



**Professionalising Community Police Forums (CPF) through Recognition
of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Safety and Security Sector.**

Research Report: March 2023

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Executive summary

Community Police Forums play a significant role in prevention and eradication of crime in South Africa. This study shows that Community Police Forums have a range of responsibilities in terms of assisting stakeholders such as SAPS, Private Security and Metro Police in their crime prevention functions. The study focuses on Community Police Forums with a particular reference to the professionalising their skills through the RPL System. In essence, the broader aim of the study was to explore how Community Police Forums can be professionalized through the RPL System. The study sought to have a formal qualification that will clearly determine CPF's scope of work and capabilities in the criminal justice system.

Previous study by International Labour Organization indicates that RPL System people are always learning, everywhere and throughout the course of their lives. However, learning that takes place outside the formal education and training system is often not well understood or valued. On-the job training, informal apprenticeships, participation in sporting activities, organizing community events, raising children, managing a household, caring for the sick and for elderly relatives are all activities that result in learning outcomes, but which often do not come with a certificate of competencies recognizing the knowledge, skills and experience acquired.

The current study outlines recommendations intended to effectively improve the working environment of the CPFs. The study recommends that the department of community safety fund all the CPF members equally so that they can equally have proper skills to prevent and fight crime regardless of their geographical location. The further proposes that a standardised training is development, not workshops as participants stated but practical training such as; patrolling, evidence collection (maintaining the chain of custody), statement taking, following criminals based on intelligence gathered in the community, safely apprehending violent suspects, the use of firearms and high speed chase.

Additionally, the study recommends that CPFs' operations should be formalised, not only on the policies but also in practice. Professionalising CPFs would means recognising their previously enquired knowledge in a formal qualification, provision of necessary resources and allocation of monthly or annually stipend for the costs of their operations.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

After 1994, the SAPS was required in terms of the South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995 (as amended) to form partnerships with the broader community to address crime problems in South Africa, hence the establishment of CPFs. Therefore, an increasing concern over the relationship between police and the community prompted scholars to examine the nature of citizen attitudes toward police service, policy, and performance (Dlamini, 2020). The impact of crime on the social and economic life of a country urges for crime solutions that work. Moreover, there is scholarly agreement that cost-effective and efficient policing requires a joint approach by the police and communities, as well as a strong political will to deal with crime. Interestingly, few studies have compared public attitudes across varied community contexts ranging from rural areas, townships, small to mid-sized cities, and suburbs (Verma, Das & Abraham, 2013).

The introduction provides a brief history of Community Police Forums (CPF) and its constitutional mandate in the communities. The background lays a foundation of the problem investigated in this study.

1.1 Introduction

According to Constantia Valley Watches (n.d), a Community Police Forum is a group of people from different communities and police representatives who regularly meet to discuss safety problems in their communities. The CPFs' main aim is to ensure police accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in the community.

The CPFs were established in terms of section 19(1) of the South African Police Service (SAPS) Act 68 of 1995. South Africa's CPFs were set up primarily to provide civilian oversight and improve police accountability and legitimacy. The forums represent both the community and the police within a particular precinct. The interim constitution instructed that CPFs at police stations be included in the new 1995 SAPS Act and provided guidelines on their functions.

South African Constitution clearly stipulates that to establish a CPF, a Station Commissioner is responsible for appointing community-based organisations and interested individuals, after consulting with the mayor or the representative of the local Municipality. This includes all representatives in the community involved in the process, such as religious groups, political groups, sports clubs, schools, and taxi associations. People who are not part of any group or organisation also have a right to be included. It is important that the police are well represented

with the heads of the different divisions represented (Visible Policing, Crime Prevention, Detective, etc.) The Station Commissioner should always be available at CPF meetings.

1.2 Background

These were to promote accountability and cooperation, monitor and evaluate police service delivery and advise the police on local policing needs. Section 18 of the act expanded on these functions to include community–police partnerships, promoting communication, improving transparency and promoting joint problem solving. According to the study done by Zwane, (2018) there is no training or educational requirements for individuals to participate in the CPFs, members of the CPF are elected by the structures they represent, members are elected based on their active participation which in most cases it favours members without any or very little education. However, this comes with serious risks.

The CPFs are increasingly involved in supporting police operations, which is very different from what was initially intended. This poses serious risks by making it difficult for them to objectively hold the police to account, with soaring violent crime rates and police abuses, South Africa cannot afford to lose any police oversight systems (Zwane,2018). South Africa desperately needs a more professional police service and consequently more accountability – not less. A police organisation can only be effective if its members are held responsible for enforcing the law and providing a public safety service. This means proactively removing those officers who use their official powers for their own or narrow gains.

The concern about the operational support role of CPFs has therefore been growing and evolving. With civilians directly involved in policing, their ability to remain objective and hold police to account will become more difficult. Given that the SAPS faces substantial personnel cuts in the coming years, it's unsurprising that community members are being given a more active role in policing functions. The police can't deal with the country's high and rising serious violent crime rate alone.

1.3 Problem statement

The scope of work for the CPFs is contained on the Police Act however, research shows that they do not have formal qualification for the work they do which put their credibility and legitimacy in question when they give testimony in court, and they do not get recognition for the skills they acquire on their duties.

1.4 Research aim

The aim of the study was to explore how Community Police Forums can be professionalized through the RPL System. The study sought to have a formal qualification that will clearly determine CPF's scope of work and capabilities in the criminal justice system.

1.5 Research objectives

The current study sought:

- To explore how Community Police Forums can be professionalised through RPL System.
- To determine how professionalisation of CPFs can improve their productivity.

1.6 Research questions

- At what extent can we use RPL system to professionalise CPFs?
- Can professionalisation of CPFs improve productivity?

1.7 Summary

The introduction provided a brief history of Community Police Forums (CPF's) and its constitutional mandate in the communities. The background laid a foundation of the problem investigated in the current study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presented different studies previously done on Community Police Forums (CPFs) in the South African Community context. The discussion on this chapter is guided by themes derived from the main objectives which are the basic understanding of CPFs and its constitutional mandate, the need for CPFs in the communities, and how could the CPFs benefit from professionalisation of their operations. The CPFs is a group of people from different communities and police representatives who meet to discuss safety problems in their communities. They aim at ensuring police accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in the community.

2.1 The general understanding of community policing

The provision of security to citizens had in the past been the sole responsibility of the state, this in many countries led to the militarization of the police services. The concept of community policing has since been adopted by many countries around the world as an alternative method of policing to shift policing from the traditional reactionary method that focused on law enforcement, aggressive crime control with limited public interaction to an inclusive policing policy that involves communities in policing their areas. The traditional policing method isolated the police from the communities and the relationship between these parties was worsened. Previous studies on community policing found that successful implementation of the Community Policing Policy relies on a well-resourced police service and the opposite renders the concept dormant (Zwane, 2018).

Moreover, the research focused on the South African context to explore challenges of effectiveness of Community Policing Forums (CPFs) as a vehicle in the implementation of the Community Policing Policy. Most studies on the work of CPFs found that indeed community policing is resource intensive, and the South African Police Service is still struggling with basic resources that include functional vehicles to support CPFs to carry out their constitutional mandate.

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, is the supreme law of the country. It states that the SAPS has a responsibility to prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain public order, protect, and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property (Constitution 1996). Similarly, Maslow (1998:18) shares the sentiment that safety and security is by nature one of the basic needs of all living beings. Maslow's hierarchy of needs puts safety at the second bottom level of the hierarchy of needs as security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of a family, of health and property (Maslow 1998:18). Community policing has since involved the use of collaborations between municipal agencies, businesses

and private security companies, individual citizens, non-profit organisation, and the media; to develop methods to police the community. These organisations work together to address criminal matters and reduce crime.

However, Kelling and Coles (1996) argue that as safety and security problems mostly occur at a local level, the police officers responsible in a particular area must decide which policing action should be taken. Crime prevention should be delegated to the local levels of policing to ensure that the police officers are responsive to community needs. Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990:18) argues that the significance of posting an officer permanently in a specific area rest on allowing that person to 'own' that particular 'space'.

The goal was to keep the geographic area small enough so that the police officer can move around often enough to maintain direct contact. Instead of simply leaving it to the police force, community policing revolves around a philosophy that the entire community can help take measures to prevent crime, as alluded to by Ferreira (1996). In his assertion, community policing is a philosophy of full-service personalised policing, where the same officer patrols and works in the same area permanently, from a decentralised place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems.

According to Gaffigan (1994) "community policing mainly consists of two complimentary core components: community partnership and problem solving". This re-thinking of policing according to Peak and Glensor (2012) "assumes that the police cannot successfully prevent or investigate crime without the willing participation of the public, an assumption that advances that the police need to transform the community from a passive consumer of police protection to an active co-producer of public order and security".

Stevens and Yach (1995:30) assumed that problem-solving requires a partnership of neighbourhood police officers, government agencies, residents, business owners and their employees, and everyone with a stake in the quality of life in the community. In the same understanding, the National Institute of Justice (1999) argued that democratic policing depends on a shared vision of policing and does not take place unless the community feels that it can have trust in the local police officers.

