Co-production as a form of service delivery:
Community policing in Alexandra Township

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1. INTRODUCTION

Safety and security is a service vital to the well being of citizens. In South Africa, safety and security is a service that has been decentralised along with other basic services. This research report attempts to ascertain whether the decentralisation of safety and security services through the community policing forum (CPF) concept has been successful. Owing to the fact that community policing depends largely on community participation, CPFs can be seen as examples of co-production.

1.1 Co-production

Co-production has been defined in many different ways. Some theorists define it broadly as being anything from citizens’ requests for public services to citizens providing assistance to public organisations. Other theorists have argued that co-production (involving waste removal services, for example) could include both citizen clean-up activities and littering. For the purposes of this study, a narrower definition of co-production will be adopted, one that perceives co-production as a form of service delivery where citizens act in conjunction with public entities to provide a service. Two definitions present themselves. The first is advocated by Jeffrey Brudney, for whom co-production is “the involvement of service consumers in the delivery of services usually in concert with public agencies”. The second is favoured by William Pammer, who defines co-production as “those actions by citizens which are intended to augment or contribute to the actions of public agencies and invoke conjoint behaviour”. Both these definitions hold that the citizen and the public agency assume mutual responsibility for service delivery. Instead of a public agency responding to service demands, it will now develop and work with citizens as co-producers to satisfy service demands.

As an alternative form of service delivery, co-production has been hailed as beneficial for the following reasons. Firstly, the active involvement of citizens in delivering services could be viewed as participatory, and in keeping with democratic ideals. Secondly, citizens could provide service agents with vital and accurate information about the needs and problems of their communities. This information could be used to adjust service delivery accordingly to meet public needs. Thirdly, and most persuasively, the co-production model of service delivery could be described as being economically viable in situations where public

1 Pammer WJ. ‘Administrative norms and the co-production of municipal services.’ Social Science Quarterly 1992; 73(4).
2 Brudney JL. ‘Co-production: issues in implementation.’ Administration and Society 1985; 17(3).
3 Pammer.
4 Sundeen RA. ‘Co-production and communities: implications for local administrators.’ Administration and Society 1985; 16(4).
agencies need to operate with reduced revenues, in conjunction with the rising costs of service delivery.

Although co-production as a model has existed in South Africa, the terminology associated with it is fairly new. Community policing, however, is a form of service delivery that fits in closely with the ideals of co-production, and it has seen recent widespread use in this country. For the purpose of assessing and monitoring co-production initiatives as a form of service delivery, this study will investigate a CPF.

1.2 Community policing as a form of co-production

There are many definitions of community policing. Some simply emphasise an improvement in the number and quality of police contacts. Others assert that community policing marks a decentralisation of the police bureaucracy and promotes fresh and proactive problem-solving strategies.\(^5\)

Robert Friedmann has defined community policing as “a policy and a strategy aimed at achieving more effective and efficient crime control, reduced fear of crime, improved quality of life, improved police services and police legitimacy, through a proactive reliance on community resources that seeks to change crime-causing conditions. It assumes a need for greater accountability of police, greater public share in decision-making and greater concern for civil rights and liberties.”\(^6\) Friedmann argues that the concept of community policing arises from the mutual needs of the police and the community. It is beneficial for the police to improve ties with the community so that community resources can assist them in crime control efforts, their bases for intelligence gathering can be widened, and their legitimacy within the community can be increased. It is beneficial for the community in that it receives improved police services, greater police accountability, and increased power sharing in police decisions.

It is therefore clear that community policing as a form of service delivery closely follows the model of co-production. As stated earlier, co-production is “the involvement of service consumers in the delivery of services, usually in concert with public agencies”.\(^7\) Community policing is an excellent example of citizens who ‘consume’ policing services actively involving themselves in improving the delivery of those services. Firstly, alongside the actual delivery of the policing service, community policing allows for a wide range of citizen participation, which is in keeping with democratic ideals espoused in the co-production


\(^7\) Brudney.
model. Secondly, in line with one of the defining ideals of co-production, community policing encourages citizens to provide government service agents with vital and accurate information about the needs and problems of their communities. Lastly, community policing fits in with co-production’s model of service delivery that is economically viable in situations where public agencies are faced with reduced revenues and rising costs of service delivery.

Community policing evaluations have generally been encouraging. It is recorded that, in many cases, community participation has helped reduce not only fear of crime but actual crime rates as well.5 Positive findings notwithstanding, there are two main limits to the success of community policing. The first is that the voluntary nature of citizen participation may affect the level of community turnout, and that fear of retaliation by perpetrators may inhibit full participation. Secondly, police bureaucracies are often rigid, and restructuring them to welcome participation by what could be seen as ‘laymen’ may prove difficult.

1.3 CPFs in South Africa

1.3.1 Legislation

Community policing in South Africa was originally envisaged in the 1993 interim constitution, which directed that an act of parliament “provide for the establishment of community police forums in respect of police stations”. The aim of these forums was to promote accountability of the police to local communities, encourage community cooperation with the police, and monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the police.9

The above principles were legislated for in the 1995 South African Police Service Act. Under this act, CPFs were to:

1. Establish and maintain a partnership between the community and the police service
2. Promote communication between the service and the community
3. Promote cooperation between the service and the community in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing
4. Improve the rendering of police services to the community at the national, provincial, area, and local levels
5. Improve the transparency of the service, and its accountability to the community

8 Rosenbaum, Lurigio.
6. Promote joint problem identification and problem solving by the service and the community.\textsuperscript{10}

In 1996 the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) emphasised the idea of partnership for dealing with crime in South Africa. It stated that, “to effectively reduce crime, it is necessary to transform and reorganise government and facilitate real community participation”.\textsuperscript{11}

The Department of Safety and Security published a formal policy on community policing in 1997, entitled \textit{The Community Policing Policy and Framework Guidelines}. This framework defined community policing as a collaborative, partnership-based approach to local-level crime solving. It stressed that CPFs should be involved in improving service delivery and facilitating partnerships for problem solving.

