

# Crime Combating: An Assessment Of Participation In South Africa's Community Policing

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## Abstract

*In South Africa, CPFs have undoubtedly been crucial in the fight against crime. The Moreletapark Sector 4 CPF's dedication to community policing is examined in this study along with how it handles recruiting, membership, and participation—the three main challenges that have so far threatened its operational efficacy and sustainability. There are still major obstacles that make it difficult for CPF members to effectively battle crime in Moreletapark, notwithstanding the principles of community policing. Therefore, the study's primary goal was to evaluate how community members participated in the Community Policing Forum in their capacity as crime combatants. The study adopted a qualitative research design to accomplish its goal. In order to choose responders, purposeful sampling was employed. To ensure that the respondents provided accurate answers, semi-structured interview questions were used. As a research tool, observation was also used. Since there are fewer active members in the CPF, the census approach was used. Throughout the investigation, appropriate ethical considerations were adhered to. The results show that the CPF's member attrition was not adequately addressed by its recruitment and attraction efforts. Furthermore, it appears that the incentive needed to maintain CPF volunteers' enthusiasm for their responsibilities is limited and riddled with problems that demotivate them.*

**Keywords** Community police forum, Community Policing, Crime combating, Labour Relations Act, South Africa.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of South Africa's democratic transition in 1990, organised crime has increased tremendously, which has led to a rise in Community Policing Forums (CPF) in the country (Shaw, 2003). From that vintage point, Hough (2002) asserts that crime immediately threatens South Africa's security at every level, with the most significant being the refusal of some investors to direct their investment into the country. It has been clear in recent events, that the people of South Africa have had few options but to apply political pressure on the government to step in and combat rising crime. The threat of increasing violence is a serious one, since vigilantism has faced several challenges (Wisler and Onwudiwe, 2007). As a result, Wisler & Onwudiwe (2007) contend that community engagement with CPFs is a sign of communities' interest in stability. The Interim Constitution (Act No 200 of 1993) made the first formal mention of CPFs. It did this by carefully separating CPFs from the authority granted to the South African Police Service (Pelsler, 1999). As a result, CPFs are mandated to act as the police's eyes and ears but lack the authority to make arrests. Section 219(b) of the Constitution supports the creation of CPFs. The Constitution makes it explicit that these CPFs are now part of the Provincial Commissioners' authority to combat crime, as this task is officially assigned to them (South African Government, 2009). According to the act, CPFs are to foster cooperation and

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accountability for the services they provide to local communities, monitor the effectiveness of the service, and provide advice on community policing prime issues, such as the provision, citing, and staffing of police stations. It offers protective services during events as well as the ability to receive and handle charges and complaints. Additionally, it patrols residential and commercial areas, prosecutes offenders, and requests investigations into local enforcement issues (Pelser, 1999). The presence of CPFs has not been without its own challenges (Anand, 2008). It was challenging for SAPS members to comprehend the potential contribution of CPFs in a post-apartheid society under evolution.

According to the Ministry of Safety and Security Media Statement (2004), strained relationships were a problem when loyalty to SAPS and the local community was irreconcilable and frequently turbulent. These relationships have been and continue to be critical. Shaw (2003) asserts that "certain communities do tacitly support the functioning of organised crime due to the levels of poverty in the country and the culture of lawlessness fostered during apartheid era (and the battle against it)." However, this is quickly changing as communities are more likely to respond to crimes on their own when the police fail to show up. Members of the Moreletapark Sector 4 CPF participated in initial inquiry into CPFs, and it was discovered that their contribution to preventing crime was reactive rather than proactive, in addition to the fact that the CPF's organisation was quite disorganised. The community's lack of support for the CPF was evident, and individual SAPS members viewed CPF membership and engagement as an unneeded evil. They were unappreciative and did not comprehend the benefits that CPFs could offer to communities. Burger (2007) asserts that the public steers clear of the SAPS entirely because police organisations are distrusted, particularly in cases where police cooperation in crime is widespread. The main researcher became interested in the topic despite public apathy towards it. As a matter of fact, creating an effective system that aggressively combats crime will benefit both the community and the SAPS. In contrast to the tense relationship between police and the public, police might thus restore a position of trust, leading to an improved interaction between police and the citizens. While the rest of the population slept soundly, a committed few spent a significant amount of time patrolling. CPF members are frequently the first on the scene, and most of the time, the community members stay completely indifferent until they are victims of crime themselves.

Consequently, some members of the general public felt discouraged or uninterested, while others joined the ranks and files of the CPFs by getting involved. This fluctuation in the number of people contributing to CPF operations had a notable effect on its efficacy. Crime increased during periods of indifference, and data on all forms of crime skyrocketed (Noeth, 2011). The observation of weekly incidences reveal that crime decreased on weekends because CPF members had more time to assist with patrol. However, throughout the week and during the day, the demands of earning a living overshadowed the communities' interest in crime prevention initiatives. The immediate question is: If active volunteer participation and membership were more sustainable, would CPFs be more effective?