Friedmann (1992:32) purports that accountability is a fundamental principle of a democratic society when solving problems, which also implies that the police officers and the community should be able to account for their actions. In addressing crime and other social disorder, CPFs should always constitute the most common mechanism for accountability in community

policing (Nalla and Newman 2013:53). The establishment of CPFs is seen as “a way to formalise the dialogue between the police and the residents of local communities which consists of regular formal meetings between the police and the residents and promotes a new channel for participation by residents” (Benit-Gbaffou, Didier, and Morange 2008). In formalising the dialogue between the police and the community, Davis, Henderson, and Merrick (2003) attest that through the establishment of CPFs empowers the community in the way that it gives community actors the ability to take part in and to manage their own challenges through sponsorship of and participation in crime preventive programs. The dialogue is enhanced through effective leadership as working with and through individuals and groups to accomplish organisational goals (Bennett and Hess 2004:52).

Moreover, Cummings and Worley (2001:56) explain that leadership is a critical element and influence in an organisational environment or performance, due to the four significant domains that leadership could affect, namely the strategic/organisational goals and objectives, the work processes, interdependent social subsystems, and the individual in such an institution. Allander (2004) furthermore suggests that leaders must be guided by values and beliefs such as respect for and protection of human rights, transparency and openness in relation to activities and relationships, both inside and outside the institution. Lynham and Thomas (2006:104) elaborate on the definition of leadership and equates it to an interactive, interdependence and focused system, wherein continuous interaction; influence; dialogue and discussions regarding organisational procedures, performance outcomes, inputs, processes, output and feedback take place within a learning environment.

2.2 The development of policing from the apartheid system

According to Minnaar (2010) one of the legacies of the pre-1994 apartheid style repressive and authoritarian policing was the lack of trust by black citizens of the South African Police (SAP). The poor public image of the police and lack of credibility in terms of policing and crime reduction obviously required a drastic change, not only in the mindset of police members themselves, but also in the way the new South African Police Service (SAPS) policed communities in the newly democratic South Africa. This had to occur within the new democratic-oriented and rights dispensation as outlined initially in the Interim Constitution of 1993 and the final Constitution (1996).

Moreover, the changeover was premised and underpinned on the acceptance of the policing approach or strategy of ‘Community Policing’, which in turn was strongly based on community policing models emanating largely from best practices culled from the USA. In South Africa, community policing was implemented with a number of supports ‘legs’, namely victim

empowerment and restorative justice, inclusive of so-called democratic or human-rights oriented policing (Minnaar, 2010).

Furthermore, Minnaar (2010) state that community support structures as mandated by the Constitution such as Community Police Forums were also crucial to the envisaged roll out of community policing. Other policing approaches in South Africa that aimed to encompass community policing were the operational approaches termed 'visible' and 'sector' policing which in turn were premised on an intelligence-led policing approach.

However, all these policing changes had to be operationalised within a context of continuing high levels of crime, of violent crime. This article looks at the policy development and operational implementation by the new South African Police Services of a broad-based multi-pronged form of community policing and social crime prevention in a transitional democratic state in the period 1994-2009.

It also postulates the relative failure of 'community policing' per se in the context of the continuing high levels of crime particularly violent crime with the return to a more structured operations based formal policing approach in the last three years. It also briefly examines some of the initiatives and 'community policing-oriented' post-ANC Polokwane Conference of December 2007 particularly the so-called Community Safety Initiatives, coupled to the national roll-out of Sector Policing in preparation for the Soccer World Cup to be held in South Africa in 2010 (Minnaar, 2010).

In South Africa, the history of street committees, informal dispute settling structures and the informal police forces and self-defence units goes back to the creation of townships. In the 1970s, Rakgoadi (1995:6) corroborates that the Lekgotla played a crucial role in instilling discipline among youth as well as in maintaining order in the townships. The Lekgotla became unpopular primarily because of the excessive use of force by members in dealing with crime and criminality.

It was also perceived to be politically aligned and membership tended to be ethnically based (Rakgoadi 1995:6). Brogden and Nijar (2005:149) argues that South Africa inherited a dysfunctional policing force of considerable size and resources that is primarily committed to public order regime maintenance rather than to bandit catching.

The development of CPFs in South Africa must be understood in the context of the apartheid legacy for police. Cawthra (1993:41) suggests the renaming of the SAPS as an icon of white-minority rule. Both critics and defenders of the SAPS presumed that its role in ordinary crime

prevention and control was a distant second to enforcing the apartheid regime. The democratic elections of 27 April 1994 demanded a fundamental reassessment of the nature of policing in South Africa. Van Vuuren (1994:100) attests that the rising crime and social instability, together with an increase in the socio-economic stimuli of crime and growing evidence of the shortcomings and inefficiency of the traditional policing approach in providing long-term answers to crime and problems of disorder in South Africa, have led to a worldwide search for a new policing approach.

According to Fox, Van Wyk and Fourie (1998:168), one of the first reforms introduced by the ANC-led government was partially to replace the top structure of so-called “deadwood” and replace officials who resisted reform with enlightened managers. The amalgamation of the 11 police agencies into one police service as opposed to a force was the next major reform.

2.3 Transforming community policing

The Police Act, the Bill of Rights, and the introduction of rules and standards are factors that have had a major effect on the transformation of the police service in South Africa (Fox *et al.* 1998:168). Although community policing involves a proactive approach to policing with community involvement in addressing the causes of crime and disorder, Adams (1994:894) attests to the notion that community policing refers to a shift from a military-inspired approach to fighting crime, to one that relies on forming partnerships with constituents.

Stipak (1994:115) perceives community policing as a management strategy that promotes the joint responsibility of citizens and the police for community safety, through working partnerships and interpersonal contact. Mmako, Obioha and De Vries (2014:107) corroborate the above statements in that the aim of community policing, according to the Guidelines for Community Policing Forums (DSS 2001) is two-fold. First, the community policing structures should assist the communities they serve; and second, they should make policing the responsibility of all South Africans, which in turn will lead to the respect of the law.

Similarly, the concept of self-defence units emanated due to inadequate policing in black townships. The SAPS was, at the time, seen as politically aligned to the ruling party, inefficient and ineffective because most of the cases that were reported to the SAPS were not properly recorded and followed up. Moreover, the communities did not have “confidence in the criminal justice system, which took several months if not years, to bring the perpetrators of violence and crimes to justice” (Rakgoadi 1995:7). The then Minister of Safety and Security, S. Mufamadi (2001) proposed in a draft policy document that community policing providing a

reasonable level of community safety was necessary for the success of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Conversely, the success of the RDP would result in enhanced community safety. However, development initiatives may have generated conflict within and between communities. The SAPS was called in to manage tense situations in the communities. For this reason, according to Mufamadi (2001), the SAPS would play a role in local development forums.

Taylor (1998:38) identified several major challenges faced by CPFs as being insufficient holistic research programmes, general implementation of programmes, involvement of politics, protecting community policing from criticism and difficulty in determining the intricate relationship between community policing and crime. Oliver and Bartgis (1998) argue that community policing represents a revolution or a paradigm shift; one that deserves sponsorship of new research and fresh theory development. The two authors suggest that the concept of community policing is itself a paradigm, not in the one large scale theory sense, but rather as an evolving mix of theories that enhances methods to deliver police services. Watson, Stone and Deluca (1998:134-135) denote trust as a reasonable faith in the goodwill of others.

Trust rests in the assumption that most people, most of the time, speak and act honestly and with good intent, not necessarily out of virtue so much as out of rational self-interest. Pelser (2008:60) attests that as South Africa converted to a democracy in 1994 with most of the police officers that served under the apartheid regime still in service, the legitimization and oversight of the SAPS was critical. In his assessment of the implementation of the community policing policy, he further argued that the CPFs had “very little public reach in their present incarnation and were poorly placed to establish community safety needs and jointly develop a responsibility and capacity for addressing crime” Pelser’ s assertion points our attention to the importance of human and physical resources for the operation of CPFs and the fulfilling of their mandates.

2.4 International perspective on Community policing

Community policing was first conceived by the Western countries and later introduced and embraced by several countries in Africa. Some of the countries that bought into the concept in Africa include Kenya, Gambia, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Lesotho, and South Africa (Brogden, 2004). Governments in foreign countries spend millions in training police officials who are responsible for implementing community policing policies. It has proved to be a viable platform for community empowerment, public education and police accountability (Corsianos, 2011; Yero, *et al*, 2012).

2.5 Community policing in South Africa

The term “community policing” is mostly used to define the activities of the community and other related efforts to prevent crime, which occurs within our communities, together with the policing of the formal police agency (Tsoabisi, 2020). In South Africa, community policing was formalised in the 1993 Interim Constitution, with the aim of democratising and legitimising the police.

In 1997, there was a shift towards improving service delivery and fighting crime. However, the impact of community policing has been limited by the fragmented nature of South Africa’s communities and a lack of capacity (Pelser 2008:24). Moreover, based on this background, community policing programmes have become the cornerstone to approaches of modern societies in the new dispensation in South Africa. Perceived community support and participation in crime prevention have always been previously scrutinised concerning service orientation, job satisfaction, training and resource allocation to police work. While efficiency implies that resources allocated to policing should be spent thereon and not drained off for corrupt personal-organisational benefits or wasted through negligence, poor planning or inconsistent execution as espoused by Marenin (1998). Effectiveness implies that resources should be expended to achieve the greatest impact on the identified goals (Marenin 1998).