The framework was followed in 1998 by the publication of a white paper, which asserted that problem-oriented partnership strategies for policing had been shown to produce positive results in terms of reducing crime. However, it also stated that, “… given that democratically elected local government has now been established, it is appropriate that functions of the CPFs be \textit{supplemented} by duly elected representatives of local communities”.\textsuperscript{12}

Community policing was also envisaged by the Department of Public Service and Administration in its \textit{Batho Pele} (People First) white paper on transforming service delivery. It outlined five core functions of CPFs:\textsuperscript{13}

1. Service orientation - the provision of a police service responsive to community needs and accountable for addressing them
2. Partnership - the facilitation of a cooperative, consultative process of problem solving
3. Problem solving - joint identification of the causes of crime, and the development of innovative measures to address them
4. Empowerment: the creation of joint responsibility for addressing crime
5. Accountability - the creation of a culture for addressing the concerns of the community.

\textsuperscript{10} South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995. Section 18 (1) (a)-(f).
\textsuperscript{13} Pelser, Schnetler, Louw 14.
1.3.2 Implementation

CPFs have been set up at every police station in the country and are guided by a National Community Policing Desk, which falls under the National Crime Prevention and Response Unit. Chairpersons of CPFs in an area sit on area boards. Representatives of these area boards then sit on provincial boards. At a national level, the nine representatives of the provincial boards sit on a national Community Policing Consultative Forum.

General characteristics of CPFs are as follows: CPFs have written constitutions and codes of conduct, and hold annual general meetings. Both residents and police attend meetings, and membership of CPFs is open to all.

1.3.3 The need for community policing

Increased levels of crime and violence have placed considerable strain on the South African Police Service (SAPS). This strain is coupled with numerous existing challenges to the police, such as low pay, bad working conditions, inadequate training, limited experience with crime prevention and, in many cases, limited legitimacy among citizens.

It is argued that crime and violence are complex social problems that require community involvement for their successful resolution. Furthermore, the proactive prevention of crime is seen to be preferable to reactive incidence-driven policing. Pule Zwane argues that team effort on the part of police and communities is viable for crime reduction as communication and coordination among citizens, victims, and witnesses generally leads to better crime-solving tactics.

CPFs are well poised to facilitate community involvement in crime resolution and reduction. They are known to accurately identify crime ‘hot-spots’, set up very successful foot patrols which act as deterrents to crime, and provide the police with vital information regarding suspects and crime trends.

CPFs are also well poised to build bridges of trust between the community and the police. This is a vital consideration in South Africa owing to the history of strained relationships between communities and the police. It could also be said that CPFs perpetuate the idea of democratic civilian interaction with the police.

14 ‘Going through the motions?: Community policing forums eight years on.’ *Nedbank ISS Crime Index* 2001; 5(5).
1.3.4 Problems and criticisms of CPFs

It is argued that CPFs in South Africa ostensibly lack the systematic and practical support of the government. Another fundamental problem is that community policing has been seen as an ‘add-on’ function to other police responsibilities – it has failed to be effectively internalised as police practice. Indeed, Pelser has argued that the establishment of CPFs has been ‘largely symbolic’.  

CPF also face many logistical problems. Often its participants lack basic resources such as education, transport, and access to communication. The lack of other resources such as finance and equipment also hinder the effective functioning of CPFs. More privileged localities can rely on wealthy residents and business donations, but less privileged localities have to rely on help from the police stations. This said, however, Duxitra Mistry points out that in the mid-1990s the Office of the MEC for Safety and Security initially gave each CPF in Gauteng R 5 000, provided they were able to produce a constitution and minutes of meetings held. Thereafter the department gave them a second payment of R 15 000. CPF Area Boards were also initially granted an amount of R 8 000 as well as a further lump sum for many of the sub forms that were not given funds during the initial allocations.

CPFs are often criticised for failing to understand the actual requirements of their role. These requirements have often not been clearly outlined, and levels of training of CPF members have been low. However, in 1996 relatively widespread training of CPF members in Gauteng did occur. According to Mistry, CPFs identified a need for training in fundraising skills, bookkeeping and budgeting, chairing meetings, facilitation skills, record keeping, communication and public relations skills as well as conflict resolution skills, among others. In addition, people wanted to know about the constitution and the bill of rights, their rights, criminal law, community policing and the powers and functions of CPFs. After presentations to the MEC, Provincial Commissioner, Area Commissioners and Area Boards, a first phase of training commenced. Those who attended the training had to make the packages they received available to their colleagues as well as pass on the information they acquired.

Critics of CPFs contend that CPF aims and strategies are vague, rely on illusory myths of community, legitimise intrusive surveillance by police and residents, and undercut police effectiveness.
There is also a concern that CPFs have failed to penetrate communities in two ways: some feel CPF membership is not widely representative of all community interests; and also CPF activity has not sufficiently improved the status or circumstances of community residents.\footnote{Mistry.}

Another argument put forward is that there is a decline in the emphasis on community policing in favour of ‘get tough’ projects such as Operation Crackdown, which favour prompt delivery of safety and security over democratic participation and accountability.\footnote{Gordon.}

CPF members have raised the issue of volunteerism, arguing that they should be compensated for their time, and equipped with items such as cell phones and bullet-proof vests.

Working out a balance between police and CPF members also presents a challenge. Police generally resist CPF criticism of their behaviour, and feel that CPF input should be curtailed so as to limit the intrusion into the discretionary domain of the police. CPF members, on the other hand, feel that they should be privy to choosing police personnel, help to set educational and experimental standards, be able to inspect police cells, etc. Communication differences have also surfaced. CPFs have been known to accuse police of bullying citizens and of being insensitive to their needs, while police have claimed that members of CPFs have been arrogant, apathetic, and, on occasion, politicised.\footnote{All these problems were aired during CPF meetings attended by Gordon in four South African provinces. Gordon.}

\section{1.4 CPF Case Study}

\subsection{1.4.1 Alexandra Township: history and context}

According to national legislation, every police station in South Africa should have a CPF. In practice, about 90\% of all police stations have at least a CPF, if not other community structures.\footnote{Interview with Director van der Westhuizen, Partnership Policing, Crime Prevention Division, SAPS; 10 December 2002.} Choosing an area for a case study was therefore no easy task; however, the Alexandra Township CPF fulfilled several criteria laid out in our overall framework for evaluating service delivery, and has a history that lends itself to investigation.

