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**The Eyes and Ears of the Police?  
Questioning the Role of Community Policing in Durban, South  
Africa**

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## **The Eyes and Ears of the Police?**

### **Questioning the Role of Community Policing in Durban, South Africa**

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### **Summary**

Today, the number of actors that are involved in policing are increasing, and its field is not limited to the state police anymore. In this wider field of policing, the role of the community is increasingly recognised as important. The idea that the community should be more actively involved in policing has led to the concept of Community Policing, where the community as an actor in the security spectrum is officially recognised. Community Policing is surfacing and gaining in importance all over the world. But what is Community Policing? What is the ideal behind it, and how is it implemented in actual settings?

Community Policing is both initiated by the police as a formal strategy to policing, as well as by the community as an informal strategy, which is often a response caused by discontent about the state-police's performance in ensuring citizens' personal security.

In South Africa, both forms are seen. Formal Community Policing initiatives were initially introduced during South Africa's transition to democracy in the early 1990s, when it was used as the police's main strategy to ensure a smooth transition into a new political system, and to increase the legitimacy of the police among the public. Community Policing Fora (CPF) were the structures that were to ensure Community Policing's proper implementation.

Today, several years after the country's transition, CPF lost their necessity in ensuring a proper transfer to democracy. Thus, their focus has changed towards crime-prevention, and the community, the police, and local governments are to establish a partnership and devise strategies together to ensure a reduction in crime and safer neighbourhoods.

This thesis is based on an ethnographic study that I undertook within neighbourhoods of Durban and their CPF in early 2011. I undertook this research with the purpose of understanding how the CPF work and what their relationship is to the community's perceptions of security. My findings show that different CPF face different successes and challenges, and that no general conclusion

can be made as to how they work. However, factors that may be distinguished as potential challenges to the proper functioning of the fora include resource problems among the South African Police Service (SAPS), the deeply divided society of post-Apartheid South Africa, a lack of trust that the community has in the police and wrong interpretations about how a CPF should function.

The effects of a poor relationship between the CPF and the community that is caused by these factors, show themselves in the CPF turning into a complaints forum, poor attendance from the community, increasingly negative perceptions of the SAPS and the surfacing of informal Community Policing initiatives in both the formal and informal settlements of Durban.

However, positive results are also seen, and especially through an educational role where the CPF educate the public about actual crime rates and necessary precautions to take in order to decrease an individual's chances of being a victim of crime, the CPF can and do contribute to higher perceptions of security among the community.

Finally, I conclude that when determining the successes of CPF, they should be viewed in a broader perspective than the current one which only looks at their influence on crime-rates. CPF may fail to cause a substantial decrease in numbers, but they may have an effect on longer-term issues that South African society faces, like socio-economic inequality and a deeply divided society.

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# The Eyes and Ears of the Police?

## Questioning the Role of Community Policing in Durban, South Africa

*Jop Munneke*

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Towards a New Understanding of Community Policing**

In its World Development Report 2011, the World Bank (2011: 1) states that insecurity has become a primary development challenge of our time. It further says that: ‘efforts to maintain collective security are at the heart of human history’, and notes that the recognition that human safety depends on collaboration has been a motivating factor for the formation of village communities, cities, and nation-states.

This recognition of the importance of collaboration to ensure security can be seen in present-day policing as well, as the actors that are involved in policing are increasing, and its field is not limited to the state police anymore (Bayley & Shearing 1996; Fleming & Wakefield 2009: 232; Jones 2003; Mawby 2003). In this wider field of policing, the role of the community is increasingly recognised as important. The idea that the community should be more actively involved in policing has led to the concept of Community Policing, where the community as an actor in the security spectrum is officially recognised. Community Policing is surfacing and gaining in importance all over the world. But what is Community Policing? What is the ideal behind it, and how is it implemented in actual settings?

Community Policing is both initiated by the police as a formal strategy to policing, as well as by the community as a response to discontent about the state-police’s performance in ensuring citizens’ personal security (Wisler & Onwudiwe 2008: 427-428). In his article, Klockars (2005: 458) concludes by asking a rhetorical question about the ideal of what Community Policing stands for. He asks: ‘who could be against community, cooperation, and crime prevention?’ He provides an answer by saying that having this opinion would be “misdirected, mean spirited and even perverse”. However, he also mentions that many of

Community Policing's immodest and romantic aspirations cannot be realised and that these issues should be addressed (Ibid.).

In South Africa, Community Policing has also been implemented as an official strategy of the police to ensure a safer country. Initially, during South Africa's transition to democracy in the early 1990s, it was used as the police's main strategy to ensure a smooth transition into a new political system, and to increase the legitimacy of the police among the public. Community Policing was implemented as an instrument of change (Burger 2007: 97-104) and Community Policing Fora (CPF) were to be the structures through which Community Policing in South Africa would be implemented.

However, several years after the country's transition, CPF lost their necessity in ensuring a proper transfer to democracy. Thus, their focus changed towards crime-prevention, and the community, the police, and local governments were to form a partnership and to co-operate in organising events to ensure a reduction in crime and safer neighbourhoods (South Africa 1998). Today, CPF still exist to serve that purpose.

Early 2011 I undertook ethnographical research within neighbourhoods in Durban and their CPF<sup>1</sup>. These neighbourhoods fell under the supervision of two police-stations: Westville and Sydenham. I undertook my research with the purpose of understanding how the CPF work. Understanding this sheds light on the question if these CPF succeed in establishing that partnership between the community and the police that was envisioned for them, or if they are an example of Community Policing being that great ideal with 'romantic aspirations' Klockars refers to, which cannot actually be fulfilled in practise.

While conducting my research, it quickly came to my attention that there is one major difficulty with the application of the term Community Policing in the setting of South Africa. The term implies that the community is one actor, who is to co-operate with the police and local governments. However, South Africa remains deeply divided, with often many different communities living together in

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<sup>1</sup> I undertook this research to obtain my bachelors degree in Cultural Anthropology and Developmental Sociology at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. The thesis was written for Utrecht University.

a neighbourhood. Many of these communities have very different ideas as to how proper policing should be implemented. This makes the task of the South African Police Services (SAPS) to keep all communities satisfied particularly hard.

The CPF thus have the hard task of bringing this divided society together, by cooperating with a police service which has to keep the different communities they have to work with satisfied, and together these actors are to work on the issue of crime prevention. Their goal seems clear, but it is difficult to establish whether they are successful. Burger (2007: 142) argues that community policing has failed, either as a concept, or a strategy, because it shows no positive reduction in crime rates. However, when a CPF succeeds in increasing people's perception about the police, or in increasing their perception of security, which is shaped partly by the media's continuing stories about crime and police malfunctioning, should this then not be considered a success? In this research I argue that when judging over the value and effectiveness of CPF, questions like this should also be taken into account.

In my research I have focused on that relationship between the CPF and people's perception of security and I have attempted to answer the following question:

*'How do the Community Policing Fora work and what relationships exist between the CPF and the community's perceptions of security in Durban, South Africa?'*

In order to answer this question I have divided this thesis into seven chapters. Following this introduction, the second chapter presents the theoretical framework to which my research will contribute. In the third chapter, the context of my research setting is provided, as well as some ideas about the subject from authors who have conducted earlier research on South Africa.

In chapters four to six, I present my empirical findings. In chapter four I will present the neighbourhoods in which I conducted my research, the CPF-structures I found present there, and some of the main actors involved in them. In this chapter I will also present an answer to my first sub-question, namely: 'how do the CPF work?' referring mostly to their structure. In chapter five I will answer my next two questions, namely 'how are the relations between the CPF and the community?' and 'why do citizens decide whether or not to participate in CPF?' I will also present a paragraph on the perception of the police, as this perception, I

have found, is closely related to both questions. In my last chapter of my empirical data, chapter six, I will present my findings to my final sub-question: ‘What relationship exists between the CPF and the community’s perception of security?’.

Finally, in chapter seven, I will summarise my findings and present my conclusion. As will be seen, the CPF in South Africa still face many challenges, and are often misunderstood by some, or all actors involved in them: the community, the police, and local governments.

## **1.2 Methodological Justification**

In order to obtain all necessary data, I conducted mostly qualitative research in Durban. I did this in the areas that fell under the supervision of the Sydenham-, and the Westville SAPS stations. Focusing on these two stations, instead of on only one, allowed me to see differences between the organisation of the various CPF. Also, by focusing on two stations, I was able to compare the data that were provided by both. This way, I was able to see how some approaches failed in one area, but worked in the other, and I could try to find an answer as to why this was by looking at the differences between the fora, the communities and the police-stations.

My data-collection techniques consisted of participant observation, hanging out, informal conversations, interviews and group interviews. In addition to these methods, I used quantitative data-collection by conducting a survey among residents of Westville and Reservoir Hills. Finally, my literature research in the field consisted of reading local newspaper articles to obtain a general perception of what the media communicated to Durban’s citizens.

Especially in the early stages of my fieldwork, I obtained a lot of knowledge through the method of participant observation, hanging out, and informal conversations, as my research setting was new to me and I needed to become up to date on how things work in the neighbourhoods, as well as during police patrols and at CPF-meetings. Especially through my observations on Sydenham’s police patrols and Reservoir Hills Sector CPF patrols I managed to get a good insight into police and CPF functioning on a practical level, while attendance of CPF-meetings showed me how the meetings are organised and which discussions

are raised. Hanging around was a method I particularly used after the attendance of these meetings, and within the informal settlements<sup>2</sup>.

In the later stages of my time in Durban, I started to undertake more in-depth interviews, as actors had gotten to know me better and became more open to share their views and provide me with information. Although various informal conversations have provided me with some idea about various people's perceptions, it was mainly through interviews that I managed to obtain most data about the effects of CPF, people's views on each other, as well as on the actors in the security spectrum<sup>3</sup>.

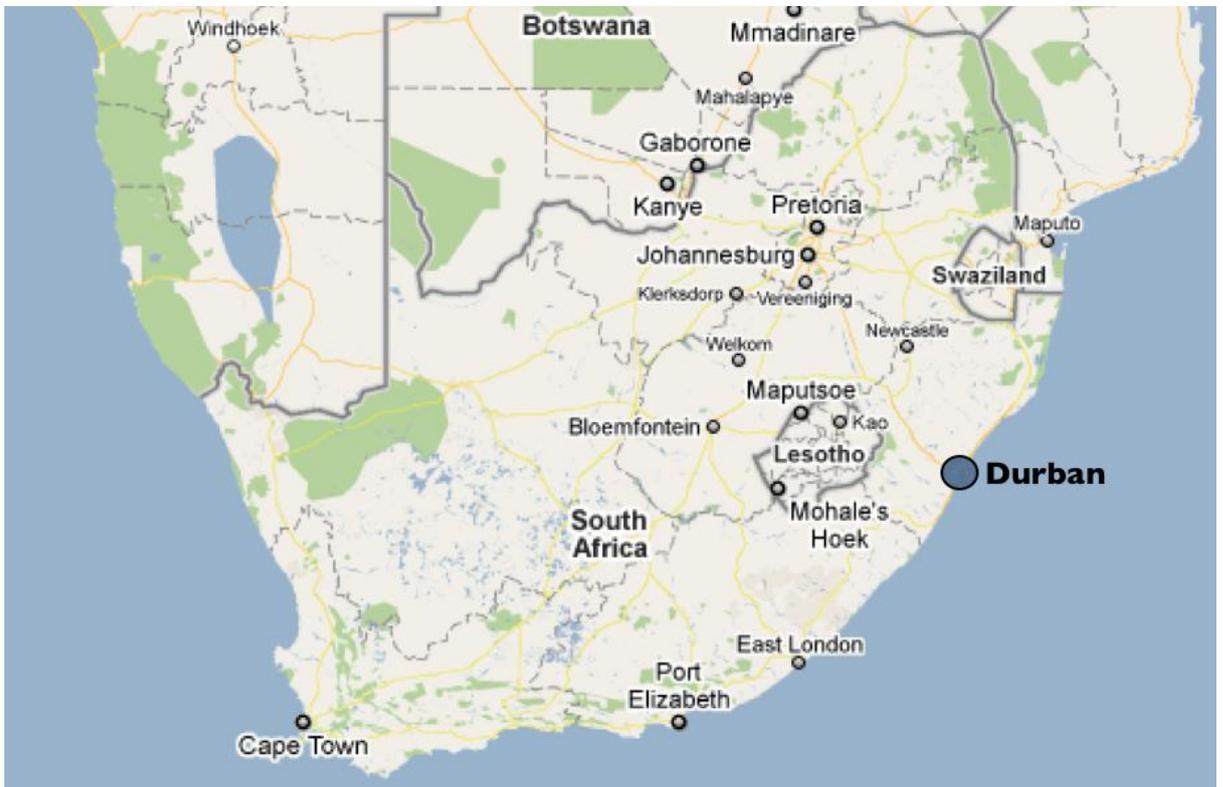
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<sup>2</sup> While in Durban, I attended sixteen CPF-meetings, went on seven patrols in Reservoir Hills and on one police patrol in Sydenham. In addition to these, I attended between three to five GOCOC-meetings (meetings were actors within the security spectrum meet to address crime) every week over a period of three months, and attended two patrols with a Private Security Company. I made a total of 6 visits to two informal settlements.

<sup>3</sup> In Durban I had four key-informants. I conducted thirty-two interviews, of which three were group-interviews.

