TITLE: THE COMMUNITY POLICE FORUM AS AN APPROACH TO CRIME PREVENTION IN THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT OF STANZA BOPAPE, MAMELODI TOWNSHIP

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at any other University.

M.J. VUJOVIC
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the Community of Stanza Bopape.
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* Thanks to all those in Mamelodi and Stanza Bopape who made this study possible.
* To Brenda for her support and enthusiasm and last, but not least to Nick and my daughter Jessica for their endless patience.
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ABSTRACT

Crime hits the poor hardest since they are least able to cope with its consequences.

In South Africa violent crime especially is increasing and in communities like Mamelodi, citizens are responding by taking the law into their own hands. Vigilantism proliferates necessitating police action and further straining a historically difficult community-police relationship which Community Police Forums (CPF) aim to transform.

This study looks at how residents of Stanza Bopape, an informal settlement in Mamelodi, organise themselves against crime. It considers the implications of this organisation for the CPF, a cornerstone of the Community Policing Model now enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, and examines ways in which the CPF can retain support and enhance its credibility within the community.

The opportunity is provided for many different voices in the community to be heard so that diverse groups can participate in the ongoing quest for an effective strategy against crime.
OPSOMMING

Die armes onder ons word die hardste deur misdaad getref want hulle ly die swaarste onder die gevolge daarvan.

In Suid-Afrika neem veral gewelddadige misdaad toe onder gemeenskappe soos Mamelodi. Die reaksie van gewone inwoners is om die gereg in hulle eie hande te neem. Vigilantisme vier hoogty en polisie-optrede word hierdeur genoodsaak. Die gevolg is groter druk op die reeds gespanne verhouding tussen die gemeenskap en die polisie. Gemeenskapspolisiëringforums (GPF) is tot stand gebring met die doel om 'n ommekeer in hierdie situasie teweeg te bring.

In hierdie studie kyk ons hoe die inwoners van Stanza Bopape, 'n informele nedersetting in Mamelodi, hulself teen misdaad organiseer. Die implikasies wat hierdie organisasie vir die CPF inhou, word oorweeg. As hoeksteen van die Gemeenskapspolisiëringmodel, is die CPF nou in die Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika vagsgelê. Daar word ook gekyk hoe die CPF groter steun onder die gemeenskap kan werf en terselfdertyd sy geloofwaardigheid kan uitbou.

Verskillende belanghebbendes in die gemeenskap kry die geleentheid om hul menings te lug sodat uiteenlopende groepe saam kan strewe na 'n doeltreffende strategie teen geweld.
1.1 **Statement of the Problem**

In adopting a joint problem-solving approach to crime, community policing aims to empower communities such as Stanza Bopape by acknowledging the fact that they have an important role to play in community safety. The South African Police Service (SAPS) and the public should be seen as partners in a process where open communication, consultation and accountability are as important as mutual trust and respect.

However, crime touches the lives of most South Africans directly or indirectly every day. Crimes of violence which include "physical attacks on a person, threats of physical attack or violence of any kind have increased dramatically since 1990" (Stavrou, 1993, p.57).

In the African townships particularly personal insecurity which gives rise to fear and frustration has led to a diversity of community responses to crime. Since some of these are considered to be outside of the law there exists the potential for conflict between a community and its police service.

Community Police Forums (CPF) represent the cornerstone of community policing and have an important role to play in building up a relationship between the community and the police. Established to facilitate police-community consultation these forums are indicative of the SAPS shift towards planning together with the community rather than planning for the community (Department of Safety and Security, 1997).

But this orientation is new to the majority of communities in South Africa. There is no tradition of collaboration with the police in the townships for example.
Yet, if any headway is to be made in the fight against crime then a new relationship must be forged between the public and the police.

This means breaking down the barriers which stand between the police and South Africa's communities. It is no easy task. The SAPS carries with it the stigma of its role in the apartheid years and "in many communities mistrust, antagonism and even open hostility towards the police needs to be overcome" (Department of Safety and Security, 1997, p.6).

1.2 Background

The study focuses on Stanza Bopape an informal settlement in Mamelodi township which lies to the east of Pretoria in Gauteng Province. It is named after a young activist, Johannes Maisha Stanza Bopape who was born in the area in April 1961 and who vanished in June 1988 following his arrest by the security forces under the previous apartheid regime.

The settlement has a particularly high incidence of crime and is poorly represented on the CPF which serves Mamelodi. In Stanza Bopape community organisation against criminal activity includes recourse to the people's courts which operate in the area and vigilante action against suspected criminals.

The following excerpt from an article in The Star ("Women try to", 1988) is an illustration of mob justice. In this incident angry residents attempted to castrate a man accused of raping his four nieces: "Residents arrested the man, assaulted him with a sjambok and then attempted to publicly castrate him with a pair of scissors. He was rescued...by two police inspectors who happened to be passing by" (p.2).
As criminals gain a stranglehold within the townships vigilante action is becoming a more common sign of community outrage. Certainly the phenomenon of vigilantism is not unique to Stanza Bopape as the following examples indicate:

1. In April 1998 pupils from the Thomas Mofolo High School in Soweto took the law into their own hands when they ‘arrested’ an alleged thief, stripped him of his clothing, painted him with white gloss paint and delivered him to the Naledi Police Station (“Pupils paint Max”, 1998).

2. Community members from the informal settlement of Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg arrested and burned four murder suspects (Mafata. 1998b).

3. “Furious and shattered Thembisa residents” (Vogel, 1998, p.6) arrested and threatened to kill 9 alleged gang-rapists,

4. Suspected rapists were hounded out of Alexander township by angry residents who threatened to “mete out their own justice” (Cox, 1998, p.13).

5. Organisations such as Mapogo a Mathamaga (the colour of a leopard) act against suspects and dispense justice “to cure them of their bad ways”. The group which expanded its version of community justice from branches in the Northern Province and Mpumalanga to “the Western Cape and parts of Gauteng which include Alberton, Kempton Park, Bapsfontein, Vereeniging and Springs” (Mafata, 1998, p.5). now claims to have 30 000 members.

It is evident that vigilantism represents an extreme community reaction with a disregard for human rights as well as for the role of the police. Yet, with statistics indicating that crime is rampant many communities would say that they feel fully justified in taking the law into their own hands.
Against this background CPFs seek to uphold a number of principles. The Department of Safety and Security (1997) names some of these as being:

Respect for and protection of human rights; the resolution of conflict between and within community groupings in a manner which enhances peace and stability; and the creation of understanding and trust between the police, the community and other relevant role players.

(p.3)

1.3 **A Role for Community Psychology**

1.3.1 **The Beginnings**

In the latter half of the 19th century the United States of America experienced boom conditions. Rapid industrialisation brought with it an influx of foreigners and in that period alone some 25 million people entered the country. Most poured into the cities where they were to experience the greatest difficulty in adjusting to the new surroundings.

The effects of alienation and poverty experienced by so many became increasingly evident as mental hospitals battled to cope with an overwhelming number of patients. But treatment seemed to have little effect and increasingly physicians began distancing themselves from the problem. Social Darwinism proved a useful theory under these conditions since it allowed the mental health profession to ascribe the inability to flourish to an innate weakness. Such an intractable flaw would justify incarceration and even the sterilisation of such individuals who would thereby be prevented from passing on defective genes.

This tendency to "blame the victim" (Ryan in Levine & Perkins, 1987, p.331) prevailed, becoming worse if anything as a result of anti-Jewish and anti-black sentiment after World War 1. However, in spite of the fact that terrible social conditions were a reality for thousands, the impact of environmental factors received little attention.
The situation did not change until the 1960s when President Kennedy provided the impetus for a social reform movement with his declaration of war on poverty. By taking the view that the amelioration of social conditions was a fundamental step towards psychological well-being he underscored the need for programmes which would “eliminate or correct the harsh environmental conditions... associated with mental retardation and mental illness” (p.40).

This stance was to provide new directions in the field of psychology where for some time there had been growing concern about psychotherapy as the dominant “modality of treatment” (Heller et al, 1984, p.14). With the plight of poor and destitute communities coming under close scrutiny, psychotherapy was now closely examined in terms of its relevance for people without food, education, work or proper housing.

It was in this climate that “community psychology” was officially born at a conference held in Swampscott, Massachusetts in May 1965. Attended by mental health practitioners whom Heller et al (1984) describe as “converts to the need for a conceptual reorientation in clinical psychology” (p.13), the conference broke new ground in re-evaluating the “ahistorical, acontextual and acultural assumptions of psychology “ (Trickett, 1996, p.210).

By the time the conference had come to an end “community psychology” had been named as a recognised field in psychology. Central themes were articulated and the discipline assumed what Kelly (1990) calls a “professional identity” (p.784), positioning itself as an approach set to expand the focus of psychology from individuals and small groups of people to populations and communities.
1.3.2 An Ecological Orientation

Right from the start an ecological orientation held sway. Derived from the Greek “oikos” meaning “house”, the term “ecology” originates from environmental biology where it refers to the study of “houses or environments within which organisms live” (Levine & Perkins, 1987, p.77). It is a field greatly influenced by the ideas of Charles Darwin who noted that species survival relates directly to the fit between an organism and its environment.

Observations such as these were carried into the social environment by sociologists like Emile Durkheim whose study on suicide illustrated that the phenomenon was not just a private act but the result of social forces outside of the individual (Haralambos, 1985).

As a means of understanding human behaviour the ecology theory gained ground in the 20th century when the “Chicago School” of sociology utilised concepts from biological ecology in a study of Chicago city. In the field of psychology the theory began to attract attention with the pioneering work of the social psychologist Kurt Lewin.

Now described as a “fundamental metaphor” (Levine & Perkins, 1987, p.77) in the field of community psychology, ecology embraces a particular set of values including the belief that the environment impacts on human behaviour and “people can therefore explain and perhaps control their behaviour through greater understanding of specific environmental influences” (p.77).

1.3.3 The Ecological Model

An early advocate for the ecological analogy in the field of community psychology was James G. Kelly whose four ecological principles of practice provide a framework for the ecological model of community psychology.
Based on the assumption that the community is an ecosystem that can be understood by applying the concepts governing biological ecosystems, the principles provide direction for problem assessment and intervention in a community setting.

For example, Kelly's principle of interdependence suggests that everything is connected so that when one component within an ecosystem is changed all the other components change. This implies that it is necessary to work at many different levels in a community in order to address the broader effects of an intervention. The principle is illustrated by well-intentioned efforts to foster the rehabilitation of patients in state mental hospitals in America by releasing them into society. A major problem, however, proved to be community resistance to neighbourhood-based treatment facilities. Because problem-solving had not extended beyond the individual this reaction was not anticipated.

A second principle, that of cycling resources, is derived from the transfer of energy in a biological system, such as when solar energy sustains a plant which then becomes the food source for an animal. In a community setting the transfer of resources may also be compared to a transfer of energy. In order to intervene and re-channel such "energy", however, it is necessary to understand thoroughly how community resources are distributed and used in the first place. For example, in an underprivileged community with few after-school programmes for youngsters, high unemployment may suggest that out of work family members could assist with extra-curricular school activities.

Adaptation is a principle suggesting that change is required to meet environmental demands. In a biological sense organisms adapt in order to cope with changing conditions. If they were unable to do so survival would be unlikely. From a community perspective it is clearly advantageous to build community resources in order to help those adapting to new roles or unfamiliar environments. An example in this case would be the formation of community support groups.
Finally, the principle of succession draws attention to the ongoing process of community change. As Levine & Perkins (1987) put it, environments are not stable; they alter constantly and push changes in community structures. These changes may be beneficial to one sector of a community but may not favour another. Levine & Perkins (1987) observe that under these circumstances "a favoured population will squeeze out the others, or at least dominate a given area, or some new level of homeostasis will develop among populations sharing the same area" (p.84).

An appreciation of such changes within a community constitutes an important step towards understanding that community and planning appropriate interventions. Levine & Perkins cite as an example Manhattan's "psychiatric ghettos" (p.84) which were upgraded to attract middle class buyers. "Former patients and welfare clients" (p.80) were then left homeless.

An overview of the ecological model suggests the centrality of natural change in shaping community processes. From this perspective the community psychologist is required to expect change and to deal with it by utilising, channeling and developing community resources. The spirit of this approach is captured by Trickett, Kelly & Vincent (in Heller et al, 1984) as follows:

To think ecologically is to (1) consider how persons, settings and events can become resources for positive development of communities; (2) to consider how these resources can be managed and conserved; (3) to approach research so that the effort expended will be helpful to the preservation and enhancement of community resources (p.140).

Accordingly, guidelines for programme development within a community include: the need to tailor interventions to meet the specific requirements of a particular setting; an emphasis on community participation starting with initial assessment of a situation; and accountability to community members.
In assessing the ecological model of community psychology Levine & Perkins (1987) are of the opinion that much of the model's success will depend on the ability of proponents to demonstrate the “ultimate usefulness of the ecological analogy for theory, research or intervention” (p 95).