### **1.1 Research Objective**

To Assess the participation of community member in the CPFs' crime combating role.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. The Theory of Substantive Fairness**

The substantive fairness concept states that a law enforcement official can implement security measures or fight crime if they have a good reason, which is a prerequisite for maintaining community safety. According to Du Plessis and Fouché (2015; LRA, 1995;

Ristow, and Ristow, 2008), a security guard cannot combat criminal activity without a valid basis. The notion of "crime-fighting" was elaborated by Du Plessis and Fouché (2015), who stated that a security agent must be able to demonstrate that fighting crimes and criminals is the best course of action after taking into account all relevant facts, including the existing crime rates in the community. As a result, using this theory to analyse the findings suggests that substantive justice in the fight against crime may be controversial. In the first place, it implies harsh and instantaneous penalties; in the second place, it suggests corrective guidance (Durai, 2010). Therefore, security agents' responsibility for community safety depends on their ability to determine when and how to combat crime rates. However, security guards typically perform this task poorly. Due to their ignorance of community policing policies and procedures or their concern about the consequences of an attack on staff, these agents may not fight crimes. Bendix (2010) asserts that communities must have a clear policy about security awareness to prevent arbitrary attacks or reprimands from those who commit crimes in the community.

## **2.2. Historical Development of Community Policing Forums**

Ongoing political shifts challenged the Western world and later capitalist ideologies, which led to the questioning of liberal values, as opposed to the welfare state. As a result, government interference weakened private enterprise's survival, ultimately leading to its downfall. Therefore, to promote and protect its population, the state takes a progressive approach. The government may provide resources to its inhabitants in an attempt to enable them to deliver services on their own (Plant & Stanton, 2009). Therefore, when the state intervenes, policies are created in which an effort to control its population, grows in scope from social to economic viewpoints. Since most nations that adopted the welfare state found it more and more difficult to provide services to their citizens, this situation could not continue unchecked. As a result, the welfare states faced mounting pressure to find sustainable financial resources to support the supposed control as financial restrictions increased (Algan, Cahuc, and Sangnier, 2011). The majority of welfare states raised taxes and looked for additional funding sources to support the resulting culture of dependency. It became clear in the late 1970s that the welfare states needed to reallocate funds and return their attention to the task of governance by selling off costly ventures that they could no longer support. Consequently, citizens gained the ability to both provide and pay for the services they received and act as guardians of welfare. According to Algan, Cahuc, and Sangnier (2011), the state's engagement was later streamlined and refocused towards community institutions that would theoretically improve service delivery.

The fact that communities are now in charge of reducing crime after recognising that governmental institutions are no longer the only ones that can do so is another example of this refocusing. Consequently, it became essential for communities to take a proactive approach in addressing and combating crime (Plant & Stanton, 2009). Mechanisms are created to make sure that the community can handle the difficulties that crime poses when it starts to take responsibility for preventing crime. This would entail the creation of new crime prevention organisations, including Community Policing Forums, as well as tactics centred on crime prevention and reduction, which is a novel and intricate paradigm for defining the connection between the police and the community. The state's power to respond to criminal control, including arrest, punishment, and prosecution, is not contested or intended to be replaced by such tactics. However, local communities are left to handle the majority of crime reduction efforts (Goldstein, 2009). In a pre-emptive or mutually beneficial relationship, the state's indirect transfer of authority to the local community brings a system of direct control through the state as a deterrent. This kind of relationship works best to reduce crime in communities (Goldstein, 2009). Accordingly, community policing tactics led to the establishment of the South African Community Policing Forums in 1994 and the British Neighbourhood Watch system in the 1960s and 1970s (Pelser, 1999).

The evolution of society was significantly impacted by the 1980s and the significant socioeconomic upheavals brought about by shifts in the global order, which in turn sped up the search for Community Policing projects. As greater power was transferred to community police groups, police tactics started to shift, according to the 2013 report of the Australian Department of Justice. Australia is one example of a state that had to get rid of the bureaucratic and welfare state constraints. As a result, they had to drastically alter how they interacted with the public by implementing new policing philosophies or a combination of them. To be applied to various levels of crime prevention, the aforementioned proactive model had to modify its authority and activities (Nel, Lieberman, Landman, Louw, & Robertshaw 2000). In theory, community structures would focus on preventative social issues like traffic control and protection, while the state would primarily handle reactionary criminal control. To direct reactive policing to high-crime areas, community policing organisations would also offer intelligence when social initiatives were implemented (Nel, Lieberman, Landman, Louw, & Robertshaw 2000). The contrast between the past and now is that the former state's engagement led to the creation of highly centralised bureaucratic organisations. As a consequence, communities exerted political pressure to obtain greater control, leading to the current preventative measures (Pelser, 1999). For example, compared to many other nations, the rate of crime in South Africa is extremely high. In light of this growth, Community Policing Forums in South Africa must be developed quickly and effectively (Altbeker, 2007).