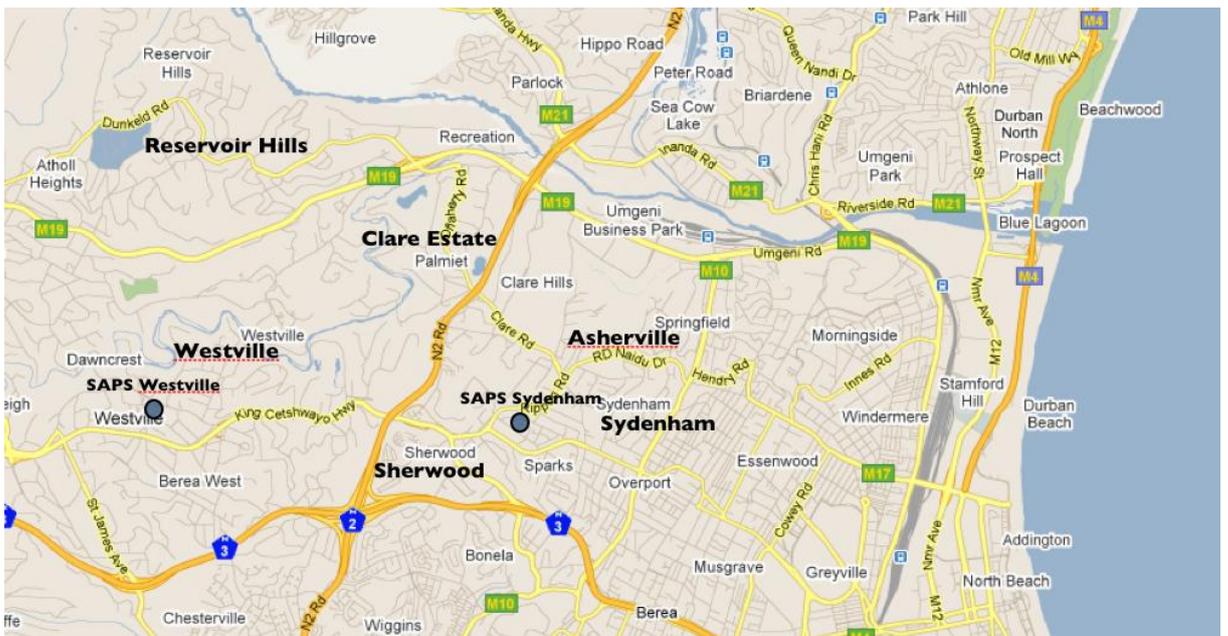
## Maps of Research Areas

Figure 1. South Africa



Source: Google Maps 2011 / Munneke 2011

Figure 2. Focus areas of research in Durban



Source: Google Maps 2011 / Munneke 2011

## **2. Theoretical Frame: Questioning the Understanding of Contemporary Security Challenges**

### **2.1 Anthropology & Security.**

Traditionally, approaches to security have been focused on inter-state wars and the idea that security means that a state should be protected from powers from the outside, or that the world should be protected from a nuclear holocaust. Security, traditionally, was about the state, not people (UN 1994: 22; Neild 1999: 2). More recently, however, broader notions of security have surfaced. This new, 'wider' approach to security allows anthropology to make an important contribution to studies on security. Issues of (in)security are of importance in the lives of the peoples anthropologists are interested in, and influence social settings anthropologists study (Goldstein 2010: 488-489). Understanding this connection is thus important for anthropologists and studying this connection can provide valuable anthropological contributions to broader understandings of security.

Perhaps the clearest approach in this wider understanding of security is the 'Human Security Approach'. In their 1994 Human Development Report, the United Nations first introduced the notion of Human Security to a broad world audience, and to world politics. Human Security is people-centred, and can be defined as having two major aspects: the first includes safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression, and the second, protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life (UN 1994: 23). More broadly, Human Security can be defined as 'freedom from fear and want' (King & Murray: 2001). The Human Security approach has been welcomed for being a holistic approach and criticised for the same reason, namely that it included too many aspects<sup>4</sup>. The traditional approach to security is in my opinion dated and I welcome the Human Security Approach's inclusion of threats to security like diseases and public disarray.

In order to specify the idea of Human Security, the approach was divided in seven components: Economic security, Food security, Health Security, Environmental

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<sup>4</sup>For further reading on the discussion about the Human Security Paradigm and its positive and negative aspects, see Frerks. (2008), Roland (2001) and Thomas (2001).

Security, Personal Security, Community Security and Political Security, each proponent being a category of threats to Human Security (UN 1994: 24-25).

Perhaps the most essential of these seven proponents in this context is Personal Security, which entails the protection from physical violence. Threats to physical well-being can come from the state (in the form of torture), other states (war), ethnic groups (ethnic tension), individuals (crime), individuals who direct their violence at women (rape; domestic violence), at children (child abuse) or at themselves (suicide) (UN 1994: 30).

## **2.2 Personal Security, Governance & Policing**

The governmental institution that is most directly involved in protecting the state's citizens from physical harm and thus ensuring Personal Security, is the police. Some definitions of the police given in the literature on policing contradict this statement however, and through them a paradox in the duty of the police becomes clear. Glebbeek (2003: 39-41) mentions the difficulty of defining the concept of police, as it encompasses many things. One definition she provides is one where she describes the police as 'the main instrument by which the state enforces its domestic monopoly on physical force' (Ibid: 39). In this definition the police are the executor of force, not the protector from it. Defining the police in this way is by some seen as problematic as it is contradictory to the idea that police should be there to protect citizens from physical harm.

Both sides are, in the context of the police, related. In order to maintain legitimacy, the police need the backing of the public or an elite within that public that has the power to authorise and provide legitimacy (Mawby 1990: 3, 173-174). This is more so, but not exclusively, in a democratic society. When the police do not use enough force in societies with high crime rates, they may be viewed by the public as weak (Glebbeek 2003: 39).

The paradox in policing thus entails that by using violence against some, the police protect other from it. Thus, in the case of the police, however contradictory it may sound, the use of violence can go hand in hand with protection from it.

Having said this, by far the most common activity of the police, is patrolling, and only a small part of cases that the police deal with, is actually related to crime.

Police patrols are mainly occupied with executing tasks that the public wants them to do (Bayley 1994: 16-17).

This fact is important in understanding what exactly it is that the police do. The police comprise the official government's body that has to maintain a secure internal state, which includes the personal security of that state's citizens. In order to do this effectively, the police must convince several audiences of their effectiveness: they must convince politicians that they have effectively executed the state's policy and the resources they were allocated; they must convince criminals that they are effective in fighting crime, and they must convince the public that they are effective in crime-prevention (or ensuring those citizens' personal security) (Manning 2005: 193).

Having mentioned this, the police's task in crime-prevention remains an issue of debate. As Burger (2007) argues, there is only so much the police can do in crime-prevention. He believes the police as an institution should contribute to crime-prevention, but they should not be the main actor responsible for it. He points to the fact that the police's tasks are mostly short-term, like law-enforcement. By doing these tasks effectively, they can create a deterrence for criminals and thus contribute to crime-prevention. However, Burger mentions that crime-prevention on a larger scale lies in tackling the roots of crime, which are longer-term problems like socio-economic ones. Addressing these issues is what is called social crime prevention and should be the responsibility of other institutions than the police.

This brings me to the wider concept of policing. A traditional idea is that policing is 'that what police officers do' (Waddington, in Fleming & Wakefield 2009: 232). This is true in the case of the public police. For them policing is not only about their effectiveness in maintaining order. Equally as important is their capability to convince their audiences of their effectiveness (see also paragraph 2.5 on perceptions of security).

Today, the concept of policing is not limited to that what the state-police do anymore (Bayley & Shearing 1996; Fleming & Wakefield 2009: 232; Jones 2003; Mawby 2003). Other actors in policing now include private security companies and community policing initiatives like neighbourhood watches (Mawby 2003:

15). This broadening of the concept of policing brings along problems with governance and accountability. With most crime being of local character, the police need to gain correct and useful information, which is most often only obtainable from the public. Co-operation between the police and the public is thus essential (Jones 2003: 606). In order to gain this information, the police need to be considered legitimate by the public (Bayley & Shearing 1996: 588). This legitimacy can be obtained through accountability: the need for the police to justify and answer for their conduct to several different parties, including their government and the public (Lewis 2009: 1).

But with more forms of policing surfacing, including Community Policing and Private Policing<sup>5</sup>, the actors who govern these other forms of police, and the groups these other police have to account to, can become increasingly vague and diverse. This is especially so in a multi-ethnic society. Thus proper and clear accountability, and strong governance, are important for a well-functioning police.

### **2.3 Governance & Policing in a Multi-Ethnic Society.**

Depending on the political system present in a particular society, the actors the police have to account to will differ. As the police are an executive body of the government, they will treat citizens according to their government's behaviour. In a liberal democracy for example, in which all citizens are granted equal civil and political rights and are judged by merit, one would expect equal treatment of all citizens (Smootha & Hanf 1992: 33). In a dictatorship or Herrenvolk democracy (in which democratic rights are limited to the dominant ethnic group), however, the ruler or ruling party does not have to depend on votes from all parts of the population (Ibid.: 32). This means that services, including policing services, might be unequally distributed to those on which the government depends the most. Thus, the issue of accountability here is important: the question of who the police have to account their actions to influences their actions.

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<sup>5</sup> Private Policing refers to all policing activities carried out on a contractual basis or through Private Security companies (Prenzler 2009: 241). Private Policing is a commercial activity. It thus excludes activities of the state-police, who are paid from public taxes, and Community Policing, through which the community is included in policing issues on a voluntary basis (ibid.).

Regardless of the political system, however, ethnic profiling (treating certain ethnic groups differently than others) by the police can result in unrest and unhappiness within a group. When this unrest grows past certain boundaries, it can result in that group considering the government and/or police illegitimate. This could pose an internal security threat (Hasisi 2008: 1125). Bowling et al (2003: 539) conclude in their article that in the case of Britain, ethnic minorities are less likely to contact the police and provide them with information. A major problem that causes this is the vicious cycle which is often present in police-minority contact. Minority-groups are often part of the lower classes of the population and have relatively many encounters with the police. This can cause the development of prejudice towards these minorities among the police, which, in turn, might result in a specific treatment of certain minority-groups. Eventually, all this can then lead to an increase in the number of complaints from minority groups about ethnic profiling of the police (Hasisi 2008: 1123).

Finally, an important problem is that the police-force is often dominated by the ruling ethnic group, especially their top functions. A way to improve or secure good minority-police relations is to ensure a police-force in which all groups, ethnicities, or skin-colours are proportionally represented (Bowling et al 2003; Hasisi 2008)

## **2.4 Community Policing**

Policing is not solely the responsibility of the state-police anymore. New forms of policing have surfaced over the years, and community policing (CP) is one of these forms that can be seen more and more in present-day society. CP can be divided in twofold, namely formal and informal CP. Formal CP is an official strategy used by a state's government to decentralise their policing obligations. Informal CP, on the contrary, is community-initiated and often happens outside of the state's influence (Wisler & Onwudiwe 2008: 427-428).

Community-initiated CP might surface when there is unhappiness about the state's approach to ensure a particular group of citizens' personal security or when it is absent altogether (Tilley 2003: 311). When a group perceives the police as not doing enough, it might take matters into its own hands and initiate a community form of policing. When force is included as a main strategy in this

form of CP, it can be considered vigilantism (Wisler & Onwudiwe 2008: 430). This type of bottom-up CP can surface when the contract between state and citizens (where the state is given monopoly on violence in return for the assurance of their citizens' (personal) security, is not met by the state. Minnaar (2001: 4) points out that this is to a certain degree the case in South Africa. According to him, forms of vigilantism in South Africa are an expression of the failure of the whole criminal justice system and the inadequacies of the policing that is or is not occurring.

Formal CP, on the other hand, is an official strategy and policy of the state-police. It is introduced by and thus with the consent of this state-police; formal CP is also introduced as a policy without the state losing its monopoly on violence and is to be considered top-down CP (Wisler & Onwudiwe 2008). It does derive, however, from the idea that the current approach to policing can and should be improved (Tilley 2005: 311). Formal CP can be introduced for multiple reasons, one of which is to include the community in matters of local security and to offer them the opportunity to have a say in the discussion about security matters (Klockars 2005: 449). This inclusion of citizens could also improve police-community relations. Another reason is to decentralise command and create subdivisions of the police force that can effectively include the community in dealing with crime. The idea is that people who know best what is going on in the neighbourhood should be most effective in fighting crime (Klockars 2005: 454).

Increased participation of the local community in these subdivisions, when done properly, can mean less work for the police. No matter what the reason for CP, however, one of the aims of its introduction is always to secure a better relationship between the community and the police (Fleming et al. 2009: 37-38; Tilley 2005; Wisler & Onwudiwe 2008). Tilley (2005: 315) also stresses that CP focuses on 'policing *with* and *for* the community rather than policing *of* the community'. Thus, as Bayley & Shearing (1996: 588) mention, the role of state-police as a quad against crime is transformed through CP into a service the police provides in co-ordination with the community.

The ideal behind CP is thus clearly an intense and successful co-operation between the community and the police in dealing with policing issues. CP's actual implementation, however, brings with it various difficulties. When exploring the

various problems that can pose a threat to the success of CP, it is important to start by looking at what the community actually is. Many authors recognise that it is a vague term (Klockars 2005; Mawby 1990; Tilley 2003). As Klockars (2005: 449) states, the concept of community ‘implies a group of people with a common history, common beliefs and understandings, a sense of themselves as ‘us’ and outsiders as ‘them’, and often, but not always, a shared territory’. Tilley (2003: 315), however, mentions that community in the context of Community Policing most often refers to a neighbourhood, and this neighbourhood can be divided in their opinions and consist of multiple ethnicities. Thus, the community the police have to work with can have a varied agenda which could complicate effective policing. Another point that Tilley (2003: 315) makes, is that those with whom the police wishes to improve their relationship through community policing (those who are dissatisfied with the police’s actions), are seldom the ones who participate actively in Community Policing.

Finally, there is also outright criticism towards Community Policing. Burger (2007: 142) argues that CP has failed because the introduction of CP has in no example lead to a reduction in crime-levels. The only contribution CP has to policing according to him is its potential to increase the police’s legitimacy. Stating the latter, he does acknowledge that it may have a positive effect, and failure of CP then depends on what its goal is exactly. Increasing the police’s legitimacy is in some countries, also in South Africa, a problem and if CP has a positive influence on this, it should not be considered a complete failure.

Concluding, it can be stated that CP and its proper implementation pose various challenges, no matter how ideologically sound the concept may be intended.

## **2.5 Community Policing & Perceptions of Security**

The police have many audiences they have to account their actions to, or who they have to at least convince that they are doing a proper job in their work of fighting crime and ensuring citizens’ personal security. When they can convince citizens, their government, but also criminals that they are properly using their resources and are effectively accomplishing a secure internal state, they will be supported and applauded. By convincing criminals they, as a police force, are doing a proper job, the police challenge criminals’ efforts, requiring them to

become more creative in their criminal activities. When police keep effectively doing this, they may scare some away and a safer environment will result. In this case convincing actors of their effectiveness is more important for the police than creating an actual decrease in crime. The two are also linked: because they create a sense of security in the example given above, the police accomplish a safer situation by scaring criminals away. However, it also goes the other way: creating a sense of security is difficult or impossible to accomplish with high crime-rates.