Furthermore, Smith (2008) noted that in South Africa, the SAPS implemented Community Policing as its guiding philosophy with the declaration of the Police Service Act 68 of 1995 and the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996. With this information, a better understanding of the need to create community policing forums within the communities was noted. Smith (2008) further explains that during the apartheid era which is the period before 1994, the starring role of the South African Police was to shield the state in contradiction of political subversion, rather than to fight crimes against persons. Introduction of Community Policing combined with a history of policing which focused on political control rather than crime prevention, has resulted in the need for comprehensive training of all police officials in the principles and practices of Community Policing and crime prevention (Smith, 2008).

The above explains that police during the apartheid era were very violent and used excessive force when they were dealing with community members. They used to be so brutal that there was no mutual relationship between the police and the communities. Whatever the police were saying, the community members just had to obey otherwise failure to do so would result in punitive measures being taken against them such as severe beating or imprisonment. That

resulted in no solid partnership between community members and the police. The role of the South African Police has changed dramatically in the post-1994 era (democratic dispensation). Accompanying the move to Community Policing, has come a greater sense of accessibility of the SAPS to the public, with community members looking to the police for help with a range of problems, some of which are not even crime related.

Reiner (1992) is however critical of the image of the police as a broad service provider (Reiner, 1992:97), stating that this image exists, because of the police being available on a 24-hour basis. However, he does acknowledge that the reassurance of the service role is an effective device in police legitimisation (Reiner, 1992). In South Africa, the formation of Community Police Forums (CPF) is a legal requirement for every police station which is in the country. The formation of CPF's provided the communities with the chance to work along with their local police station on a regular basis. This had improved accountability and the police-community relations. It should be noted that the accountability of CPF's rests directly with the station commissioner of each police station.

This places the responsibility of the fruitful implementation and supervision of Community Policing firmly with the police service (Reiner, 1992). According to South African Constitution it is stipulated that all the provinces has to encourage proper relationship amongst the police and the community at large. In an article published by Community Safety Forum Policy (2006), it has been indicated that the relationship between police, CPF and general community members cannot just be accomplished by the relevant provincial structures of the state without the simultaneous association of both the local and 19 national and domains of government. The Constitution of the country provides the over-arching structure for policy and legislation.

2.6 The basic understanding of CPFs

There are numerous definitions of community policing, but they appear to have three common features: police-community partnerships, a problem-solving approach, and organisational decentralisation (Oliver, 1998; Community Policing Consortium, 1994). Oliver's (1998) provides a most comprehensive definition, the researcher defines a community policing as a systematic approach to policing with the paradigm of instilling and fostering a sense of community, within a geographical neighbourhood, to improve the quality of life. It achieves this through the decentralization of the police and the implementation of a synthesis of three key components: (1) the redistribution of traditional police resources; (2) the interaction of police and all community members to reduce crime and the fear of crime through indigenous proactive programs; and (3) a concerted effort to tackle the causes of crime problems rather than to put band-aids on the symptoms.

Community policing stresses policing with and for the community rather than policing of the community, CPFs aspires to improve the quality of life in communities. The quest for improving the quality of life, CPFs aims to solve community problems alongside the community and as defined by the community. However, proven difficult to pin down what specifically is involved in implementing community policing. On that there is broad agreement among scholars and many police officers (Tilley 2008).

Skogan (2018) argues that the definition of CPFs must not define it in terms of its outcomes or a highly specific set of strategies, instead preferring to emphasise that it is more about changing organizational cultures and decision-making processes within the police: Community policing is not a set of specific projects; rather, it involves changing decision-making processes and creating new cultures within police departments. It is an organisational strategy that leaves setting priorities and the means of achieving them largely to residents and the police who serve in their neighbourhoods.

Community policing is a process rather than a product. Furthermore, the study by Skogan furthermore identify three 'core strategic components' of CPFs that are central to understanding it: administrative decentralization, community engagement and problem-solving (Skogan, 2018).

2.7 The need for CPFs in the communities

According to 2022/23 Annual Performance Plan, the SAPS currently utilises a police to citizen ratio per capita (1 police officer for 450 citizens) and it has the same meaning when converted and expressed as the police density per 100,000 citizens (222/100 000). These statistics suggests that South African population outnumbers the law enforcement officers by a high margin. This means the SAPS do not have enough manpower to "tackle" crime in the country. This lead to less police visibility which potentially create more freedom criminals to commit crimes without any fear of being apprehended.

SAPS Annual Performance Plan 2022/23 shows that at least 6,083 people were murdered in South Africa between January and March 2022. This represents an increase of 22% or 1,107 more people murdered compared to the same period the previous year (2021). Alarmingly, increases in reports of children and women being murdered has sharply increased up by 37.2% and 70.5% respectively. The Annual Performance Plan further state that in same year (2022) almost 11,000 people raped were reported. This lead to the conclusion that the huge

gap between the police to person ratio is directly related to high number of unsolved crimes and the spike of crimes in the country.

Moreover, reported National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) conviction rates are high, but their prosecution rates for serious crimes are very low if expressed relative to the actual number of reported crimes instead of the number of cases brought to trial. Therefore, this means that most people getting arrested are most likely to be released due to insufficient evidence to prosecute them. They are a number of factors contributing to this which can be also debated. Some people believe that police are inadequately trained, under resourced and associated with corrupt activities but the scientific evidence shows that it is not practical for one police officer to serve and protect a high number of civilians. This statistic shows that it is not possible to for one police officer to process all number of reported cases without mistakes.

Therefore, the police have come to realise that their work can be made easier when the community provides them with information concerning crime. This is not only the case in South Africa but has been a norm in other countries like United States of America (USA), Iraq, as well. CPFs has been a platform for organising the police, the community and other role players to form partnerships in policing.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 prescribes that CPFs must be adopted so that the SAPS can obtain greater public legitimacy and acceptance and in general improve service delivery to all South Africa's citizens. Through these provisions, the department of Safety and Security developed and implemented several policies, plans and strategies to give meaning to the prescripts of the Constitution (Oliver, 2004).

Pelser (2002) argues, that CPFs has generally been viewed as the responsibility of a particular function within the South African Police Services (SAPS). This responsibility is interpreted at various levels, primarily in terms of the establishment and maintenance of the CPFs has been interpreted by SAPS members as an add-on function to the other responsibilities of the police (Pelser, 2002).

Pelser (2002) further argues that undermining the work of CPFs is a reason why, in some police stations in South Africa, CPFs is not regarded as an important component of policing. The result of this attitude is that CPFS cannot be sustained in the long term. Oliver (2004) argues that for CPFs to be effectively implemented, there is a need to plan for its short, medium, and long-term sustainability. Koning (2000) argues that the government has the moral and constitutional obligation to guarantee a safe and secure living environment for the

society by upholding law and order. This is usually done through the establishment and implementation of policing structures, programs, and strategies together with adequate delegated authority to implement these.

2.8 Legislation Framework on Safety and Security

As early as the end of 1994 and building on the Interim Constitution, a *Green Paper on Safety and Security* was issued as a policy guide for policing in the „new democratic“ South Africa. This outlined the principles such as community policing, democratic control, and accountability, as well as introducing a new style of policing that required a demilitarised approach whereby civilian values would inform every aspect of the new policing services. This latter was an important concept within the context of the past way of policing (pre-1994) in South Africa.

An immediate start was made in drafting a new piece of legislation to restructure the amalgamated policing agencies. This new piece of legislation, The SAPS Act No. 68 of 1995, was passed in early 1995. The Act which also tried to give structure to some of the principles and guidelines for a new South African democracy inserted in the Interim Constitution, was a comprehensive attempt at defining and setting up a „new look“ policing service for South Africa, with a new approach to crime prevention, crime reduction and combating of crime. The Act provided for an accountable, impartial, transparent, community-oriented and cost-effective police service.

The Act also provided for a civilian ministerial secretariat, community police forums (CPFs), an independent complaints directorate (ICD) (all issues inserted into the Interim Constitution) and the institution of the National Secretariat for Safety & Security largely staffed with civilians such as academics and practitioners from other branches of the criminal justice system.

The National Secretariat resided directly under the Minister of Safety and Security, i.e. did not report to the new National Commissioner of SAPS. They were tasked to undertake policy formulation and provision of management information and advice to the Minister. This task included (as per the new Act) the evaluation of service delivery and performance of the police as well as to promote democratic accountability and transparency in the new Police Service. Other changes looked at such aspects as training which was adapted to reflect a non-military style of policing; different policing styles or approaches such as „community policing“ and even a brief flirtation with „zero tolerance“.

There was recognition by top management of the new SAPS and the National Secretariat that an urgent look at policies, legislation and guidelines for a new way of policing in South Africa was needed. Work began in 1995 on a more comprehensive (than the Green Paper) document, the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* (NCPS). The NCPS document was approved by Cabinet in May 1996 and represented the first time ever that South Africa had formulated such a national policy or strategy which clearly identified crime prevention as a national priority.