Alexandra, located in the northeastern suburbs of Johannesburg, has been in existence for over 90 years. From 1904 land in Alexandra was sold to black people under freehold title, and in 1912 it was proclaimed a ‘native township’. After the 1913 Native Land Act was passed it became one of the few areas in Johannesburg where black people could live with a
status other than that of ‘temporary sojourner’. The population grew rapidly, and today about 350 000 people live in an area roughly one square mile in size.\textsuperscript{27}

Although throughout the years Alexandra was subject to a series of urban planning efforts and forced removals, services and upkeep by authorities was virtually nonexistent. As a result, the township has endured years of neglect and a lack of investment, and living conditions have become increasingly worse. Migration and overcrowding have also become progressively worse with the number of shacks estimated at 34 000.\textsuperscript{28} Although many Alexandra residents have lived there for several decades, it is not a homogenous society. The ratio of men to women is estimated to be 1:1.22. The unemployment rate in Alexandra (using a conservative definition including those only actively looking for work) is 32%. This is higher than the rate for black Africans in Gauteng province (29%), in which Alexandra is situated. Forty% of women compared to 19% of men are unemployed, and those who have jobs are mostly low-skilled or semi-skilled workers.\textsuperscript{29}


\textsuperscript{28} Isserow, Everatt. ‘CASE.’ In: Wilson, Alexandra Township and the Alexsan Kopano Resource Centre. 2002: 11.

\textsuperscript{29} Isserow, Everatt 11.
Although throughout the years Alexandra was subject to a series of urban planning efforts and forced removals, services and upkeep by authorities was virtually nonexistent. As a result, the township has endured years of neglect and a lack of investment, and living conditions have become increasingly worse. Migration and overcrowding have also become progressively worse with the number of shacks estimated at 34,000. Although many Alexandra residents have lived there for several decades, it is not a homogenous society. The ratio of men to women is estimated to be 1:1.22. The unemployment rate in Alexandra (using a conservative definition including those only actively looking for work) is 32%. This is higher than the rate for black Africans in Gauteng province (29%), in which Alexandra is situated. Forty% of women compared to 19% of men are unemployed, and those who have jobs are mostly low-skilled or semi-skilled workers.

Alexandra has also experienced decades of political unrest. It was often the site of anti-apartheid struggles and youth movement activities. Besides political violence, residents also lived through hostel violence.

Crime and violence is an overwhelming problem for Alexandra residents. According to a study by Isserow and Everatt, 83% in Alexandra feel crime has increased since 1994. Research shows that the most common form of crime is car hijacking (28%), followed by rape (27%), housebreaking (18%), murder (17%), and child abuse (6%). The pervasiveness of crime is illustrated by male participants in focus group sessions held for this study, who reported a fear of sending younger siblings to shops because of child abuse. Residents also frequently noted problems with the way in which the police handled crime. Women showed an even greater fear of crime, as they felt likely to suffer sexual as well as criminal violence. Alexandra has a long history of poverty, poor socio-economic conditions, and violence. There is also clearly a chasm between the community and the policing services, and for this reason an effective CPF could provide a vital opportunity for residents to gain more security and peace of mind in Alexandra.

The history of the relationship between Alexandra residents and the police is worth mentioning. According to an excerpt from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings:

Applicant stated that during the period 1989 to 1992 whilst he was at the Alexandra Security Branch he committed various acts of assault on the residents of Alexandra ... He ... remembers that in some instances the people laid charges and dockets were opened ... He stated that when a docket was opened against a member of the police force it would go to a certain section where there was a

30 Isserow, Everatt. ‘CASE.’ in Wilson, Alexandra Township and the Alexsan Kopano Resource Centre. 2002: 11.
31 Isserow, Everatt 11.
retired Brigadier ... This Brigadier would interfere with the investigation and thus make it difficult for the senior prosecutor to enrol the matters. 33

This statement illustrates that relations between security forces and Alexandra residents have been fraught for some time. The TRC hearings turned up substantial evidence describing clashes between the police and Alexandra residents. One respondent stated that he had participated in invasions into the township at night with the objective of creating a general atmosphere of unrest and fear in Alexandra, and that “these activities formed part of the covert operations conducted by the security forces in the course of the political struggle being waged at the time”. 34

Following the demise of apartheid and the introduction of a democratic state, police brutality and bias have decreased. The South African Police Force has been restructured to form the South African Police Service, mandated to uphold and safeguard the fundamental rights of South African citizens. Despite this, however, the need to mend and build strong relationships with Alexandra residents still exists. Community policing in the township therefore has a vital role to play.

2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH CRITERIA 35

The question being asked is: Is the delivery of safety and security services in Alexandra improved by the CPF?

The criteria it is measured against include:

1. Bridging the gap between police and township residents through an evaluation of relationships between the CPF, the police, and township residents, including access, participation and perceptions by citizens

2. The effect of the CPF on the crime rate

3. Sustainability of the CPF, including issues of resources

4. Accountability of the CPF

5. Equity.


34 Ibid.

35 Method: Information was gathered by conducting in depth interviews with Alexandra CPF members and members of the Alexandra Police Station. Alexandra residents were also interviewed by use of household questionnaires over a three-day period, resulting in approximately 35 interviews as well as approximately 15 interviews with residents of Alexandra Township in the charge office of the Alexandra Police Station.
3. FINDINGS - THE ALEXANDRA CPF

3.1 Background

The first Alexandra CPF was established in 1996, and existed at the Alexandra police station until August 2002, when it was disbanded and replaced with a new one. The previous community policing system allowed for each sector in Alexandra (six in total)\textsuperscript{36} to have its own CPF. Since 2002 the new system has allowed for only one CPF in Alexandra, comprising representatives of all the sectors, elected by township residents at a public meeting held at a local community centre. 12 representatives, including a chairman, were elected. CPF elections are held every second year. The CPF currently holds monthly meetings to discuss crime rates, crime trends, most wanted criminals and communication and consultation levels between the police and township members.\textsuperscript{37} CPF members are formally represented on six commissions set up by the Alexandra police station.\textsuperscript{38}

Along with the CPF in Alexandra, a community patrol group has also been operating. Although this patrol group now falls under the umbrella of the CPF, it was originally an independent form of community policing. The patrol group was formed in August 1999 with the support of the Alexandra police station. It only patrols sector four of the township, and has had a volunteer base oscillating between 52 and 130 people.\textsuperscript{39}

The table on the next page lists current members of the Alexandra CPF, and the figure that follows is an organogram that shows how CPF members are allocated to police commissions.

\textsuperscript{36} Alexandra has been divided into sectors by the Alexandra police station for the purposes of effectively monitoring crime.

\textsuperscript{37} Interview with Captain Nefolowhane, Alexandra police station; 25 November 2002.

\textsuperscript{38} Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF, Alexandra police station; 11 December 2002.