1.3.4. The Mental Health Model

In the 1960s John Kennedy's statement that "an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure" (Kennedy in Heller, 1984, p.175) shifted interest away from treatment and towards prevention in the field of psychology. Many subscribed to the view that it is preferable to identify and eradicate the causes of mental illness rather than adhering to a treatment model only.

The concept of prevention came from public health where practitioners concentrate on finding ways in which to promote health so as to avoid the onset of disease. In this regard Heller et al (1984) note that person, pathological agent and environment are identified as three interacting components where disease is concerned. Prevention can be considered at any of these levels.

In the field of mental health this orientation required a shift in emphasis on two fronts. Clinicians needed to take the view that it is preferable to prevent psychological problems rather than treat them once established and, the emphasis had to shift from a traditional focus on individual clients to the greater community.

An important development supporting this conceptual reorientation was the formulation in the mid-sixties of a definition for preventative psychiatry by Gerald Caplan. Distinguishing between three types of intervention, Caplan (in Heller et al, 1984) proposed that:

Preventative psychiatry refers to the body of professional knowledge, both theoretical and practical, which may be utilised to plan and carry out
programs for reducing (1) the incidence of mental disorders of all types in a community (primary prevention), (2) the duration of a significant number of those disorders which do occur (secondary prevention), and (3) the impairment which may result from disorders (tertiary prevention) (p.179).

Further contributions were made in terms of "recognising the role of environmental and institutional forces in the development and maintenance of disordered behaviour" (Heller et al, 1984, p.177) and in the provision of guidelines for preventative work in a community setting.

The mental health model of community psychology evolved as a model characterised by prevention, conceptions of positive mental health and an increased emphasis on the environment. Predominant types of intervention generally include mental health consultation and crisis intervention, the latter focusing on building coping skills and the former on solving problems in interaction with caregivers.

Levine & Perkins (1987) observe that whilst primary prevention in particular has attracted a strong following amongst proponents of the model a number of difficulties obstruct Caplan's (in Heller, 1984) goal of "reducing the incidence of mental disorders of all types in a community" (p.179).

A treatment-orientation and the "expert-patient" approach of the medical model persists. Further, the reluctance of proponents to address social and political issues as factors in the aetiology of psychological maladjustment constitutes a problem.

As Butchart & Seedat (1990) note, "the mental health model locates the origins of psychosocial distress and the means of their eradication primarily within 'communities' and tends to divorce such factors from the wider context of social and economic problems" (p.1097). Thus, damaging environmental conditions are seen as being area-related only.
This orientation is evident from the definition of 'community' usually being given within a set of geographical boundaries rather than cultural or political ones. Professionals then assume that their values reflect those of the community when they are in fact "those of the dominant ideology" (Butchart & Seedat, 1990, p.1097).

Proponents of the mental health model have also found it difficult to move away from conventional theories about the causes of psychopathology. Thus, as Butchart & Seedat (1990) suggest, "the model continues to depend on traditional nosologies in diagnosis and intervention planning" (p.1097). This in turn leads practitioners to view mental health as the absence of mental illness. "...if there are no persons who are mentally ill according to mainstream psychiatric classification systems (such as DSM 111-R), then the 'community' is healthy" (Butchart & Seedat, 1990, p.1097).

1.3.5. Social Action Model

Levine & Perkins (1987) speak of the need for action to achieve change. Drawing on ecological principles they point out that, in part, change means creating access to previously inaccessible resources and this is unlikely to happen quickly or to last for very long if there is no change in the established system.

The birth of community psychology in America happened at a time of social upheaval. Race riots and glaring inequalities in social institutions ultimately led to a closer examination of the "detrimental psychological effects of segregation" (Levine & Perkins, 1987, p.311) on black people in the United States. As historical, political and cultural factors were explored in the context of desegregation the role that they played in the oppression of generations of African Americans became more apparent.
By way of example, the American Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal” yet at one time the country’s original constitution contained a section in which slaves were described “as three-fifths of a person for the purpose of representation” (Levine & Perkins, 1987, p.312). Slavery aside, this kind of blatant contradiction in values endured for decades. As Levine & Perkins (1987) point out, however, it was neatly side-stepped by seeing the “black person as less than fully human in intellectual, moral, and social characteristics” (p.312).

Meaningful change, when it finally came, could be ascribed in no small way to the actions of those who confronted, condemned and attacked such injustice. This prompted many in the field of community psychology to advocate that proponents should adopt the role of social activists. Commenting on this orientation, Bennett (in Trickett, 1996) refers to the position taken at the Swampscott conference in 1965:

the founders focus was not limited to community mental health but encompassed a broader conception of social interventions. Community psychologists would serve as proponents of the concept of community mental health work, advocates for the poor and minorities, and active participants in and contributors to social and political life (p.210).

The social action model in community psychology thus evolved as an approach in which community is hierarchically described. Those in authority hold their position at the expense of other groups which suffer as a result of the existing power structure. Oppressed groups are subject to injustice and exploitation which are the root of behavioural problems encountered within a community.

The community psychologist approaches this situation with the view that a central component of change relates to heightening community awareness around the effects of problems and the benefits of change.
The approach steers communities away from self-blame, clarifies the source of their issues and rallies people to put pressure on identified targets. As Levine & Perkins (1987) put it, “the basic strategy of change is to get people involved in identifying and solving their own problems” (p.336).

The social action model has come under criticism for several reasons. Problematic is the assumption that those in power hold the bulk of the resources and balance can only be restored once such resources are more equitably distributed. From this perspective there is the risk that the many resources which do exist within a disadvantaged community will remain underdeveloped.

In addition, the definition of “community” which is restricted to a certain constituency may be limiting. This becomes clear when seen in the light of Rappaport’s assertion (in Levine & Perkins, 1987) that “community well-being requires the co-existence of multiple intervention approaches” (p.339) often representing a diversity of definitions of community.

Last but not least, it is possible that the conflict often accompanying group action creates its own set of problems. For instance, high in-group cohesiveness resulting from conflict with an out-group is likely to increase the probability of conflict with other groups. Levine & Perkins (1987) cite as an added risk the possibility that social-action organisations might “evolve into elitist and undemocratic institutions” (p.339) themselves.

1.3.6 Community Psychology within the South African Context

It has been often and strongly argued as well as documented that psychology as a field can and should make a broader contribution in addressing the living situation of all people in South Africa than it currently does.

Although community psychology is still a young field in South Africa, the importance of its development within the South African context specifically is
widely recognised. The social and personal situations people find themselves in locally, both as inheritance from the country's past and in the waves of transformation to a new order, coupled with the need to cross the great divide from the selective (and costly) consulting room to the masses, make this a particularly relevant approach to mental health needs in South Africa (Oosthuizen, 1999).

Community psychology in South Africa entails a paradigm shift that moves from pathology to a resource focus and away from a more modernist expert helper-helpless patient organisation to one of more participation and co-creation between those involved (Oosthuizen, 1999).

The aim of community psychology is therefore to mobilise communities innate health resources to help work against the paralysis brought about by a sense of helplessness. According to Oosthuizen (1999), resting on an appreciation of the intricate interconnectedness of any ecology and the patterned functioning of systems, a basic premise is that community is not primarily to be understood as geographical, but rather as a process in the realm of people's sense of connectedness with, and disconnection from, each other.

The study explores this process in the context of crime and its impact on a disadvantaged community in South Africa. Since such communities are highly vulnerable to crime and least able to cope with its consequences (Department of Safety and Security, 1998) the themes of empowerment and resource development in the field of community psychology may be considered relevant to the formulation of local crime prevention strategies. Accordingly, this study utilises the ecological and social action models of community psychology in its investigation of the problem.

As the social action model suggests, the study is mindful of the need to rally community members and to empower disadvantaged communities by "mobilising residents to take control of preventative programmes" (Butchart & Seedat, 1990,
In line with a suggestion by Stringer (1996), opportunities are provided for the silent, marginalised and isolated members of society to be heard and to take action.

The study also reflects the tenets of the ecological model in its emphasis on resource distribution and development. In this regard people's wellness, strengths and competencies are acknowledged, as is the wealth of knowledge and experience which they have of their situation. Community participation is therefore fundamental and serves to ensure that the study is relevant to the security problems of the community of interest.

As the ecological analogy directs, the study also attaches importance to the contextualisation of human behaviour. Since "human activity does not develop in a social vacuum but...is situated within a sociohistorical and cultural context of meanings and relationships" (Rosnow & Georgoudi in Trickett, 1996, p.213), emphasis is placed on the history of policing in South Africa as well as on the "cultural, interactional practices and emotional lives" (Stringer, 1996, p.15) of those effected by crime.

It is the researcher's contention that this has an important bearing on the aim of the study, which is to explore the ways that a disadvantaged community organises itself against crime and to consider the implications of such organisation for community policing, the model of policing now enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

1.4 Explanation of Concepts

*Community Policing* can be defined in part as "a philosophy that guides police management styles and operational strategies and emphasises the establishment of police-community partnerships and a problem solving approach responsive to the needs of the community" (Department of Safety and Security, 1997, p.1). The term encompasses neighbourhood watch and block watch initiatives, street
committees and so forth. Some vigilante groups refer to themselves as community policing structures.

A Community Police Forum is the cornerstone of the community policing concept and is described as “a co-operative effort to facilitate a process of problem-solving” (Department of Safety and Security, 1997, p.2). It is broadly representative of the community and allows for “structured consultation between the police and the different communities about local problems, policies, priorities and strategies” (p.50).

Wherever there is a police station there should be a CPF in place. This should make provision for regular meetings in order for CPF members to exchange ideas as well as to provide input on priority issues, such as community outrage at taxi violence in Mamelodi.

The Criminal Justice System is “a system made up of the Departments of Safety and Security, Justice and Correctional Services. These are collectively responsible for ensuring the safety of citizens and the processing of offenders” (Department of Safety and Security, 1998, p.32).

Alternative Systems of Justice and Self-Ordering referred to in the study mean “structures of dispute processing and of policing” (Brogden & Shearing, 1993, p.135) which existed in traditional African society, or evolved in response to an alienating legal system which either neglected the needs of African communities or considered them unimportant. Such alternative systems include people’s courts and vigilante groups.

1.5 Structuring of Further Chapters

This study explores the relationship between the South African Police Service and communities in South Africa. The interaction between the two is examined
from a historical perspective in Chapter 2 which looks at decades of policing starting from the time of British colonial rule.

The chapter also focuses on alternative systems of justice and self-ordering which have evolved within the African townships. These systems represent a particular way of understanding crime and punishment and are considered in the context of community policing, an approach which aims, amongst other things, to promote reconciliation between communities and the SAPS in post-apartheid South Africa.

The challenge which alternative systems of ordering present to the community policing initiative is explored in accordance with the principles of community psychology discussed in Chapter 1.

The study employs a methodology which places strong emphasis on dialogue and collaboration with participants. This form of research which is described as “co-operative inquiry” (Reason & Heron, 1996, p.21) is outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 gives the research results focusing on the input of small groups and documenting the final research stage when participating groups were brought together to co-author the story of policing in the informal settlement of Stanza Bopape. The study is summarised in Chapter 5 which also gives guidelines for future research.
2.1 Introduction

The character of the South African police has been shaped over many decades. In order to understand how various influences have contributed to the response of the police towards communities in South Africa, and the response of communities towards the police and policing, it is necessary to look at the historical roots of policing in this country. It is inevitable that much of what has happened in the past will impact on the community-orientated model of policing which has now been introduced for a new, democratic South Africa.

2.2 A Historical Overview

2.2.1 British Occupation of the Cape - A Merging of Roles

The paramilitary style of policing in South Africa has endured for decades and is not something the new SAPS can easily put behind it. Although this characteristic of the force is usually associated with apartheid-era policing, Brogden's (1989) discussion on the origins of the South African Police makes it clear that from the eighteenth century onwards policing in South African was akin to "an internal army of occupation acting (mainly) on behalf of white incomers...against the indigenous population and against non-white migrant labour" (p.13). Under British colonial rule from 1795, Brogden (1989) contends that a military style of policing was more dominant in South Africa than in any other imperial territory.

Commenting on the character of the police during this period, Van der Spuy (1989) notes that the roles of policeman and soldier were merged to such an extent that it was difficult to distinguish between the two. The Frontier Armed and
Mounted Police, for example, was formed in 1855 in an attempt to halt the theft of cattle.

The unit, however, became almost exclusively concerned with border disputes and frontier wars (Dippenaar, 1988). It was re-structured in 1878 and named the Cape Mounted Riflemen (CMR) and the military orientation of the force was evident in the titles afforded its members. For instance, inspectors became captains described as belonging in the “Permanent Colonial Forces both for Policing and Defence” (Sachs, 1970. p.56). Although the task of the CMR was ostensibly to keep the peace along border areas it also ensured that government policy with regard to indigenous populations was enforced.

The Cape Police, which was created to meet the need for a more interior-orientated police force, was not very different. Sachs (1970) says that the responsibilities of both the CMR and the Cape Police were “clearly related to conquests, integration and subordination within the Colonial legal order of Africans, Griquas and San in the East and North of the colony “ (p.57).