The NCPS motivated for a change from the previous exclusive focus on law enforcement to now include „crime prevention“ (i.e., away from a narrow „crime control“ focus). Other important changes envisaged in the NCPS which impacted extensively on the future way of policing in South Africa, were looking at crime as a social issue and that responsibility for dealing with it be shared by all agencies; a movement away from the emphasis on a state-centred criminal justice system to that of a victim-centred restorative justice system. Although the NCPS was of necessity wide-ranging, covering the whole criminal justice system many of the issues raised in this document focused more on the role of the police in operationalising these needs in fighting crime than on operational aspects of Community Policing.

According to Nyuswa (2015) the Community Policing Forums (CPF) is a body mandated in terms of sections 205 and 206 of the Constitution of South Africa Act No. Section 108 of 1996. Most data suggest that it is a responsibility of the station Commander to take reasonable steps to establish a CPF for his/her precinct. All neighbourhood watch structures must be affiliated to the local CPF to be recognised by the local South African Police Services in the area. The CPF may establish sub-forums and/or co-opt other persons in an advisory capacity. The Forum or Sub-Forum may establish, direct the establishment, register, and have oversight over the Community Safety- and Victim Support Structures.

2.8.1 The introduction of Recognition of Prior Learning System

According to South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), 2016, RPL Policy replaces the policy document ***Recognition of Prior Learning in the Context of the South African NQF*** developed in 2002 by the SAQA within the context of the SAQA Act (Act 58 of 1995). The Policy is located within the broader context of the Human Resource Development Strategy and the National Skills Development Strategy, as well as a consideration of the National Development Plan 2030. The Policy builds on the strengths of the ***Recognition of Prior Learning in the Context of the South African NQF*** developed by SAQA in 2002, as well as on new insights gained from ongoing practice and research. It establishes the basic core principles and priorities for RPL as part of the further development and implementation of the

NQF in South Africa. This Policy seeks to position RPL in relation to the overarching principles and priorities of the NQF in South Africa.

Furthermore, SAQA states that the implementation of National RPL Policy will be achieved by: (a) Advancing a comprehensive, quality-assured, and resource-driven approach to optimise the delivery of RPL services and programmes, including RPL assessment. (b) Ensuring quality assurance and benchmarking of RPL overseen by SAQA and the three Quality Councils: The Council on Higher Education (CHE), Umalusi: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). (c) Recognising those barriers to implementation, such as: limited incentives; lack of resources to develop and sustain services at affordable prices; lack of trained RPL personnel; inadequate supporting systems such as administrative systems that are unable to grant credits for part-qualifications, and admission systems without robust alternative access routes; and institutional resistance and lack of capacity must be addressed. (d) Recognising different kinds of RPL and purposes for RPL in relation to different contexts and classifications of knowledge, skills, competencies, qualifications, and part-qualifications in the national learning system. (e) Providing for national co-ordination to assist the Quality Councils, institutions of learning, and RPL practitioners to deal with barriers, accessing funding, building capacity, advocacy, and marketing, and expanding RPL provisioning in a comprehensive RPL system (SAQA, 2016).

According to NSDP (2019) the main aim is to ensure that South Africa has adequate, appropriate and high quality skills that contribute towards economic growth, employment creation and social development. The NSDP derives from the broader plan of government, namely the National Development Plan (NDP), which aims to put in place the framework whereby we 'build the capabilities our citizens to make our future work'. The NDP notes that "several challenges require attention, including a critical shortage of skills, a complex intergovernmental system, high levels of corruption, weak lines of accountability, inadequate legislative oversight, and a long history of blurring the lines between party and state. These are difficult issues, requiring honest reflection, careful planning, and decisive leadership.

2.8.2 The White Paper (1998)

The Green Paper (1994), the SAPS Act of 1995 and the NCPS (1996) in advocating a new approach to police practices made an important policy or paradigm shift by strongly advocating that policing be made more community oriented. To ensure that these principles were implemented in actual policing and building on the impetus given by the policy acceptance of the NCPS (and the Green Paper) the Minister of Safety and Security approved the

development of a White Paper in June 1997,¹¹ with the main aim of reviewing existing policies and programmes and finally to set the policy framework for the next five years.

Prior to the actual release of the White Paper in 1998 the Department for Safety & Security had released a detailed document titled: *Policy Framework and Guidelines for Community Policing*, in April 1997. As a consequence the White Paper made little operational reference to Community Policing per se, other than to mention that the SAPS policing approach continued to be „underpinned by the philosophy of community policing“ and that this focus was “directly in line with international trends in policing which demonstrate that the participation of communities and community policing form the bedrock of effective law enforcement” (White Paper 1998: 3 & 10).

In the White Paper the emphasis had shifted towards improved service delivery, at the heart of which was the principle that “a partnership between the police and communities is essential to effective service delivery” (White Paper 1998: 3). The White Paper went on to proposed certain interventions for “a safer and more secure society” in two main areas, namely law enforcement; and social crime prevention (White Paper 1998: 19). In the latter problem-oriented partnership strategies were implied, which again drew from international trends (White Paper 1998: 40).

The Department of Safety & Security’s and SAPS view of serving the community better through Community Policing, would inter alia involve more effective management of both direct and indirect victims and witnesses of crime as a vital part of successful police investigations. This was in fact integral to the accepted community policing philosophy (that the SAPS subscribed to in the guidelines document) which sought to build relationships between the police and local communities. There was thus, a further acceptance of the link between victim support and successful investigations being critical to improving service delivery and therefore to enhancing public confidence in the police (White Paper 1998: 24).

While the 1998 White Paper of the Department for Safety & Security emphasises the role and involvement of other new role-players outside of the SAPS within a framework of social crime prevention programmes,¹² (White Paper 1998: 5) this White Paper did not spell out how this would be implemented in practical terms for these other role-players (e.g. private security industry) in South Africa.

In terms of partnerships, the White Paper merely states that, with reference to visible policing, the “capacity to implement visible policing be augmented through *partnerships* with local

government” (White Paper 1998: 13). The implication here is that this would be done in conjunction with the proposed metropolitan or municipal policing structures.

The White Paper does not provide a practical guide to private-public policing even though it explicitly mentions the private security industry in terms of being a „partner” in the fight against crime (White Paper 1998: 7). Finally, the White Paper refers only to areas of intervention to ensure effective crime prevention by way of Community Crime Prevention.

The intervention involves communities taking responsibility for crime prevention in their own neighbourhoods. Such interventions involve localised programs, which mobilise a range of interest groups to address crime prevention on a town or city basis. Projects could include improving surveillance through schemes such as car guards or community marshals (White Paper 1998: 17)

It would appear that the above created some sort of opportunity for the private security industry to engage in crime prevention exercises at a community level. However, as in the past, no legal or regulated framework for such initiatives was established or proposed at all. The implication within this omission is that any such action would occur in a legal and practical vacuum.

According to the White Paper (1998) the uncertainty remains in several quarters as to what kind of support, co-operation or service would be provided by the security industry to the police. The wide diversity of services provided by the general private security industry in South Africa further complicates the matter. Although a number of so-called joint or co-operative partnership initiatives have already been launched between certain companies/individuals and police stations at a local level, these have proceeded without the formal recognition or approval by the South African Police Services management and also without due acknowledgement to the legal implications of such actions.

There is in fact no formal national co-operation agreement in existence between the SAPS and the Private Security Industry. Accordingly, the outsourcing of some of the operational functions of the SAPS is at best problematic. There is also no mandate from the South African Police Service that supports or gives any proposed guidelines regarding the expected standard service delivery in terms of outsourcing any policing functions to the private security industry. There are no clear guidelines regarding the role of the Security Industry and the police or any clear-cut instructions defining the exact relationship between these two entities (White Paper, 1998).

2.9 Role and Functions of CPFs

The role and functions of CPFs have been explained by several researchers (Henry, 2009; Nyuswa, 2015; & Van Vuuren, 1996), they all give insight on the objectives of the CPFs. According to Henry (2009) CPFs are expected to achieve the following basic objectives:

- To increase public satisfaction with the police
- To decreased fear of crime.
- To contribute to reducing levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (or 'disorder')
- To increase community engagement (increasing public 'ownership' of local crime problems and willingness to play a role in problem solving)
- To change police officers' levels of engagement and satisfaction with their job.

Nyuswa (2015) argues that the primary objective of the CPFs is to promote a partnership between the community and the local police and to create an environment that will promote effective local policing that is user-friendly. Community Policing Forums are constituted to:

- represent the community's interests and monitors the SAPS' service delivery.
- perform a vital role in the civilian oversight of the SAPS in the precinct. A police service can only be effective when it enjoys the confidence and co-operation of the community which it serves.
- improve communication between the SAPS and the community.
- make the needs of the community known to the police and to help the police meet those needs.
- promote the image of the SAPS to the community to foster closer ties between the SAPS and the community.
- promote transparency and foster joint problem-solving and co-operation

Van Vuuren, 1996 further states that the objectives of community policing include:

- Establishing an enduring partnership between police and all communities with the view to more effective protection of the community and better quality of life.
- Enhancing the quality of information available to the police and the development of a proactive and problem-solving approach to crime and violence.
- Ensuring that the police service addresses the primary needs of the community.