\textsuperscript{39} Interview with Johnson Ndlovu, Chief Commander of the Alexandra Sector 4 Patrol Group; 26 November 2002.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPF Representative</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Sithole (Chairperson)</td>
<td>Computer technician</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovo Mahlange (Secretary)</td>
<td>Works at Alex FM</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Olivier (Treasurer)</td>
<td>Butchery owner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred Rothokolo</td>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menkelele Mathebula</td>
<td>Nursery school teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themba Twala</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Keke</td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Mokwena</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty More</td>
<td>Manager of Alexandra Youth Centre</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor Maluleke</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Dube</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portia Monkele</td>
<td>Head of Abangani Nkosi (women’s association)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Evaluation

In order to measure whether the CPF has improved the delivery of safety and security services in Alexandra it is necessary to evaluate it against several criteria. Five areas of focus have been chosen: bridging the gap between police and township residents through an evaluation of relationships between the CPF, the police, and township residents, including access, participation and perceptions of citizens; the effect of the CPF on the crime rate; sustainability of the CPF, including issues of resources; accountability of the CPF; and equity. All five areas are fundamental to an assessment of whether this co-production initiative is or is not improving service delivery for citizens of a poor township. These criteria will also help to assess whether the CPF is successfully implementing the ideals espoused in the policy of community policing.

3.3 Bridging the gap

Improving the delivery of safety and security services can be viewed from one perspective as being the improvement of relationships between providers of policing services and the citizens being provided for. As explained, the role of the CPF is to bridge the relationship between the police and the community. One crucial element of this ‘bridge’ is the relationship between the CPF and the police itself.

3.3.1 The CPF and the police

Interaction between the police and the CPF has by no means been smooth. Both members of the police force and members of the CPF have indicated that there are communication problems and mistrust between these two actors. Much of the antagonism can be attributed to a different understanding of what the role of the CPF is. According to the captain responsible for working with the CPF, its role is to help the police win the trust and cooperation of the community. He believes the CPF should also have a role in discouraging community members from engaging in crime, as well as to encourage township residents to come forward with information.40

Although the CPFs have been working according to the principle that they must bridge the gap between the police and the community, outdated policy directives that encouraged CPFs to perform a monitoring role over the police have also influenced them. According to Alfred Rothokolo, a member of the CPF involved in crime combating, the role of the CPF is also to ensure that police resources are properly used and that the police are impartially and

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40 Interview with Captain Nefolowhane; Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.
honestly carrying out their duties. The ‘watch dog’ role the CPF occasionally plays over the police is angering the police. As a member of the CPF explained, there are certain policemen who have negative attitudes towards the CPF, and who label it the ‘Corruption Unit’. This is a sarcastic reference to the fact that CPF members once objected to police officials stripping a stolen car that had been recovered. Furthermore, he explained that it is sometimes difficult for CPF members to mediate between the police and community because police personnel often refuse to discuss community grievances about the police, dismissing CPF members as being unpaid volunteers and not trained members of the police force.

Difficulties in police-CPF relations go beyond police anger over being monitored. As members of the CPF Patrol Group acknowledged, the police have in the past been threatened by the activities of the CPF, fearing that they are taking over the police’s work. Amongst the CPF there is a concern that there are individuals within the police who resented the Patrol Group’s function, and find them to be competition.

There are also significant communication problems between the CPF and the police. For example, CPF members feel important police events are not communicated to the CPF. This happened when the Christmas function of going out into Alexandra and giving children toys in decorated vehicles, planned by the police, was not communicated to CPF members, leaving them feeling marginalized.

Furthermore, the CPF has on occasions felt undermined by members of the police. For example, the head of the Business Against Crime Commission of the CPF drafted a letter of invitation to local business people to attend a meeting with the police and the CPF, with a view to review crime in the area. He presented this draft letter to a member of the police only to subsequently find that his letter was sent out and a meeting organised and held without his knowledge. Moreover, police personnel working on CPF projects have in the past been reassigned without consultation with the CPF.

Concerns with the CPF-police relationship do not only emanate from the CPF. The Alexandra Station Commissioner himself stated that, if given a choice, the majority of policemen and women in the station would say a CPF is not needed. These concerns have been linked to cases where the CPF has overstepped its bounds. The Station Commissioner described examples of CPF members impersonating police, writing threatening letters, and making threatening phone calls to crime suspects. In the past accusations of racism in

41 Interview with Alfred Rothokolo, member of the Alexandra CPF, 26 November 2002.
42 Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
employment of police personnel were directed to the Station Commissioner, which he felt was unjustified as the Station Commissioner has no responsibility for placing personnel. 45

However, relations between the police and the CPF are not all problematic. There have been several accounts from both parties that indicate there are healthy elements to the relationship as well. According to Captain Nefolowhane the CPF, including the Patrol Group, has had many successes and is useful in passing on information to the police as well as improving relationships between the police and the community. 46 Senior police personnel are also reportedly very supportive of the formation and work done by the Patrol Group. 47

The head of the CPF crime combating portfolio states that the CPF has a very good relationship with the police, going so far as to say that they function like a single unit. 48 The Chief Commander of the Patrol Group also stated that the police, and especially the Station Commissioner have been supportive of the Patrol Group. Other members of the Patrol Group explained that they are happy with their relationship with the police, as it is an amicable one. 49

3.3.2 The CPF and township residents

The relationship between the CPF and the community is crucial to an understanding of whether the CPF is improving the delivery of safety and security services. In order to evaluate the community-CPF relationship it is useful to look at issues such as access and participation by residents in the CPF, and perceptions of the citizens regarding the effectiveness of the CPF.

3.3.3 Access to the CPF and participation by township residents

Since their formation both the Patrol Group and the CPF have been working according to the principles of sector policing. Sector policing involves sub-dividing a policing precinct into small geographical areas. Each sector is managed by a fulltime police officer that works with the local community. 50 As we explained, the previous community policing system allowed for each sector in Alexandra (six in total) to have its own CPF, however, since 2002 the new system has allowed for only one CPF in Alexandra, comprising representatives of all the

45 Interview with Station Commissioner, Director Mothiba, Alexandra police station; 25 November 2002.
46 Interview with Captain Nefolowhane.
47 Interview with Director Mothiba.
48 Interview with Alfred Rothokolo.
49 Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.
50 Harris B. ‘Bulldog has teeth to bite Alex thugs.’ City Press 17 September 2000.
sectors. The Patrol Group has always worked within the boundaries of sector four (and prior to joining the CPF were know as the ‘Sector Four Patrol Group’). In terms of access therefore, the CPF has a clear system of policing and clear points of access for township residents. Whether the information regarding sector policing is passed on to residents is, however, a different matter.