The two notions, security and perceptions of security, are, however, not the same. The 'Safe and Clean Neighbourhoods Program' that was introduced in the mid-1970s in the US state of New Jersey and involved an increase in foot-patrols, showed that this increase in patrols did not actually affect the crime rates, but did make residents who lived in the areas where these foot-patrols were introduced feel safer. It also gave them a more favourable attitude towards the police (Wilson & Kelling 2005). In his discussion about fear of crime, Lee (2009: 116-118) also mentions the fact that surveys indicate that some populations believe that crime rates are getting worse regardless of actual changes in crime-rates and that police and the courts are largely powerless to do anything about this.

Perceptions of Security may also be influenced by governments and media. In certain scenarios it can be beneficial for the government to create a 'culture of fear' among its citizens to, for example, push certain policies or keep its population under control (Isin 2004). Over-reporting of threats and crime in the media can create a false perception of insecurity (and the under-reporting can do the opposite). (Un)freedom of press can thus influence the perception of security as well.

For CP, a perception of insecurity may prove negative as citizens may start to mistrust their neighbours and/or public places. The first threatening effective co-operation, the latter resulting in people avoiding these places and thus reducing natural surveillance (Lee 2009: 117).

CP can also be influential in a positive change in people's perception of security. In fact, Bayley and Shearing (1996: 603-605) state that CP is essential for proper policing, legitimacy of the police-force, and an increased security. They propose block grants for poor communities so that they can participate on the security

market and organise their own security. They also believe that through community policing, governments can develop the self-disciplining and crime-preventive capacity of the poor, high-crime neighbourhoods. They believe that participation of the community is essential as the community knows where the problems are and is capable of addressing them. CP might then be able to increase a perception of security, as, because of its participation, the community knows that important issues are being addressed. Be this as it may, strong governance and well-monitored accountability will be important for proper allocation of the block grants Bayley and Shearing propose. Especially in poor areas corruption may thrive and is easily missed. Proper CP might thus positively influence citizens' personal security and their perception of security, but it is difficult to implement and presents many challenges, as can be seen in South Africa.

### **3. Context: Community Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa**

#### **3.1 The End of Apartheid and South Africa's Transition to Democracy**

In his speech on the second of February 1990, South Africa's president at the time F.W. de Klerk announced the lifting of the ban against the African National Congress (ANC) and other political parties that were prohibited under Apartheid law. He also announced the release of Nelson Mandela and other political figures who were imprisoned during the Apartheid era (Welsh 1997: 60). De Klerk's speech would turn out to be the beginning of the dismantling of the Apartheid policy that had dominated South African politics for almost half a century. This policy had executed the ideal of the separation of whites and nonwhites by law, and had established a society based on inequality determined by skin-colour (Welsh 1997).

In the years leading up to 1990, the Apartheid policy had been eased considerably due to increasing criticism and pressure from the international community, as well as an explosion in size of the African population. In the years following his 1990 speech, de Klerk continued to slowly dismantle all Apartheid legislation, which led to South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 (Welsh 1997). The new South Africa was to become the 'rainbow nation', in which people of all ethnicities were to be able to live on an equal basis.

However, Apartheid's legacy had left major scars on South African society in the form of severe inequalities in wealth and education (Welsh 1997: 60). Also, the transition to democracy and racial equality was accompanied by an increase in crime (South Africa 1998). These problems would pose difficult challenges for South Africa's future regimes to establish a strong democracy and social and economical equality, as well as a secure internal state.

#### **3.2 South Africa's Deeply Divided Society and Crime.**

The final clause of the interim constitution of South Africa of 1993 opens with the following statement:

*'This Constitution provides a historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South Africans,*

*irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex. The pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all South African citizens and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society' (South Africa 1993).*

A division is made in the interim constitution between the deeply divided society of the past, and the society based on the peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South African citizens of the future.

In their report on South African income distribution and poverty, which was published sixteen years after South Africa adopted this interim constitution, Leibbrandt et al. (2010: 68) conclude that inequality in income distribution and poverty in South Africa remains high and, although the rise of a black middle and upper class has resulted in increased intra-racial inequalities, inequality still contains a clear racial aspect. It is fact that the bottom half of income distribution remains to be reserved for black South Africans and poverty is still dominated by black citizens. Hootnick (2003: 56) notes this continuing inequality in his statement: '[...] democracy has brought about the end of segregation only as a matter of law.'

Apart from inequality remaining high sixteen years into South Africa's democracy, the country has seen an increase in crime levels in the final years of Apartheid and during its transition to democracy (South Africa 1998). South Africa's (1998) White Paper on Safety and Security, a paper released by the government to discuss past approaches to policing and to deal with crime and set out policy recommendations for the future, points to the fact that states in transition often see rising levels of crime and that this surge in crime is hard to control for a new government. However, crime remains extremely high in South Africa today, more than a decade past its transition (Burger 2007: xi). Although its murder rate has declined since 1994/1995, it remained almost seven times that of the United States in 2009/2010 (FBI 2010: 2; SAPS 2010: 3). Furthermore, the amount of hijackings and house robberies has actually increased since 1994/1995 (Burger 2007: xi).

The South African government has thus until this date been unable to provide that what was envisaged in the 1993 Interim Constitution: a society based on the well-being of all citizens, equal development opportunities and peaceful co-existence,

and although it was perceived to be a problem of the past, South African society remains deeply divided.

### **3.3 Crime and Community Policing in South Africa**

In its transitional days, South Africa introduced Community Policing. Then, it was seen as more than a policing strategy. Shaw, in Burger (2007: 102) states that CP was primarily ‘an attempt to rebuild relations with citizens after confrontational periods... to transform the apartheid-oriented police force into one which enjoys some community acceptance’. The role of the community then was thus big in the sense that it functioned as a watchdog of the police.

The Community Policing Fora (CPF) were instituted as the body through which the CP approach of the government was to be executed (Bruce 1997: 31; Pelsler 1999). Initially, it was thus the task of the CPF to function as this watchdog which checked police activities. Later, when the transition to democracy was completed, the fora were to serve a new function more in line with the new theoretical focus on social crime prevention. In South Africa’s (1998) White Paper on Safety and Security, the argument that crime prevention should be allocated to other institutions than that of the police is recognised. The paper mentions that social crime prevention is an important way to tackle the roots of crime and places responsibility for Crime Prevention on all government levels (national, provincial, local), and on government departments like housing, education, welfare and health. All these actors were recognised as important in addition to that of the department that occupies itself with security. The CPF were to perform a role on the local level, namely by aiding the local government as well as the local body of SAPS in the new approach to crime prevention by organising social crime prevention programs and setting priorities for crime prevention-initiatives.

This change in the role of CPF envisions a more equal relationship of co-operation between the CPF and the police, as well as local government bodies, and explains the fact that CP as a policy since 1997 has been focused mostly on creating a partnership between the community and the police (Pelsler et al 2002).

### **3.4 Formal and Informal Community Policing in South Africa**

Community Policing through CPF is a formal approach to CP by the South African government. The fora are important as the government has an influence in them and they are a way for the community to become involved in policing, without CP turning informal. Informal CP is something the South African government strictly rejects (see B nit-Gbaffou 2008).

This is not to say that informal CP does not exist in South Africa. Especially in the informal settlements, informal CP in the form of popular justice systems is often widespread and accepted among the community (Hootnick 2003). These justice systems date from the period before the abolishment of Apartheid and were particularly active in the late 1980s and early 1990s when political violence was high. They were presented often as people’s courts that took the law into their own hands and punished criminals according to their own beliefs (Minnaar 2001). In many occasions, these people’s courts, also called kangaroo courts, had considerable legitimacy among communities and in Apartheid days they were not considered to be a particularly severe problem by the authorities (Nina 2000). However, after the transition to a democracy these systems were not in line with government policy and the practice of these systems denied common rights under South Africa’s new constitution and undermined the functionality of the state. They were thus unwanted forms of justice for the South African government (Nina 2000).

According to Harris (2001), CPF have a potential to prevent violent community initiatives from surfacing. However, he also points to the fact that they may become part of these initiatives as well. As an example of how this may happen, he mentions that some kangaroo courts present themselves as CPF while actually they can be called vigilante groups (Harris 2001).

### **3.5 Community Policing Fora and their Guidelines**

CPF were instituted from an ideology that they would bring about more legitimisation of the SAPS, and after South Africa’s transition they were supposed to continue to function as bodies through which a partnership between the community and the police is established. This importance is also mentioned in the Community Policing Toolkit published by The Kwazulu-Natal Provincial

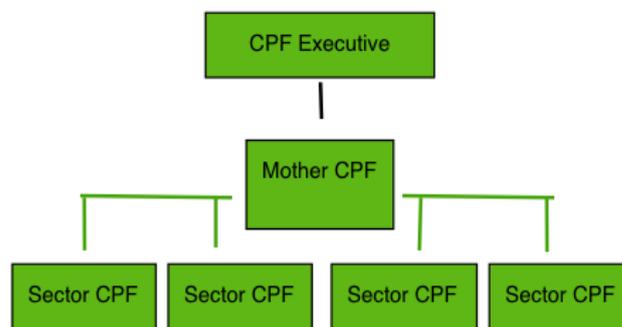
Community Police Board (2003: 7). It is stated here that Community Policing brings the police and the community together to solve problems of crime', which is, as was mentioned earlier, focused on crime-prevention.

In order to do this effectively, the forum may not be aligned to any specific political party and members shall not use their membership to promote the aims and objectives of any political party. Also, racism should not be shown or tolerated in any way in the forum. (Ibid: 30).

The Community Policing Forum toolkit (ibid: 20-24) mentions some important requirements for every CPF. It states that each CPF should have an executive committee that consists of at least a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Station Commissioner/Commander of the SAPS-station the forum is related to. The CPF also has to be attached to a police station and must have the local police represented in it. Furthermore, it must have adopted its own constitution, be accessible to community members and organisations and be representative of the community.

Finally, the provided guidelines state that a CPF may initiate a sub-forum depending on the geographical size of the area. This sub-forum must have representatives on the "Mother" forum and meet all the other requirements for main forums (Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board 2003: 18-21). A full CPF structure may then be as following:

**Figure 3. CPF Structure:**



Source: Munneke 2011

The division of a forum in sub-fora to divide the CPF into smaller, more easily manageable areas, is in line with the new approach of the SAPS to combat crime and promote crime prevention by the strategy of sector policing. Sector Policing is defined by the Draft National Instruction of the South African Police Service 2003 (South Africa, in Burger 2007: 133) as:

*'[...] a method of policing used in a smaller, manageable geographical sector in a police station area; the appointment of a police official as a sector commander who, by acting as a crime prevention official will involve all role-players in identifying the particular policing needs in each sector and addressing the root causes of crime, as well as the enabling and contributing factors, in order to bring about effective crime prevention.'*

Guidelines for how CPF are to work, and what they are meant for, are thus provided. Even still, Community Policing in South Africa has been subject to severe criticism of various authors. Burger (2007), rejects CP in general as, according to him, it has failed to bring about a decrease in crime levels wherever it has been instituted. Harris (2001) claims that CPF don't work because they have failed to address crime, because they are seen as one and the same as the police instead of a partnership, and because CPF members have used their position to their own ends.

In the following chapters I will explore the way CPF functioned in the first half of 2011 with Durban as a case study. I will try to create a broader understanding about how they co-operate with the police, how they are perceived by the community, how and if they function, and whether or not they have any influence on the community's perception of security.

## **4. Structures and Guidelines: How the Community Policing Fora Operate**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In Durban, CPF are widely present. Every SAPS-station is by law obliged to organise a CPF and to engage the community in policing. While I was there, I focused my research on CPF belonging to two SAPS-stations in particular, namely the Westville, and the Sydenham stations. This chapter introduces the stations and CPF in these areas, as well as some of the main actors that are involved in them. It also looks at how they operate.

### **4.2 The Westville and Sydenham CPF**

Westville is a large area in Durban and has its own SAPS-station. This SAPS-station has a CPF-structure attached to it that consists of an executive body and one forum. It is not divided into smaller sectors, although one member of the Westville SAPS did express feelings about the possible necessity of instituting sub-fora in the future for community policing to be more effective<sup>6</sup>.

The CPF holds three kinds of meetings: Annual General Meetings (AGMs), executive meetings, and public meetings. The executive meetings remain exclusive for the executive committee, while the AGM and public meetings may be attended by anybody living in the Westville area. AGMs are held annually, while the Public and Executive meetings are generally held once a month.

All meetings are generally attended by various members of the police service, including Westville SAPS's station commanders (Colonel Charlotte Davis, Lt. Colonel Edwards<sup>7</sup>) and the officer of communications (Brian). Sometimes, a representative from Metro-Police attends as well (Simon Anderson).

Westville's executive committee is run by Chairperson Keith Wilson and is rather large, consisting of eighteen members. In addition to the five compulsory positions in the executive, they have many other members who wish to remain actively involved in the CPF-executive in addition to attending Westville's

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<sup>6</sup> Interview 28 April 2011

<sup>7</sup> All names in this thesis are changed to protect the identity of those who participated in this study.

monthly public-meetings. Some of these executive members include Davy Moore who runs the website, Edward Lewis who surveys among residents of Westville who have been a victim of crime, and Daniel, who is a representative from a private security company.

Of my focus-areas, the Westville CPF is best attended, with usually around fifty to seventy community-members present in its monthly public meetings. Its 2011 AGM-meeting<sup>8</sup> was equally well attended.

Unlike Westville, the CPF that is connected to the Sydenham SAPS-station is divided into four sub-fora. These four sub-fora belong to Reservoir Hills, Sherwood/Sydenham, Asherville and Clare Estate. Each of them has its own executive committee which sends out representatives to an overarching executive-meeting of the mother-body of the Sydenham CPF. This mother-body overlooks all four sectors and is attended by Sydenham's Station-Commander: Colonel Olivia van der Wilt. Just like in Westville, Sydenham's officer of communications (captain Miller), attends many meetings along with Mrs van der Wilt. The chairman of this overarching executive is Mr. Naidoo, who is the chairman of the Clare Estate sub-forum as well.

The public meetings of the sub-fora in Sydenham are not as well-attended as those in Westville. In the Sherwood/Sydenham area they generally attract between fifteen to twenty-five community-members. However, these meetings are bi-weekly and relatively many different attendees show up on the different meetings. Should there only be one meeting each month, a larger attendance could be expected.

In Reservoir Hills, meetings are held on a monthly basis and are roughly attended by twenty to thirty community members. Most of these attendees are also active in the Reservoir Hills patrol.