The researcher further state that the establishment of community police forums is an important mechanism in achieving these objectives of true community policing (Van Vuuren, 1996). The three different authors unanimously identify community engagement as an important aspect

on preventing and fighting crime. The authors emphasise the important role that CPFs play on facilitating the relationship between the police officials and communities enabling a successful community policing.

2.10 The role that CPFs play in our communities.

The CPFs plays a huge role in fighting crime and criminal elements (deviant behaviour) in the communities, this is further emphasised by Henry & Mackenzie (2009) (as stated in Zwane, 2018) in what they termed *Evidence Review*. The evidence reviews focus on, public satisfaction with police, fear of crime, levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, and police officers' level of engagement with and satisfaction with their job.

Increased public satisfaction with the police: Studies vary in their findings as to the level of increase in public satisfaction driven by CPFs, from modest improvements to significant gains. There is data from some studies to support the contention that it is visible police presence rather than the quality of resident-police interaction that drives satisfaction with the police and confidence in officer effectiveness. If CP can engage more effectively than other policing strategies with sub-criminal problems of disorder, it should be able to reap the benefits of increased public satisfaction with the police consequent upon lower levels of disorder-related fear (Zwane, 2018).

Decreased fear of crime: Reductions in fear of crime, and increases in feelings of safe, range in the evaluation data from the impressive to the patchy. The robust Chicago evaluation provides strong evidence for the fear-reducing capacities of CP. As well as reducing fear of crime through directly lowering crime and disorder rates, and attending to quality-of-life issues, CP might reduce fear of crime simply through its 'reassuring' presence. While knowledge of the police's local CP efforts has been found to be associated with lower fear of crime, often most residents do not know enough about the implementation of CP in their neighbourhood to benefit from this reassurance (Zwane, 2018). Reductions in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (or 'disorder'): CP has been seen to reduce both crime and disorder, although there is stronger evidence for its effectiveness in reducing disorder than crime. The positive results in relation to the reduction of disorder have been suggested to be related to two strands of the CP approach in particular: foot patrol and problem solving (Zwane, 2018).

Increased community engagement (increasing public 'ownership' of local crime problems and willingness to play a role in problem solving): Implementing a variety of strategies to encourage citizen participation in the processes of CP has been seen to be more effective than relying only on one method of engagement, for example public meetings. Although programmes have

been found to have achieved positive results in relation to public confidence in the police, feelings of safety, problem solving, and police visibility, they have tended to have little effect on calls for service or 'social capacity', e.g., willingness of neighbours to intervene, or increased voluntary activity (Zwane, 2018).

Changing police officers' levels of engagement with and satisfaction with the job: There is a wide range of possible beneficial effects of CP on police attitudes. In the right implementation context, confidence in and support for CP practices can be high among community officers. CP has been found to be generally supported by community officers, but sometimes less supported by the rest of the force who retain a preference for motorised patrols and response-oriented methods. This evidence has been used to support the recommendation that all officers be rotated through CP assignments, to expose them to working knowledge of the method and its benefits. This fits with calls for CP to be implemented by way of 'whole organisation' change rather than specialist units, as well as other less clear-cut findings which have suggested that while all officers support CP, those with experience of CP support it more (Zwane, 2018).

2.11 Limitation of powers on CPFs

According to Malherbe, (2013) CPFs operations have limitations which might have a negative impact on the success of their operations, some of the limitations includes:

- Not to wear or use the SAPS uniform, pieces thereof or insignia in any way.
- Not make use of any rotating/reflecting light of any colour on a private vehicle for the purpose of visibility during patrols. (Reg 176 of the National Road Traffic Act: use of amber, blue, green, red lamps emitting an intermittently flashing light on unauthorized motor vehicle is prohibited by law)
- Performing a voluntary unpaid service with the risk associated with that task without having necessary resources.

2.12 Challenges of the South African CPFs

According to Pelsler (2019) the responsibilities of the CPFs are contradictory since most of the practical functioning of the CPFs are mostly influenced by the historical conflicts between police and the communities. At the birth of South Africa's democracy, accountability and legitimacy were crucial for transforming the police from an oppressive force to a democratic service. CPFs were intended to facilitate that shift from the old style of policing, and whether the plan succeeded is still a debatable matter. However, a recent Afro-barometer Survey,

which Shows that three-quarters of the public has very low or no trust in the police, suggests that they've failed when it comes to legitimacy (Burger, 2021).

The CPFs are increasingly involved in supporting police operations, which is very different from what was initially intended. This poses serious risks by making it difficult for them to objectively hold the police to account. With soaring violent crime rates and police abuses, South Africa cannot afford to lose any police oversight systems.

Pelser (2019) further state that the danger lies in the likelihood that, should a basic level of trust fail to be developed, the police will become increasingly marginalised through either the development of self-policing or its stronger form, vigilantism. However, once a basic level of trust has been achieved, it is apparent that the challenge becomes one of understanding the actual requirements of the policy. This refers mainly to the clarification of agreement on clear roles and responsibilities. Of relevance, therefore, is the extent to which CPF representatives and police personnel have received education and training in the core elements and objectives of community policing, as well as in an appropriate demarcation of roles.

However, the research indicated that, should the education and training need of the police and members of CPFs not be met, it is likely that the CPF at these localities would either regress to simply become a forum for complaints or, of more concern, how CPF representatives can dominate and gain control over police operational procedures (Pelser, 2019).

2.13 The application of the RPL system

The National Development Plan (NDP) acknowledges that the fight against crime in South Africa requires active citizenry, partnership with the Civil Society and the Private sector; this embraces the principle of democratic policing. The Community Police and Sector Crime Fora are important vehicles to mobilize communities to participate in the decision-making process of government, however the politicization of these fora prevent citizens from objectively participating in policing matters of their locality (Fourchard, 2012, Maroga, 2004). This however does not change the fact that citizens must feel and be safe but promotes the proliferation of non-state policing which only benefit those who can afford it and declares state policing as inadequate (Stamper, 2006).

According to International Labour Organisation (ILO), (2018) RPL is a process which relies on an assessment of informal learning outcomes to formally recognize competencies. Through RPL, learning outcomes are assessed (the learning or skills acquired through practical experience).

Table 1. Key stages and steps the RPL System (ILO, 2018)

Stage	Steps
1. Awareness and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential applicants are aware of RPL as an opportunity • General information about the RPL system is in place, related requirements, steps to take, assistance available and where to obtain it is readily accessible. • The steps of an RPL process are clear and transparent to all stakeholders, as is information for potential applicants.
2. Counselling and facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling is available to provide potential applicants with more detailed information about the RPL process • Potential applicants can obtain guidance on the specific RPL steps and their requirements • Counsellors/facilitators perform an initial assessment (pre-screening) of applicants and support them in preparing their portfolios (evidence) • Counsellors/facilitators offer guidance on skills gap training, if needed
3. Assessment and certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessor reviews the evidence/portfolio submitted • If applicable, the applicant might be prepared for a final assessment, test or demonstration against existing qualification standards to receive the certification/units/credits. • Final assessment (e.g. test or demonstration) • Decision on the final assessment and information on shortcomings, if applicable (and potential re-skilling, mentoring etc. for another assessment) • Appeal, if legally applicable, by applicant against decision, if relevant • Award of qualification/certificate/credits/units/exemptions

RPL is for any applicant who has acquired relevant competencies through work experience, informal or non-formal learning, but who does not have a related qualification/certificate. RPL can allow an applicant to:

- i. Progress within a company,
- ii. Change jobs or sectors,
- iii. Obtain a salary increase,
- iv. Save resources (time and money) by having some units/credits recognized as part of a new qualification (including tertiary education),
- v. Start working in a foreign country (recognition of foreign qualification), among other things.

ILO (2018) further state that the potential benefits of RPL are not limited to the applicants. Employers, for instance, may benefit from RPL for cost-efficiency reasons. RPL allows employers to advance workers in which they have invested over the years and who possess the relevant skills and experience for a particular job. Governments, on the other hand, can use RPL to improve the educational profile of their workforce and help applicants expand their employment prospects. If RPL is integrated into the overall education and training systems, it will positively impact the labour market, as well as countries' economies, and society (ILO, 2018). Furthermore, the table below provides potential benefits of RPL System.