From the point of view of the national crime prevention division, there is a concern that CPFs actually hinder community involvement in policing, as there have been instances where CPFs force other community interest groups to work through them, rather than allowing them to interact directly with the police.\textsuperscript{51} This, however, does not appear to be the case in Alexandra. The current members of the CPF have diverse backgrounds and are fairly representative of the many groups in the township. For instance on the CPF there is a member of a women’s group and a member of a youth group, a radio worker, a teacher and a social worker, as well as unemployed members.

Although this diversity points to an open and accessible CPF there are still problems related to political party gate keeping. A member of the CPF explained that at the last meeting held to elect CPF members there was an attempt to politicise the event. Some attendees arrived wearing political party t-shirts advertising political slogans and became unruly.\textsuperscript{52} The Station Commissioner also told of one incident where CPF members joined a joint Business Against Crime and police meeting sporting t-shirts with party propaganda. This unnerved members of the Business Against Crime group.\textsuperscript{53} However, incidents of using the CPF as a political power base are strongly discouraged, and there is a sense that this dynamic will no longer be tolerated by either the police or the CPF itself.

In terms of participation there are concerns that the CPF has had very low support from the wider Alexandra community. Some police personnel feel that the CPF has not been a successful link between the police and the community. This is due to the fact that the CPF has not laid the groundwork for community cooperation with the police, even though they are positioned to do so. The Commissioner stated that it has fallen to the police to form relationships with Alexandra communities that still feel alienated from safety and security service providers. He further explained that there have been cases where the CPF has been at loggerheads with certain interest groups, such as an Alexandra Eastbank non-governmental organisation.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{51} Interview with Director van der Westhuizen, Crime Prevention Division, Partnership Policing, Pretoria; 10 December 2002.
\textsuperscript{52} Interview with Alfred Rothokolo.
\textsuperscript{53} Interview with Director Mothiba.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
Further concern that the CPF has not penetrated the community is due to low turnout by residents at CPF meetings.\textsuperscript{55} Members of the CPF did point out that Alexandra residents do have a high level of participation in the CPF. Although the most recent election meeting drew over 500 people, CPF general meetings only draw in the vicinity of 60 people.\textsuperscript{56} According to Rothokolo there is often a problem with the CPF calling general meetings and with having information to impart to residents, however he feels attendance at meetings, when called, is good.\textsuperscript{57} Yet other members of the CPF stressed that there is a problem with reaching out to Alexandra residents because there are no specific mechanisms the CPF uses to do this. The philosophy ‘we are in the community and we all know each other’ is relied on, and this is not a failsafe method. For instance, there is concern the CPF is not seen as a collective forum but rather as a group of individuals, resulting in Alexandra residents approaching only individual CPF members, rather than the forum as a whole.

Although Police Captain Nefolowhane believes the CPF is improving relations between the community and the police, he has similar concerns to those above, explaining that it is often difficult to mobilise community participation, especially in situations such as trying to mobilise local businesses into discussion about crime. A solution to this example may be the recent election of a member of the local business community onto the CPF. However, he still believes Alexandra residents need to be more aware of the CPF and to have a better understanding of its role.\textsuperscript{58}

The Patrol Group, independent of the CPF, appears to fare better when it comes to issues of access and participation. When the Patrol Group was formed in 1999 there were 52 community volunteers. Since then the number of volunteers has fluctuated, reaching heights of 150 people but not dropping to below the starting number.\textsuperscript{59} Members of the CPF also feel the Patrol Group is accessible to citizens as it is visible in the streets and works during after office hours. Nefolowhane certainly believes the Patrol Group is well known by the community in the sector they patrol.\textsuperscript{60}

3.3.4  

\textit{Perceptions of township residents regarding the effectiveness of the CPF}

It is difficult to state with certainty the perceptions of residents in Alexandra regarding the CPF, not least of all because Alexandra is a diverse community with no homogenous opinion and because of the constraints inherent in a short-term case study. The study was able to

\textsuperscript{55}  Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56}  Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.
\textsuperscript{57}  Interview with Alfred Rothokolo.
\textsuperscript{58}  Interview with Captain Nefolowhane.
\textsuperscript{59}  Interview with Johnson Ndlovu, 26 November 2002; Harris.
\textsuperscript{60}  Interview with Captain Nefolowhane.
conduct 43 interviews with Alexandra residents, which form the basis for measuring perceptions of the citizens regarding the effectiveness of the CPF.\textsuperscript{61} It is useful to assess citizen’s views of the CPF and the Patrol Group separately, as for several years they functioned as independent units and therefore have different profiles in the community.

36% of respondents interviewed had heard of the CPF, while 64% had not. This indicates that while there is some exposure of the CPF in Alexandra, the CPF still has much work to do in infiltrating the community. Those that were aware of the CPF were not necessarily supportive. One problem was that although people knew the name ‘Alexandra Community Policing Forum’, they had no idea where the CPF was located, how to find its members, or what it actually did. Some interviewees understood that the role of the CPF was to help the police and residents in curbing crime, but still felt that they were inaccessible.

There were mixed reactions as to whether the CPF is doing a good job and helping to improve the delivery of safety and security services. Approximately half the respondents who had heard of the CPF felt that the CPF was helping to create a safer environment. Comments such as “they restore orderliness” and “I have seen them help people at the police station” indicate that there are frequent instances of the CPF improving the delivery of policing services. On the other hand, concern was expressed that the CPF is unhelpful and didn’t take citizen’s problems seriously. Respondents felt the CPF either did not respond to calls for help or took too long to respond. A comment along the lines of “they are part of the criminals and do crime like them” is also worrying, as is “sometimes they scheme with the police”. This indicates that incidents may have occurred that have instilled a deep mistrust in some residents of the township. Allegations of biased CPF membership were also levied with comments such as “the police pay their cousins to work as CPF”.

Interviews about the Patrol Group were filled with the same contradictions. Roughly the same number of respondents was aware of the Patrol Group as were aware of the CPF. This, however, may hide a greater awareness of the Patrol group as interviewees were from the whole Alexandra area while the Patrol Group only works in sector four. Those that did know of the Patrol Group had either seen them patrolling, heard about them from friends or had been searched by them. The majority of respondents who knew of the Patrol Group felt that they were doing a good job (69%). People stated that they reduce crime at night, and after they have patrolled the crime in an area drops. Interviewees who had negative perceptions stated concerns such as the fact that the Patrol Group does not carry identification, has little respect for residents, and assault ordinary people. One damning comment stated that “they are just like the police, you must bribe them to get help or they help you for sex.” These comments indicate that there are instances where members of the Patrol Group have overstepped their boundaries and inflicted human rights abuses.