The Clare Estate and Asherville sub-fora that I attended saw an attendance at their monthly public-meetings of about ten to fifteen community members<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> held on 15-02-2011

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately I was only able to attend two CPF-meetings in Clare Estate and one in Asherville, as they were monthly and often intertwined with other forum-meetings.

Although it is not required by guidelines (see Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board 2003), some CPF do organise their own Community Patrols in addition to their meetings. The Westville CPF limits herself to the organisation of meetings, but this is very different in Sydenham's CPF. Here, official patrols are organised, and Reservoir Hills is the most active in the area.

The patrol in Reservoir Hills is organised by a man named Kesh, who is also the CPF's chairperson. According to Kesh, the patrol is active every day, but biggest on Friday and Saturday nights. It operates on a purely voluntary, non-political basis, with its sole-function to make Reservoir Hills a safer place<sup>10</sup>.

In order to establish effective patrolling, Kesh first divided Reservoir Hills into zones, and later allocated a group of people and cars onto each zone for effective patrolling. According to him, there are now up to forty-two cars on patrol per night.<sup>11</sup>

Sydenham's other sub-fora organise similar community patrols, but on a much smaller scale. For example, the Sherwood/Sydenham sub-forum organises patrols that are not on set days and are planned during the CPF's biweekly public meetings. The initiator is often Ben (the chairperson) or Rivash (the vice-chairperson and GOCOC-representative of Sherwood/Sydenham<sup>12</sup>). In Sherwood/Sydenham's patrol volunteers go out in one or two cars and patrol the area. This patrol is not as visible as in Reservoir Hills, as community-members' own cars are used and registered with SAPS<sup>13</sup>.

### **4.3 The Wheeling and Dealing of CPF**

The Westville and Sydenham CPF-meetings that are held are either an executive meeting, a public meeting, or an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The AGMs are short and to the point, not focused on day-to-day issues but purely on the annual reports and the election of new executive members. When I was

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<sup>10</sup> Interview Kesh 08-04-2011

<sup>11</sup> Interview Kesh 08-04-2011

<sup>12</sup> For GOCOC-meetings, see chapter 4.4

<sup>13</sup> Observed on patrol, 11-03-2011

conducting my research, there were various discussions about this last topic, as there had been a change in national legislation that newly elected executive members should serve a five-year term instead of a one or two year term. Many people expressed their concern about this change in the law. Rivash expressed a feeling that ‘fresh blood’ should be joining the CPF<sup>14</sup>. One woman commented that a long, five year term could create rustiness in leadership that would be bad for the CPF<sup>15</sup>. In response to various complaints, Captain Miller from the Sydenham SAPS said that the draft of the new constitution was presented to the CPF various months earlier, but that nobody complained or commented back then, and so the new law was final<sup>16</sup>.

The executive meetings are mostly about the organisation of events by the CPF, reports that need editing or explanations, and other issues that do not regard the general public. They are held at least once a month and only executive members are welcome to attend.

In the public meetings, all kinds of matters relating to crime are discussed. In addition to those directly relating to criminal activities, like the spotting of suspicious vehicles, or ongoing investigations on previous criminal activities like housebreakings and the way the police deal with them, some issues also reflect on local governments. One of these matters that were discussed when I was conducting my research, was cable-theft. The stealing of copper cables was a big problem all over Durban, and resulted in many streetlights not working on local or national highways, but also along roads in residential areas. Dark areas as a result of this theft provided hiding spots for criminals, and made people in the area feel unsafe<sup>17</sup>. Similar issues were raised in regard to high bushes along the roads, which made good hiding spots for criminals<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Sherwood Sector CPF meeting 14-02-2011 and various subsequent meetings.

<sup>15</sup> Sherwood Sector CPF meeting 14-02-2011

<sup>16</sup> Asherville Sector CPF meeting 09-03-2011

<sup>17</sup> Interview Rose 13-04-2011, Interview Mr. Govender 06-04-2011

<sup>18</sup> Westville CPF-meeting 15-03-2011

#### 4.4 Sharing ideas: Towards Policing on a Local Level

In addition to the CPF's official meetings, Ground Operations Co-ordinating Committee (GOCOC)-meetings are organised weekly by each SAPS-station. Here, various actors, including representatives from Metro Police, Private Security Companies and CPF, meet representatives from various SAPS departments to discuss crime problems and trends. The SAPS-representatives will then, ideally, discuss the issues that were raised with their departments and give feedback on them in subsequent meetings. The GOCOC-meetings are different from CPF-meetings as they are more frequent and are always initiated by the SAPS-station, while CPF-meetings, although they are connected to a SAPS-station, are chaired and initiated by community members and on some occasions not even attended by SAPS-officers. GOCOC-meetings do work in co-operation with CPF as they are often attended by CPF-representatives and have a similar objective, namely the sharing of ideas. Daniel, who is involved in many GOCOC-meetings and various CPF, including the Westville ones, mentioned the importance of this after the Sydenham GOCOC-meeting:

*'The sharing of ideas is a very necessary thing, and is not done enough. The fact is that we have shared ideas in the meeting this morning and that the police are going to make a point to put articles in the paper that are going to be shared with more people than were in the meeting. That I believe is a necessity that we need to do more'<sup>19</sup>.*

During the GOCOC-meetings that I attended, there was a lot of talk about the implementation of Sector Policing. In early 2011, the time that I conducted my research, the SAPS were facing deadlines and needed to change their strategies to effectively introduce the approach of sector policing. Problems with its implementation were faced in various areas, because the SAPS did not have enough manpower or vehicles for the proper implementation. Like one SAPS-officer explained:

*'...for sector policing to be implemented you need one sector commander with his own vehicle, one co-sector commander with his own vehicle, two detectives with their own vehicles, two officers to attend to complaints, two crime*

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<sup>19</sup> Interview Daniel 18-04-2011

*prevention members, so eight members per sector. At the moment we do not have the capacity*<sup>20</sup>.

In one Sydenham GOCOC-meeting, the chairperson, Captain Johnson, also pointed to the problem with manpower by saying that in Sydenham there were three vehicles for the area's four sectors. Because there was not enough manpower, some vehicles were appointed to multiple sectors. Which sectors obtained their own vehicle was decided by looking at crime-trends from the previous week. Rivash mentioned a problem he had with this re-activeness of SAPS by responding:

*'The Sydenham police focusses on three sectors for their policing, but there are more than three sectors. It means the SAPS is being reactive and not proactive. There is no use in sending patrols to places where crimes have already taken place.*<sup>21</sup>

In fact, because of this lack of resources, sector policing basically means the same kind of policing as before with a new name. With vehicles being appointed to different sectors each week depending on crime-statistics, police officers have different areas to cover each time, making it difficult to create the personal bond with, and obtain the knowledge of the area that sector policing was envisioned for.

#### **4.5 Analysis**

Attending a CPF- or GOCOC-meeting in Westville or Sydenham confirms the statement made by various authors, like Bayley & Shearing (1996), that the concept of policing is not limited to that what the state-police do anymore. In CPF-meetings, which are attended by the SAPS and sometimes Metro Police, the community plays an active part in aiding the police by pointing out potential hot-spots for crime or observing suspicious vehicles. In GOCOC-meetings, a group of people comes together to discuss crime that consists of many other actors than only state-police, like representatives from CPF or private security companies. This co-operation between actors can be seen as a form of co-operation between

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<sup>20</sup> Interview 28-04-2011

<sup>21</sup> Rivash, in the Sydenham GOCOC-meeting held on 28-02-2011

the police and the public. This co-operation Jones (2003: 606) points out to be essential.

The CPF, with their structure and ideology that is provided by the government, can be seen as what Wisler & Onwudiwe (2008) call formal Community Policing. They are organised as a top-down approach. The partnership between the community and the police that the CPF-structure, in co-ordination with GOCOC-meetings promote is a perfect example of what Klockars (2005:449) argues is a reason to implement community policing, namely to include the community in matters of local security and offer them the opportunity to have a say in the discussion about these matters. Klockars' (2005: 454) point that the decentralisation of command and creation of subdivisions in the police force may be another reason to implement community policing, is seen in Sydenham with the sub-division of the forum in sub-fora, as well as the police's attempted implementation of sector policing in both areas.

When observing the structure of the fora in the areas of Westville and Sydenham, the types of meetings they hold, their link to a police-station, and their division into sub-fora, it can be concluded that the structure that is used, and the structure that is provided by the Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board (2003), match each other almost perfectly. Also, the initiative of sector policing was implemented in line with the ideology that is provided by authors like Klockars (2005). In fact, when considering the Draft National Instruction of the South African Police Service 2003 (South Africa, in Burger 2007: 133), which I mentioned in chapter 3.5, the draft provides a statement which almost exactly matches Klockars's (2005: 454) reason as to why sector policing would be implemented, namely the decentralisation of command and creation of subdivisions of the police in order to effectively include the community when dealing with crime. The problems that CP in South Africa faces is thus not seen in its structure or ideology. But where do they surface then? Perhaps in the way CP is exercised?

Sector policing is an example of a similarly good structure, and great ideal that is obstructed by a proper execution and underlying factors. It may thus be believed to be a great way to bring more effective policing, but the lack of recourses that the SAPS stations in my areas faced were a major obstacle for the implementation

of sector policing as it is meant to be. Do CPF have similar problems? This question will be further elaborated on in chapter five.

## **5. Executing Community Policing. CPF and the Challenges they Face**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Harris (2001), mentions that in his study, which evaluates the successes and failures of the CPF, most respondents equate the CPF with the police. This is an important point, as this finding suggests that the community's relations with the police have an impact on the community's relations with the fora. In this chapter I will portray the community's relationship with the police in my focus areas in Durban and explain which factors influence this relationship.

After having established this, I will be able to explain how this relationship of the community and the police relates to the relationship that the community has with the CPF.

Finally, I will show that the relationship between the community and the CPF has an important influence on why people do or do not attend the forum-meetings or patrols, but that there can also be other motives behind involvement in a CPF, like political ones.

### **5.2 South Africa's Divided Society: 'I'm not being racist, but...'**

Bruce's (1999: 31) claim that according to the South African Police Service Act, CPF should be 'broadly representative of the community', points to the importance of having representatives of all ethnic groups present in a community attending CPF. In reality, this is often not achieved. In general very few representatives from informal settlements were present during the CPF-meetings I attended, even in areas where considerable parts of the residents were living in these settlements. The problem is that these groups living in the informal settlements are the groups that have the worst relationship with the police as they were largely neglected by the police during Apartheid days and were left to their own justice systems (see chapter 3). Tilley's (2003: 315) argument that it is seldom those with whom the police wishes to improve their relationship through community policing, who are reached through its practise thus applies here.

Even still, equal representation of those living in the formal settlement is also often a problem. Those attending the meetings in Westville CPF are almost

exclusively white<sup>22</sup>, while of those registered as living in Westville, twenty-three percent are black, two percent coloured, twenty-seven percent Indian and forty-eight percent white (eThekweni Municipality 2011). Ideally this would suggest considerable participation of the Indian and black population as well.

Tilley's (2003: 315) point that 'the community' in the context of community policing generally means those living in a common neighbourhood, and that thus this community may consist of various different ethnicities, seems particularly true in Westville. When using Klockars (2005: 449) definition of a community, namely that of a 'group of people with a common history, common beliefs and understandings, a sense of themselves as 'us' and outsiders as 'them', and often, but not always, a shared territory', one may conclude that there are in fact many different communities living within 'the community' that is supposed to be represented in the CPF-meeting.

The problem in South Africa is that, although no longer by law, it is still a deeply divided society. In this divided society the various communities present in a neighbourhood often have very different perceptions about the police, as well as very different ideas about the way various issues should be resolved. This fact may lead to problems in regard to police legitimacy. It also creates a challenge for CPF to establish an equally strong relationship with all members of a neighbourhood.

According to Hornberger (2007: 34-35), a lack of legitimacy often leads to a situation of non-cooperation and mistrust between the community and the police, which would oppose the establishment of a successful CPF. Thus, it is important to look at the community's perception of the police in order to get a better understanding of the CPF and how their relationship with the community is.

### **5.3 Perceiving the Police: the Problem, or the Solution?**

#### **5.3.1 Unhappiness about post-Apartheid South Africa**

Many respondents (of all ethnicities and skin-colours, even some who were black) expressed a certain unhappiness about the current state of affairs in South Africa. According to many, there was a trend of 'Reverse-Apartheid' happening in South

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<sup>22</sup> During Westville CPF meetings 15-02-2011, 15-03-2011, 19-04-2011

Africa since its change to democracy in 1994<sup>23</sup>. The government's policy of 'Black Economic Empowerment (BEE)', which requires of employers that a certain percentage of their employees consists of ethnicities that were previously disadvantaged under the Apartheid-governments, causes much discontent over job opportunities among white, coloured and Indian South Africans. Among the Indian and Coloured communities there is a particular feeling of discontent as they feel that they are not able to benefit from the BEE policy today even though they were previously disadvantaged under Apartheid. Many found that the new government was too focused on the black South African citizens. One Indian man explained this feeling when he told me the following statement:

*'before [1994] we weren't white enough and now we aren't black enough'<sup>24</sup>.*

Then, among many black South Africans there is still a lot of discontent over the socio-economic situation in the country because the majority of the people living in poverty in the informal settlements is still black, and a lot of the country's wealth is perceived to be still in the hands of whites (an observation that corresponds to Leibbrandt et al's (2010) findings in their study on income inequality in South Africa). Finally, there seems to be a consensus among virtually all my respondents that the government is corrupt. One Indian resident of Clare Estate explained to me in a metaphor his explanation of why this was so and why the new black government was unable to maintain order and create a government without corruption:

*'The black people are like a dog that has been held on a chain for too long. When this dog is released after being imprisoned for his entire life, it does not know what to do. That is the problem in South Africa. The blacks were suddenly released and given all the power, and they just started taking everything they wanted. They thought they could just do that as they had been denied it for so long'<sup>25</sup>.*

Thus, the after-effects of Apartheid, as well as new problems that were acquired during South Africa's transition to democracy and the years following, are still very much alive among all groups of Durban society to this day and prejudices

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<sup>23</sup> Based on informal conversations with Craig, Mark, Jan, and others.

<sup>24</sup> Informal conversation, 09-04-2011

<sup>25</sup> Interview 29-03-2011

towards people with other skin-colours remain widespread among Durban's various ethnic groups. These issues and prejudices among the population also reflect on its perception of the police.