Potential benefits at the economic and educational level	
Increased employability of population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced capacity of societies to empower disadvantaged groups. • Recognised value of services such as, voluntary and unpaid work.
Increased labour mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower labour force, as opportunities for decent work and lifelong learning open to more individuals, including groups disadvantaged in the labour market. • Increased earnings of the employed
Improved access to formal education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated movement of individuals to a better job • Increased ability of employed people to change career and employer. • Expanded opportunities for movements of workers from rural to urban areas and across borders
Strengthened qualifications system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced qualifications system providing a bridge between the informal and formal economy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened lifelong learning framework as RPL creates new opportunities for achieving a qualification.
Potential benefits at the societal level	
Societal inclusion and recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced capacity of societies to empower disadvantaged groups. • Improved visibility and use of existing human capital • Recognized value of services, such as voluntary and unpaid work
More motivated labour force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowered labour force, as opportunities for decent work and lifelong learning open to more individuals, including groups disadvantaged in the labour market. • Increased earnings of the employed
More interest in lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded opportunities for individuals to embrace lifelong learning and benefit from it in terms of labour market outcomes.
Potential benefits at the personal level	
Psychological benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened self-esteem, confidence and motivation to work and learn, including among those formerly discouraged.
Higher individual returns to work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved opportunities to access jobs that match individuals' competencies. • Reduced costs of education, including in terms of time investment required to attain a qualification. • Increased opportunities to move from the informal to the formal economy

According to ILO (2018) states that quantitative research on the benefits of RPL is limited. There has never been a systematic effort to collect data and comprehensively track the impacts of RPL over time and on a large scale. Indicators such as financial gains, including wage gains for successful RPL applicants, are rarely measured. The available evidence tends to rely on case studies and focuses on the personal perceptions of RPL beneficiaries, which are usually highly context specific. The benefits also include the life-long learning and quality education which is highly advocated by SASSETA. According to the SSP 2023/24, SASSETA

is the main driver of skills development initiatives within the safety and security sector. One of the outcomes of NSDP is to Identify and increase the production of occupations in high demand. SASSETA through its Discretionary Grant funding policy model has made provisions for awarding bursaries to deserving students. The policy aims to ensure effective implementation of the SASSETA strategic objectives to support programmes addressing both entry and high-level skills and research needs in the Safety and Security Sector.

Moreover, contributing toward building an active citizenry is one of skills priority actions which is said to be at the apex of the SETA agenda as outlined in the SASSETA 2022/23 Strategic Plan. The National Development Plan (NDP) emphasises a need to build active citizenry as an important element of realising Vision 2030. This is because beyond the development of workforce and creating a pipeline of new entrants to the safety and security sector, there are other skills needs to be addressed. The key component of the crime prevention model is aimed at changing the way communities react to crime and violence. Such a model involves the roll out the Community Patrollers programme, strengthening Community Policing Forums (CPFs) and Community Safety Forums (CSFs), as well as establishing and bolstering other safety and security volunteer programmes (SASSETA SPP, 2023/24).

2.14 Summary

This chapter presented different studies previously done on Community Police Forums (CPFs) in the South African Community context. The discussion in this chapter was guided by themes derived from the main objectives which were the basic understanding of CPFs and its constitutional mandate, the need for CPFs in the communities, and how can the CPFs benefit from professionalisation of their operations. the chapter presented a detailed overview of the RPL system, the assessment and potential benefits on the economy, individuals participating, and the society.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology provides an outline on how the researcher will go about collecting and analysing the data on the proposed study. The purpose of this section is to outline the research design that was utilized to execute the current study, it further discusses the units of analysis, sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, as well as the limitations of the study.

3.1 Qualitative research Design

The present study was framed within a qualitative research design. Qualitative research involves exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). This takes place in a form of an interactive process between the researcher and the participants. In qualitative research, the researcher is usually present in the intensive story sharing experience with participants. Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena (Hancock, Ocleford & Windridge, 2007).

The present study south to explore how CPFs can be professionalise through the RPL system in the policing sub-sector. Since qualitative research is a form of social action that emphasises the way in which people interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals (Haradhan, 2018). According to Zohrabi (2013) qualitative research is an exploratory method which seeks to explain 'how' and 'why' a particular social phenomenon or program, operates as it does in a particular context. In the proposed study, qualitative research will be used to unravel the

3.2 Sample and sampling methodology

The participants will be sourced from the department of community safety and liaison and from the police stations around Johannesburg. Hence, purposive sampling method will used for the study. The sample for the proposed study will be made up of the member of CPFs, community members working with CPFs, officials at the department of the community safety and liaison and police officials working with CPFs.

3.3 Data collection

Data will be collected through telephonic interviews, individuals, and group interviews with the participants from the above-mentioned departments. Semi-structured interviews will be used the research, Semi-structured interviews will afford the researcher the opportunity to explore and probe further on themes that may emerge during the course of the interview.

3.4 Data analysis

The collected data will be analysed using a qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action (Krippendorff, 1980). In the study, this method will be used to summarise information and provide insight on the importance of providing a professional structure for CPFs.

3.5 Ethical considerations

3.5.1 *Informed consent*

Prior to data collection, a permission to conduct the study was sought in writing from the organisations that participated in the study. Additionally, before data collection, the participants were made aware of what the study entails and what the process of participating in the study will involve. Participants were also made aware, through an informed consent letter, that participating in this study is voluntary and that they may refuse or withdraw their consent to participate at any time during the study should they wish to do so. Moreover, the participants were informed that there will be no penalty for withdrawing their consent.

3.5.2 *Protection of identity*

To protect the identity of the participants and the organisations that took part in this study, the SASSETA research department took the onus not to disclose the participants nor details of the CPFs Sections that took part in the study. Additionally, all the information gathered, and material used to collect the data are kept in strict confidence at the SETA in the research department. Each member of the research team has signed a confidentiality clause which binds them from not disclosing confidential material and to protect the research participants.

3.6 Limitations of the study

As with most research studies, this study also has limitations and as follows.

3.6.1 *Data collection method*

Data was sourced from six different CPFs which included five in Johannesburg and nearby areas and one of the six participants is from Port-Shepstone in the South Coast KwaZulu-Natal. Hence, the findings of the study cannot be conclusive and cannot be generalised to all Community Policing Forums. This implies that findings of the study may only be interpreted in the context in which the study was carried out.

Furthermore, a one-on-one interview was utilised hence, other participants may have been reluctant to share some information during the interview session out of fear. This may be a limitation in that participants may have distorted or omitted some information.

3.6.2 Reluctance to participate in the study.

The researcher discovered that some CPF members were reluctant to participate with the concerns that they might share confidential information that they have access to on the SAPS operations. The operations of the SAPS involve the safety of the community and if exposed to the public might negatively impact the effectiveness of the police crime prevention strategies. They insisted that the researcher send interview guide first to have an idea about the line of questioning and requested to ask permission from their superiors. As a result, this contributed to a limited sampling and participation.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

It is worth noting that the current study was not conceptualised to yield conclusive evidence regarding professionalising CPFs through RPL System. Rather, to test the assumptions on the use of RPL System in the safety and security sector and to contribute to the phenomenon of professionalisation of the CPFs by means of gathering insight from members of the CPFs. Section 4 mainly focuses on presentation of the findings of the current study.

4.2 Presentation of the findings of the study

The findings of the current study will be presented according to the following themes as guided by these research questions:

- At what extent can we use RPL system to professionalise CPFs?
- Can professionalisation of CPFs improve productivity?

Emanating from the above questions are the following themes:

- The period of service in the CPFs
- The process of becoming a member of CPF.
- The scope of CPF's operations.
- CPF's basic policing training.
- Challenges faced by CPF members on their operations.
- The relationship between CPFs, Police and the Community.
- Participant's understanding of the RPL System.
- Participant's opinion about Professionalising the work of CPFs.

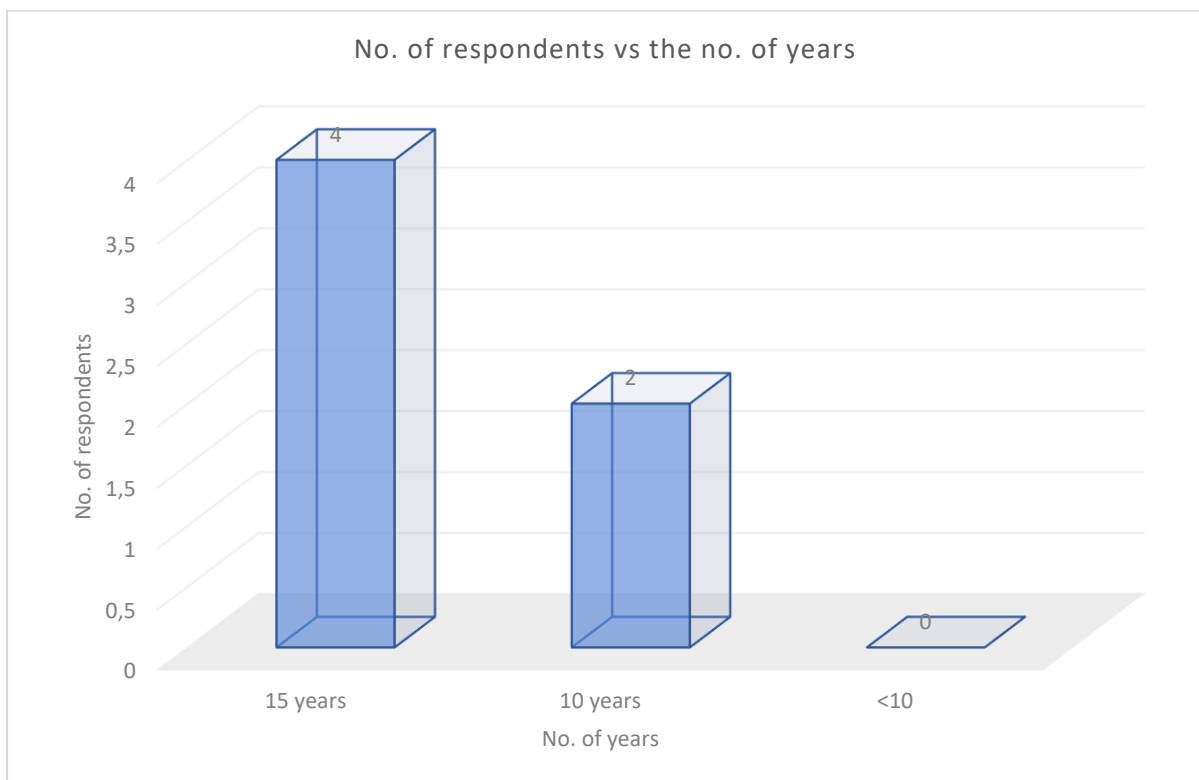
4.2.1 The period of service in the CPF

The purpose of this question was to determine the extent to which the respondent has insight into and experience with their CPF's activities. This was intended to establish relations and to gauge the respondent's know-how regarding other activities conducted by various CPFs in their communities. Members who had been involved in the CPF for more than 10 years could easily respond to the ensuing question about orientation and training, including resource allocation.