### **2.3 Participation and Membership in Community Policing Forums**

The idea that law enforcement or SAPS should be interdependent would be a logical departure from the philosophy behind community policing. The reciprocal advantages of a decrease in crime will act as a reaffirming factor for a productive existence if this interdependency is successful (Maroga, 2004). Police management philosophy as a mediator between parties will rely on the two sides' relationships being successfully reconciled (Lloyd & Foster, 2009). Therefore, it is still controversial as SAPS members are career-oriented people, who face problems in their careers, while community policing structures are essentially volunteers. The strains of conflicting interests, even those related to community safety or interests, versus professional difficulties are frequently incompatible, which could make the two parties' relationship tainted or unworkable. The dedication of members and whether or not this commitment will result in the fight against crime are the only factors that determine the recruitment of members, which is a pretty crucial element (Vancouver Police Department, 2014). Consequently, hardship is viewed as the system's main handicap because the community's attitude towards recruiting will determine whether or not it results in complacency (Zinn and Kelder 2011). In South Africa, police structures may or may not be involved in the fight against crime. Since police officers are inherently a part of the community, their interests frequently clash with those of the community, which may or may not view police as hostile depending on the parties' exposure and experience (Marais, 1992). Consequently, it may be challenging to recruit Community Policing members because their acceptance in the community may be critiqued and consequently found problematic.

### **2.4. Recruiting Community Policing Members**

The essential elements of recruiting are listed by Lloyd and Foster (2009) as the location of community requirements and, thus, the foundation for collaboration between the police and Community Policing institutions. Trust is frequently built on elements including unambiguous leadership, strong community involvement, conspicuous police presence, prompt response, and easily recognisable uniforms and insignia. Furthermore, assigned responsibilities and clearly defined areas of responsibility would foster trust between the police and the community, according to Lloyd & Foster (2009). Support from crime victims

both on the crime scene and at the Community Policing Forum always justifies traumatised community members joining the CPF. The community member feels more secure after joining (Pelser, 1999). As a result, depending on the successes that the connection reveals, the recruitment of potential Community Policing members may either be delayed or enhanced (Marais, 1992). One of the main issues facing current Community Police members is the recruitment continuity of new members. Community patrollers may not be accepted by the community since they may be perceived as having basic flaws because they may be members of other fraternities from a social, religious, or political standpoint (Marais, 1992). One excellent example is Community Policing members who have known gang links (Moreleta CPF, 2014). According to studies by Zinn (2010) and Nel et al., (2000), Community Policing Forum's internal dynamics should be handled similarly to those of any other organisation. Their study mentions the issue of declining membership, but it doesn't go into detail about the causes of this decline. Depending on how enthusiastic the active volunteers are, Community Policing Forum activities can be either powerful or weak. Members of the community policing force face social, professional, and family-related difficulties (Pelser, 1999).

Gaining the community's respect and understanding is one of the crucial elements. This is accomplished by continuing to be present at police stations where members of the public can get anonymous assistance in reporting crimes. Members of Community Policing frequently refrain from participating when fighting crime becomes a grey area or diffused, which will have a detrimental effect on recruiting new volunteers. For example, on the Cape Flats, where gang-related events are common and gangs target CPF members in retaliation, community policing members will not put themselves in danger (Du Plessis, 2014). Community Policing Forums are rarely perceived favourably by criminal syndicates.

Communities that experience high crime rates frequently lament the insufficient presence of law enforcement in their localities (Dozier, Hacker, Silberberg, & Zieghahn, 2011). Community Policing Forums frequently address this deficiency, which the public frequently perceives as just another dishonest police practice. However, SAPS members are required by the Police Service Act to have the authority to make arrests, whereas Community Policing Forums do not (National Prosecuting Authority, 2011). As a result, unlike SAPS personnel, Community Policing members do not operate independently; instead, they face criticism for failing to carry out the SAPS mission. As a result, members of Community Policing encounter criticism from the community, which makes them to stop participating in Community Policing Forum activities. As a result of waning enthusiasm, membership declines, and doubt over the pervasive crime situation takes its place (Minaar, 2004).