### **5.3.2 Too violent or too soft? Changes in the attitude of the police**

The problems I mentioned in chapter 5.2 about the different ideas various communities have about how the police should deal with issues, make it hard for the police to act in a way that keeps everybody satisfied. A discussion between two black high school students illustrates how two people can have a completely different perception about what the proper attitude of the police should be: one expressed his outrage about the police because according to him, they acted very violently:

*'The police are no good. They come and they beat you up. Or they shoot you for no reason. Look at that pilot that was killed the other day!'*<sup>26</sup>

The other student responded that he thought the police were too soft and that he would respect them more if they would act more violently when necessary:

*'The police are too soft man! When they come, they just arrest the small-fry and bring them to prison. Life in prison is often an even better life for the criminal than the one he is living outside of it. He gets free food and a roof over his head and stuff. The police should show more strength, then people would respect them more!'*<sup>27</sup>.

Regardless of one's ethnicity or class, there seems to be a general consensus among my respondents that the quality and attitude of the police has dramatically changed since South Africa's transition. Two employees of Private Security Companies (PSCs) said that many highly qualified SAPS-members were fired after Apartheid was abolished, and that others, due to worse benefits and different policies, decided to resign themselves after the transition to democracy. According these two PSC-employees, all this resulted in a police service that has

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<sup>26</sup> Class discussion Bechet Highschool 19-04-2011. The pilot he refers to was mentioned in a news article which reported on a situation where the police had shot at a vehicle and had accidentally killed an innocent pilot. This story was published in the previous week, according to the student, but I was unable to verify it.

<sup>27</sup> Class discussion Bechet Highschool 19-04-2011

greatly deteriorated in quality since the transition<sup>28</sup>. Brian, a white police officer at Westville SAPS, attributed the deterioration of the quality of the police force to the policy of BEE. He said that if there would be an opening for a promotion, although he had remained in the same position for several years and may be better qualified, somebody of another skin-colour and with less experience would still be promoted instead. He outed his frustration about this:

*In my opinion, one should get a job not because of his or her skin-colour, but because he or she is qualified<sup>29</sup>.*

This deterioration in the quality of the SAPS is believed, by many of those I spoke to, to reflect in the attitude of the police. One coloured SAPS station-commander mentioned that when she joined the force, during Apartheid days, it was still a calling to join the police, whereas now it is just another job that people take for its benefits<sup>30</sup>. A white criminal investigator who was himself working for SAPS expressed his frustration with his (black) colleagues' attitude when he pointed to one black officer standing on the scene of an armed robbery with a cup of coffee and said:

*'What bothers me the most is the attitude of the police. It used to be a force. There used to be discipline. Now they attend a crime scene only when they feel like it and just stand there drinking some coffee'<sup>31</sup>*

One Indian resident of Clare Estate, Mr. Singh, told me his experience with this change of attitude when he said that in previous times, when somebody had any trouble, the police would instantly respond and help citizens, even him being an Indian man. Now, he had had to wait for two hours after initially calling for the Sydenham Police Station to respond, and even when they did respond, they were not helpful<sup>32</sup>. He attributed this to the attitude of the police, complaining about a police officer who, after promising to follow him to his house, took off to

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<sup>28</sup> Informal conversations with Mark and Jan

<sup>29</sup> Interview Brian 23-02-2011

<sup>30</sup> Interview on 28-04-2011

<sup>31</sup> Informal conversation with a criminal investigator on the scene of an armed robbery. 14-03-2011

<sup>32</sup> Interview Mr. Singh, 29-03-2011

Reservoir Hills instead and never returned. He also appointed a racial aspect to the police's attitude when he mentioned how much better it was when the white officers were still in charge of the station:

*'You know I might sound racist, I'd rather have the white boys that used to be there, they never gave an inch. The law was the law. We had some good officers, but right now, we don't. And yet we are supposed to have a force of about hundred and fifty. At one stage, twenty years ago, there were only twenty-eight, and they managed to patrol this area. With less man-power, and less vehicles. And if you look at it, the density of this area hasn't really increased over time'*<sup>33</sup>.

Perceptions of the police and their attitude tend to go hand in hand with racial prejudices, and for many residents the transition to democracy remains a radical turning point for the attitude of the police, believing that the quality of SAPS has deteriorated since the institution of democracy. During my research this perception was not limited to white South Africans, but was also present among people of skin-colours that were previously disadvantaged: Indians, Coloureds and Blacks.

### **5.3.3 Negotiated bail or police corruption? Understanding the task of the SAPS**

Negative perceptions of the SAPS because of slow or no responses naturally cause anger and mistrust among the populace. This having said, another reason why the perceptions of the SAPS in South Africa are particularly bad, is that many South Africans hold the police responsible for issues that do not fall under their jurisdiction.

On a visit to the Westville prison, one of the prison guards, Nev, told me that the prison was severely overcrowded<sup>34</sup>. One of his tasks was in fact to go past courts and state institutions to negotiate bails for those criminals that were detained for less severe criminal acts. In an interview, Olivia van der Wilt referred to these full prisons when she gave her view on whether or not the police was doing their job:

*'The police are doing their job, look at the prisons, they are full. How can they say that we are not doing our job?'*<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Interview Mr. Singh, 29-03-2011

<sup>34</sup> Informal conversation Nev, 18-04-2011

<sup>35</sup> Interview Olivia van der Wilt, 21-04-2011

Negotiated bails from those who were caught for less severe acts result in the early release of a criminal. This is outside of the power of the SAPS. However, many respondents mentioned the early release of criminals as a sign of police malfunctioning, like one of the residents of the Cato Crest informal settlement said:

*'You know, we call the police, they come, take the criminal away, and a week later, he is walking the streets here again. The police can't be trusted my friend, they do not do their work'<sup>36</sup>.*

Corruption within, and malfunctioning of the police is here thus assumed to be the reason behind the early release, while there may have been other factors that were responsible for the prisoner's early release in this case.

In South Africa's (1998) White Paper on Safety and Security, it is recognised that crime-prevention should be done by SAPS as a matter of deterrence, but is also a responsibility for other government departments. Many discussions in GOCOC-meetings, however, agreed with Rivash's belief that the police should be more pro-active, not re-active. As Rivash explained:

*'There must be an effort from the side of the government to make us feel safe. Our police stations are undermanned, and I believe that that is one of the reasons that we feel unsafe. You rarely see a police car in your area unless something has happened. Now, we don't want police to respond to an incident, because then they become report-takers. You don't want the police to be reactive, you want them to be pro-active, and they can only do that with a large force'.<sup>37</sup>*

Here, again, the larger discussion surfaces as to what exactly the task of the police entails. When considering the police as the only institution that ensures the security of the state, then, logically, crime prevention would fall under the task of the police and Rivash would be right in making this statement. Burger (2007: 111-114; 130-135) argues, however, that the police may cause a deterrence by operating effectively, but that actual crime prevention should happen through programmes that promote health, social equality, housing, et cetera. According to him, the police is by definition a response-service, as they are there to effectively respond to calls for help. The task-description of SAPS by the White Paper on

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<sup>36</sup> Informal conversation resident of Clare Estate Informal Settlement 05-04-2011

<sup>37</sup> Interview Rivash 01-04-2011

Safety and Security supports this position of Burger. This implies that some of the issues in South Africa that have been the cause of the SAPS's bad reputation, do not actually fall under SAPS's jurisdiction, and should thus have been attributed to other government departments instead.

## **5.4 The Relationship between the Community and the CPF**

### **5.4.1 Discussions v.s. complaints. Different ideas about the fora**

As mentioned by Harris (2001), the absence of trust in the police can be a deterrent for community members to participate in the CPF, as the CPF are often seen as synonymous with the police. Also, even if this synonymity is not perceived, in a CPF where the police does not take the partnership seriously, joining or attending a meeting may be considered useless, which automatically renders a positive relationship impossible, or even any relationship difficult.

Thus, the relationship between the community and the police and the expectations they have of each other in the CPF, are important when defining the relationship between the CPF and the community. The fact that the expectations the police have from the community are very different from those the community has from the police, makes the relationship even more problematic. Station-Commander Olivia van der Wilt mentioned her view on the partnership:

*'...a lot of [the community] question the police in a sense that [the community] is [the police's] watchdog... And that is not the idea of Community Policing. The idea of Community Policing is that we share information. The idea of Community Policing is a partnership, but the partnership from [the community's] side is lacking in most of the meetings: it's become a complaints forum, a lot of political parties are piggybacking on them...'<sup>38</sup>*

When there was a discussion going on in the Sherwood/Sydenham CPF<sup>39</sup> about whether or not complaints could be voiced, secretary Jennifer mentioned that it was only the old Station Commander who did not want the forum to be used as a complaints forum, not van der Wilt. There thus seems to be a difference in what the community expects of the CPF, and what the police expect of it. The police did not want the forum to become a complaints forum, but wanted it to be used for discussing crime and finding solutions. Van der Wilt was quick in mentioning

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<sup>38</sup> Interview Olivia van der Wilt 21-04-2011

<sup>39</sup> 25-04-2011

that the partnership from the community's side was lacking. But what about the police's side of the partnership?

When considering Glebbeek's (2003: 39) definition of the police as: 'the main instrument by which the state enforces its domestic monopoly on physical force' and when defining the police as the official government's body that has to maintain a secure internal state (see chapter 2.2), one would expect that the police's side of the partnership is to use the knowledge of the fora and the CPF members to ensure the community's safety and to respond to their calls for help. In Mr. Singh's case, who is also a member of the Clare Estate CPF, the police lacked their side of this partnership as they failed to act for more than two hours after Mr. Singh contacted them regarding an attempted 'theft of motor-vehicle' in front of his house. As Mr. Singh said:

*'I was saying to Mr. Naidoo, the Chairman of the Clare Estate CPF (who had also subsequently tried to get the police to come to Mr. Singh's aid): if we, two members of the police forum, cannot get the police to come, then who can?'*<sup>40</sup>.

When discussing crime is all that happens in a CPF, and community members do not see any result from the partnership in action undertaken by the SAPS, complaints will follow, turning the CPF into the complaints forum it was not meant to be. For the proper functioning of a forum, it is thus important that all actors know what they can expect from each other, and that they act to meet these expectations. The above examples show that when the partnership remains delicate with both actors pointing fingers at each other, a strong forum cannot develop, nor good relations between the forum and the community.

#### **5.4.2 Keeping the community happy: what should and shouldn't be discussed in CPF**

The statement made by Mr. Singh in section 5.4.1 illustrates a problem that haunts many CPF. In order to maintain good relations with the rest of the community, it is essential for the forum to obtain legitimacy among the populace. This legitimacy is obtained by the community believing that a forum can make a

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<sup>40</sup> Interview mr Singh 29-03-2011. I was at Mr. Naidoo's home conducting an interview with him when this incident happened and can confirm his repetitive attempts to call the SAPS Sydenham police station to get a vehicle to come.

difference and can mobilise actors to help them. If even a forum has problems with getting the police to come, then the legitimacy of that forum is in danger.

One forum that has a good attendance, active police representative, and is not used solely as a complaints forum, is the Westville CPF. Edward Lewis, himself an ex-police officer, conducts a monthly survey among people who have recently been a victim of crime in Westville. His questionnaire contains questions about how residents rate the way the police take their statements, their response time and follow-up. In all, the Westville police generally score reasonably well (usually between seven and nine points out of ten) in this questionnaire<sup>41</sup>. Mr. Lewis interprets the results as follows:

*'Most of the times the respondents are quite happy with the police. The only problem that comes forward really is that many are unhappy about the follow-up afterwards. Often people feel that the police don't do much more than taking statements for insurance purposes.'*<sup>42</sup>

Westville is, for South African standards, an affluent area with middle- to higher-income families. Mr. Lewis pointed out that these richer families usually have insurance, and they were thus, as long as the insurance pays out, quite satisfied with this kind of police response.

However, also when a CPF like Westville does work accordingly, is not used as a complaints or a political forum, and maintains a relatively good partnership with the police, not all community members see this as a positive thing necessarily. In one Westville CPF-meeting a woman was threatened to be sent away after she had started voicing her criticism towards the ANC, which was deemed inappropriate by the executive because guidelines state that a CPF should refrain from party-politics<sup>43</sup>. In a response to this, another attendee voiced his problem with the attitude of the CPF executive in this matter. He in fact believed that the relationship between the community and the police had become too strong:

*'What bothers me, is that the forum has become sort of a mutual aspiration between the community and the police, and once somebody does say what she*

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<sup>41</sup> Westville CPF-meetings 15-02-2011, 15-03-2011, 19-04-2011

<sup>42</sup> Interview Edward Lewis 15-04-2011

<sup>43</sup> Westville CPF-meeting 15-03-2011

*believes, she is almost sent away! Now, she will not come back again, and tell other people not to come as well.*<sup>44</sup>

An issue I would like to raise here in regard to the relationship between the CPF and the rest of the community, is that the promotion of the CPF-meetings, as well as what happens in them, is for a big part communicated word-to-mouth. Many people attend their first meetings when they are taken as a guest by somebody else. Also, many people who do not have time to attend certain meetings but are interested in them, hear what happened in the meetings through a friend or acquaintance who did attend. An important task for the CPF executive thus remains to keep the attendees satisfied and informed, and deal with their complaints, as the rest of the community will hear feedback and comments from those attendees.

Community-members should know that the forum is not meant primarily for complaints, and they should know that a forum should remain non-political. However, in the example of the woman in Westville, but also on occasions in Sydenham sub-fora or other fora, the CPF-executive seemed overly careful not to discuss anything political. Guidelines state that: ‘the forum will not be aligned to any specific political party and members shall not use their membership to promote the aims and objectives of any political party’. However, as Rivash rightly said: ‘everything we discuss is linked to politics’<sup>45</sup>. And, in fact, South Africa’s (1998) White Paper on Safety and Security mentions the task of a CPF to co-operate with local governments (see chapter 3.3).

There is thus no problem in discussing issues that are related to politics, as long as promotion of any particular one party does not happen. Particularly the Westville executive seems overly reactive to hearing any political party’s name being mentioned and are often quick to dismiss matters in this particular case when it does happen, instead of dealing with them in a constructive matter to satisfy the person who raised them.

The misinterpretation of the guidelines of a CPF, as well as being overly strict in maintaining them, has a counterproductive effect, as it only deteriorates relations

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<sup>44</sup> Informal conversation with Westville CPF-meeting attendee, 15-03-2011

<sup>45</sup> Rivash, in a Sherwood CPF-meeting, 08-04-2011

between the CPF and the community, and the police and the community. Finding a solution for complainants instead of dismissing them or their argument as inappropriate will cause more satisfied attendees, improve relations with the community as other community members will hear positive stories through word-to-mouth feedback, and does in fact not have to be in contradiction to the guidelines of a CPF.