These members with long service in the CPFs informed the researcher that they are expecting to be registered in the formal police service at the police stations and provided with resources. Such resources should include salaries and allowances given to the members per year of

service to guarantee sustainability and continuity of the service. This should have a great impact on the programme and contribute to reaching its intended goals since these members are expecting to be registered permanently in the police service.

Figure 1: The graph below shows the numbers years respondents have in the CPF.



Source: Author, 2023

The graph above shows that they were 67% of respondents who had 15 years of service in the CPF and only 33% had 10 years of experience. The inference that can be drawn from this

is that all the respondents had enough experience to participate and comment about issues in the CPF.

4.2.2 The process of becoming a member of CPF

This theme focused mainly on the steps of becoming a member of the CPF and suitable candidates for the CPF's operations. The participants stated that the appointment of new CPF members is based on their active participation on community-related matters in their communities. Most CPF members are also community leaders, neighbourhood-watch members, or part of other structures in their communities. They mostly nominated and voted in by their community members to represent them on the CPF structure. The study found that it is unlikely to appoint an individual into the CPF membership position if the person has a criminal record or if a person is not supported by the community he or she represent.

“New members of CPFs get elected by stakeholders and partners at the CPF Annual AGM.”

“The procedure is to report to a commander, they will be necessary documentation, screening process to be followed and vetted to ensure that people do not have criminal records or have criminal intentions to look like a forum for self-preservation or any other activity than the sole process of the bureau”.

“You must be a long-time registered member of a community organization, e.g., Neighborhood watch, NGO, a business forum. All the organization come together at the election meeting then you get elected together with other representatives executive members, the executive is made up of the secretary and assistant secretary, the chairperson and deputy chairperson, treasury, safety coordinator and victim support coordinator”.

This shows that process of appointing a new member of CPF thorough, and new members are appointed based on the merit of the work they do in their respective communities.

4.2.3 The scope of CPF's operations.

As previously stated by different authors, respondents also added that the work of CPFs involves working with all role-players (SAPS, Private Security and Metro Police) in the safety and security sector in fighting and preventing of crime. Keeping records, writing reports, and making recommendations to Station Commanders, Provincial Commissioner and MEC. The respondents state that CPF's work as a first point of contact when the crime is committed, they are the first to arrive to the crime scenes and the first to talk to the victims of crime. The CPF's work involves facilitating communications between the community and SAPS, performing a civilian oversight of the SAPS in the precinct.

The CPF plays a mediation role to ensure that the work of SAPS to fight crime in the community is effective and it enjoys the confidence and co-operation of the community which it serves. The CPFs make the needs of the community known to the police and to help the police meet those needs. They promote transparency and foster joint problem-solving and co-operation. CPFs help with establishing an enduring partnership between police and all communities with the view to more effective protection of the community and better quality of life. They also enhance the quality of information available to the police and the development of a proactive and problem-solving approach to crime and violence. Lastly, they ensure that the police service addresses the primary needs of the community.

4.2.4 CPF's basic policing training.

New members of the CPF do receive basic training, however, the training is not exclusively basic policing training but a basic training in different fields (e.g., firefighting, accident scene management, Counselling etc..). This happens because they deal with different cases ranging from, domestic violence, sexual abuse, road accidents, Cash In Transit (CIT), Stock theft, House robbery and murder. Whenever there is crime or any other incident that occurs in the community, they are most the first to arrive at the scene of the crime. This is mainly because they are in the community closer to the "action" therefore, are required to possess multi-skills to deal with whatever happens in the community.

However, the training is informally organised and facilitated by the leadership structures in that section and is purely based on their experiences. This means that if they have never dealt with the case they will not be able to teach their members on how to deal with such cases because they are not qualified or accredited to teach and facilitate those training. This is based on the respondent's statements, they stated that they train their new members unofficially and the training they give is based on the skills they enquired during the course of their experience. In some cases, the SAPS, Private Security and Road Traffic Management Official they do arrange workshops to induct new CPF members about their operations and what they expect as assistance from CPFs.

In cases such as domestic abuse and sexual abuse, the CPF members are given basic psychology training on how to talk to the victims, giving them assurance about their safety and giving information about perpetrators of crime. In cases of car accidents new members are given basic training of how to save people involved in an accident and how to park their cars when they are the first to arrive at the scene to avoid causes other accidents and not to obstruct the way for the paramedics.

In crime scenes they are also given brief details on how to secure the crime scene and avoid contaminating the evidence and handing over the crime scene to the SAPS when they arrive. These training are dependent on geographical location of the CPF and the crime that is prevalent at that place. Most CPFs in rural areas are also given training on how to investigate stock theft (most cows and goats). In addition, to the “normal” crimes stock theft is high in rural communities.

4.2.5 The challenges faced by CPF members on their operations.

They are many challenges that CPFs are faced with, and the challenges are also dependent on the community the CPF serve. They are number of challenges that participants mentioned such as; (a) lack of resources, (b) gender representation in the CPF, (c) being undermined by SAPS, (d) CPF’s credibility in question when testifying in court, (e) support from the community, and (f) inadequate funding from the department of community safety and liaison.

(a) Lack of resources

The study found that most CPFs do not have adequate resources to safely carry out their daily duties, they do not have cars designated to patrol the neighbourhood, they do not have proper uniform to wear while on duty. They do not have flashlights when patrolling at night and they do not have safety vests/bullet proofs to ensure their safety when confronting hostile criminals. “The lack of protective clothes makes it difficult for us to carry out our duties in confidence, unlike police most of us we do not even have gun, we not competent to carry firearms”. One of the respondents explained that the work of CPFs is like a suicide mission, they are expected to root out crime with little or support from the department.

(b) Gender representation in the CPF

The current study found that CPF is mostly dominated by men, it is understood most work that is associated with danger attract more men however, this poses a challenge for the work of CPFs due to the diversity of cases they deal with. In most cases that involves domestic violence women are mostly preferred to talk to by the victims of crime. “when a woman or a child is raped would never feel comfortable talking to a man because men are mostly the perpetrators of such crimes”. The misrepresentation of women in the CPF defeats the effort of CPFs in ensuring that their presence guarantees the feeling of safety.

(c) Undermining of the CPFs by police officials

Some participants stated that they have good relationship with police officials they work with, however, they emphasized that the good relationship is mainly because the station

commander value their input to the fight against crime. “when the station commander welcomes the CPFs in the station and gives you the power to escalate report any issue involving a miscarriage of law by police officers you have no reason to be uneasy with your work”. Even though in most police stations CPFs are valued in other police stations CPFs are not given space to work because some station commanders feel like the presence of CPFs might invite unnecessary scrutiny from outside forces (community or IPID). In some cases police officials do not think CPFs are qualified to hold them accountable for any mistakes they make while enforcing the law.

(d) CPF’s credibility in question when testifying in court.

In court most authorities are called to testify as expert witnesses on a particular field, for example, investigators are called as qualified people to collect evidence, doctors are called to testify as experts on health and many other experts on different fields based on the qualifications and experience. The CPF members when called to testify in courts are mostly challenged mostly because they do not have any qualifications on the subject matter only the experience which cannot be qualified to give credibility to the witness.

Regardless of whether they were first to attend to the crime scene their evidence is mostly disregarded because they are deemed as not credible witnesses. *“Most police officers use us as scapegoats when the chain of custody of evidence is broken, they always say we are responsible for that, they even blame us for contaminating the crime scenes”.*

(e) The support from the community

The success of the work of CPF is based on the support they get from the community and is based on the social class of the community. Most township communities cannot afford to take their CPF member for annual trainings or buy them protective tools for operations however, in most suburban communities they can donate enough money to train their CPF members. *“Me and my team we have full security regalia from bullet vest firearms, we spend do not mind using our own money to buy ourselves protective clothes and the community do support us because they know that we keep them safe”.*

(f) Inadequate funding from the department of community safety

The study found that even though the department do disburse funding for the purchase of resources and minor training not all CPFs receive that funding. “The funding mostly goes to township communities, I do understand that they need the funds more than us but we also need support from government. It is a good thing that township communities are prioritised

however, it would be nice we also receive it after they are done with the township communities”. One participant when asked if CPF members receive any kind of compensation stated that:

“No there is no compensation, but I know that there is something in discussion, there is something that will be allocated to safety so that we can provide necessary equipment like flashlights and markings that states who you are like jackets and things like that. we also required to carry appointment cards to show the who we are if required so because anyone can be pretending to be one of us and a civilian can draw their firearm if you fail to show that you are a policeman of working with authorities, those funds will also assist with those administration needs, it’s not the case of hearsay or the word of mouth the identification card will ensure that the person is who he says he is”.