## **2.5. Main Tasks of Community Policing Forums**

Community Policing Forums help to provide proper risk management, community protection and an improved standard of living by fostering cooperation between the police and the communities (Burger, 2007; Monyei & Ukpere, 2024). In addition to making sure that the police respond to the community's basic requirements and answer them, they also take on the duty of maintaining community safety by preventing crime. CPF aids in the creation of a proactive and problem-solving approach to crime and violence by improving the calibre of information that the police have access to. Furthermore, Community Policing Forums give communities access to visible, approachable policing as well as a general presence to boost public trust in law enforcement and discourage criminal activity (Marais, 1992). In conclusion, according to Sections 18–23 of the South African Police Service Act of 1995, and the Community Policing Forum's constitution, these forums bring the ideals of the police force into line with those of a democratic South Africa (Juta Law, 2012). According to the aforementioned laws, the goal is to develop police officers who can engage with their communities in a way that respects local customs and values (Microdot

South Africa, 2014). According to the Vancouver Police Department (2014), Community Policing Forums will selectively summarise their secondary duties, such as documenting suspicious events, and visits, and assisting in contacting senior citizens who are part of the program. Additionally, they help with infrastructure problems like insurance, alarms, discounted locks, and strengthened door security, such as door chains (Microdot South Africa, 2014).

On a social and strategic level, they take part in other community social events and support the scheme's fund-raising efforts. They also keep an eye on each other's property, report real-life events to the SAPS, and make sure that signs from the Community Policing Forum are put up outside the homes of community members. To be able to guide SAPS in times of crisis, they post signs on the streets and roads and maintain a log of members' names and addresses (Dozier, Hacker, Silberberg, & Zieghahn 2011). In addition to their strategic duties, Community Policing Forums are tasked with disseminating information via local newspapers and publications as well as churches (Algan, Cahuc, and Sangnier, 2011). Preventative action, which suggests a patrol and watch, would therefore include removing dumpsters and dustbins during holidays and keeping an eye out for stolen cars (Vancouver Police Department, 2014).

A conspicuous sign is placed on the members' gate to announce membership. As a result, Community Policing Forums spend money on engraving kits or more subdued markers like the Microdot program, which involves painting recognisable micro dust on valuable objects (Microdot SA, 2014). Additionally, social media is used as an efficient media tool to inform Community Policing members, and social events are improved through the production of a newsletter or Facebook pages (Microdot SA, 2014). According to Monyei and Ukpere (2024), and Laycock and Tiley (1995), this leads to the planning of organisational value activities or schemes as routine as the removal of newspapers and posts, which marks the absence of homeowners as a chance for risky behaviours, vandalism or break-ins. Since it begs the question of whether a mere presence lowers crime, even Community Policing Forums would find it difficult to benchmark success in this regard. Pelsner (1999) asserts that while research themes on crime prevention structures are similar, Community Policing Forums have different structures because of the particular difficulties they encounter. The study is intriguing because community structures will adjust their involvement in proportion to the impact of crime on the community or the severity of a single criminal incidence in the area. This has a controversial effect on different SAPS districts because the improvement in crime rates results in the movement of SAPS members, frequently to regions where crime is more dangerous than where they are now assigned. To stop transfers, SAPS stations may frequently fabricate or modify crime (News 24, 2011). Consistently managing CPF membership activities as a generalist approach to crime prevention might not solve a community's problems because that community might feel that the management intrudes on their personal lives (Minaar, 2004). For the fact that sporadic results do not transfer into coordinated action and strategies, measurement is speculative and fragmented, contributing little strategic value. Given the demoralisation, complacency, and decline in involvement, it is evident that the SAPS does not prioritise managing the number of Community Policing Forums. This is because police resources are limited, resulting in little support for Community Policing activities (Minaar, 2004).

## **2.6. Organizational Approach to Community Policing**

When a shift in police mind-set towards community policing occurs, it is reasonable to predict that organisational adjustments may follow. According to Myhill & Rudat (2006), organisational changes can either have a good impact and be accepted by the community, or they can cause animosity. Thus citing specifically, the police value system that will have the greatest beneficial influence on tactics and strategies, community police formations that are now in a traditional reactive posture will be demoted from a bureaucratic, hierarchical

model with a sharply defined reporting structure to a flatter and more decentralised organisational architecture. In addition to relieving community police of some of their administrative duties, this strategy will alter how performance is measured (Department of Justice, 2013). CPFs will now be evaluated using a different set of guidelines as a result of a changed organisational strategy, as opposed to the reactive hierarchical approach that focuses more on customer or citizen satisfaction. From an organisational standpoint, the proactive community view will now balance the need to generate statistics on reactive policing, such as traffic stops, roadblocks, and arrests. To guarantee that actions are governed consistently and human resources are used efficiently, activities will be accommodated within a work pattern (Department of Justice, 2013).