In this regard Van der Spuy (1989) observes that police involvement in the work of colonisation in the nineteenth century must serve as reminder of how the police have “facilitated the process of conquest and subjugation of the indigenous peoples of this land” (p.265). Further, he draws attention to the fact that it was this process which served to entrench the racial and class interests of white society in South Africa for decades to come.

Legislation which the police were required to enforce included pass laws. First introduced by the British as a means of controlling Xhosa admission to the Cape, these were later applied to the Cape's ‘semi-nomads’ who then found themselves under direct police control. Required to find a “fixed place of habitation” (Brogden, 1989, p.15) and carry an official contract of service, if punishment for vagrancy was to be avoided, they were effectively restricted from freedom of movement and open to police harassment.
With the expansion of the Eastern Cape borders and the establishment of border locations created to accommodate displaced Africans or "native foreigners" (Sachs, 1970, p.69) as they were called, police action centred increasingly on pass offenders. In fact Sachs describes one Queenstown police raid as having brought arrested Africans "in batches of 20 before the court" (p.69).

The pass system was to remain just as much a part of policing in South Africa as militarism. In the Transvaal, from 1886 onwards, the police enforced legislation designed predominantly to protect the interests of the mining industry on the Witwatersrand. As Van der Spuy (1989) points out, the force was instrumental in ensuring that the industry's needs for "a large pool of docile, black labour" (p.266) were met. This was achieved primarily by policing hut and poll taxes as well as the pass laws.

2.2.2 The Anglo Boer War and Beyond

The dual role of police and military was constantly reinforced. With the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War in 1899 both the South African Republic Police (ZARP) and Orange Free State Republican Police fought on the side of the two Boer Republics.

The new South African Constabulary which was formed when the war ended was described by Milner (in Brogden, 1989) as being a support army. Accordingly, one of its first tasks was to evict Africans from rural farms which the Boers had been forced to leave.

Brogden (1989) argues that black people were thus forced by the police to submit to Afrikaner authority in the rural areas. In this context "the South African Constabulary acted as a military force to suppress black land occupation on behalf of the two formally reconciled white races" (p13).
Even when the formation of a national police force became an ideal after the Unification of South Africa in 1910, legislation which established two units, the South African Police and the South African Mounted Riflemen (SAMR), did not make the conventional distinctions between the police and the military.

In his discussion of the Police Act of 1912, Dippenaar (1988) notes that the SAMR became primarily responsible for the policing of large black areas, especially in Natal and the Transkei. He observes that "the point of departure was that a military unit equipped with arms would be able to enforce law and order more effectively in such areas" (p.8).

The dual function of the SAMR is also made perfectly clear in the Defence Force Act of 1912 which stipulates that in times of peace the unit should "perform all such functions as are by law conferred on or are to be performed by a police officer or constable" (Dippenaar, 1988, p.9). A member of the SAMR would thus "have the benefits of all the indemnities to which a member of a police force would in like circumstances be entitled" (Dippenaar, 1988, p.9).

2.2.3 World War 1 - Recession and Unrest

In 1913 political tensions began to mount both internationally and within South Africa. With the onset of World War 1 the SAMR was called up for active service leaving the SAP to deal with widespread industrial action and fears that the turmoil might be used as a starting point for black liberation moves (Grundlingh, 1987).

These events precipitated a crisis within the police force, fuelled by shortages of people power, low salaries, and working conditions which were far from satisfactory (Van der Spuy, 1989). Such factors did not make the force a good career prospect and it became increasingly difficult to recruit members. The poor rural areas, however, proved to a be rich employment source but the calibre of recruits caused problems which impacted on police image and morale.
The end of the war in 1918 heralded a recession which had important implications for the South African Police in terms of ethnic composition. As the spotlight fell increasingly on poor whites and the perceived anomaly of what Van der Spuy (1989) describes as “fusion of ethnic status and subordinate class position” (p.273) moves were made to create employment opportunities for this sector.

The numbers of mainly poor Afrikaners employed by the SAP increased significantly so that by the time the SAMR and the SAP finally merged in 1920, there was a strong core of Afrikaans-speaking members in the force.

Formation of this new force coincided with black unrest in the country. Riots in Port Elizabeth left 25 Africans dead and 66 wounded following police action. Similarly, policemen carrying machine guns and rifles shot dead 200 members of a religious sect which had failed to meet certain legal requirements and was grouping on Crown land at Bulhoek (Dippenaar, 1988). This type of response, which seemed to characterise police interaction with black communities, is seen by Brogden and Shearing (1993) as being typical of the tendency of the SAP to resort to the use of weaponry usually associated with military rather than police action.

The ongoing enforcement of a host of unacceptable laws and ordinances also encouraged sweeping police action which inevitably exacerbated tensions between the police and black communities. For example, mass police action in Natal during 1929 culminated in the arrests of 700 black people for failure to pay taxes, and over 1,000 for illegal brewing of liquor (Dippenaar, 1988).

Commenting on relations between the police and “non whites” the Lansdown Commission, which was appointed in 1936 to investigate a number of issues pertaining to the force, highlighted the abuse of power by the police in its dealings with the black community. In addition it observed that an attitude of “mutual distrust, suspicion and dislike existed” (Van der Spuy, 1989, p.270).
Significantly, the Commission's report noted the extent to which police conduct was compromised by the "restrictive and discriminatory regulations to which blacks were subjected" (Van der Spuy, 1989, p.271). Dippenaar (1988), commenting on the 344,710 convictions of blacks in 1936, attributes these statistics to criminal charges deriving from regulations which were only applicable to blacks. He lists these as: possession of liquor, black township regulations, Master's and Servant's Act, Native Labour Act, City Districts Act and Pass Laws.

The Commission strongly recommended that harshness and oppression on the part of the police be avoided in the enforcement of such laws (Dippenaar, 1988) and emphasised that a system of racial discrimination would have dreadful consequences for the police force (Van der Spuy, 1989).

2.2.4 World War II - Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism in the Force

1938 saw Afrikaner nationalism coming to the fore. The Ossewa Brandwag, an Afrikaner cultural organisation which was to take a pro-Nazi stance during World War II, began to attract a large police following (Cawthra, 1993) and this set the stage for division within the force.

The decision made by General Smuts to fight on the side of the British gave rise to serious conflict within the SAP which was exacerbated when members were told that they could choose whether or not they wished to serve in an infantry brigade. As Van der Spuy (1989) puts it: "the decision to sign up or not was, to an important extent, determined by party political allegiance" (p.275). Not suprisingly, when war was declared in September 1939 the force was split apart (Van der Spuy, 1989).

Political differences reached a head in 1942 with the uncovering of a planned coup d'état by 562 members of the SAP aimed at toppling the Smuts government (Van der Spuy, 1989). The crisis was handled with military efficiency and hundreds of men were brought to trial.
In the years just prior to the end of the war the Union was plagued by unrest. Resistance to the pass system and dissatisfaction with wages and conditions of employment indicated growing frustrations amongst Africans. The police responded with a more zealous enforcement of laws which gave rise to more antagonism. In 1943, 544 397 Africans were convicted under "discriminatory legislation" (Rheinallt Jones, 1945, p.105). In the light of such statistics Junod (1944) was prompted to comment that these laws seemed simply to "multiply incidences of crime so that a law-abiding community would be slowly transformed into a community of outcasts" (p.6).

Viewing the problem of crime as a problem of native policy, Lewin (1945) observes that legislation giving rise to such a tide of petty offences should be seen as "the legal reflection of a political attempt to reverse the operation of powerful economic and social forces" (p.65). In an examination of police conduct in relation to such policy he noted that "the political, administrative and psychological factors (found) in race relations in South Africa are regularly reflected in the operation of the law" (p.62).

2.2.5 Nationalist Rule - Apartheid and the Police

As the political importance of race increased and ethnicity ceased to cause extensive divisions within white communities, the stage was set for Afrikaner Nationalist rule. From 1948 onward the political nature of policing was to become more and more overt as the police enforced the government's system of apartheid, suppressed political opposition and became, increasingly, a symbol of oppressive rule (Van der Spuy, 1989).

In the 1950s a host of special apartheid laws were introduced. In addition racial laws already in existence were extended so that pass laws, for example, could be applied to African women and African men over 16. In 1960 mass black action at Sharpeville indicated the extent of the dissatisfaction surrounding this legislation (Brodgen & Shearing, 1993).
A protesting crowd some 2,000 people strong, was harassed by low flying aircraft, baton-charged, and eventually fired on without warning. Backed by Saracen armoured vehicles equipped with Sten machine guns the police, who were armed with service revolvers and .303 rifles, fired 700 shots at the demonstrators killing 69 people and wounding 180 (Dippenaar, 1988).

This incident led to an escalation in violent confrontation between the police and black communities as liberation movements took up the struggle countrywide (Van der Spuy, 1989). The government responded by declaring a State of Emergency and banning the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress. Detentions were then used on a wide scale. It is noted (Brewer, 1988) that 11,727 people were detained on the first day of the State of Emergency alone.

Increasingly under threat and alarmed at the possibility of guerilla warfare, the SAP strengthened its links with the South African Defence Force (SADF) which was already frequently used as an ancillary of the police in urban areas (Brewer, 1988).

Police training focussed on “aspects of counter-insurgency warfare” (Cawthra, 1993, p.14) and some members of the force were trained in the use of Browning heavy machine guns. In rural areas a modern equivalent of the Mounted Rifles was introduced for purposes of policing.

2.2.6 Tightening the Grip - Enforcing Legislation

The appointment in 1961 of B.J. Vorster as Minister of Justice meant that the police were given more control than ever before. Speaking at the 50th Anniversary of the SAP, Advocate Vorster (in Dippenaar, 1988) suggested that the multiracial composition of the population represented a threat to the “norms of civilised white society” (p.313).
Based on this observation he proposed that the maintenance of law and order would depend in part on the ability of the SAP to "persuade people who fundamentally differ from the white man to... maintain a kind of order which is foreign to their nature" (Dippenaar, 1988, p.131). This came to mean an "inexorable drift to more police, more powers, less accountability and less public scrutiny" (Van der Spuy, 1989, p.283).

Certainly the powers given to the SAP became more extensive and more formidable over time. Between 1970 and 1978 parliament passed some 62 acts dealing with the control of blacks and attempting to curb growing unrest in the townships. Following the Soweto riots of mid-1976 which sparked violence countrywide and left 1 000 people dead, the Criminal Procedures Act of 1977 was introduced.

This gave police the right to use whatever force they deemed necessary to overcome resistance or stop a person from escaping arrest. For example, killing someone who could not be stopped was deemed justifiable homicide (Brewer, 1988). The possibility that drastic means would be used by the police under such circumstances was very likely since all members of the force were armed. Brewer highlights the fact that every recruit was "issued with a side arm and a R1 rifle" (p.170) and that in times of riot and border control sub-machine guns and shotguns were carried.

Disclosure of police misconduct was also more strictly controlled and the Indemnity Act of 1977 protected state officials from the consequences of any action or statement connected with the policing of internal unrest (Brewer, 1988).

Almost predictably the number of deaths and injuries related to police activity escalated and in the period 1976 to 1984, 6,408 blacks were killed and wounded (Brewer, 1988, p.171). The stories behind these statistics are horrifying. Referring to the brutality which was characteristic of South African policing", Brodgen and Shearing (1993) proposed that manhandling at that time by the
police began on the street and continued at the police station where victims were tortured behind closed doors. The authors insist that it is this systematic violence which has established the police as the “enemy of the people” (Brogden & Shearing, 1993, p.23).

Van der Spuy (1989) comments that whilst black perceptions of the police had always been that of a “naked iron fist” (p.288) coming down on their communities with undisguised force, the accelerated police effort to crush resistance meant that the impact of this fist was felt increasingly. As a result of minimal restraints on the use of extreme force by the SAP, abuse of power was commonplace and the police service took action which Van der Spuy describes as being “a deliberate component of state strategy” (p.299).

2.2.7 Building the Force - The Role of Black Police

Whereas in the early days of Nationalist rule the force had not been strong numerically, its membership was of necessity increased in order to cope with the township protests which continued to sweep the country.

Recognising that this unrest was coming under the spotlight of the international community, the government embarked on a strategy designed to shift media attention away from the nasty scenes of white police brutalising members of the black community. The plan entailed recruiting large numbers of black police to fill the lower ranks in the force. These men, who enforced apartheid law in their own communities, made it easier to deal with any criticism which arose as a result of the methods they used. Violence was simply explained away as an unfortunate instance of brutality by blacks against blacks. Brogden and Shearing (1993) refer to this as “a game plan to confuse and conceal the reality of everyday policing in South Africa from both local and international audiences” (p.69).

Emphasising the role of black policemen in confrontations between the police and communities was particularly effective. In fact as early as 1960, according to
Dippenaar (1988) in his commentary on the Sharpeville massacre, "a few policemen, particularly black members of the force, occasionally acted in an undisciplined manner and without self-restraint..." (p.283).