## **5.5 Attend or Stay away? Reasons to Join the Fora**

### **5.5.1 Joining a CPF as a member of the public**

Usually, most people attending a CPF in a public meeting are regular community members not related to the CPF-executive or the police. Keith Wilson believed that these community members could be divided in twofold:

*'I think there's two kinds of people that come to the CPF. One has never been bothered with it until he's become a statistic. He comes along somewhat therapeutic. Then, if he is committed he will continue coming because he realises that if he's not informed he will continue to be a target. Then there is those who come because they want to be kept informed and kept up to date'<sup>46</sup>*

The distinction is quite straightforward and it is true that people attend for these reasons. One attendee of the Sherwood CPF sub-forum meeting distinguished two slightly different groups: 'those who have been affected by crime recently and come to one or two meetings, and those who are regular attendees'<sup>47</sup>.

Those people who only attend one or two meetings because they have been victims of crime often come because they are unhappy with how the police dealt or is dealing with their case and want to tell their story in the forum. A man who was a victim of two burglaries in his house was an example of this. He had repeatedly gone to the Sydenham Police Station and was eventually thrown out because, according to him, the police did not want to deal with his case. He believed that '[the Sydenham Police Station] is not operating as it should'. The problem discussed in section 5.4.1 comes forward again with these attendees, namely that they attend generally to pose complaints, which the fora are not meant for.

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<sup>46</sup> Interview Keith Wilson and Davy Moore, 22-04-2011

<sup>47</sup> Informal conversation, CPF sub-forum meeting Sherwood 14-02-2011

The regular attendees tend to know more about the fora, what is expected of them, and although they do voice complaints, they are also interested in discussing crime, finding out what is happening in their neighbourhood, and assisting the police in pointing to problems community members experienced. These members are thus the ones who are using the CPF in the way they were meant to be used according to South Africa's (1998) White Paper on Safety and Security, namely in a way that the CPF should help local governments and police-services to prevent crime.

### **5.5.2 Joining a CPF as an executive-member**

Apart from simply attending as a member of the public, some community members decide to become actively involved in CPF-executive committees. But what motivates them to put in this extra effort?

An important reason to become involved in an executive committee of the CPF turns out to be a perception of insecurity, and the feeling that the police are not doing enough. Many executive members were themselves a victim of crime, decided to go to a CPF, and became more and more involved. Rivash is an executive member who joined for such a reason. He explained his reasons for joining as following:

*'...seven or eight years ago, I had a highjacking incident. I pulled into the driveway of my car and two guys came up from behind me with guns, held me up and took my car away. So, when this happened, other people in the street got to know about it and one lady who is living across from me and was very active in the CPF came to me and told me: you know we have a police forum meeting every monday, you should come along and tell them what's happening. So I came along to the meeting and there was a station commander there at the time who was saying how we're living in such a safe area with no highjackings and so on, and I put my hand up and said: you know but you've got your facts wrong. I was highjacked two weeks ago. He said: oh yes, I forgot to mention that one. At that stage I realised that a picture was given to us that is not always correct, and at that stage I decided to attend more meetings [...] and I got elected as vice-chairman last year'<sup>48</sup>*

Camilla, who was involved in the Sherwood/Sydenham CPF for about five years, mentions a similar reason to become involved:

*'I started off becoming involved because I was a victim of crime. My house was burgled... we've got various safes in our house and all our valuables*

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<sup>48</sup> Interview Rivash 01-04-2011

*were stolen. What really perturbed me was that when doing the investigation, the investigating officer also implicated that my husband and I were involved, that we had orchestrated the burglary and so on and [...] I thought: my gosh, how much more corrupt can this get that we have to orchestrate our own house being burgled. At the same time, I can understand why they ask this because what happens is that people, if they are insured, sometimes orchestrate their house being burgled so that they get money from their insurance. People are in dire straits in this country and engage in criminal acts. So I can sort of understand why they would do that but to imply that we would do something like that I thought was preposterous. I didn't understand what was happening in the country at that time with the police and the police forums and so on. So I took it on, went to the police and they actually found out that the investigating officer was a drunk and what happened was that they finally had to discipline him. But then what happened further than that is that I said that I had to become involved in the police forum, because if my area is becoming unsafe I need to know what is happening in the area and I need to have a good link with the police<sup>49</sup>.*

Major aspects to become involved for both Rivash and Camilla include some of the main issues that I have discussed earlier in this chapter: a negative attitude of the police and a sudden perception of insecurity in the country because they were a victim of crime themselves made them want to get involved. For them, Harris's (2001) argument that the synonymy between the CPF and the police prevents people from attending CPF obviously does not apply, as they had a negative perception of the police but still became involved in a forum for several years. In fact, Rivash is still involved in the Sherwood/Sydenham sub-forum.

In their case, the reason why they still became involved may have attributed to various things. One of these is that Camilla managed to get her problems resolved before she joined a CPF, and got the authorities to discipline her investigative officer. This showed that when an effort is put in, results can be booked when co-operating with the police to address issues.

Another may have been their perception of the CPF. Rivash mentioned that: 'the Sherwood CPF is a very active CPF' and that he honestly believes that, after eight years of involvement: 'there is a greater degree of co-operation between the police and the communities now than there has ever been before'<sup>50</sup>. Thus, for him, even

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<sup>49</sup> Interview Camilla 07-04-2011

<sup>50</sup> Interview Rivash 01-04-2011

when he perceived the police as not functioning properly, greater co-operation could be reached with an active community participation in the CPF.

Davy Moore, executive member of the Westville CPF, tells that his reason to become involved was also being a victim of crime. His perception of the police, however, was different:

*'In my case it was having had eight attempted burglaries and four successful ones. A friend of mine who used to work with me, he was a member of the forum and said: come along to the meeting. So I came along to one or two, then stayed away, and then later on Walker, our treasurer, said I must come along. So I did and I actually enjoyed it, having a good station commander followed by another good one just makes sure that you have confidence in the police and the concept of Community Policing then makes sense. You know I am a bit hesitant towards the current government but their attitude towards Community Policing remains number one. The police cannot do it on their own, they need the help from the community'<sup>51</sup>.*

It can be concluded that a positive perception of the police's attitude, like in Davy Moore's case, or at least seeing positive results from co-operation with the police like in Camilla's case are a major contributor to joining a CPF and becoming involved. In Rivash's case, an active community that tries its best even without very much initial co-operation from the police was for Rivash a reason to remain involved and has, according to him, eventually lead to an improvement in the partnership.

### **5.5.3 The CPF as a medium for political interest groups**

In section 3.5 I already mentioned that the Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board (2003: 30), explicitly states that: 'the forum will not be aligned to any specific political party and members shall not use their membership to promote the aims and objectives of any political party'. However, in her statement mentioned in 5.4.1, Olivia van der Wilt mentioned that, although this is not meant to happen: 'a lot of political parties are piggybacking on [the CPF]'. It is a fact that, regardless of guidelines, also in some of my focus-areas a political motivation may be distinguished among those attending a CPF or those becoming involved in the CPF executive.

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<sup>51</sup> Interview Keith Wilson and Davy Moore, 22-04-2011

Most people who attended a CPF with a political motivation were community-members who were running for counsellor in South Africa's municipal elections (that were to be held on May 18th, 2011). In the example of a Sherwood/Sydenham CPF-meeting held on April 24th, 2011, one man who was running for counsellor and who had never been an active member in previous meetings, suddenly offered his extensive help to community-members who had problems with the police. He did this by offering to go to the police station with the community's complaints and try to solve them.

Another, and perhaps the clearest example of politics and the CPF becoming intertwined is the Reservoir Hills Sector CPF patrol, with its initiator, Kesh running as independent counsellor in elections. According to Kesh, the reason he became involved initially was that the CPF had been running for a long time without success. As he explained:

*'The organisation had been running for about twenty-two years but basically with no success. They just had four or five members et cetera and then I should attend the meetings, where I decided: you know what, I need to pep this whole CPF thing up. Then we had an election of who was gonna be the new chairperson. There were quite a few people there from the public, and they elected me. Over a year and a half I am the chairperson, we actually have over hundred-and-thirty-three cars. We've easily brought down crime with about forty-three percent in Reservoir Hills and you will notice in our meetings that the hijackings have actually dropped totally. The only problems that remain are the housebreakings'<sup>52</sup>.*

According to Kesh, he joined solely to make the area a safer place, he had a good relationship with the police, and he wanted to remain active in the CPF for as long as he could.

However, in the weekly GOCOC-meeting of Sydenham, Reservoir Hills came forward in weekly police reports as one of Sydenham SAPS station's most crime-stricken areas<sup>53</sup>. Also, on one patrol where there had been an attempted burglary, it took SAPS more than an hour to send the requested dog-squad to search for the

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<sup>52</sup> Interview Kesh 08-04-2011

<sup>53</sup> Based on observations made while attending weekly Sydenham GOCOC-meetings in the period of 07-02-2011 - 28-04-2011. Unfortunately SAPS never released official statistics regarding specific crimes or crime rates, so whether or not crime has actually dropped by 43 per cent, and highjackings to 0, I was unable to verify.

criminals, regardless of Kesh's statement that: 'When we call [SAPS], they are there within a few minutes'. The men who had attempted the house-breaking and who were believed to be hiding in an area of high bushes were never arrested<sup>54</sup>. It is important to notice that some of these facts conflict with Kesh's statements.

Extra motivation behind running the patrol effectively may explain this conflicting data. As I mentioned, Kesh put himself up for election as counsellor in the 2011 municipal elections. He had become well known because of his CPF sector patrol and their very visible patrolling on Friday and Saturday nights. His image as a man who selflessly put in effort to bring down crime in Reservoir Hills and succeeding in this while maintaining a good relationship with SAPS would certainly aid him in obtaining votes. And, it is important to note that among the patrol members, but also members of the public, Kesh generally had a good reputation. Although some did express their doubts, like Kashil, a patrol member:

*'I believe that the patrols on Friday and Saturday nights are not working. Those nights are the party nights for criminals. They know when the patrols are happening, and just come back between nine and five on weekdays, when all the patrol-members are at work. And you know, before eight months ago, nobody had heard of Kesh, while the CPF has been around for many years. He has only recently become involved and is now running for counsellor. This does not necessarily have to be a bad thing, but I have to see what his true intentions are'*<sup>55</sup>

Now, two concluding marks are necessary. First of all that, although political motivations might be distinguished, in the above examples, nobody explicitly used the forum to promote the aims and the objectives of a certain political party. In Sherwood/Sydenham, the man running for counsellor was a member of the ANC, but he attended CPF more to show his goodwill in the hope to gain votes, than to explicitly promote ANC views. In Kesh's example, this was the same, with him not belonging to a particular party but running as an independent candidate in the election. Political motives thus, like Kashil expressed, do not necessarily have to have a negative influence in the CPF, as they may ensure more co-operation between CPF and local governments.

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<sup>54</sup> Based on participant observation on Reservoir Hills's Sector CPF patrol organized on 11-02-2011

<sup>55</sup> Informal Conversation Kashil 14-04-2011

#### 5.5.4 Staying away: reasons not to attend a CPF

After looking at reasons for people to attend CPF-meetings or patrols, or initiating them, it is also important to look at the opposite side: why people do not attend.

The two most commonly mentioned reasons are quite straightforward: no time to attend, or no familiarity with the fora. In a survey conducted in Westville, fifty-three percent of the respondents had never heard of a CPF. Many of those who had heard of the CPF, had never been because they had ‘no time’, or they had ‘no reason to discuss crime in [their] free time’. Also the traditional idea mentioned by Waddington (in Fleming & Wakefield 2009:323) and by the Kwazulu-Natal Provincial community Police Board (2003: 60), that policing is that what police officers do and should not be the task of the public, is widely present. As a woman attending the Westville CPF said when she expressed a complaint in the forum:

*‘I am already paying rates and taxes, why should I then also occupy myself with policing? If they want me to do it myself, it is fine, but then stop charging me these fees!’<sup>56</sup>*

Also, no trust in the police because of their attitude or failure to show action was for some a reason not to attend. Mr. Singh (see 5.4.1) mentioned in his frustration that he was wondering why he should continue to put effort in the CPF if he and Mr. Naidoo as executive members could not even get a police van to attend to their complaint<sup>57</sup>. Anna, a former Sherwood/Sydenham CPF-member, said that she had actually given up her position in the CPF executive because of this lack of trust in the SAPS. She answered my question as to why she had left the CPF’s executive-committee as follows:

*‘I could almost sum it up in one word: dishonesty [...]. At the stage that I was secretary for the CPF, I was aware of criminal activities. And I believe that there were these druglords that were, and still are, operating in our community, with full knowledge of the police. The Sydenham station-commander at that time turned a blind eye, and we did not get the support of our local politician. He never even attended our meetings’<sup>58</sup>.*

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<sup>56</sup> Publicly spoken in the 15-03-2011 Westville CPF meeting

<sup>57</sup> Interview Mr. Singh 29-03-2011

<sup>58</sup> Interview Anna 12-04-2011

Thus, in addition to regular responses related to time constraints or feelings that it was the task of the police to attend to crime, the trust in the police and problems with their attitude towards dealing with crime were important factors not to attend or become involved in the local CPF.

## **5.6 Informal Community Policing: the Whip, the Machete, and the Flickering Lights**

I have discussed all the reasons why people may, or may not choose the formal road of community policing. But what about the informal way?

The absence of trust in the police and the CPF, and an increasing perception of insecurity, may eventually result in community initiated approaches to CP, or what Wisler & Onwudiwe (2008: 427-428) call informal CP. In the informal settlements and townships, Informal CP is often seen in the form of the instant punishment of criminals when they are caught, but also in more structured systems like people's courts, also called Kangaroo Courts<sup>59</sup>. In these courts, criminals are tried and punished straight after this trial. As one nurse living in Reservoir Hills recalls a story about how a rapist was punished:

*'On one occasion, the police were called that a criminal had been caught and they were given a location. When the officers got there, they found the criminal tied to a pole, with his arms and legs cut off in several pieces. The man was still alive but later died of his wounds'*<sup>60</sup>

People's courts continue to have considerable legitimacy within many informal settlements and townships.<sup>61</sup> However, in the formal settlements, more and more forms of informal CP are also surfacing. Philip, a resident of Sydenham and headmaster of a high school, is a man who, until recently, exercised his own neighbourhood patrols. As he explained his reasons for doing this:

*'So, we have been doing our own policing. We ask questions and if you can't answer, you're in big trouble. Here, we have very little faith in the police. We've become so conscious where we walk. We're always security conscious.'*

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<sup>59</sup> Interview resident informal settlement 08-04-2011, informal conversation Jan 11-03-2011, CPF sector meeting Sherwood 11-04-2011

<sup>60</sup> Nurse, informal conversation held on 26-04-2011

<sup>61</sup> Informal conversation with two residents in informal settlement 08-04-2011; Interview Andrew 16-03-2011

*It is good that we have CPF, as they update you on statistics. But, when it comes to it, you're always tempted to take the law into your own hands. We've become so tired of what is happening around us*<sup>62</sup>.