## **2.7. Effectiveness of Community Policing Forums in South Africa**

If Community Policing systems are so active, what changes have they brought about? This is a major contention in some of the reviewed literature, including Maroga (2004) and Mistry (1996). To set a baseline, this would suggest that statistics from before crime prevention programs were implemented should be taken into account (Burger, 2007). One of the difficulties can be the absence of statistics since they are frequently used to support political arguments. For the fact that government statistics are perceived as supporting a political agenda rather than being accurate, they are frequently questioned. The structural and administrative makeup of Forums is described in research conducted under the sponsorship of the National Crime Prevention Centre and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), but it does not focus on the expansion of research on ways to promote participation (Nel, Lieberman, Landman, Louw & Robertshaw 2000). It is still necessary to resolve issues with the internal management of Community Policing Forums. It is noteworthy that "Neighbourhood Watch," namely the American and British models of community policing organisations, are very successful in local and international studies because of substantial police backing and group engagement (Laycock & Tiley, 1995). Interestingly, Anand (2008) makes the same remarks about Neighbourhood Watch's lack of zeal in low-crime neighbourhoods. This is in line with communities being complacent as crime rates decline, only to discover later that this complacency leads to a wave of crime that is hard to contain because the fear of crime further discourages participation (News 24, 2013). It bolsters the trend that, when and where needed, SAPS or police resources are frequently sent to regions with higher crime rates (Minaar, 2004). Rather than long-term proactive Community Policing, this affects the ability to conduct reactive policing.

It is noteworthy that members of Police Forums frequently experience feelings of abandonment and that they are in a precarious position (Du Plessis, 2014). Thus, it is unnecessary to criticise Community Policing Forums without taking the wider picture into account. The situation is comparable to Community Policing Forums, where it is uncommon to find trustworthy historical statistics to set success criteria (Myhill & Rudat, 2012). It is common for police agencies to fail to distinguish between their own and community accomplishments. Government-derived resources are dubious, except for the numbers provided by Zinn and Kelder (2011). The media is still full of allegations of political meddling with these figures (News24, 2010). An overall crime reduction of 65% is achieved when Community Policing Forums are included. Their study makes no mention of the degrees of community involvement or the symmetric contribution of a community. It is challenging to compare the measured level of community involvement to a similar decrease in crime because it is rarely studied. As a result, Community Policing Forums, which are mandated to police hard-core crimes, might not be able to prevent them. Hence, they might not be able to measure their impact on membership participation in crime reduction and anti-social behaviour.

In the case of CPFs, where trustworthy statistics are hard to come by, Zinn & Kelder's (2011) further stated that research is nonetheless dependable and sets the standard. Murphy

(2004) asserts that one of the challenges facing community policing agencies is evaluating and, consequently, benchmarking success. Its ill-defined goals and changing tactics pose challenges, particularly in contrast to police departments' better-organised statistics. For this reason, the success of community policing may be viewed as dependent on police statistics or may not provide any results at all. This is because police geographical areas are more expansive than the small areas where CPFs work. Owing to the fact that it is challenging to evaluate participation or involvement in programs as a success or failure, this deters members of the Community Policing Forum (Murphy 2004). If this kind of failure occurs again, communities will have a harder time organising and recruiting people to participate in community policing activities on a long-term basis. The National Prosecuting Authority (2011) states that estimates of the effectiveness of community policing are far from sufficient. Based on the above, the effectiveness of Community Policing Forums is doubtful.

### 3. Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was more appropriate for the study given its social foundation. The study was carried out in the CPF's Sector 4 Moreletapark responsibility area, which by definition does not include other sectors, to keep the study's scope reasonable. There was a chairperson in charge of liaising with the SAPS as part of an established leadership structure. A core group of 10 members of 388 Moreletapark CPF form the research participants (RPs). Area leaders who oversee the nine zones that make up Moreletapark Sector 4 CPF, were the most enthusiastic volunteers in CPF events. Interviews, observation, and CPF document reading were among the data collection techniques used. The zone leaders that made up the internal reaction team primarily represented the ten interviewees. All research participants were asked open-ended questions, which led to longer participation and richer data. To support the Dictaphone recordings, field notes were carefully gathered. Specifically, when individuals sounded uncertain, field notes allowed the researcher to reevaluate earlier data. Interviews were recorded using sound, guaranteeing that the data would not be impacted. The content analysis approach appears suitable for assessing CPF members' participation because it is a level of relational analysis that allows for the definition of word relationships. The interview material was therefore coded based on a subset of relationships that affected the disengagement of CPF members in Sector 4 Moreletapark.

### 4. Data Analysis

#### 4.1. Recruitment and Attraction of Members to Participate in CPF Activities

CPF's depend on membership to maintain the viability of their operations. There are 8,000 families in the Moreletapark region, based on voter registration. Therefore, it is impossible to efficiently patrol the area with just ten patrollers. The density of such a small number will be negligible if all ten patrollers are on patrol at the same time. Covering the area becomes impossible since potential patrollers are hesitant to participate in CPF activities. Thus, the CPF's capacity to attract and enrol new members is essential to its long-term viability.