This strategy, however, produced its own set of problems and black policemen were so reviled that it became difficult to recruit them from urban areas and the SAP had to turn its attention to rural areas instead.

In the 1980s this need for the force to distance itself from "politically sensitive or extra-legal tasks" (Cawthra, 1993, p.17) also led to indirect policing by means of black forces such as the Municipal Police, Kitskonstabels and vigilante groups which operated in the townships.

2.2.8 The Communist Onslaught - Policing in the '80s

Another theme which emerged at this time was the criminalisation of political protest and the politicisation of ordinary crime (Brewer, 1988). Van der Spuy (1989) notes that police in the 1980s saw themselves as being committed to the fight against the communist onslaught which supposedly threatened South Africa. In this context he describes the force as viewing the world from within an "overarching political framework" (p.290) which dictated their every response to events in the country.

Once again, a battery of new laws supported their efforts. In 1982 the Internal Security Act was passed, strengthening security legislation and allowing the police to bring charges of terrorism or subversion against anybody participating in industrial disputes, taking part in demonstrations or supporting a boycott (Brewer, 1988). Furthermore, a section of the Act enabled the authorities to hold people, without access to legal advice, until they had responded satisfactorily to police questioning.
In this way the SAP intruded on the day-to-day activities of township blacks whom they believed would use a variety of means to give voice to political protest. Funerals, prayer meetings and carol singing were all monitored with special legislation allowing the police force to intervene where it saw fit (Brewer, 1988). By 1983 the police had the right to search any person, property or vehicle, without a warrant, anywhere in the country.

When township violence once again erupted in 1984 the spread of unrest prompted South Africa’s Catholic Bishops to level accusations directly at police action which included “indiscriminate use of firearms, assaults and beatings, damage to property, provocation, callous or insensitive conduct, and the indiscriminate or reckless use of teargas” (Cawthra, 1993, p.28). It was noted that the police had “shot children, fired gas into classrooms and houses, fired on pedestrians from armoured vehicles, broken up funerals and looted” (p.28). This had occurred to such an extent that they were seen as upsetting the peace and perpetrating violent crime.

In support of evidence pointing to increasing police violence and repression Brewer (1988) notes that between 1984 and 1985 the police were responsible for the deaths of 514 people and for the imprisonment of 4,806 who were detained for unrest related incidents.

2.2.9. State of Emergency - Policing by Semi-Autonomous Forces

The State of Emergency declared in 1985 and again in 1986 allowed the SAP to arrest and detain whomever it pleased. In accordance with emergency regulations, magistrates and police officers could also use force resulting in death if people refused to listen to instructions given in “a loud voice” (Brewer, 1988, p.176). In a seven-month period during the first state of emergency, 11 000 people were detained and at least 100 died each month, indicating the extent of oppressive action and brutality by the police.
That members of the force were not held accountable for their actions was apparent. The Kannemeyer Report (Brewer, 1988) which was presented as a result of the police intervention which left 20 people dead after a funeral in Uitenhage, absolved the SAP of blame. Although it revealed a tissue of lies on the part of the force and showed that the police had incited mourners, the commission towed the Nationalist Party line (Van der Spuy, 1989) finding that those involved had been faced with a difficult decision and that it was understandable under such circumstances that the SAP had opened fire (Dippenaar, 1988).

During this period, semi-autonomous black forces began to play a more important role in policing (Cawthra, 1993) when the black municipal authorities were permitted to appoint their own police (Brogden & Shearing, 1993). Since the municipal authorities were considered puppets of the apartheid regime, they were not recognised by township communities. Their policing arm was equally reviled, being more concerned with ensuring that unpopular council decisions were implemented rather than providing support.

Like regular SAP members these police proxies were permitted to use force in the course of duties which included enforcing legislation pertaining to school boycotts and enforcing curfews. They were hated in the townships where residents dubbed them, amongst other things, the “greenflies” making reference to the “the flies which buzz around faeces” (Brogden & Shearing, 1993, p.82).

The Kits Konstables, so called because they received instant training were introduced in 1986 when 1 000 black policemen were recruited as auxiliary police for service in the townships. Many could not read or write and they quickly earned a reputation for aggressive behaviour and drinking. They were armed with shotguns and as Brogden and Shearing (1993) point, out any excesses on their part were simply ascribed to black-on-black violence.

The use of vigilantes also became more prevalent. Although never recognised officially there is a great deal of evidence pointing to the fact that they worked
closely with the police. For instance, affidavits from squatters who were victims of the 1986 "witdoekker" vigilante attack at Crossroads near Cape Town linked police to this vigilante group. Claims that the police had "supplied the witdoekker with arms and ammunition and had actively participated in burning houses" (Brogden & Shearing, 1993, p.87) were widespread.

Municipal Police, Kits Konstables and vigilante groups all served to support the SAP, who continued to pour into the townships where they imposed restrictions, banned meetings, sealed off areas with barbed wire barricades and went from house to house in pursuit of dissidents. People were taken off the streets and questioned and leaders of community organisations, trade unions, and churches were imprisoned (Cawthra, 1993). As the police continued to wage war from behind mesh barriers and from within armoured vehicles the chasm between the force and community widened.

By the end of 1986 thousands of people, including children, had suffered at the hands of the SAP. In this regard Brogden and Shearing (1993) draw attention to the fact that more than half of a group of children giving evidence on police brutality before a commission of inquiry claimed to have been "assaulted by kicking, sjambokking, the use of fists, caning and slapping" (p.30).

Mzamane (in Brogden & Shearing, 1993) sums up the negative perceptions of the police at that time when he quotes his two-year-old son as saying that the police should all be shot.

2.2.10 Toward a New South Africa - A New Image

In the latter half of the 1980s and particularly in the De Klerk era from 1986, moves were made to improve the image of the force. However, the SAP continued to employ what Cawthra (1993) calls "military style tactics" (p.30) and the relationship with black communities was still characterised by violence and aggression.
In the year that the ANC was unbanned there were numerous confrontations between communities and the force. From February 1990 to the year’s end, 323 people were killed and 3,390 were wounded by police. In addition the SAP was accused of using gangs, vigilantes, informers, and secret units within the Security Branch to undermine the ANC.

The 1990s, however, heralded the end of white minority rule in South Africa and the way was paved for non-racial elections in 1994. It did not seem possible that the SAP, given its history and reputation could remain operative. As Cawthra (1993) puts it “the force was regarded as an irredeemable enemy, to be defeated and disbanded” (p.5).

The reality of policing in the New South Africa was somewhat different. Cawthra (1993) contends that a lack of trained personnel and few resources to replace the existing police force meant that the ANC had no option but to focus on transforming the SAP into a service which would work for the good of the community.

2.3 **Overcoming a Legacy of Mistrust**

2.3.1 **Reorganising the Force**

As a new era dawned in South Africa’s history the ANC sought ways in which to overcome the legacy of brutality and intimidation which the SAP carried with it. Negative community attitudes towards the police in post-apartheid South Africa distanced the force from communities and mitigated against the possibility of building a mutually supportive relationship between the two.

Similar difficulties had been faced in Namibia after the country attained independence in 1990 following a century of colonial rule and 25 years of struggle. As Tapscott (1993) notes, the role of the Namibian Police (NAMPOL) in the two decades leading up to independence was akin to that of a military unit and
negative perceptions of the force as a repressive tool endured. The transformation of NAMPOL from a police force to a police service provided an opportunity to reorientate “formal police practises and to improve the public image of the police as guardians of the community” (p.388).

Following in Namibia’s footsteps, South Africa moved towards the creation of a service-orientated police force “with new ways of thinking and acting” (Shearing, 1994a, p.2). Emphasis was also placed on conforming to internationally accepted standards and procedures set by western liberal democracies. In order to accomplish this, experts from Great Britain, Canada and the United States were consulted (Brogden & Shearing, 1993).

Community Policing had been hailed internationally. At the 1990 Canadian Conference on International Crime Prevention the general consensus of opinion was that good policing and community policing are synonymous. In fact feedback indicated that extensive consultation had not yielded any other vision for policing (Lynes, 1996).

Rosenbaum and Lurigio (in Lynes, 1996) observe that in the United States of America “community policing is overwhelmingly popular among police managers, citizens and politicians and is the centrepiece of the Clinton administration’s anticrime policy” (p.491).

The term “community policing” encompasses aspects of crime prevention ranging from community police forums to block watch initiatives. Described as a strategy designed to create a better and safer environment for all, it is heavily reliant on the active support and participation of the community (Jagwanth, 1994).

2.3.2 The Need for Partnership

The concept originally evolved from problems of credibility and legitimacy which were widely encountered by the police in a number of countries. Since it
appeared that community-police relations lay at the heart of these difficulties, it was necessary to look at ways of fostering co-operation between the two. The idea of a partnership became a central theme with both parties encouraged to recognise their mutual dependence in the fight against crime. In this regard Brown (in Jagwanth, 1994) states the following:

The police bring into the relationship their constitutional and legal values and their professional knowledge and skills. Citizens bring their intimate knowledge of neighbourhood conditions and their willingness to participate fully in controlling crime and maintaining order in their communities.

(p.165)

In the context of South Africa this appeared beneficial. On the one hand such a partnership promised to help overcome the legacy of mistrust and suspicion which the police carried. On the other hand the very real problem of escalating crime could be more effectively addressed if the community shared responsibility with the police for a safe and secure environment.

2.3.3 Making the Changes

The framework for major and far-reaching changes within the SAP was outlined in a Strategic Plan tabled in December 1991. By May 1992 the first steps had been taken towards fundamental transformation of the SAP. The emphasis in policy guidelines adopted that year was on improving the relationship between the police and the community by positioning the SAP as a service-rendering organisation offering community support, participation, and consultation.

With a change of government in 1994, this approach to policing was written into South Africa’s new Constitution which prescribes “Community Policing as the style of policing to be adopted by the South African Police Service” (Department of Safety and Security, 1997, p.1).
2.3.4 Community Police Forums - The Centrepiece

The Constitution places strong emphasis on the need for consultation and states that this will be facilitated “by the introduction of community police forums in every police station area” (Stevens & Yach, 1995, p.36).

Consultation is pivotal to meeting the needs of local communities (Stevens & Yach, 1995). According to the Department of Safety and Security it plays an important role in “improving the delivery of police service to the community; strengthening the partnership between the community and their police; and promoting joint problem identification and problem solving” (Department of Safety and Security, 1997, p.57).

The CPFs, which are modelled on the statutory liaison forums (Jagwanth, 1994) that operate in every police area in the United Kingdom, allow for structured consultation between a community and its police service and may be considered central to the concept of community policing.

2.3.5 Educating the Public

In line with its new strategy the Police Service took several important steps towards improving community relations. During 1994 the number of community police forums was increased. The Mamelodi Community Police Forum was established in that year and an executive body comprising seven civilian stakeholders and five police officers began the process of consultation.

The Police Service also took steps to curb police abuses, to make the service more accessible to the media and to introduce a community visitor system within police stations. The latter, which authorises nominated community representatives to visit stations in order to assess conditions, is undertaken in Mamelodi by one of the seven sub-forum departments which have been established by the CPF.
The SAPS also embarked on a three-year educational campaign designed to build a more positive image of the service. Aimed primarily at black townships, the programme emphasised the public's right to participate in the development of policing in their communities (De Vos, 1996).

The response appeared positive and sharing responsibility with the police for a safe and secure environment was welcomed as a means of empowering communities. For the first time there would be public involvement in policing which would extend from the generation of ideas through to planning, implementation and evaluation.

2.3.6 The Problems Endure

Despite this, numerous problems still impede the development of a sound community-police relationship in many of South Africa's townships. In the first place the image of the police remains tarnished. This suggests that it might be difficult for the CPF to achieve the goal of building a partnership between a given community and the police.

De Vos (1996) notes, for instance, that the force continues to deal with criticism related to poor discipline, racism and inefficient investigation. It is further proposed that "deeply entrenched characteristics inherent in police culture militate against changed attitudes and behaviour" (p.211).

For many South Africans trust remains a central issue where the police are concerned. As one community member put it: "...it will be very difficult for the community to come to trust the police. There is so much suspicion. To get the people to trust the police is going to be a long and heavy task..." (Shearing, 1994, p.23).

To compound the problem community confidence in the police has been further eroded by widespread allegations of police misconduct (Tabane, 1999). In
the past few years police officers have been charged, convicted and sometimes
jailed for crimes which include: murder, family murder, culpable homicide,
conspiracy, theft, car theft, fraud, defeating the ends of justice, car hijacking,
robbery, corruption, rape and assault.

A second but equally important difficulty which is eroding community
confidence in the police and undermining police-community relations is the
growing crime problem which is threatening communities in South Africa and
creating insecurity in the country (Department of Safety and Security, 1998)

2.4 Alternative Policing Structures

2.4.1 The Emergence of Vigilante Groups

Violent crime in particular has been on the increase since 1990 giving rise to a
host of anti-crime initiatives. Amongst the wealthier sectors of the population, for
example, the use of private security companies has burgeoned as a necessary
means of safeguarding both person and property. For the majority though a
locked door is often the only barrier against criminals (Stavrou, 1993).