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\textsuperscript{61} Acknowledgement to Paul Thulare (CPS) for managing the household questionnaire process.
3.3.5 The police and township residents

The history of the relationship between security forces and township residents was discussed in an earlier section of this paper. Unfortunately, resident surveys indicate that many of the same problems still exist. There is still a large degree of mistrust and fear of the police in Alexandra. Comments already stated such as “scheming police” and “you must bribe the police or give them sexual favours” indicate mistrust and scepticism around police behaviour. However, when respondents were asked where they would go first if they had a crime-related problem, 83% said they would go to the police. One reason for this is an understanding that it is the constitutional duty of the police to help citizens, so that no matter how problematic their service the police are obliged to help. Certainly there were supportive comments related to police work, and examples of where the police had successfully helped crime victims. However, the police-community relationship will remain a problematic one for the foreseeable future, highlighting the importance of the role the CPF should play.

3.3 Effect of the CPF on the crime rate

It is difficult to quantify the impact the CPF has had on the crime rate in Alexandra, owing to the fact that official crime statistics gathered by the Alexandra police do not differentiate between police and CPF activity.\(^62\) It is, however, possible to assess CPF impact on crime in a qualitative manner.

Accounts from CPF members suggest that township residents find it easier to impart information concerning crime in their vicinity to CPF members rather than to the police. Two reasons for this are put forward. Firstly, the CPF, being members of the community, are quicker to access than the police; and secondly, township residents who do not wish to be divulged as sources of information, for example in having witnessed a rape, would rather impart their information to a CPF member than to the police, where a statement would have to be made and signed.\(^63\) Information which therefore would have remained private is now being made public through an alternative channel than the police. It is important to stress though that the CPF’s mandate is to encourage its informants to go to the police station and open cases. In many cases CPF members actually escort informants to the police station. This not only provides support for hesitant informants and witnesses, but also helps to build a culture of using the police as a service.

Should informants refuse to open cases at the police station the CPF would then approach, for example, the suspect named by the informant. The CPF has the power to

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63 Interview with Alfred Rothokolo.
question suspects and even arrest them if necessary, whereby they would be taken directly to the police station and a case would be opened. In 2002 the CPF made over 100 arrests.\(^{64}\)

The activities of the Patrol Group are vital in assessing the CPF’s impact on crime. The Patrol Group runs a foot patrol every Friday and Saturday night between 17h00 and 06h00. The aim of the foot patrol is to target crime ‘hot-spots’ in the township, and then increase visibility around them. This has been very successful in the case of crime spats in and around shebeens in Sector Four. According to the CPF, muggings around the shebeens in Sector Four have been greatly reduced owing to the visibility of the Patrol Group. Members of the Patrol Group, upon identifying themselves with official identity cards issued by the Alexandra police, have the power to search suspects for weapons, confiscate these weapons, and turn them in to the Alexandra police. Should the suspect refuse to be searched, the Patrol Group will hold him or her until the police arrive. The Patrol Group has been responsible for confiscating over 300 illegal firearms in a three-year period\(^{65}\) – this figure exceeds that of the Alexandra police for the same time period.\(^{66}\) It should be noted that confiscation of illegal firearms is on the Alexandra police’s priority list.\(^{67}\)

It has to be emphasised that, notwithstanding accounts from the CPF and the Patrol Group, accounts from some police quarters confirm the benefits of CPF activity regarding information dissemination and gun confiscation. Captain Nefelowhane of the Alexandra police described a situation where the police arrested a suspect accused of rape based on information from the CPF, who had been approached by the victim’s mother. He also confirmed that the Patrol Group has been responsible for the confiscation of approximately 150 illegal firearms in the period of one and half years.\(^{68}\)

Captain Nefelowhane also pointed out that the CPF is helpful in providing police with information about the community. For example, often police are unable to trace people who have opened cases to provide follow up information. This is owing to either the person having moved or the person having recorded his or her address incorrectly. CPF members are usually better able to trace such people than the police as their members reside in the community. For the same reason, identifying suspects is also made easier for the police by the CPF.

The CPF has also been known to communicate township residents’ grievances about services to the police. Alfred Rothokolo claims that township residents had complained to him that service in the Alexandra police station charge office was too slow, and that the police had in instances failed or neglected to open cases when they should have. It is

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\(^{64}\) Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.

\(^{65}\) Interview with Johnson Ndlovu.

\(^{66}\) Ibid.


\(^{68}\) Interview with Captain Nefelowhane.
difficult at this point to say whether these grievances were addressed, but the CPF was used as a vehicle to communicate them to the police.\textsuperscript{69}

### 3.4 Sustainability of the CPF

The sustainability of the Alexandra CPF depends very much on its funding and resources.

There is no specific budget for the Alexandra CPF; it is supposed to be funded from the Alexandra police station operational budget,\textsuperscript{70} but CPF members report that they are not receiving any funds whatsoever from the police.\textsuperscript{71} Furthermore, it is difficult for the CPF to generate finances from the community, as its members are mostly poor. It has, however, managed to generate donations from a private company in Sandton, and it is working on setting up partnerships with other CPFs in Johannesburg to raise funds. The Alexandra CPF has also submitted a financial proposal to the Area Board in the hopes of securing funds from the MEC for Safety and Security, but nothing came of it.\textsuperscript{72} Lack of funding has been a cause for great concern for CPF members who find themselves short on resources. CPF members have described how they have to resort to using their own vehicles and cell phones because these are not always provided by the Alexandra police station.\textsuperscript{73} This is a particular challenge for the CPF members who are unemployed and cannot resort to their own resources, as well as to members of the Patrol Group who often find themselves in situations that can be described as emergencies. The Alexandra police station has provided Patrol Group members with identity cards and bibs.

The fact that the Alexandra CPF has no formal headquarters is also a cause for concern. According to the CPF it originally had an office at the police station, but was removed from it due to a shortage of space. Some CPF members feel that this was just an excuse to oust the CPF from the police station in order to reduce its impact.\textsuperscript{74} The CPF has been assured of office space in the future, however, when the police station is expanded.\textsuperscript{75} In the interim it is entitled to use the telephones, fax machines, administrative staff and stationery of the police station.