**The responses to Question 1:** How do Community Policing Forums (CPF's) recruit people to join their crime-fighting roles? Emanated from this question.

RP1 said in this context:

"By word of mouth. After learning more about the radio network and the CPF from others, I obtained the correct phone numbers and began to gather additional information before joining".

"Given my limited understanding of the CPF's recruitment process, I would assume that doing various community drives, shopping centres, exhibitions, and the like would be necessary, but I believe that the simplest or fastest way is for all members to simply recruit their neighbours; that's the quickest way that we can increase our numbers." (RP2).

"Since we used to live next to each other in the security complex, I have known RP3 for several years. I knew that he was constantly active, and I knew that I would also get involved" (RP2).

**Moreover, RP2 added:**

"I wasn't really recruited by anyone, but I ultimately went to the CPF website and discovered the recruitment forms there. I believe it was sent to (B8) or someone else, and they returned them, which I filled out and so on. Should I state that I visited the CPF even though I was not hired from a recruitment perspective?"

Given that most members were drawn to the CPF solely because of its mission, it is evident from the background above that formal recruitment has received minimal attention within the organisation. The research participants' responses corroborate this perception. A thorough recruitment plan was lacking in terms of attracting CPF members. Members appear to be drawn to the CPF because they joined voluntarily and appreciate the goal of combating crime.

"I eventually joined the CPF because I support the cause after speaking with several of its members and learning about their activities" (RP3).

In similar vein, RP4 responded:

"Well, I had contact with certain members of the CPF, and they told me what they do, and eventually, I joined because I support the cause."

The fact that RP3 and RP4 saw CPF actions as "part of a cause" is noteworthy. Also, for the fact that the two research participants were drawn to the CPF and recruitment followed is as well noteworthy.

Like research participants RP1, RP2, and RP3, RP7 stated:

"I believe it is a system that is based on referrals and friends...I can't believe I ever saw a green light and decided I wanted to join. Yes, I believe their method of attraction is probably not that effective. I joined because I had friends who were members. Their self-promotion and self-marketing strategies are ineffective".

"I joined through posters and social events such as a braai hosted by a CPF member, which took place at a function venue. It was word of mouth, indeed." (RP9).

In addition, RP9 remarked:

"I am pretty familiar with the role of CPFs through other sectors, but not totally from the recruitment push no."

As can be seen, RP9 above confirmed cases in which members were enlisted when prospective CPF recruits expressed interest. Additionally, when the community showed interest, potential members were drawn in during incidents.

RP10 described how she registered and showed interest thus:

"So, it was more by word of mouth; the desire to be involved was there already, but I just needed a little push in the right direction... Well, I had wanted to join for a long time and just hadn't gotten as far as doing anything about it. When I got to vote one day, CPF had a stall at the voting station and I noticed somebody that I knew. I went to chat and the next moment I knew I was signing up to join the CPF."

"All right, let me tell you as jy betrokke was, van bure, normaalweg (Translated: One usually hears from one's neighbours or if you were involved elsewhere earlier)" (RP6).

RP5 appeared to provide an oblique response to a probing question on whether participants view crime as a minor or major issue that motivated their self-interest to join the CPF:

"So jy wys dat daar 'n belangstelling in die publiek is en omdat jy hierdie voorbeeld stel verwek jy hey, wat gaan nou hier aan? Wie is hierdie ou en hoekom sê hy, hoekom waarsku hy my? En op die manier stel jy die CPF aan die mense voor." Translated: "you have to show that you are interested so that the community gets interested. The community has to think, why are these people warning me about crime?" (RP5).

The community's seeming indifference to crime is supported by RP5's response, as people are frequently unaware of it unless they are personally or indirectly affected.

In a similar vein, RP7 stated:

"I saw that the Moreletapark neighbourhood had a high crime rate. I decided to participate through one of the former members' recruitments".

Hence, RP7 was not criminally affected but remained enrolled. All of the responders shared the perception that crime is a threat. The following question assessed the research participants' experiences with crime by asking if they were directly or indirectly affected by it, which might have contributed to their decision to join the CPF. The response to the question was as follows:

"The incident, in a sense, is what motivates people to engage, but they get disinterested once it no longer affects them. One or two persons have been victims, but the majority are victims who have never been harmed. Indeed, it is likely that criminality plays a part" (RP7).

In addition, RP7 stated:

"I believe that criminality plays a part, but I also believe that human nature is such that you get used to things. Many things, including burglary, become accustomed to you. What we observed was that when criminals entered a home while people were inside, brandishing guns and other weapons, the people instantly joined the CPF".