Many township communities appear to have given up on the police and the
justice system and are responding to escalating crime by taking the law into their
own hands. The following examples serve to illustrate such community action:

1. As described previously members of the Stanza Bopape community
in Mamelodi severely assaulted and attempted to castrate a man

2. In Diepsloot informal settlement, Gauteng, residents carried out a citizens’
arrest of four murder suspects. Execution followed when a member of the
Community Police Forum who contacted the police was told that there was
no police vehicle available to collect the arrested men. The suspects were
burned to death by a 1 000 strong mob who “decided to take the law into
their own hands because they had lost faith in the police” (Mafata, 1998b, p.6).

3. A vigilante network in the Northern Province has thousands of
members across 15 branches. The organisation whose modus operandi
is to beat a confession out of suspects was formed because of the
perceived inability of the police to do their job. The contention is that
suspects are either released or they walk out on bail or “criminals live in
five-star accommodation in jails at the taxpayer’s expense” (Mafata, 1998a,
p.5.).

In particular the granting of bail, especially to rape suspects, has enraged
many communities. ”Communities are starting to revolt, believing that justice and
the police are failing them. They are threatening to mete out their own justice to
child rapists whom they claim are getting off scot-free because of slackness” (Cox,

The excessive use of force and abuse of human rights associated with mob
justice, kangaroo courts and vigilante action draws attention to the frustration with
the police and the justice system which is now surfacing in many of South Africa’s
communities. Clearly the risk exists that this frustration with official structures will
be generalised to the CPF and that under these circumstances its value is likely to
be questioned.

Yet if Community Policing constitutes an effective step towards crime
prevention then CPFs have an important role to play in helping to overcome the
“us-them” view of crime fighting which prevails amongst communities and the
police in South Africa (Department of Safety and Security, 1997).

From this perspective much hinges on the way in which these forums can
accommodate the tensions which will inevitably arise as a result of the diverse
responses to crime in South Africa’s communities and different perceptions of crime and punishment.

2.5 Indigenous Systems of Ordering - A Historical Overview

2.5.1 The Colonial View

It is important to recognise that “traditional African society has always had its own central structures of dispute processing and of policing” (Brogden & Shearing, 1993, p.135). In this regard it is relevant to examine how and under what circumstances these have operated.

Under British colonial rule, for instance, these “alternative” systems of justice were, as far as possible, incorporated into the formal legal system as a means of reducing their power (Grant & Schwikkard, 1991).

Jeffries (1938) points out that whilst tribal law was recognised, it was usually applied in accordance with the overarching principles of English law. This is clear from a Colonial Office stipulation that “for judicial and legal work in the Colonies, a sound practical knowledge of the Law is more important than experience of local conditions” (Jeffries, 1938, p.143).

Commenting on the practice and application of European Law in South Africa, Junod (1944) describes a system which he believes to have been “absolutely foreign to an African” (p.17). He notes, for example, that under English law an offender would be charged and possibly fined or imprisoned, but not required to compensate either victim or community. This, he says, runs contrary to indigenous approaches where the emphasis is on restitution.
2.5.2 An Alienating System

Further drawbacks of the system included the problem of access to justice. Grant and Schwikkard (1991) define access as “the ability and opportunity to use the formal legal system to settle disputes” (p.306) and argue that this was non-existent in the case of Africans. Attention is drawn to the fact that official courts were also “culturally alienating” in so far as proceedings were conducted in a foreign language, interpretations were inaccurate, legal representation was not always available, particularly in rural areas, and the costs were prohibitive for most.

In urban townships where people were dealing with the unfamiliar, crowded together under difficult living conditions and trying to establish a life for themselves without customary rules and authority (Xaba, 1995) the formal legal system presented more problems than it did solutions.

Although structures were introduced in an attempt to recognise some form of African customary law, these too were by and large unsuccessful. The Commissioners Courts, for example, were reviled and are described by Bapela (in Brogden & Shearing, 1993) as a poor attempt on the part of white South Africa to acknowledge customary African ordering practices. Portrayed as “a bastardisation of traditional African criminal justice”, they were accused of “failing to acknowledge the core ethos of the African tradition...namely that it was community rather than offender centred” (p.140).

2.5.3 Township Solutions Pre-1980 - Street Committees

Under these conditions it became increasingly necessary for urban African communities to consider alternative ways of dealing with crime and criminals. In this regard Van Niekerk (1988) draws attention to a natural shift towards self-help initiatives which initially included township street committees and makgotlas. Van
Niekerk defines the term “makgotla” as bodies which had peace-keeping and mediation responsibilities.

Street committees primarily performed policing tasks. They focussed on keeping order, organising street patrols when crime became especially prevalent, and on making representation to local authorities on behalf of township residents. But they were wide open to exploitation by the authorities under the apartheid regime and many were co-opted into policing for the state.

Scharf (1989) observes that trade-offs were commonplace and that basic services, for example, might be provided in exchange for information which was of value to the authorities. In this way, many committees put themselves in an invidious position when they became involved in the policing of unpopular legislation such as influx control for the state.

The Soweto riots of 1976 marked the beginning of the end for the street committees. As it became more dangerous for any township group to interact with representatives of the apartheid regime, the committees increasingly disassociated themselves from the local authorities. Few were willing or able to make representation on behalf of a constituency and instead many began to take on the role of dispute resolution.

2.5.4 Township Solutions Pre-1980 - The Makgotla

The history of the Makgotla is similar in many respects. Described as “semi-official tribal courts” (Cawthra, 1993, p.67), they were introduced to deal with disagreements and disputes which arose between members of a community.

According to Scharf (1989) the Makgotla differed in structure because of community diversity with regard to order, values and loyalty. Some, such as the Vukani Vulimehlo People’s Party in Mamelodi, emphasised order and the use of force whilst others “relied on moral pressure and social ostracism” as a deterrent
(p.222). In addition numerous groups upheld tribal values and followed tribal custom closely in their adjudication of disputes.

Generally the courts tended to follow indigenous law and proceedings were kept simple. The approach was informal and the rules and regulations which are typical of western legal procedure were not applied. Like the street committees, the *Makgotla* operated alongside formal structures and were, for instance, frequently involved in the allocation of housing. In fact evictions were often carried out by *Makgotla*-affiliated vigilante groups.

Just as a relationship with the authorities led to the downfall of street committees within the townships, the link between the *Makgotla* and state organs such as the township councils ultimately led to their demise. Once the councils were forced to abandon the townships during the State of Emergency it was no longer possible for the *Makgotla* to operate.

**2.5.5 Challenging the State in the ‘80s - People’s Courts**

A number of alternative structures then emerged including civic organisations, women’s and youth movements, people’s courts and street patrols (Scharf, 1989). Scharf draws attention to the fact that these were commonly viewed as “organs of people’s power” (p.225) and therefore represented the first real challenge to the authority of the state.

Township crime was escalating but as groups became increasingly politicised they shunned the authorities particularly the SAP which was considered ineffectual anyway.

Street Patrols took on the role of township police and assumed responsibility for bringing perpetrators before the people’s courts. Most courts actively avoided any association with the brutal methods of the SAP so although corporal punishment was sometimes administered, the emphasis was on healing. In this
context healing can be understood as the sense of wholeness which accompanies insight into oneself and one’s actions (Miller & Baldwin, 1987).

Brogden and Shearing (1993) observe that the aim was to repair the relationship between the offender and the community. Healing took place when the perpetrator acknowledged that he or she had in some way wronged the community and would make amends.

As Scharf (1989) indicates:

The emphasis was on problem solving, not persecution, on restitution and reconciliation not alienation and banishment, on educative sentencing stressing community service, not punitive retributions, on transmitting the morality of a future non-racist democratic style of life... (p.227)

Van Niekerk (1988) comments on the importance of making offenders aware of the central role played by community organisations in the struggle. The aim, he suggests, was to make people a part of community efforts and for this reason, people’s courts often assigned offenders the task of adjudicating at a trial where the circumstances mirrored their own.

By 1983 less than two percent of the township Africans in South Africa took their grievances to official courts (Van Niekerk, 1988) and the township courts were dealing with issues ranging from assault and theft to robbery and witchcraft. In addition many handled cases which were political in nature, such as disobeying stayaways.

In Mamelodi, people’s courts, which were also known as disciplinary committees, people’s advisory committees, and comradely courts, were often specialised - with certain courts handling specific issues. With the exception of
rape, which was usually punished by lashing and compensation, sanctions were as far as possible conciliatory.

2.5.6 Power Struggles and Policing

This is not to say that violence did not occur. Scharf (1989) points out that those courts which were not aligned with a political organisation were characterised by power struggles and generally attracted members from marginalised sectors of the community, in particular the youth.

Scharf (1989) notes that such “unlinked” structures appeared to be more “inquisitorial and secretive” (p.228), using fear and the threat of capital punishment to maintain a following. Xaba (1995), in his assessment of violent punishment particularly by the youth, portrays this sector as having lived a life devoid of kindness and characterised instead by exposure to death and cruelty. Consequently brutality became the order of the day and there was no room for compassion or forgiveness.

A problem for many courts was the ongoing detention of the key figures. This often left them in the hands of weaker members of society who were more inclined to call for punitive sanctions against offenders. Van Niekerk (1988) suggests, however, that such action was not so much evidence of criminal behaviour as anger arising from the injustices of apartheid. Seen in this light violence against offenders can be ascribed to “inward turning aggression…which ignores the real enemy and looks inward to find the roots of weakness, deceit, disloyalty and disunity within the oppressed community itself” (van Niekerk, 1988, p.298).

Other factors which had a bearing on the tendency towards repressive sanctions include *inter alia* the victim’s right to participate in determining the perpetrator’s punishment, the informal approach to proceedings and the fact that over time community members required to serve in the courts increasingly elected themselves and were not democratically voted into their positions.
2.5.7 Creating Community and Reducing Crime

Whilst some courts abused the principles of justice and imposed cruel and harsh sentences, others addressed crime in the community in such a way that justice was seen to be done and this was in accordance with methods which were both accepted and understood within African communities.

Since the existing policing structures had neglected to provide for such methods, were not trusted, and utilised procedures which were unfamiliar, people's courts had a vital role to play. They became part of the fabric of township society and, as Xaba (1995) points out, managed to “stamp out petty crimes and diffuse serious domestic and neighbourhood squabbles” (p.65) which carried the seeds of violence. In addition they were successful in overcoming the problems associated with rights of revenge, ensuring instead that a guilty party would be heard and given the opportunity to make amends.

People's courts also handled problems which were not recognised by the official justice system. Xaba (1995) illustrates this with the example of a claim made by family members to their dead son's unregistered shack. The dispute involved the dead man's girlfriend who argued that since she had lived with him she should be entitled to the accommodation.

In this way the courts provided an opportunity for community members to be heard and to air their grievances. Beyond this, however, they “developed a sense of self-sufficiency...and created a sense of community which still prevails” (Nina, 1994, p.3).

The point is well made by Allison (in Grant & Schwikkard, 1991) that people's courts sought to win support by laying the foundations for a future with which the majority could identify. Approaches to crime and punishment reflected African conceptions of justice including, for example, an emphasis on direct compensation to an injured party as well as punishment. Verdict and sentencing were
determined by a majority vote and punishment was, more often than not, based on the track record of the offender.

2.5.8 State Intervention

People's courts flourished until Emergency Regulations were imposed in 1987 and the state clamped down on alternative systems of ordering. This led to an upsurge in the incidence of crime and meant that gangs had free reign in the strife-torn townships.

As violence escalated residents were left with very little protection, particularly since the state police had no interest in crime or its investigation. In response communities revived street committees and street patrols but, as Brogden and Shearing (1993) point out, the pressure was such that most of the "informal justice processes had retreated back to an underground ad hoc existence" (p.161) by the early 1990s.

Over the next few years and particularly as South Africa moved towards democracy many of these re-emerged. In Mamelodi, for example, people's courts continue to operate although they are not officially recognised.

2.6 Community Policing and Alternative Systems of Justice

2.6.1 The Potential for Conflict

It is one of the weaknesses of the community policing model that it has not taken sufficient account of the organic systems of ordering which have evolved within the townships and which continue to operate "illegitimately" and outside of the CPFs without opportunity for consultation.

These "home brews" (Shearing, 1994, p.5) are the initiatives which should characterise a Discovery Model of policing. They stand as a tribute to people's
experiences and are representative of the ability to find solutions. In contrast, community policing is a product of the Cloning Model which refers to the adoption by one country of another's vision of policing.

Using a business analogy to examine the possible effects of an imported policing strategy, Ncholo (1994) suggests that by failing to make provision for an African sense of justice within an essentially Eurocentric model of policing, community policing does not fully address the needs and priorities of many communities. He observes that much like any business the failure to acknowledge competing businesses involved with the same product is detrimental to success.

The idea that every community member should be involved in policing and that behaviour which threatens the well-being of a community should be dealt with by community-based structures still applies. In fact Ncholo (in Midgley, 1996) argues that an African sense of justice is compromised or neglected when systems of policing are designed for African communities without their input. The point is strongly made that "policing policy should incorporate the practice and experience of the African people and reflect the country's diverse cultures" (p.18).