When I asked Philip if he did not feel unsafe while on patrol, he took me to his car and showed me a machete and a whip, mentioning that he took them on patrol for security.

Philip, however, was not the only person who undertook, or was in favor of, informal CP. A couple living in Sydenham expressed themselves as being in favor of undertaking informal CP because of government and police malfunctioning. As one of them said:

*“Look at Malema<sup>63</sup>: he once said in a speech: ‘I’ll kill myself before I commit suicide’. How stupid can you be? And he has many, many supporters in this country [...]. And the police: I don’t like the police. They are involved in crime. In Newlands, one police officer killed his brother. All the witnesses and evidence were there, but they only gave the guy two years house arrest. The whole of Newlands know him though. Lots of people there want to kill him. He will be shot one day [...]. The CPF are good to resort to when you have trouble with the authorities, if they can follow through. But often they can’t. No, if you ask me, I’d take matters into my own hands”*<sup>64</sup>.

Thus, informal CP remains present in both the informal and formal sector in South Africa. The people mentioned above have all acted outside of the CPF. However, CPF themselves also may become more informal in nature, operating more and more from a community’s initiation, and not always in co-operation with the police like they should according to guidelines (see Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board 2003).

In the Reservoir Hills Patrol’s case, tensions were starting to show between the CPF and the police. Captain Miller expressed a certain frustration about the fact that on one occasion, when the patrol intervened in a rape-case of a six-year-old girl, the patrol went past their jurisdiction when dealing with the rapist:

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<sup>62</sup> Interview Philip 24-04-2011

<sup>63</sup> Julius Malema was the ANC Youth Leader in the period that I conducted my research (February - April 2011)

<sup>64</sup> Interview 08-04-2011

*'The community needs to know where their job ends, and [the SAPS's] job starts. A good lawyer may now get this rapist off on a technicality'<sup>65</sup>.*

Another issue that was mentioned often by the police during my research, was the patrol's use of white flickering lights on cars. According to van der Wilt and Captain Miller, no community car is allowed to use those lights, as then the patrol might be misinterpreted for a police vehicle, and pretending to be a police vehicle is a criminal offense<sup>66</sup>.

Some of the Reservoir Hills patrol members were also carrying paintball guns and wearing bullet proof vests. According to Kesh, this was all legally allowed<sup>67</sup>. There were some tensions between SAPS Sydenham and the Reservoir Hills Patrol, but, after the SAPS expressed that the flickering lights were forbidden, Kesh did abolish them. Also, he was actively trying to make his patrol members reservists for the SAPS to promote co-operation and give them more legal powers in the patrol, like carrying a weapon. Rivash expressed his belief that Kesh would be able to, after some fine-tuning, remain active within the aspects of the law<sup>68</sup>. At the time of research, however, the patrol was in a bit of a grey zone between formal and informal CP.

Community initiated CP, or informal CP, may thus surface in various ways. Members of the community may initiate it outside of any formal structure when they feel that something needs to be done, but that this cannot be done through either the police or the CPF. Also, CPF may grow and slowly start taking initiatives that fall outside of their task-description provided by official guidelines, and start showing a tendency towards informal ways of CP.

## **5.7 Analysis**

In the conversation between the two high school students that were talking about how the police should act, and how they would gain respect, the paradox of

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<sup>65</sup> Interview Captain Miller 10-03-2011

<sup>66</sup> Captain Miller and Colonel Olivia van der Wilt in Sydenham CPF Executive meeting 17-03-2011

<sup>67</sup> Interview Kesh 08-04-2011

<sup>68</sup> Interview Rivash 01-04-2011

policing comes forward. Glebbeek's (2003: 39) argument that the police may be viewed by the public as weak if they do not use enough force, came forward in the response from one student, who thought that the police should act more violently, as they were too soft. The other student believed the police to be failing in their task of ensuring citizens' personal security because they were actually causing too much violence, instead of protecting people from it. Bayley (1994: 16-17) mentions that the police are mainly occupied with executing tasks that the public wants them to do. The problem that comes forward in the discussion between the students is representative for South Africa's multi-ethnic society. Namely that 'the public' consists of many different communities, who often have different ideas about what they want the police to do (see chapter 5.2). This makes the task of the SAPS a particularly difficult one.

SAPS's main challenge after South Africa's transition to democracy was to obtain, and maintain, the legitimacy from the public. The policy of BEE was also applied to SAPS, in order to get a police service that included members of ethnic groups that were previously disadvantaged. However, as can be seen from conversations with members from PSCs and the public, instead of increasing the legitimacy among the public, many feel that since South Africa's transition, the quality of the SAPS has greatly deteriorated. Bowling et al (2003) and Hasisi's (2008) point that a police-force in which all groups, ethnicities, or skin-colours are proportionally represented leads to an improvement of good minority-police relations thus does not apply (yet) in South Africa. The principal may be appropriate, but the equal representation in the SAPS is by most considered to have gone hand in hand with a deterioration in the quality of the services that the police provides.

Although CPF were originally instituted to rebuild relations with citizens after confrontational periods (Shaw, in Burger 2007: 102), the current task of CPF is to create a partnership between the community and the police, and to co-operate with them and local governments in the prevention of crime (South Africa 1998). However, this partnership seems particularly hard to effectively establish at many police-stations. Van der Wilt pointed to the fact that the community is lacking their side of the partnership, that CPF are now used as complaints forums, and by political parties to obtain votes. At the same time stories like that of Mr. Singh

point out that when the community does act like ‘the eyes and ears of the police’, the police do not always respond, or do not respond in a way that the public expects of them. Mr. Singh expressed his doubt about whether or not he should remain active in the CPF, as his trust in the police and their ability to respond had greatly deteriorated. He thus mentioned his trust in the police a reason not to remain involved, corresponding with Harris (2001)’s argument that lack of trust may be a deterrent to attend a CPF.

The partnership, and what is expected of it, is one of the main issues that cause the CPF not to work. The SAPS do not accept complaints, because guidelines like those provided by the Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board (2003) mention that the fora should not be used for them. Fact is that, as Burger (2007) and van der Wilt argue, the community often has overly high expectations of the police, and expect the police to accomplish things that are often not their task to accomplish. This leads to complaints towards the police in the fora that are not justified and that the police are not able to address. At the same time, SAPS-members often fail to recognise that if the SAPS would always be responding to citizens calls effectively and operate in a way the community expects them to operate, or at least provide better communication if they cannot, complaints would not need to be voiced and more time for finding constructive resolutions to crime is then available. Although the response-time is not always an issue, unfortunately it still remains a regular occurrence in various of Durban’s areas that the SAPS do not show, or only multiple hours after the initial call. In this, the SAPS are also lacking their side of the partnership.

The role of the police is not the only aspect of the forum that is misunderstood, however. Also the role that political parties have to play in the forum remains unclear for many attendees. The fora should not be used for the promotion of political parties (Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board 2003: 30). However, this is perceived wrongly in the Westville and Reservoir Hills CPF. In the Westville CPF the mere mentioning of a political party is considered to be problematic. South Africa’s (1998) White Paper on Safety and Security states, however, that the CPF should function in co-operation with the SAPS and local governments. Especially when comparing the argument made above (that other government departments than the SAPS are to establish crime prevention) with

the new role of crime prevention that the CPF are to play, it should be recognised that co-operation between CPF and political parties is equally important as co-operation between CPF and SAPS. As Satish mentioned, everything discussed in the CPF is related to politics, which is why a political motive behind Kesh's involvement in the CPF, or a discussion that is related to politics in the CPF, is not necessarily problematic, as long as that discussion is not about the promotion of one specific political party.

The misunderstandings of CPF, and a poor partnership between the community and the police, may eventually cause informal CP to flourish. Aspects of informal CP may surface through or outside of a CPF. The Reservoir Hills Patrol is an example of it happening through a CPF, which slowly grows, becomes more active, and then starts taking over aspects of the actual police which may conflict to the CPF's task description. Harris (2001), points out that CPF may become part of vigilantism. He warns that some vigilante group may present themselves as CPF, while in fact, they are not. In the Reservoir Hills Patrol's case, it is happening the other way around, where an initiative of formal CP is starting to show tendencies towards unlawful policing activities that are not in co-operation with the police anymore. This is something which Bénit-Gbaffou (2008) also warns for.

Informal CP happens in South Africa when structures like the CPF or the police are not deemed capable of dealing with crime-issues in a way that the community would like to see, which corresponds to Tilley's (2003: 311) argument that community-initiated CP may surface when there is unhappiness about the state's approach to ensure a particular group's personal security. This is still seen in the forms of peoples courts like the Kangaroo courts, which Nina (2000) pointed out existed already before the end of Apartheid, but are now, in the country's new democratic system, considered unwanted forms of popular justice. This is because, as Smootha & Hanf (1992: 33) point out, every citizen of the country should be treated equally in a liberal democracy, which is not the case when different justice-systems are used for different people. These systems punish criminals according to their own beliefs, outside of formal structures, as Hootnick (2003) also found in his study.

In the formal settlements, community initiatives are seen that are not as structured as the people's court system, but exist more as community patrols in which the patrollers are armed, like Philip who armed himself with a machete and a whip.

## **6. Get your Facts Right! The CPF as an Instrument to Change the Community's Perceptions of Security**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In the following chapter, the relationship that exists between the CPF and the community's perception of security is discussed. In the previous chapter it already came forward that many members who have been a victim of crime decide to attend a CPF-meeting. This way, a positive relationship is thus seen between a feeling of insecurity and attendance of a CPF. What will be looked at now is if attending this CPF-meeting increases or decreases one's perception of security?

### **6.2 Feeling safer: How CPF Can Change Perceptions of Security**

#### **6.2.1 The general perception of security in Durban**

It is important to recognise that the general perception among the Durban population is that Durban is an unsafe city. This perception is present among virtually all aspects of society, in both the formal and the informal settlements. Lena Lewis, a citizen and schoolteacher of Sydenham explained how she experiences that feeling of insecurity when she is driving her car:

*'You are always and constantly aware of how far you are away from the person in front of you. When you approach a robot<sup>69</sup> you always keep enough space in front of you so you know that if something happens you can go out of the way. It is not a nice feeling'<sup>70</sup>*

A resident of the informal settlement of Cato Crest explained his perception of security, his unhappiness with both the police and the criminals, and how he dealt with it:

*'Safety is gambled between police and hooligans. I am exposed to both. By being in the middle, I am safer. Although at night, to be outside, is not safe'<sup>71</sup>*

This perception of insecurity is for many a result from an actual encounter with crime. Perceptions, however, can also be greatly deteriorated by the government and/or media. Isin (2004) refers to a 'culture of fear' that can be created by any of

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<sup>69</sup> Robot: South African English for 'traffic light'

<sup>70</sup> Interview Lena Lewis 29-03-2011

<sup>71</sup> Informal Conversation 08-04-2011

these. Especially the media in Durban tend to publish stories about crime, the police, and corruption charges in the South African government excessively and thus contribute to this culture of fear that seems to exist in South Africa<sup>72</sup>, making it a difficult task for the CPF to change this image of unsafety that is presented to the reader on a daily basis.

### **6.2.2 The impact of the CPF on perceptions of security.**

As Keith Wilson mentioned, some people come to the CPF for somewhat therapeutic reasons after they have been a victim of crime. As I discussed earlier, these people who have been victims tend to come mostly to complain or criticise the police, and tend to stay away after a few meetings. The question is what role those CPF-meetings or patrols have had for these people.

The impact of a CPF can, for easiness sake, be divided in threefold: it can have no impact on one's perception of security, a negative impact, where someone feels less safe, or a positive impact, where someone actually feels safer.

The impact that an attendance of a CPF has on somebody is very different for every individual person. It is therefore difficult to make any general conclusions about the relationship a CPF has on one's perception of security. Also, because perceptions are so difficult to measure. As a reservist from Westville rightly said:

*'someone can feel really safe in this country for his or her entire life, and then when something happens, that feeling can change completely'*<sup>73</sup>.

In a memoir on his experiences as a reporter in South Africa, Bram Vermeulen expresses exactly this feeling when he writes that after having lived in Johannesburg for eight years without anything happening to him, he was feeling safe in the city. When suddenly he was a victim of a mugging, however, he was on edge for weeks on end (Vermeulen: 2009). With these points in mind, it is possible to give a general overview of the various impacts CPF may have on people.

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<sup>72</sup> Based on my impression of Durban's newspaper articles of the Daily News, The Mercury, and the Mail and Guardian in the period of 04-02-2011 - 28-04-2011.

<sup>73</sup> Interview 06-04-2011

Emma, for example, expressed that she had gotten a more negative perception of security (but a more favourable attitude towards the police), when she told me:

*'Being involved has definitely made me a bit paranoid, as I now hear everything that is going on in my neighbourhood [...]. At the same time, I do respect the police a lot more for what they are doing, and understand their situation. They are understaffed, underfunded and they have a lot of crime to deal with in this area'*<sup>74</sup>

A member of the Reservoir Hills Sector CPF Patrol had gotten a safer feeling since his involvement. He told me the following:

*'When I'm on the patrol, it feels good to do something about crime myself. And when I'm sitting at home, I feel good knowing that the guys are out there'*<sup>75</sup>.

For other people, however, attending CPF-meetings or patrols did not have much of an effect on their perception of security. Like one member of the Reservoir Hills sector CPF patrol, said:

*'At the end of the day my friend, no matter how many people are out there patrolling, if the thieves want to get in your house, they can still do it'*<sup>76</sup>.

The use of the CPF as a meeting through which somebody can stay informed on the crime-situation, and developments in technologies which relate to security, however, can make a difference on an individual's perception of security. As Daniel explains why he feel safe:

*'I myself feel safe because I know what is going on in Durban and I know what precautions to take to remain safe. The problem is that many people are just not informed'*<sup>77</sup>.