RP2 strongly believe that the primary motivation for joining the CPF is the fear of crime and thought the trend was not intended to exist:

"Crime statistics have an effect. I believe that the more crimes there are, the more people say, 'I better do something, I better become involved.' Even if you're simply afraid, you want to acquire a radio because you're afraid. But, as you are aware, I do not believe that fear should be the driving force behind our involvement or community involvement". (RP2).

The above responses illustrate strategies used in drawing new members to the CPF.

Potential members' self-interest appears to be a major factor in their decision to join the CPF, as does their fear of the impact of crime. To put it another way, some research participants argue that some members joined after suffering a crime themselves or witnessing a neighbour being harmed.

Therefore, in terms of how the CPF draws members to participate in its activities, the following common themes emerged from the data analysis:

- Word-of-mouth,
- Self-interest,
- Friend-based (i.e., joining because your friends are members or through a referrer);
- Flyers and social functions (or gatherings), and
- Prior knowledge of CPF activities in other sectors.

The following table shows the frequency of use of certain recruitment and attraction strategies as revealed from the current data.

**Table 1.** Frequency and ranking of emergent themes for recruitment and attraction

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Total</b>
Word of mouth	XXXXXXXX	7
Self-interest	XXXXXXX	6
Friend based	XXX	3
Flyers and social function	XX	2
Previous awareness	XX	2

**Source:** Author's Fieldwork.

As can be seen in Table 1 above, word-of-mouth is the most popular method for recruiting new members to the CPF. The self-interest of those who joined because they wanted to fit in, fear crime, or support the cause came next. Referrers and friend-based networks have become a reasonably popular way to draw in new members. However, it appears that the least effective methods for drawing new members to the CPF are fliers and social events that include prior awareness in other areas. One research participant (P7), however, believes that these present strategies are inefficient and poor ways to draw in new members to the CPF.

#### **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

In a corporate society, employees are hired to make sure a company runs well and is therefore viable. One of the main factors contributing to the potential success of any organisation, including the CPF, was thus thought to be effective recruitment (Plant & Stanton, 2009). It is evident from the data analysis that the CPF heavily relies on word-of-mouth to recruit new members. When it comes to spreading knowledge, word-of-mouth has limited potential because it can only be shared with those who happen to cross your route or who live in your neighbourhood. In addition, some members, like P3, joined the CPF for personal gain (Pelser, 1999) and most likely out of sympathy for the cause. Joining the CPF is also motivated in part by a desire to fit in or a fear of crime in the community. A person who joined for personal reasons may likewise depart for the same reason. When crime rates and visible crime decline, members who join because they are afraid of crime might as well quit. Furthermore, it appeared that friends or referrals were the main source of interest in and recruitment of potential members to the CPF. To put it another way, it seems that the only people drawn to CPF recruitment and attraction efforts are potential members who are acquainted with certain current CPF members or groups. Accordingly, it appears that attracting "outsiders" and, consequently, more individuals, does not happen

frequently (Marais, 1992). From this angle, it can be argued that if the pool of potential volunteers from the larger community who might join and support the CPF's activities is still based on friends or neighbours, it has not been fully utilised because this is a very limited strategy. Flyers distributed at social gatherings appear to be another strategy for drawing new members to the CPF. It is important to remember that social gatherings are not necessarily regular events, making them a restricted means of disseminating information about the CPF to draw members. The purpose of using flyers to draw potential members to CPF activities may also be thwarted because many people as they may not have enough time to read them during social events. The data analysis also noted prior knowledge in another area or community as a source of member recruitment. This strategy is also constrained because it is not enough to rely solely on a small number of people who are already aware of the CPF's operations in other industries for recruitment and attraction to be successful. As a result, the majority of marketing campaigns to inform the community about the CPF's activities barely produced mass recruitment, suggesting that the existing strategy for drawing in new members appears to be flawed in several ways. This result supports RP7's claim that the existing methods of member recruitment and attraction are inefficient. According to RP7, "...the way they attract is probably not that efficient." Their self-marketing and advertising strategies are not particularly successful. Thus, the research goal, which was to Assess the participation of community members in the CPFs' crime combating role has been achieved. Based on the data analysis and the researcher's observations, it can be stated that the CPF's present recruitment and attraction efforts has not strongly enhanced community members full participation.