Community-based formations, such as the Makgotla, Imbizo, Inkudla and Ibandla and more recently people's courts, have handled legal matters and dealt with township crime for decades. As Sanders (1987) points out, it has been impossible to wipe out African law. Although various aspects may have been altered in response to social change it has retained its strong community orientation and survived under the most difficult circumstances.

To deny certain organic structures recognition as official participants in community policing may be short-sighted, particularly since a stated objective of this approach is to encourage consultation, build partnerships, and foster a sense of ownership by expanding the community's role in policing.
It is necessary to recognise that rampant crime and a legal system which does not appear to produce justice have provided sufficient motivation for a community to take the law into its own hands. Vigilante action from this perspective may be seen as the manifestation of outrage against a system which seems incapable of stemming the tide of violence and crime in South Africa. It is a means of communicating frustration and a protest at the entire justice system.

However, in its disregard for human rights, vigilantism requires the police to act against communities which dispense their own justice. Furthermore the service must, where necessary, investigate certain practices of people's courts. In both instances this sets the stage for confrontation rather than partnership with a community.

Baxi (in Van Niekerk, 1988) makes the point that if people's law was to be accepted it would "reinforce the positive values of state law and combat its negative aspect" (p.300). The potential for conflict between the community and the police would presumably then be lessened.

Certainly the need for a more flexible approach to community policing is greatly needed. Given the history of policing in South Africa it can probably be said that a willingness to negotiate around the "home brews" which characterise diverse approaches to crime in different communities is especially relevant if such communities are to enjoy the "enhanced sense of responsibility, ownership, commitment, awareness and accountability" which Stevens and Yach (1995, p.15) name as the benefits of the community policing.
3.1 Action Research as an Approach

The methodology employed in this study is action research, an approach which is congruent with the spirit of the field of community psychology and consistent with the guiding principles of the discipline. Accordingly, strong emphasis is placed on dialogue and collaboration and the active participation of all those involved in the research process is encouraged. An empowerment agenda is strongly adhered to and the centrality of context is recognised throughout.

Reason and Heron (1996) describe action research as co-operative inquiry which conducts research with people not on them or about them, and which in its most complete form requires that all participants engage in the roles of researcher and subject by “moving in a cyclic fashion between phases of reflection as co-researchers and of action as co-subjects” (p.21).

Essentially it involves the repetition of cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning. Tandon (1981) suggests that it is this process of action and reflection which creates understanding and brings about change. This can be attributed to the fact that action research gives rise to dialogue which “represents a potent method of generating inquiry and intervention...and contributes to the intermingled processes of knowing and changing” (p.293).

McNiff (1988) contends that the “action” of action research lies in the changes which occur in people’s lives and in the system within which they live. It is research which is never static. Rather, as the term implies, it is a continual process, a search. A dynamic interaction which demonstrates how a person’s ideas can be expanded and then taken up by another in order to move his or her ideas forward. As McNiff puts it, it is like “a dance of communication. One
question becomes another's answer, the answer in turn becomes a question" (p.42).

Kennis and McTaggard (in Zuber-Skerrit, 1996) define action research accordingly as:

A form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. (p.147)

3.2 Creating a Context for Action Research

Trickett (1990) contends that action research can be described as "adventuresome research" (p.210) and names three themes which he suggests provide a context for the use of such an approach in the field of community psychology. The three include: levels of analysis of behaviour; a commitment to poor and minority groups; and collaboration between the researcher and the researched.

These themes are embodied in the aim of this study which looks at the ways in which a disadvantaged community organises itself in response to escalating crime and the implications of this organisation for a police-community partnership as represented by the community police forum.

By espousing a collaborative approach to inquiry which is "democratic, empowering and humanising" (Stringer, 1996, p.10), action research seeks to improve the quality of people's lives within the family, the community and the organisation and bring together groups that are potentially in conflict so that they may find "sustainable and effective solutions to common problems through dialogue and negotiation" (p.19).
This is a descriptive study, the scope of which is limited to a particular community of interest in Mamelodi township, Gauteng. Participants include:

- The South African Police Service
- A community Youth Group
- The executive of the Mamelodi Community Police Forum
- Students from Vista University, Mamelodi Campus, Centre for Innovation and Productivity.

The research incorporates the following:

1. An interview
2. Small group discussions
3. General group discussion - All participating stakeholder groups

### 3.3 Exploring some Guiding Themes

Trickett's (1990) themes, which are identified from the assumptions guiding the field of community psychology, provide a useful way to explore the relevance of action research for this study. Although various aspects of the study have been used to illustrate a particular theme these examples are not mutually exclusive.

#### 3.3.1 Theme One - Levels of Analysis of Behaviour

The first theme points out the need to understand how the social context and social processes influence a person's development and behaviour. From a research point of view this requires that those in the field of community psychology must move beyond theories of behaviour which tend to focus on the individual and brush aside the history and context" (Trickett, 1990) and look instead at the "indivisible gestalt, or whole, that is termed person-in-context" (Orford, 1992, p.5).
For instance, working within the natural setting of the community, in other words with people in their context, enables the researcher to become familiar with the "underlying social processes which express the integrity of the culture" (Rappaport, 1981, p.584). This then makes it possible to arrive at topics which are of community and therefore more valuable since people are likely to benefit from programmes which reflect the context of their daily lives (Kelly, 1986; Rappaport, 1990).

This theme is reflected in the researcher's own approach to the identification of a topic for study. As a direct result of her interaction over a two-year period with members of the community in Mamelodi and Stanza Bopape, she became aware of the high crime levels in the area as well as their impact on local residents. As the police, members of the CPF, and the community shared their views and concerns in discussion, they shaped the subject matter and gave the study its focus and direction.

Contextual knowledge is an important research goal which can only be realised by means of interaction with a community and through shared understanding (Tolan, Chertok, Keys & Jason, 1990). It is arrived at in conversation and is reliant on discussion which becomes increasingly more involved and enriching.

Its value lies in "descriptive richness, explanatory utility and conceptual robustness, rather than in its situational independence, ability to prove general fact and generalisation of results" (Tolan et al., 1990, p.7).

3.3.2 Theme Two - A Commitment to Poor and Marginalised Groups

The second theme reflects the orientation of community psychology towards those who are disempowered. Empowerment has been called the "unifying goal" of community psychology (Glenwick, Heller, Linney & Pargament, 1990) and is
defined in its absence as the loss of a sense of control over one's life (Rappaport, 1990).

It is an aim of community psychology to respond to this loss by identifying those situations where influence can be gained over the decisions which affect community welfare. In this way the silent, marginalised and isolated members of society are given voice and the possibilities for people to direct their own lives are greatly enhanced. From this perspective, empowerment can be equated with development and research should represent a valuable opportunity for the realisation of this goal.

Working with an empowerment agenda also means that attention must be given to the way in which data is collected. The idea of the "neutral and objective observer gathering information from subjects" (Raush, 1986, p.604) does nothing to further the aims of empowerment. In fact by putting distance between the investigator and the investigated, it becomes impossible to tune into the participant's definition of reality.

As Rappaport (1990) points out, it is by ignoring "the constructed reality of a participant" (p.55) that the researcher runs the risk of degrading and disempowering. Beyond that he or she also forfeits the chance to benefit from insights which reveal more about the participants, the topic and self.

Since the willingness to learn from another person is also a measure of the recipient's confidence in that person, the underlying message is an empowering one. Acceptance of someone else's knowledge implies recognition of their competence and ability.

This focus on the strengths of an individual or group of people is an important aspect of empowerment and one which meshes with a principle of community psychology which is to focus on competencies, rights and abilities rather than on the deficits and needs in a given community.
Research which is strengths orientated is empowering research because it sets out to find existing resources and assets which, once identified, can be used and developed under the direction of the community. The feeling of control which emerges brings with it a tangible sense of power which ultimately gives voice to those in disadvantaged communities.

This theme is reflected in an aim of the study which is to look at ways in which a disadvantaged community organises itself in response to crime. In taking the historical context as a departure point for such initiatives, as well as recognising the role which these initiatives can play in the fight against crime, the competencies and abilities of the community are acknowledged. This then is the process of empowerment.

As Rappaport (1990) notes: "These are the people who have historically been excluded, allotted low ascribed status and not given any opportunity to attain achieved status" (p.52). It is this fact which makes it so necessary to acknowledge competencies that are present or to accept that such competencies are always possible given the opportunity (Rappaport 1981).

3.3.3 Theme Three - Collaboration between Researcher and Researched

Finally the theme of collaboration, which is linked to the need for an understanding of the social context, redefines the relationship between the researcher and the researched and creates a context for working which can be described as horizontal (Trickett, 1990; Westergaard & Kelly, 1990) rather than hierarchical.

This style "acknowledges the value of differential expertise" (Trickett, 1990, p.211) with respect for experiential knowledge being a fundamental requirement.

Stringer (1996) identifies this as a "flatter organisational structure that minimises the social distance and power differentials between people" (p.28). In this regard
his discussion on the difficulties inherent in adopting the stance of a distant and neutral observer is instructive. He comments as follows:

I realised that as an impartial, objective, observer I could never hope to define, discover or measure the worlds of meaning that embody human behaviour in any social setting; that any hypothesis or explanation that I formulated at a distance from those worlds of meaning could bear little meaningful relationship to the actions and activities of people who inhabited them and that any interpretation of their behaviour that failed to take into account the ways in which participants defined and described their situations must necessarily fail as an explanatory system. (p.8)

Genuine collaboration gives rise to a partnership which is based on trust, respect and commitment. Each person accepts the view of the others, re-appraising and re-evaluating his or her knowledge and beliefs in the light of something which has been said. This suggests that each person learns something from the others and that each changes as a result of this process. From Rappaport's point of view there is a willingness to be moulded as well as to be the moulder (Rappaport, 1990).

Building on this Creswell (1998) talks of the importance of the researcher as an active learner rather than a distant expert. Where the expert passes judgement, the learner tells a story from the participant's points of view.

That this approach is fundamental in the study is clear from the emphasis on an initial orientation which was considered essential in order for the researcher to familiarise herself with the social setting. It is also apparent from her involvement and active participation in community activities, ranging from workshops to discussion groups and public meetings, and from her belief that in the research process there can be no better guide than the community itself.
3.4 Action Research as a Stage-by-Stage Process

Stringer (1996) suggests that action research can be conducted in three stages. Each provides an opportunity for meaningful interaction between all of the participants in the study and all are compatible with Trickett’s (1990) themes and thus with the aims of the study. These stages are named as the “Look,” “Think,” and “Act” (p.39) steps of action research. There is also always a preliminary orientation phase.

3.4.1 The Preliminary Orientation

Since collaboration is accepted as the cornerstone of contextual knowledge, community-based action research is always a participative enterprise which seeks to create a research partnership based on trust, respect and commitment, and to include the relevant stakeholders in the process of investigation.

Rappaport (1990) makes the point that the role of empowering research is to “give voice to the people of concern” (p.57). In satisfying this requirement the researcher must emphasise that there are many ways of seeing the world and that every person has the right to be heard. Empowerment can therefore be equated with full participation, the importance of which becomes evident with an appreciation that power, including the power to organise, to make decisions and to exercise control rests all too frequently in the hands of the few. The needs and problems of the many remain unacknowledged.

Awareness of the various stakeholders thus constitutes a first step toward ensuring that all those who can contribute in the research process are included. As Stringer (1996) puts it, to build a relationship it is first necessary for people to feel that “their ideas and agendas are acknowledged and that they can make a worthwhile contribution to the common enterprise...this is the heart of a democratic society” (p.28).
By overlooking stakeholders the researcher runs the risk of alienating certain groups. In addition research motives may be questioned if it is perceived that some members of the community have been excluded from the process.

Networking plays an important role in overcoming these difficulties and it is the aim of the researcher to establish, through interaction with the community, those groups which are primarily concerned with the issue at hand. In this regard, Stringer (1996) emphasises the need to be aware of key people or gatekeepers, regardless of whether they are central figures in an informal setting or major players in formal organisations.

Further, the need to keep returning to the initial “social analysis” must be kept in mind. In the case of one or two individuals representing a stakeholder group it will be necessary for all members of the stakeholder group to agree on the legitimacy of such individuals as spokespersons. Processes which appear at face value to be inclusive may exclude certain stakeholders thereby restricting participation to those deemed unlikely to change the status quo.

The point is made (Stringer, 1996) that whilst the inclusion of more people in the process might seem to increase the probability of conflict and complexity, it does allow the researcher to expand his or her focus from “one that seeks immediate resolution of specific problems to more encompassing perspectives that have the potential to alleviate may interconnected problems” (Stringer, 1996, p.37).

In this preliminary stage, orientation also extends to familiarisation with any steps which might previously have been taken in addressing the issue. Documents, for instance, could provide an extra data source which may be relevant to the research process. The value of such material lies not so much in the insight afforded the researcher as in the opportunity to review and reflect on the content in collaboration with other stakeholders.
By establishing the input of various groups the researcher expands the possibility for full participation. Information can be summarised and shared with all parties involved, contributing to the creation of an account which is truly constructed jointly.