When asked about the importance of identification in the CPF, the participant said it important for the community members to be able to identify them from the distance and be able to show that they appointed to serve the community. The participant added that they are lot of vigilantes who pose as members of the CPFs, they take law into their hands and the blame is directed to CPFs. The participant further heightened that

*“The case of **vigilantism**, those are people who want to fight crime on a smaller scale need to organize themselves and get registered, taking law into their hands cannot be supported but in most cases people do so because they feel like police are not doing their job properly, but they need to write to us, we need to educate them because those guys can actually be effective”*

4.2.6 The relationship between CPFs, SAPS and the Community.

The study found that the relationship between CPF and SAPS is dependent on the station commander of that SAPS precinct, some participants stated that they are always welcomed in the police station to perform their duties. However, most station commanders are not open to the idea of having CPFs as civilian oversight, but only interested to work with them when searching criminals. This suggest that other station commanders only welcome CPFs when it is going to benefit them in terms of securing arrests and distance them after that. Most studies done on the relationship between SAPS and the community (especially black communities) found that SAPS is still mostly seen as an enforcer of the oppressive system.

South Africa comes from the Apartheid system which was oppressive to mostly black people and the police were the driver of the oppression. The police was transformed after the introduction of the democratic dispensation however, most black people do not believe the transformation was properly done as the brutality of police still persists, especially during the peaceful protests. Therefore, this further ruin the relationship that is still not matured and the CPFs was introduced to mostly bridge the misunderstandings that insists between the communities and the police.

4.2.7 Participant's understanding of the RPL System.

The study found out that most participants did not know about the RPL System, most of them heard about the name but they did not understand the system works. "I do not want anything that has to do with school, I am too old for school". One participant assumed the RPL system is the same as schooling system where you seat for exams and write assignment however, the interviewer explained that the system is way different from the school system as it accommodate even individuals who cannot write or read.

The researcher further explained that the RPL System is the learning that takes place outside the formal education and training system. It covers variety of jobs such as; on-the-job training, informal apprenticeships, managing a household, caring for the sick and for elderly relatives are all activities that result in learning outcomes, but which often do not come with a certificate of competencies recognizing the knowledge, skills and experience acquired.

4.2.8 Participant's opinion about Professionalising the work of CPFs.

The study found that participants believes that the introduction of the RPL System could formalise the work of the CPFs in terms providing credibility of their knowledge and skills. "I do not know about such system, but hearing about it I think it could be beneficial to CPFs". Even though the work of CPFs is voluntary most members feel like their contribution is not valued enough by the department of community safety. This is mainly because the department do not assist them with the necessary sources to work "tools of trade", they leave everything to the CPF members and their community to provide for themselves. One of the participants added that:

"I do understand the recognition of prior learning, in not so affluent communities is definitely something that could be beneficial because we have so many capable leaders in our communities but they do not know how to bring those skills to the fore, management skills, people's skills and because communication is key, negotiating skills and meeting management skills needs to be accredited, sitting boundaries and managing the community effectively. I understand that because "knowledge gained is knowledge acquired" so the RPL System would come in handy for all senior members of the CPF and community leaders who are active in fighting crime in a smaller scale".

The participant was adding on the point that most CPF members are of business forums, and some are part of neighborhood watch or other associations that are actively fighting crime in their communities. Therefore, Professionalising the work of the CPFs through the RPL System will benefit the members involved and help the criminal justice system successfully prosecute the offenders.

4.3 Summary of the subsection

This section focused on presenting the discussion and findings for the current study. The findings were presented in terms of various themes, that is, the process of becoming a member of CPF, the scope of CPF's operations, CPF's basic policing training, the challenges faced by CPF members on their operations, the relationship between CPFs, Police and the Community, participant's understanding of the RPL System, participant's opinion about Professionalising the work of CPFs. The theme addressing the challenges was further broken into; (a) lack of resources, (b) gender representation in the CPF, (c) being undermined by SAPS, (d) CPF's credibility in question when testifying in court, (e) support from the community, and (f) inadequate funding from the department of community safety and liaison.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The purpose of the current study

The purpose of the study was firstly, was to explore how Community Police Forums can be professionalised through the RPL System. Secondly, the study sought to have a formal qualification that will clearly determine the CPF's scope of work and capabilities in the Criminal Justice System.

5.2 Summary and review of the findings

The participants of the study gave a detailed information about the operations of the CPFs and how they could achieve a safe society with less or no crime. The results of the current shows that CPF makes SAPS work easy by organising the communities into cooperating with them when they are searching for criminals, they come forward with the information that mostly leads to a successful arrest. They are showing communities that SAPS are not the enemy that is mandated to oppress them but authorised by democratic constitution to protect and serve the communities regardless of the race and gender.

The sampled population was made up of the Chairpersons of the CPFs responsible for the sections, they are all senior members of the CPFs with more 10 years of experience. The number of experiences they have in the CPF was just "the word of mouth", this means we are reporting their of experience and competency as a hearsay, we did not see any qualification which would have indicated the exact date when they were declared competent for the work they are doing. The courts and defence attorneys they also discredit their credibility based of the fact that they are qualified to have an opinion about any matter discussed in courts base on the fact that they are not qualified to deal with crime.

Moreover, most CPF members feel like their services are abused by the policing system, they are expected to help police prevent and solve crimes without getting any resources or practical training. They are mostly involved in apprehending hostile offenders without protective clothes or firearms. The participants shared that in most cases are asked to divert from their mandate to work as an oversight body of the SAPS and as a mediator between the community and SAPS but actively involved with the of the police. The findings of the current study has brought about recommendations outlined below.

5.3 Recommendations for empirical findings

5.3.1 *Addressing the funding challenges*

Most CPFs are self-funded and sometimes their community members contribute to the purchase of protective clothes and fund the training. The study found that most CPFs in rural areas and township do not get as much training as their counterparts in the Urban areas. This is mostly because the fear of crime in Urban areas is high, and the Urban communities believe that people who are robbing them do not reside with them in the Urban communities. They believe that they are getting robbed by people from informal settlements and townships. Therefore, they invest in private securities guard and patrol the neighbourhood and also invest in training and arming the CPF members. The study will recommend that the department of community safety fund all the CPF members equally so that they can equally have proper skills to prevent and fight crime regardless of their geographical location.

5.3.2 *Implementing the RPL System*

Addressing the basic training and recognition of the experience gained, the study found that there is no standardised training to the new members of the CPF but the training they mostly receive is given by their leadership in that particular section. This means that if the chairperson is experienced in one field he will most likely recommend that they get a basic training on the field, and other skills they will learn as they perform their duties.

Therefore, the study recommends that a standardised training is development, not a workshop but a practical training such as; patrolling, evidence collection (maintaining the chain of custody), statement taking, following criminals based on intelligence gathered in the community, safely apprehending violent suspects, the use of firearms and high speed chase. A clear program for capacitation/ training of the CPFs should be developed. The training programmes should be accredited so that the trained members can be empowered by such training.

5.3.3 *Benefits of professionalising the CPFs*

The good work done by the CPFs in communities are undeniable, they are closer to average people and when the crime is committed, they always know who to talk to and how to follow all the leads. They are able to help SAPS solve crimes by making it possible for them to secure a conviction and they follow up on the cases reported by the community members. Making their operations professional would empower to properly work as a civilian oversight body without doubting their capabilities. Based on this fact, the study recommends that CPFs'

operations should be formalised, not only on the policies but also in practice. Professionalising CPFs would mean recognising their previously acquired knowledge in a formal qualification, provision of necessary resources and allocation of monthly or annually stipend for the costs of operations.

5.3.4 *Emphasising the role of CPFs*

The study shows that CPF members are no longer doing what they were mandated to do as prescribed on the Police Act 68 of 1995. They are over-deployed but under-trained which poses a high risk to the community and to the CPFs themselves, by not getting proper training they are on the risk of sabotaging the work of SAPS unintentionally.

The study recommends that CPFs are refocused back to their work as mandated by the Police Act 68 of 1995 which is; *to ensure the efficient and appropriate service delivery of safety and security to the community., Addressing complaints against the police on behalf of the community and against criminal elements in a particular community, on behalf of policing partners., Building communication and problem-solving channels between all policing partners and the community., Producing safety plans from reported police statistics, as well as community needs and complaints regarding crime hot spots and suspicious activities., Planning and participating in anti-crime exercises, which are determined by the community's complaints., and the CPF facilitates safety and security meetings between the community and law enforcement.*

5.4 Section Summary

The SAPS needs to be more considerate of the challenges faced by the CPFs concerning resources and try to put measures in place to assist them in executing their duties. CPFs should not be seen as a competing partner of the SAPS and private securities. They should be seen as a supporting structure to both, the SAPS and private securities, therefore, they should be supported by both parties in preventing and solving crimes.

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