Training for CPF members is also a point of contention. So far training for CPF members has been limited. Current CPF members have not had any training, but are in the process of

\textsuperscript{69} Interview with Alfred Rothokolo.
\textsuperscript{70} Interview with Director Van De Westhuizen.
\textsuperscript{71} Interview with Alfred Rothokolo.
\textsuperscript{72} Interview with Slovo Mahlange, Secretary, Alexandra CPF; 4 April 2003.
\textsuperscript{73} Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.
\textsuperscript{74} Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.
\textsuperscript{75} Interview with Director Mothiba.
soliciting seminars from organisations that run conflict resolution and management programmes. Those who were members of the Patrol Group before the new CPF was formed report that they attended a workshop organised by local business about respecting citizen rights, and a seminar held by the Human Rights Commission focusing on the South African Bill of Rights.

An extreme argument is made by Director Station Commissioner Mothiba, who argues that legislation should limit membership of the CPF to people who have a certain level of education (some of the members of the CPF do not even have a Standard 6 education), and can for example understand necessary legislation. Current legislation does not disqualify eg an ex-convict from membership of the CPF. Mothiba feels that this too is a problem and that the sort of people who should sit on the CPF are church leaders and schoolteachers, etc. While CPF members with high levels of education would no doubt benefit community policing in general, it has to be remembered that the CPF should represent its community as closely as possible, and many township residents have very little formal education. Should membership be limited on an educational basis, the CPF would not be very representative of Alexandra. This point notwithstanding, it would be beneficial for CPF members to have some form of practical training, for example in outreach initiatives as well as protecting human rights. Perhaps training of this sort will help define CPF objectives and methods, and clarify its role within the police. It would undeniably strengthen its sustainability.

3.5 Accountability of the CPF

Accountability is a vital element when considering the improvement of a service delivery in terms of social justice and democracy.

The original CPF had pervasive problems of accountability. According to Nefolowhane, the original CPF members were suspected of taking bribes in lieu of fines. There were also allegations of corruption and misadministration. These allegations led to the disbandment of the CPF. Station Commissioner Mothiba reiterated this, stating that he was forced to disband the CPF in 2001 due to allegations levied against it. Examples of CPF members impersonating police officers as well as threatening suspects have already been cited, and this coupled with allegations of corruption point to serious concerns of CPF members abusing their positions. However, since the disbandment of the previous CPF close attention has been paid to the activities of the CPF by the Alexandra police, to ensure that similar problems do not arise again. Also, the CPF members themselves have indicated a disapproval of the previous behaviour and a commitment to serving the interests of their communities.

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76 Interview with Slovo Mhlanga.
77 Interview with Alfred Rothokolo.
78 Interview with Director Mothiba.
79 Interview with Captain Nefolowhane.
It stands to reason therefore that the CPF needs to a degree to be accountable to the police. If it is operating in partnership with the police to deliver safety and security, it needs to respect police procedure and due process. This debate, however, has been submerged by the debate on the CPFs’ ‘watchdog’ role of the police. The 1993 Interim Constitution directed that among the functions of CPFs would be the “monitoring of the effectiveness and efficiency of the (police) service”. The emphasis on democratic control soon began to give way to an emphasis on partnership - that is the CPF partnering the police to solve crime as outlined in the 1995 Police Services Act. Pelser, Schnetler and Louw argue, however, that partnering and overseeing are responsibilities that are contradictory.

Notwithstanding its accountability to the police, the CPF has to be accountable to township residents. The Patrol Group is directly involved in policing township residents, and individuals within it have the opportunity to infringe on human rights and partake in vigilante activities. As the Chief Commander of the Patrol Group explained, when it was first set up there was fear in the community that it would function as a vigilante group, causing low levels of community trust. He believes now, however, that the Patrol Group has gained the trust of Sector Four residents. As already cited, the Patrol Group has quite extensive powers of arrest, search, and seizure. The power to arrest is every citizen’s right, but questions arise when the powers to search people and seize their possessions are accessed. In the case of the Patrol Group, these measures are to a degree controlled. Patrol Group members wishing to search a suspicious person have to ask permission first, and can only confiscate weapons. Also Patrol Group members are required to clearly identify themselves to the suspect and explain their actions. It is on this basis that conferring these powers on Patrol Group members cannot be labelled as vigilantism.

Vigilantism aside, the question has to be asked how far powers officially designated to the police can be conferred onto citizens. While the majority of the household questionnaire results indicated support for the work of the Patrol Group, there were a few responses that are cause for grave concern. These responses allege that Patrol Group members illicit bribes and sexual favours in return for service, and also that Patrol Group members attack suspects who refuse to be searched with shamboks. Clearly if members of the police service had behaved in this fashion there would be cause for human rights abuse allegations. In the case of the CPF, however, there are no official mechanisms in place to hold members accountable. The Chairman of the Area Board affecting the Alexandra CPF stated that while the Area Board has an obligation to make sure that CPF/Patrol Group members behave according to their constitution and internal code of conduct respectively, there have not been any mechanisms put in place to enforce their good conduct or to hold them accountable for misconduct.

The issue of accountability also extends to CPF activity. It has been suggested that CPFs

80 Pelser, Schnetler, Louw 22.
81 Interview with Johnson Ndlovu.
82 Household Questionnaires.
83 Interview with Leon Stein, Area Board Chairman; 3 April 2003.
in South Africa represent for the most part the interests of individuals rather than the community at large.\textsuperscript{84} In the case of the Alexandra CPF, apart from the episode of political campaigning, this cannot really apply if one reviews the membership breakdown. For example (as cited earlier), the CPF comprises unemployed individuals, factory workers, members of women and youth organisations etc. Clearly these individuals represent the interests of the township. Representation on the CPF is one thing, but the outreach, effect and impact of these individuals is quite another. As gleaned from the household questionnaires, 63\% of respondents indicated that they had not heard of the CPF. This is clearly reflected in the low turnout at monthly CPF meetings that are open to the public. Among the reasons put forward to explain this is the fact that the CPF has not penetrated the township effectively.\textsuperscript{85} Other reasons given include that it does not advertise its meetings adequately, and it does not have much to report at these meetings.\textsuperscript{86} The CPF cannot work in isolation from the needs and views of the township residents; for this reason it has to find a way to make itself, its actions and its objectives known to township residents, and supplement its activities with their input.