The need to identify stakeholders suggests that it is necessary for the researcher to familiarise himself or herself with the social setting and in this regard Stringer (1996) refers to the importance of "social mapping" (p.51) as part of the research process. This then becomes an initial phase of the research requiring the researcher to carry out a broad analysis of the setting in order to familiarise herself or himself with all of the groups which may have a stake in the problem to be investigated.

3.4.2 Orientation in Action

In line with Stringer's (1996) recommendations, the researcher spent a considerable amount of time in Mamelodi Township and in the Stanza Bopape area. The aim was to obtain insight into some of the key issues around crime and policing. The final research topic was arrived at through community input and it was as a result of her interaction with community members that the researcher was able to identify various relevant stakeholder groups.

In some instances the identification of such groups was facilitated by participation in community workshops, meetings and other projects designed to address the problem of crime. Initiatives such as the 1998 Stanza Bopape Crime Workshop which addressed the area's crime situation and provided insight into the structure of the CPF gave the researcher a good overview of the situation.

It proved helpful in identifying steps already taken and provided an opportunity to track new projects. For example, four groups at this workshop tackled a number of issues with the objective of presenting a report to Gauteng Premier, Mathole Motshekga. Discussion covered:
Helping the police to address crime without contravening the law.
Developing the idea of community courts and community police.
Sustaining CPF structures, and the perceived need for a local police station and CPF.

Participation in the workshop increased the researcher's awareness of problems confronting the community and allowed her to put these in context. The following exchange where the CPF responded to comment from the floor is illustrative of the process.

CPF Spokesman: "A member of the community can only make a citizen's arrest. He or she cannot investigate a crime or search a person's property. This is the role of the police. The community must act within the scope of the law."

Community member: "I still believe that a rape perpetrator should be thrashed..."

CPF Spokesman: "You must recognise the structures of the government of today. Don't take the law into your own hands. Ultimately you will be arrested."

Community member: "I can tell you that in a shooting incident recently the police didn't investigate the shots. They carried on their way."

In the process of "social mapping" (Stringer, 1996, p.28) and familiarisation the researcher also witnessed violence and confrontation. These experiences were frightening. However, they contributed to a greater appreciation of the problems which face those who live in the township and also provided insight into the ways in which the community responds to violence. An entry in the researcher's journal describes one incident following which it was necessary for the CPF to negotiate with community members in order to prevent retaliation:
I have a meeting with the police but there is a problem at Denneboom, the big taxi rank on the outskirts of Mamelodi, and I am asked if I can go there. I feel extremely nervous. The rank is like a war zone, broken glass and smoke. Apparently someone was shot through the window of a combi at point blank range. The commuters tell me that with this taxi violence they fear daily for their lives. (March 24, 1998)

Because the researcher does not reside in the area a difficulty in the process of familiarisation was keeping abreast of community developments around crime. Much valuable information was, however, obtained as a result of chance discussions and unplanned interactions which were often extremely fruitful, enabling her to identify additional role players beyond the more obvious and immediately identifiable stakeholder groups. This indicates the benefits of mixing as freely as possible with members of the community in the initial stages of the research.

In its unstructuredness though the approach demanded a high degree of flexibility from the researcher and was often frustrating. The process was a slow one and the picture seemed to be forever changing. Like a landscape of shifting sand there was often no certain direction. The following excerpt from the researcher’s journal reflects this: “It seems as if we are headed somewhere but I feel as if there are more and more players and less and less action. Everyone is waiting for the next person” (November 20, 1998).

From the researcher’s perspective the stakeholder groups appeared to mirror her own sense of frustration. This is perhaps understandable in light of the fact that over an 18-month period the same problems were raised in public meetings. Little headway appeared to have been made.

These observations can be considered relevant to the process of knowledge construction since they are indicative of a “stuckness” which could be detrimental to the formation of a healthy partnership.

3.5 Step One - The “Look” Stage of Action Research
3.5.1 Exploring the “Look” Stage

This stage of action research is described by Stringer (1996) as the stage in which participants can define and describe the problem to be investigated and the general context within which the problem is set.

One of the principles of action research is that it aims to better the social and emotional lives of all the people who participate in it. This is achieved by organising and conducting research in such a way that it will contribute to the formation of community, or as Stringer (1996) puts it, to the “common-unity” (p.25) of all those involved.

Essentially, consensus is better reached through co-operation. It is by linking various groups that the building blocks for a consensual approach to problem solving are put in place. However, initially the use of separate stakeholder groups can greatly facilitate the process. In this approach each group creates an account of its context individually and only when this has been achieved do the groups come together.

The smaller group process affords participants the opportunity of exploring and clarifying their problems in a safe environment and reduces the possibility of antagonism and conflict which might arise amongst diverse stakeholding groups, particularly when institutions are involved. It also provides an opportunity to introduce and discuss the purpose of the later, larger meeting with all stakeholders.

 Throughout the process the researcher is a non-judgemental participant, a resource, utilised by the group for the purposes of "articulating their perceptions and concerns" (Stringer,1996, p.68). The aim is to facilitate a descriptive account of the situation as seen through the eyes of a particular group of people.
The process requires that the researcher records key concepts and observations, remaining true to the experiences and feelings of the group. This may be achieved when a summary of the discussion is presented at intervals by the researcher for consideration and verification by all those involved. Accuracy of interpretation is thus safeguarded and the participants are afforded a further opportunity to shape the descriptive account.

Respect for participants is fundamental and includes the need to check on the confidentiality of information, for instance, observations made in official documents. It also suggests that considerations such as representation at the general meeting are openly addressed and agreed so that the group may reach consensus on a legitimate spokesperson or spokespersons to represent their interests on that occasion.

Stringer (1996) proposes that, in order to avoid confrontation, groups are also asked in advance to come up with ground rules for the larger meeting. This is in line with an aim of action research which is to encourage full participation in the research process. It is only by becoming an active player that a sense of control can begin to emerge (Stringer, 1996).

3.5.2 The "Look" Stage in Action - A Small Group Approach

In line with Stringer’s (1996) suggestion that the initial use of small groups can greatly facilitate the research process, the researcher organised individual stakeholder groups within which definitions and descriptions of the crime problem could be explored.

In the process she concentrated on facilitating a descriptive account of the situation as seen through the eyes of the group concerned. However, where necessary she also used questions derived from a framework given by Spradley (in Stringer, 1996) which orientate participants whilst reducing the possibility that the researcher will impose her own perceptions on a group. Stringer (1996) refers
to these as questions that are broad enough to give focus without influencing the direction of the discussion.

Examples are questions which encourage participants to talk about their own experience of township crime and more specific questions which might probe specific situations, for instance, community and police responses to particular incidents in Stanza Bopape.

Stringer (1996) suggests that having painted a general picture further questions generated from initial discussion should focus on filling in the detail so that the setting is explored as comprehensively as possible.

3.5.2.1 Group One - Community Members

The first group which comprised about 15 young people was spontaneously formed at a community health centre in Stanza Bopape. The setting was completely informal and the group grew in size during the course of the interview. Participants sat cross-legged on the floor and there was much lively debate and discussion between them.

The researcher first explained the purpose of the research and obtained permission to tape record the discussion. In addition, since language constituted a stumbling block on this occasion, a translator who was considered acceptable to the group was used.

The researcher's sense was that the participants were enthusiastic and that the majority felt strongly about the extent of the violence and crime in their community. In the course of the discussion, however, she was also aware, as a result of dissension between group members, of the ever-present potential for conflict surrounding issues which evoke strong emotion such as crime and violence. In this context the role of dialogue in the process became evident as participants negotiated from different perspectives.
It was the researcher's belief that the nature of this particular interaction did not lend itself to formal analysis, categorisation and utilisation of charts and other tools which Stringer recommends (1996). She felt that by creating a more formal atmosphere these could have inhibited the participants and prevented them from openly voicing their opinions.

Instead she chose to contribute to the process by reflecting on the input of various group members, by requesting more detailed information at certain times, and by ensuring that the meanings which participants gave to their comments and observations were clearly put forward (Stringer, 1996).

3.5.2.2 Group Two - The South African Police Service, Mamelodi

The SAPS was the first point of contact when the study commenced. Since the CPF represents a partnership between the police and the community, separate discussion groups were not initially envisaged. However, due to the difficulty experienced in getting the CPF executive together, a one-on-one interview was conducted with an SAPS CPF representative.

This was a taped interview which was more structured than the discussions that had taken place with the community youth group. Stringer (1996) suggests the use of an agenda for such group interactions and indeed the CPF had requested one. This was used for the purpose of the SAPS interview, but lent an air of formality to the interactions which the researcher felt detracted from the spontaneity of free discussion.

Despite this, however, she considered that crime, particularly from a police perspective could be explored reasonably well. In this regard her sense was that the relationship which had been built up in the course of the study greatly facilitated the process.
3.5.2.3 Group Three - The Community Police Forum, Mamelodi Executive

Contact with the executive of the Mamelodi CPF was initially made through the SAPS in Mamelodi West. Since the researcher was advised that it is the constitutional responsibility of the CPF to set meetings she made direct contact with the secretary and later with the chairman of the CPF to organise a discussion group.

The formation of this group was a frustrating and extremely slow process for the researcher and it took several months before it was possible to arrange a meeting. It was the researcher's sense that a number of factors could have contributed to the delays in this regard. These include:

* The fact that Stanza Bopape is not well-represented on this CPF and wants its own CPF
* The number of people on the CPF executive - making it difficult to co-ordinate a meeting
* The fact that most members of the CPF hold full-time jobs and have difficulty in attending additional meetings
* The voluntary nature of CPF involvement - extra meetings might seem above and beyond the call of duty
* The fact that meetings are often held after-hours and the researcher felt unsafe going into the township after dark.

When the group discussion did take place the researcher felt that the conditions were not conducive to the "descriptive richness and conceptual robustness" which Tolan et al. (1990, p.7.) name as a prerequisite for gleaning contextual knowledge.

The difficulties experienced were largely as a result of time constraints which arose because the group "piggy-backed" on a CPF executive meeting. Delays in
starting cut into available time and the researcher felt a reluctance on the part of the group to participate fully under these circumstances.

She became increasingly aware of the problems and pressures which beset the CPF and was reminded of an earlier journal entry she had made which read:

Another meeting has been postponed. More violence has put the enquiry on hold. This seems to be a community under siege. The CPF is so busy shoring up the holes that it is difficult to make any progress with the study. This time it is the shooting by gangsters of a crimebuster at a CPF meeting. He was to have attended our discussion group. (November 20, 1998)

It was also of concern that members of the group seemed hesitant to express their personal views and opinions and left this instead to one spokesperson. The opportunity for joint exploration and an exchange of ideas was, under these circumstances, not possible. Most strongly the researcher felt that participants did not trust the process and that this was an obstacle to open communication.

A further journal entry made by the researcher after contact with the chairperson of the CPF may be considered relevant to this observation:

After several attempts at setting up a meeting I telephone the chairperson at home. He tells me that the CPA has been approached by numerous researchers and has participated in various studies but has never had the benefit of any feedback. (February 15, 1999)

Of all the groups involved in the study the researcher felt that she had not managed to forge strong links with the CPF executive. Although there were practical reasons for this she felt that the experience pointed to a need for greater consultation with the CPF in the preliminary stages of the research.
3.5.2.4 Group Four - The Centre for Innovation and Productivity, Vista University, Mamelodi Campus

The Centre for Innovation and Productivity (CIP) forms part of Vista University in Mamelodi. In 1998 a consultative process with Mamelodi community organisations was set in motion "in order to develop a better understanding of the needs of the community and the interests and capacities of the faculty and students" (Berger, 1998, p.6). The CIP has now established a student faculty committee on the Mamelodi campus which aims "to support economic and social development projects in the community" (p.10).

The CIP as a stakeholder group was brought to the attention of the researcher by the CPF. This contact resulted in considerable interaction over a six-month period during which a great deal of valuable information was exchanged.

As far as the group discussion was concerned the researcher experienced some delays in organising an interview and when this did take place it was unexpectedly a one-on-one interview. Most CIP student representatives were registering for the new academic year and were unable to participate. Following initial discussion, however, several students joined the group and this enhanced the possibility for a meaningful exchange of ideas.

3.5.3 Small Groups - Finding Themes in Dialogue

Informed by the nature of the discussions, interaction between group members and the transcriptions of the taped interviews, the researcher identified the following broad themes:

* Perceptions of a community: Stanza Bopape
* Perceptions of community-police relations
* Perceptions of community organisation against crime
* Perceptions of the CPF.
The researcher then analysed the tapes in detail, coding key observations and allocating these to the relevant thematic category. The results were presented for discussion in document form to the participating groups which were invited to verify and amend the material as they saw fit. In addition the document was accompanied by an invitation to attend a general workshop. The individual groups were advised that their initial input would form the basis for further discussion and exploration and were given the option of nominating representatives to attend should they prefer to do this.