Many a SAPS-officer, as well as a CPF-member, believes that the key to a safer neighbourhood would be to make people more aware of the crime in their area, so that they can take the right precautions. Westville Communications Officer Brian mentioned this importance when he described his task in the CPF:

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<sup>74</sup> Interview Emma 24-02-2011

<sup>75</sup> Informal Conversation with Reservoir Hills Sector Patrol member, 18-02-2011

<sup>76</sup> Group interview with Reservoir Hills Sector Patrol members, 04-03-2011

<sup>77</sup> Interview Daniel 18-04-2011

*'What I do is I give lectures in the CPF about simple things people can do to increase the security around their house, like installing panic buttons, proper alarm systems, or keeping dogs'*<sup>78</sup>

James, a Reservoir Hills Sector CPF patrol member expressed that he believed having this awareness of your area and taking certain precautions is very important for a safe neighbourhood:

*'If everybody is aware of what they are doing, and what is happening in the area, then we will have a crime-free area. If everybody takes care of the small security things around their houses, we don't need a police-force'*<sup>79</sup>

It is thus in education about what is happening and how people can protect themselves from crime, that the CPF seems to have an influence on perceptions of security. When I asked people about whether they do or do not feel safe in their homes, most who felt safe seemed to feel that way because of their dogs outside, because of their gates, or because of the patrol of the guard in front of their house, not because they attended a CPF-meeting or patrol. But, by attending CPF-meetings, people can be made more aware of what precautions they can take when they are at home.

Particularly the Westville CPF scored high in this educational aspect. They released a free, bimonthly magazine 'Crime Zero' with general information about SAPS-functioning (mostly positive stories), ways to protect your home with new technology for alarm systems, and CPF-dates. This magazine was well read with its publisher estimating there to be about thirty thousand readers, based on the fact that all magazines were taken at the end of the bimonthly period with an average of three readers per magazine<sup>80</sup>. One student of Westville Boys high-school seemed to relate the CPF to that educational aspect particularly, when he said:

*'Oh the CPF, isn't that where they educate you about how to protect your home and such?'*<sup>81</sup>

Thus, although effects can be seen on some occasions among individual community-members who attend because they feel safer when they do something

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<sup>78</sup> Interview Brian 23-02-2011

<sup>79</sup> Group interview, 04-03-2011

<sup>80</sup> Interview Clive Williams 20-04-2011

<sup>81</sup> Class discussion at Westville Boys Highschool 20-04-2011

themselves to ensure a safer community, generally the CPF's influence on security lies in its educational role. Through meetings, or its own media, a CPF can be a different voice which to some degree balances the negative reporting from news-papers and other media, but also contributes to safety issues by showing proper methods of protecting yourself and your home in an unsafe society.

### **6.3 Analysis**

The 'culture of fear' which according to Isin (2004) exists in South African society, is exacerbated by the media. Stories about government corruption, police malfunctioning and crime in all aspects of society that are published by various media create a general perception of an unsafe country which may cause prejudices among the population towards government departments and institutions, including, but not limited to, the police. This over-reporting can lead to a similar situation to the one Lee (2009: 116-118) points out, namely that the population starts believing that the security situation is getting worse regardless of an actual change in crime-rates.

The CPF can in certain occasions help to break this perception of insecurity. One may feel safer to know that something is being done, or change his or her perception towards the police because problems of the country become clearer through involvement in the CPF. Others feel more unsafe due to CPF-attendance. Where these people were previously unfamiliar with all the problems around them, stories in CPF may have made it more real to them that acts of crime happen closer to home than they had expected.

The majority of the people, however, have a negative perception of security regardless of CPF-attendance. Stories told in CPF confirm the stories of the media, and do not change their perception of security in any significant way.

What, generally, do seem to make people feel secure are well-operating security systems and infrastructure like alarms, panic buttons and gates around the house, as well as the presence of dogs. CPF can educate people about new technologies and possible precautions they may take, and in doing so influence and stimulate people to purchase these items. This, again, is the role CPF can play in changing perceptions of security through education.

## **7. Conclusion**

CPF today exist to establish a partnership between the community, the SAPS and the local government. These actors are to find solutions for crime-prevention together (South Africa 1998). But how do Community Policing Fora work in practice and what is their relationship to perceptions of security? My research findings about CPF in the Sydenham and Westville areas in Durban, show that their structure corresponds with the guidelines provided by the Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board (2003), and that challenges present themselves not in these structures, but in the way Community Policing is executed.

In each forum different problems are faced and successes booked. Below, I will present my most important findings as to which factors challenge the proper functioning of a forum and may cause a poor relationship between the forum and the community. I will then go on to explain how these factors play out in practice.

Firstly, resource problems present a challenge for the SAPS in ensuring the proper implementation of new strategies towards Community Policing, like that of sector policing. Also, the SAPS's ability to ensure a quick response to calls from the community or the CPF and provide proper follow-up is affected by this problem.

Secondly, the deeply divided society of South Africa is making the ideal of community policing particularly hard to accomplish, as the community that is supposed to co-operate with the police is itself deeply divided and maintains many different ideas about how policing should be properly implemented.

Then, the issue of a lack of trust in the police may deter people from attending a CPF-meeting or patrol. A lack of trust may be caused by factors like a change in the attitude of the police since South Africa's transition to democracy, under-qualified personnel in the police service, the presence of corruption, negative reporting from the media, misunderstanding the task of the police and which problems fall under their jurisdiction and which not, as well as negative personal experiences.

A fourth and final issue is that there are various interpretations about the role a CPF can play for political purposes. It is the task of the CPF to establish effective crime-prevention initiatives with local governments. Political discussions are thus

allowed and recognised as important. Guidelines do state that the forum may not be used for the promotion of a specific political party (Kwazulu-Natal Provincial Community Police Board 2003: 30). When political arguments are raised, they are often done away with on the basis that political discussions are not allowed in the fora. Thus, necessary discussions which relate to politics are often wrongly dismissed based on the argument that politics should not be discussed in the fora, causing dismay among members who are not allowed to raise issues they would like to raise.

The effects of a poor relationship between the CPF and the community that is caused by these factors, show themselves in various ways.

First of all, a forum may become a complaints forum, instead of one where a constructive resolution to proper crime prevention is established through co-operation between the community, the police and the government.

Secondly, forum members may decide not to come back to the forum on a future occasion. Also, as a lot of the communication between the CPF and the community is done word-to-mouth, these members may prevent other community-members from coming and spread their negative perception of the forum among neighbours and acquaintances. All this results in a lower attendance of the forum.

Thirdly, a poor relationship plays out on the perception of the SAPS. Opinions about the SAPS either remain the same or will be exacerbated and the forum can lose some of its legitimacy among the population as well.

Finally, when trust in the police and the forum is absent in such a way that no alternative is seen towards a better security situation through any formal way, informal community policing may surface. When this occurs, the community undertakes its own initiatives to policing and takes the law into its own hand. These initiatives are often seen in informal settlements in the structures of peoples' courts, but increasingly also on a smaller scale in some formal settlements.

Burger's (2007: 142) argument that Community Policing has failed because it has not been able to contribute to a reduction in crime levels, is correct in Durban. However I argue that we should move beyond this narrow understanding of

security and value community policing in a broader perspective. If it does not perform on its original objective, how then does community policing play a role in security challenges in South African Society?

My data shows that on various occasions a CPF has managed to provide individual community members with a better understanding of what the police do and do not do, and has made these members more sympathetic towards the challenges faced by the SAPS.

Also, it has provided members of the community with a better understanding of what is, or is not happening in their neighbourhood, which may challenge the negative image of Durban's security situation that is painted by local media and turn it into a more realistic one.

The CPF have an important role to fulfil in educating the public. They may thus provide a better understanding of the SAPS, but also inform community members which precautions can be taken to minimise the chance of an encounter with crime. Community members who have taken these measures have expressed that they feel safer and in this way the CPF has an influence on the community's perception of security.

No general conclusion can be made about how CPF work and how they relate to a community's perception of security, as all CPF work differently and have different challenges to overcome. Also, the community's perception of security is something which is hard to measure, as each individual person maintains a different idea about the security situation. Moreover, this idea is subject to change after a certain event (like an encounter with crime).

What can be distinguished from my case study, are factors that cause a CPF to fail, but also the contributions CPF may have to goals that do not directly match their official purpose, like the changing of perceptions. CPF may not cause a direct decline in crime-rates, but do provide media channels through which various actors from South Africa's society that normally do not meet, can come together and discuss issues and find solutions together. In this, they can thus be more than merely the ideals with romantic aspirations that Klockars (2005: 458) mentions.

A subject for further study may be the influence attendance of a CPF has on an individual's perception of people of other ethnicities and skin-colours. I believe that the root-causes of crime in South Africa do not lie solely in a malfunctioning police service and agree with Burger (2007) that they lie in other problems as well. Burger mentions socio-economic problems and a failing criminal justice system as major contributing factors, and I would like to add the divided society that remains seventeen years after South Africa's transition to democracy to this list. I believe CPF to be media through which boundaries that divide South African society can be broken on a grassroots level, which may show a decline in crime on the longer term.

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Then there are also the many members of the South African Police Service who were ever so helpful to me and my research. I know their job is a busy one and I am lucky to have had so much of their time.

Not to be underestimated was also the help of various representatives from a number of Private Security Companies, who were helpful, informative, took me on patrols, and also became good friends.

Then, I was able to see Durban's other side only with the help from the residents of two of Durban's many informal settlements. Although initially I was hesitant to go over and visit them, I have rarely been so warmly welcomed and felt instantly at ease as at many of their homes. It was not only for data-collection that I made the trip over multiple times. The friends I made there have my gratitude.

In the very last weeks of my research, I suddenly met some great people who were able to give me new insights in social settings that I had not visited before. Some wonderful families who were members of the Reservoir Hills Sector Patrol invited me over for numerous dinners at their homes and in the city. It was great spending time with them all.

Conducting research was sometimes tough, tougher than I could have had imagined. Some of the stories I heard in meetings were gruesome and sometimes hard to deal with. On these occasions I was so lucky to have roommates and friends who were able to take my mind of things or listen to my stories. Without all those of whom I spent time, dinners, climbing trips and other activities with, my stay would have been much less pleasant. A big thank you to all of them.

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## **Annex 1. Reflection**

Although arriving in a strange country by myself was no new experience for me, conducting research through participant observation, informal conversations, hanging out, interviews, et cetera, was. My research took off with a surprisingly good start, as Julian Carter, who was introduced to me by a friend from Utrecht, was so kind to take me along to all of his meetings from the first week after my arrival in Durban onwards. He introduced me to many people who later turned out to be valuable informants, and who introduced me to even more people. Starting a network thus did not prove to be an issue.

From the beginning onwards, I felt quite comfortable in my role as a researcher. I obtained a lot of my early data from participant observation, hanging out, and informal conversations, none of which I found particularly hard to undertake. In the second week of my stay in Durban I was already invited to attend the community patrol in Reservoir Hills, of which I became a regular attendee in the weeks following. The patrol members showed obvious pride in what they had established, and were keen to inform me as a researcher what kind of activities they undertook.

Where participant observation, hanging out and informal conversations were not particularly hard, organising interviews and meeting informants in more of a private setting proved to be difficult for me. In the third, fourth and fifth week, I had more difficulty in meeting with informants. Some of whom I had scheduled an interview with did not show up or were not at home when I visited them. This happened a couple of times in the third week and instead of actively trying to make new appointments, I lost my motivation to pursue these informants, as well as actively attempting other ways to obtain new and interesting data, which resulted in me only attending regular weekly or monthly meetings which did not provide me with many new insights. Retrospectively, I wish that I had made earlier attempts to reignite my research, as these weeks feel like lost time.

After these three weeks with a lack of motivation, however, things seemed to pick up again. Especially in the final five weeks of my stay in Durban, I started meeting new people who were able to offer me completely new perspectives on what I already knew. This showed me the importance of conducting research for a

longer period of time, as even at the very end of my stay informants managed to surprise me with their insights. Especially my visit to the Westville prison at the very end showed me that the crime-problem in South Africa extends much further than merely to the police, and changed my view on the SAPS and the challenges they face significantly. What also changed in these final weeks was that informants actually started calling me to make appointments, instead of the other way around, which was a welcome change in undertaking my data-collection.

The greatest contribution conducting this research has had on me as a person is that it has shown me again the importance of making contact and communicating with all the people around you. There was so much fear in South Africa: fear towards people of other skin-colours, fear towards crime, fear of the informal settlements. Now I do not intend to imply that some of these fears are not justified, but I do now realise that the way you approach another person contributes greatly to how you are going to be treated, as well as the experiences you are going to have with him or her. Showing an interest in those people living in the informal settlements caused them to invite me over to their homes and I must confess that I have nowhere in the formal sector in South Africa felt as welcome as in the informal sector. If more South African citizens would undertake similar trips to these settlements, maybe perceptions can change faster than they have been changing since South Africa's transition to democracy.

Saying this now, however, may be easy, but it also took me some time to take the step of entering an informal settlement. Stories from police, friends, and newspapers did make me hesitant to enter. I too became a victim of prejudices after initially spending time in only the formal settlements of Durban, which is why I do understand the fear that was present among many of the people around me.

Fact is that South Africa remains a society with a high crime-rate, and hearing some stories was not easy. In fact, I can mention more than a few which I wish I had not heard. These stories were the hardest part of my research, as they have stayed with me, also after my return home. They have shed new light on the society I live in in the Netherlands, and how lucky I am to live in a relatively safe city.

All in all, South Africa has made an incredible impression on me. It is a land of contradictions. It is a place where individuals I met were incredibly friendly and welcoming, where I could leave my car keys at guards when I would go for a surf (while I was told never to do such a thing), and where I had the ability to meet an incredibly diverse group of people through my research. I look back on these things with wonderful memories.

At the same time, I experienced incredible amounts of racism among all groups of the population, which I initially felt I had to contradict, but eventually gave up doing. Also, I heard gruesome stories, saw the impacts of HIV and poverty, and had the feeling that a human life there is not worth the same as it is in the Netherlands. All this was exacerbated by my research, as it was through my research that I was brought into contact with many of these aspects. These experiences were tough and have made a lasting impact on me.

I may conclude with mentioning that I did not experience any major setbacks in my research except for the three weeks that I mentioned earlier, and that all the necessities for my data-collection came, after putting in some initial effort and putting certain fears behind me, quite natural. However, my research was on a heavy topic, and although I did not have to face any serious ethical dilemmas or was a victim of crime, I had some tough times dealing with certain stories that were told.



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