3.6 Equity

It is vital to understand whether or not the Alexandra CPF is impacting more on the poor or at least equally on all levels of society in order to assess if it is a viable way of extending safety and security services.

Previous literature has indicated that CPFs in wealthier suburbs function more effectively as a result of the resources at their disposal. But as Mistry points out, due to past strained relationships between the police and citizens, CPFs in poorer areas such as Alexandra take their role very seriously. He states, “Empowerment has been the key word for these CPFs”.\textsuperscript{87} This is certainly the case to some degree in Alexandra. The CPF and the Patrol Group are very motivated by a need to reduce crime in Alexandra and to support the needs of the interest groups in the township. The reasons underlying this are that many of the CPF members have themselves been direct victims of crime. Furthermore, various members of the CPF are also members of interest groups in the township and their link with the CPF gives them a voice and a platform from which to strengthen these interest groups.\textsuperscript{88}

Equity within Alexandra itself is a further important issue. The experience of the Patrol Group can go some way to indicating that poorer areas of the township are receiving better

\textsuperscript{84} Interview with Director Van Der Westhuizen.
\textsuperscript{85} Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.
\textsuperscript{86} Interview with Alfred Rothokolo.
\textsuperscript{87} Mistry.
\textsuperscript{88} Interview with members and affiliates of the Alexandra CPF.
safety and security services than they did in the past. The Patrol Group was formed in Sector Four precisely because it was the area with the highest rate of crime. A meeting to address crime called in 1999 by the Alexandra police station showed that the majority of concerned township residents came from Sector Four. These residents subsequently voluntarily formed the Patrol Group. The Patrol Group therefore gave township residents a way to actively become involved in ensuring safety and security in their vicinities, thus empowering them. The CPF was an extension of this empowerment whereby CPF members from among their peers had a direct mandate with the police.

A distinct benefit of co-production, which is visible in this case study, is the way that citizens who are the most affected by a shortage of service delivery are drawn into participating in delivering it. This improves the scope for equity. Concerns arise however, as in the case of the Alexandra CPF, when certain members were perceived as gate keepers, that is, protecting and promoting their own political interests. Should gate keeping become the norm within the Alexandra CPF it would severely impact upon the equity of delivering safety and security services.

4. CONCLUSION

Having measured the Alexandra CPF against five criteria it is now possible to return to the research question - is the delivery of safety and security services in Alexandra improved by the CPF?

In terms of the CPF’s impact on crime in sections of Alexandra it would seem that the CPF is improving the delivery of safety and security services. In terms of the impact the CPF has had on building relationships between township residents and the police, and its wider impact upon social justice and democracy though, it seems that the CPF is failing to fulfil its role.

The CPF and more specifically its Patrol Group have been instrumental in identifying crime ‘hot-spots’ and subsequently effecting reduction of crime in these areas. The number of illegal weapon confiscation by the Patrol Group has also been impressive. Access to information with regards to crime has also been made more available to the police via CPF structures.

These successes notwithstanding, the CPF also has its failings. The CPF is perfectly poised to facilitate proper communication between township residents and the police; it is, however, failing to do this owing to its inability to effect outreach to township residents, and because of its own weak relationship with the police. The fact that CPF members are elected at open, public elections, comprise members broadly representative of Alexandra and are mandated to share a forum with the police make it a viable way in terms of social justice and democracy to deliver its service. Unfortunately, it is not being utilised to its fullest capacity, indicated by the low levels of township residents being familiar with the CPF and
the low public turnout at CPF monthly meetings. Clearly, efforts and resources need to be directed into informing township residents about the CPF. A further way for the CPF to improve its outreach to township residents would be for it to form stronger links with other institutions and organisations in Alexandra. Several interviewees indicated that they would approach their ward councillor, social worker or court officials instead of the police or CPF if they had a crime-related problem. This indicates that these actors are important players in the delivery of safety and security services, and ones that the CPF should work with. If for instance the CPF ask ward councillors to inform them of what their constituents feel are important crime problems, and in turn for the ward councillors to inform their constituents about the CPF, then the process of information sharing would be improved. Ultimately residents may circumvent their councillor and approach the CPF directly. This principle would apply equally to social workers and court officials. Both these actors are also perfect conduits of information into the community, which the CPF could make better use of.

The actual role of the CPF needs to be clarified. This would go a long way to it having a wider impact in Alexandra, and would also seal its relationship with the police. The CPF constitution makes general references to the duties of the CPF, and this has been complicated by the changes in emphasis for CPF activity by various legislations. The feeling from police quarters is that the CPF should be presenting specific crime prevention strategies to the police after consulting with township residents. Certain members of the CPF disagree with this, however, and feel that they should be working in conjunction with the police in the formulation phase of crime prevention strategies.

CPF accountability is also an area that severely impairs the CPF’s ability to deliver a service successfully. There are no formal mechanisms in place that regulate CPF and Patrol Group activity. This is particularly worrying in the light of various accusations levelled against certain members of the CPF and the Patrol Group. While the Alexandra police are, to an extent, responsible for CPF/Patrol Group misconduct, an ideal form of regulation would be through the Area or Provincial Boards.

A wider underlying question that also needs to be addressed in conclusion is whether or not co-production is an effective alternative form of service delivery. In the case of the Alexandra CPF it would seem that it is. Township residents who are poor and unemployed have been given the opportunity to empower themselves against crime and deliver a service to their neighbourhoods, and as a result some areas in the township have become safer. This decentralisation of safety and security services has given Alexandra residents a forum in which to voice concerns in a way that they can easily access, utilise and have a direct bearing on.

Within the framework of decentralisation and its effect on service delivery, this case study highlights many points that lend themselves to further investigation. CPFs have been set up at most police stations in South Africa, police stations are collected into areas and the various areas fall under provincial SAPS structures above which is the National SAPS. This means that in effect, SAPS has decentralised the police service. How then does this decentralisation sit with local government? In South Africa some of the metropolitan councils
have set up Metro Police from the former traffic departments. The Metro Police, apart from regulating traffic, also have a role, albeit weakly developed, in crime prevention. Could it be argued that CPFs are ‘single purpose committees’ which, instead of enhancing democracy will derail it, and that decentralisation of safety and security services belong with the Metro Police? Alongside this is the burning issue of whether or not ordinary citizens should be given powers legislatively vested with the police. Also within the framework of co-production, how far can it be argued that allowing citizens to take on the burden of delivering services to themselves will cause local authorities/police to shirk their responsibilities?