#### **4.3 Implications of the Findings**

The implementation of Community Policing Forums' mandates to prevent crime is fraught with difficulties. In carrying out their duties, CPFs frequently battle the community, which frequently has conflicting interests and the rise in violent crime. To effectively deter and prevent crime, however, members of a CPF are essential in maintaining a people-oriented policing atmosphere. Although CPFs have shown themselves to be successful in preventing crime, their sustainability is a problem. By successfully battling crime, CPFs aim to establish an atmosphere that supports the community's security and protection responsibilities. By doing this, CPFs make sure that active collaborations create the conditions necessary to improve community-police relations, service delivery, and crime rates. By fostering such an environment, issues brought forth by crime can be proactively addressed. When preventive measures are not taken, the situation becomes reactive, and a small number of security or law enforcement organisations may arrive at the crime site late. Due to a lack of members, Moreletapark CPF, like many other CPFs in South Africa, has some difficulties in combating crime. To handle the difficulties brought on by the rise in crime in society, each of them must successfully manage its problems. However, if it does not have the people resources to meet its operational issues, its success is jeopardised. Therefore, for CPFs to effectively fulfil their duty in combating crime for a peaceful and harmonious community and country, they need the active cooperation and support of both the SAPS and the community they serve.

#### **4.4 Limitations of the Findings**

The Moreletapark CPF volunteers' involvement was the focus of the investigation. As a result, the results cannot be extrapolated to other CPFs in different industries. The bulk of CPF members who have previously departed the CPF were not thoroughly assessed in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted with just ten members. More information about the reasons why members leave the CPF would have likely been obtained if the study had been expanded to include people who have stopped participating in its activities. Furthermore, no questions were asked about the opinions of the community members who did not take part in the CPF activities, particularly about the reasons they avoided

contacting the CPF at all. The study only used a qualitative methodology that was based on interviews. The research findings might have been better understood if a mixed method research approach was adopted.

#### **4.5 Suggestions for Future Research**

In the future, communities would greatly benefit from a quantitative study that will be carried out over a larger geographic region and measure the attitude of police officers towards the CPF. Communities might benefit from research on police involvement and dedication to CPF operations. Communities would also greatly benefit from studies that address police officers' attitudes towards receiving assistance from CPF volunteers. Additionally, research could examine the CPF's current laws to identify and suggest improvements. To find out if the current findings are supported by additional studies in another industry, more research can be done. In the future, research like this might also employ a mixed-method approach to gather rich data for better triangulation of data.

### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is crucial to reiterate that the CPF's incapacity to recruit, inspire, and retain more members appears to have had an impact on its mission to prevent crime. Consequently, Moreletapark CPF finds it challenging to fulfil its community protection mission given its diminishing membership. However, the entire Moreletapark community bears some of the blame for the dismal performance in preventing crime, not just CPF members. To encourage interested parties to participate in CPF activities, there is a renewed need for CPF leaders in the community to work towards fostering cordial relationships with other security stakeholders and community interest organisations. Communities must be involved for CPF to operate efficiently and sustainably. Hence, some recommendations have been proffered below to help CPF expand its membership base and encourage members to participate in its operational activities:

- **A Need for More Street Meetings with the Community:** - Due to the community's distaste for more conventional approaches like leaflets, the previous media that were used had little impact and played a significant role in the tensions surrounding the CPF's PR campaign. Flyers at intersections are thought to be the largest annoyance, while traditional advertising frequently aggravates the neighbourhood. Therefore, such approaches must be avoided since they lead to needless strife. It is advised to do street meetings with the community since trust is crucial. Therefore, there will be a chance for direct communication between CPF members and the community regarding CPF membership and its requirements. Meeting with the community through street meetings will likely be more effective because it will take place at their doorstep, while the CPF finds it challenging to reach out to the community at specified places.
- **An Urgent Need to Intensify the Use of Recent Modern Social Media to Bring CPF Activities to the Public Domain:** - Social media is a popular and useful tool for social and professional groups to advertise their presence. Furthermore, social media lacks the permanence of print, which is unchangeable once it is disseminated. As a result, members can receive the most recent information about CPF activities by receiving updates and relevant links by email. Even though the CPF already has a Facebook account, it is not updated frequently and is still a subpar recruitment and advertising tool. As a result, the Facebook page ought to be more involved in community communication by updating frequently, which would guarantee that the most recent information is posted. To inform the community that the CPF Facebook page exists, magnetic signs on the CPF vehicle should also be used to advertise the page.
- **A Need to Reduce the burden of CPF activities on CPF members:-** Members

of the CPF must not be overburdened by CPF activities. Volunteers will be able to fulfil the CPF's mission of combating crime if the current load on members is lessened. Therefore, CPF members ought to be relieved of additional duties like traffic control and other emergency tasks. They would be better able to concentrate and completely support the mission of combating crime as a result. As a result, the traffic and fire services should be urged to respond promptly. Therefore, if CPF members are not overworked with other tasks, which demotivates already overworked members, CPF actions in combating crime will help the community.

Indeed, a change in membership and, of course, the involvement of the Moreletapark community in CPF operations might occur if the suggested ideas are put into practice. The community's trust in the CPF's ability to successfully combat crime in the community will undoubtedly be restored because of the mutually beneficial relationship.

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