelitsha youth. Both the state and average citizens found it more efficient to utilise vigilantism and punitive tactics against outgroups - predominantly gangsters, Somalis, and the LGBTIQ+ community. This
was explicitly done to protect the ingroup. The fact that legal acts were punished, i.e., being foreign or ‘immoral’, signifies that vigilantism is due to more than just high crime rates or an illegitimate, absent state. Significantly, discourse around the other was in fact instigated by the state. Conversely, organisations did not utilise criminologies of the other or participate in vigilantism. Who participates in vigilantism does require further research. Nonetheless, this study shows that state agents should not be disregarded. Moreover, it provides a framework for why this occurs, and who are the targets of vigilantism.

The findings suggest that legal, conventional resources for crime control should be prioritised, and that social cohesion initiatives – with a focus on foreigners and the LGBTQ+ community especially – in Khayelitsha are vital. Another noteworthy point is the decrease in punitiveness and vigilantism when confronted by the Commission of Inquiry (2014), although public pressure must be maintained to have a lasting effect. Indeed, vigilantism continues to occur in Khayelitsha (e.g., Meyer, 2020) and more generally across South Africa. Since this research, SAPS have officially added vigilantism as a crime category, with statistics showing 3,888 incidents in 2019 (SAPS, 2019/20). Of these, 1,202 resulted in death, and this is unlikely to paint the full picture.

Discourse surrounding dangerous foreigners, including that they are taking economic opportunities, endures. This is shown with widespread xenophobic violence across the country. Somali shop owners appear to remain a common target in townships (e.g., Kalipa, 2019). Discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community by both state agents and citizens also persists (e.g., Obose, 2019). As not much has changed in Khayelitsha regarding development, crime/deviance, or policing (e.g., Kiewit, 2019), it is important to consider this research to implement change. In addition, although only generalisable to vigilantism in South Africa, it would be worth examining whether this framework is applicable to other countries.

Appendix
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