They were also consulted with regard to the date and venue for the workshop. The general consensus of opinion was that a Sunday would be the most convenient day for all those involved. The venue presented a problem since it was not easily accessible for some groups. However, since the study focusses on Stanza Bopape it was agreed that a venue convenient to members of the Stanza Bopape community would be used.

This then represents the "Look" stage of research, a phase which leads participants to "Think" and finally to "Act".

### 3.6 The "Think" Stage of Action Research

#### 3.6.1 Exploring the "Think" Stage

It is in the "Think" stage of the research that stakeholder groups are brought together to analyse and interpret the situation in order to extend their understanding of the nature and context of the problem (Stringer, 1996).

It is an important phase in that it effectively broadens the pattern of participation and, according to Walten and Gaffney (in Foote-Whyte, 1991) constitutes a further step towards "strengthening both the knowledge and action outcomes" (p.122) of the inquiry. The point is made that because more groups
are involved and the interests of a broader population are represented, the resulting model for change is likely to be sound and more widely supported.

Stringer (1996) sees this meeting of groups as a means of setting participants free, not only to voice their own beliefs but to "construct a new vision," (p.59) of the situation. As Paulo Freire suggests, people meet to name the world in order that they might change it (1970). Enlightenment occurs when stakeholders are given the opportunity to reconsider their views in the light of input by others. From this perspective it then becomes possible to find different ways of resolving problems.

As Elden and Levin (1991) suggest, it is a learning process which enables people to find new meaning. Ultimately then "frames of reference can be changed and new frames generated" (p.134).

Stringer (1996) draws attention to the goal of obtaining a collaboratively generated description of a situation which "includes the perspectives, interests and agendas of all parties" (p.61). The initial role of the researcher is to create conditions which are conducive for such productive interaction. This means that he or she will attend to matters such as transport and the identification of a suitable venue, for example.

The researcher can also present ground rules for the gathering as well as a broad agenda detailing the purpose of the meeting, its format and the actions of all participants including the researcher's own role in the proceedings.

The process of formulating a joint descriptive account requires that the material derived from the work of individual groups is presented in summarised chart form either by the researcher or by representatives from the stakeholder groups.
It is the facilitator’s role at this time to “acknowledge differences, to help people learn to listen to each other in-depth and to provide a containment so that conflict can be explored safely” (Reason & Heron, 1996, p.135). In addition, the facilitator sets the stage so to speak for a joint process of interpretation when stakeholders will form smaller groups within which the information can be explored.

Various frameworks are suggested for this exploration (Stringer, 1996), including questioning strategies designed to obtain a clearer picture of the situation. Stringer proposes that questions can be formulated in relation to a number of core elements. These may include historical factors, values and attitudes towards one another and consideration of the availability of and access to resources. It falls to the facilitator to guide stakeholder groups in this respect.

Reason and Heron (1996) describe this as a phase in which all of the players can become:

fully immersed and engaged with their experience. They (may) develop a degree of openness to what is going on so free of preconceptions that they see it in a new way. They may deepen into the experience so that superficial understandings are elaborated and developed. Or they may be led away from the original ideas and proposals into new fields, unpredicted action and creative insights. (p.127)

Thoughts and ideas generated are sorted collectively. Here Stringer (1996) suggests a number of ways in which the group can create categories from all of the information presented. One method is to determine common ideas and to group these accordingly. This exercise requires co-operation and negotiation and creates a further opportunity for stakeholders to reassess their contributions. In writing up the interpretive account the researcher utilises this charted information and where necessary transcripts of recorded discussion.
3.6.2 The "Think" Stage in Action - A Large Group Approach

This phase of the research was aimed at bringing all of the participating stakeholders together. It took the form of a workshop facilitated by a clinical psychologist who was not involved in the field of investigation but who is familiar with the township. This enabled the researcher to observe the process and to participate in group discussions. The proceedings were tape recorded with the permission of the participants.

As a first step the researcher welcomed the groups and explained that this stage of the study involved reflecting on the thoughts and ideas which had been generated in the small group process, and reaching consensus on the problems which had been named. No formal agenda was used.

With the exception of the community youth group all of the groups had nominated representatives who were present. No members of the youth group arrived. The researcher found this surprising given the enthusiasm of that group. In addition she was disappointed that as a result of their absence the community would have no voice beyond the group’s initial input.

Prior to commencing the workshop, however, a community representative arrived with apologies from the group and the researcher expressed regret that the youth would be unable to make a contribution. Presumably as a result of this interaction a number of Stanza Bopape residents later arrived at the venue and asked that they be allowed to participate. It was felt that although they had not been part of the small group process, they would nevertheless constitute a valuable voice which needed to be heard.

The workshop got underway with the categorised comments from individual groups being put up on the walls for general inspection. Even in these early stages the charts generated discussion, particularly around those comments pertaining to vigilantism. Participants were broken up into groups which were
structured so as to ensure that there was at least one person from each of the
different small groups represented.

Each group was given a randomly selected chart of comments, asked to work
through the categories and to reflect on the statements which had been made.
This was a lengthy process since for many it presented an opportunity to debate a
number of issues which emerged from some of the charted points. The
researcher participated in one of these groups and was struck by the interest and
levels of committment shown by those involved. However, it was apparent that
some aspects led to more animated discussion than others and in her group, for
example, disappointment at the government’s perceived lack of material support
for CPFs was raised in the course of discussion around “Perceptions of the CPF”.

This activity was followed by general discussion between all the group
members. It had been the intention of the researcher at this stage to create
categories from all of the information presented. This was to have been achieved
by using the coding exercise suggested by Stringer (1996).

However, categories were spontaneously created and the group identified and
agreed central features of the problem without needing a structure that might have
interrupted the generation of ideas. But this was by no means a quick or easy
process and, prior to charting, there was often lengthy discussion around various
points which had emerged in the course of conversation. In addition the facilitator
tried to encourage the active participation of those who held back from full
involvement in the process.

It was of concern that although such a forum should represent an opportunity
for “diverse groups to negotiate agendas” (Stringer, 1996, p.35) the researcher
felt that there was much left unsaid and that individuals did not always feel
comfortable about voicing their opinions in this setting. This was corroborated by
the fact that in some cases people preferred to express a viewpoint privately to
the researcher rather than air it generally.
The scope of the subject might have been problematic in terms of the degree to which different aspects of crime and crime prevention could be explored. In this regard time constraints for some participants may well have put pressure on others and prevented them from having their say. Nevertheless, interaction in the large group proved stimulating and the researcher felt that as participants settled into the process it became easier to share ideas and to move towards providing possible solutions to problems which had been collectively named.

3.7 The “Act” Stage of Action Research

3.7.1 Exploring the "Act" Stage

This is the stage in which it becomes possible to formulate solutions to problems and to plan concrete actions. Stringer (1996) speaks of it as a phase where people can come up with practical solutions to the problems they have named. A point is reached where participants can "reflect on their situation and can conceive solutions to their problems with a degree of clarity that escapes them in the rush and clutter of their day-to-day lives" (p.97).

The formulation of a negotiated course of action is desirable since it increases a sense of ownership. This in turn increases the possibility than any activities undertaken will be successful.

Stringer (1996) emphasises, however, that it is the unity which arises from a common vision which proves more inspiring than the procedures. From this perspective the joint formulation of a vision statement may help to ensure that each and every activity is orientated towards the well-being of the community in every respect. He goes so far as to suggest that stakeholders describe what they are to do and how they intend to do it. The purpose is two-fold. It enables participants to clarify agreed actions and further it confirms the need to carry out these activities in a way which fosters a community spirit.
Thus, for each task, the participant\group recognises and responds to the human need for dignity, pride and respect. Equally, the process requires that the researcher must constantly observe and reflect on his or her own practises.

An important aspect is the opportunity which this final stage provides for celebration. Stringer (1996) notes the importance of recognising the group's accomplishments and suggests that an appropriate ritual end the proceedings.

3.7.2 The "Act" Stage in Action

The processes of "Thinking" and "Acting" were to a large extent interwoven in this study since participants were continuously exploring and identifying solutions to their difficulties.

Participants indicated, however, that discussion was all too frequently characterised by a welter of ideas and suggestions but that this, as the researcher had observed during the orientation phase, was rarely accompanied by any action. As a result the group was keen to reach agreement on a way forward and to designate areas of responsibility. Accordingly, suggestions were agreed and charted.

Stringer's (1996) suggestion of a celebration was adhered to and participants shared a meal together. The researcher observed that for most this represented an opportunity to continue to explore the topic and felt that this was indicative of the growth of "common-unity" (p.25) which Stringer emphasises as an important aim in action research.

3.8 Towards the Descriptive Account

The researcher used the material generated from the "Look", "Think" and "Act" stages of research to present the account which follows. In this process the themes which had been identified were eventually woven together, revealing a
story which in many ways represents the richness and fullness of description referred to by Tolan et al. (1990) in their discussion on the centrality of “complex and enriching discussion” (p.17) as a research goal.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The "look" stage of action research (Stringer, 1996) gives people participating in separate, small groups the opportunity to explore a particular problem. In this way a discussion forum is created and stakeholders can begin the process of jointly shaping a descriptive account of their difficulties.

Ideas, comments and observations pertaining to crime in Stanza Bopape were contributed by four small groups and later transcribed from tape recordings (see Appendix A). The researcher then identified four overarching themes and categorised the input from each of the individual groups accordingly. The themes are as follows:

* Perceptions of a community, Stanza Bopape
* Perceptions of police-community relations
* Perceptions of the CPF
* Perceptions of community organisation against crime.

At the "think" stage of the research (Stringer, 1996), when the pattern of stakeholder participation is expanded, groups come together to construct a vision of the problem which will reflect and accommodate a diversity of views. Those groups contributing to the study gravitated towards specific aspects of the material presented by the small groups.

This input from the "look" stage is presented in the form of selected comments which illustrate how, and to what extent, experiences and feelings articulated in the small groups informed the large group account of the problem. Sub-themes
which emerged in the large group process tell the story of a journey towards finding “common-unity” (Stringer, 1996, p.25).

4.2 The “Look” Stage - Perceptions of a Community : Stanza Bopape

The four participating groups, namely a community youth group, the SAP, the CPF and representatives of the CIP from Vista University, were unanimous in their perception that the informal settlement of Stanza Bopape is a dangerous place to be. Young men and women in the youth group clearly feared for their safety both during daylight hours and at night. These feelings were expressed in comments like “at night you hear gunshots in the neighbourhood,” and “you don’t sleep at night”.

The blatancy of criminals in the area was apparent. The group observed that criminals “kill people in daylight” and that residents in the community are “afraid of walking, of driving, of being raped”. The police shared this view of the area, noting that “people are scared” and that “they live in fear”. Fear was a dominant theme. Both the CPF and CIP groups picked up on it and explored the implications of living under threat. Members of the CPF, for instance, spoke of the negative psychological effects of crime and the resulting isolation of the settlement since “nobody wants to go into a crime-ridden area”.

4.3 The “Think” Stage

The experiences and feelings articulated in the smaller groups informed the large group account of the problem to a great extent. Significantly however, this input also took participants in a new directions as the sub-theme of community apathy indicates.
4.3.1 Sub-Theme - Rampant Crime

Stanza Bopape was seen as a crime-ridden area where people feel unsafe. Stakeholders agreed that the situation impacts negatively on the community and considered it vital to explore ways in which crime and the perpetrators of crime can be dealt with more effectively.

4.3.2 Sub-Theme - Community Apathy

The community of Stanza Bopape was, however, perceived as not being supportive of the police-community partnership. The feeling is that although the CPF is putting effort into building and strengthening this relationship the broader community is “not on board”. The point was made that “the support of the entire community is needed” before any headway can be made in the fight against crime. Paradoxically though, such support seems more likely if the CPF shows it can tackle crime effectively.

The perception of community apathy may well have been reinforced by the absence of a community stakeholder group. However, the debate surrounding community apathy indicated the extent to which this problem concerns the various groups.

4.4 The “Look” Stage - Perceptions of Community-Police Relations

Input from the individual groups indicates that community-police relations are not good. The community youth group in particular was unanimous in denouncing the police for corruption, poor service delivery and inefficiency. Attitudes towards the police were reflected in comments such as “some police are eating with the criminals” and “the police are corrupt”. These observations were backed up with numerous examples. For instance, one participant said “dockets are bought. I’ve seen that happen in front of my eyes”. Another remarked that “if something has
been stolen and they (the police) find it it will not end up in a court it will end up in the hands of that policeman or woman and he/she will sell that product”.

There was little confidence in the justice system and the group did not believe that the police service would act against criminals efficiently. Group members accused the police of releasing suspects and there were angry reactions at the perceived leniency of the justice system. These included statements such as “maybe today I kill someone. Tomorrow I will be out”.

The CIP group echoed this theme, emphasising the historical roots of the problem and identifying a lack of trust on the part of the Stanza Bopape community as one factor which hinders a solid partnership with the police. Participants said that this was “a long-term problem”. Its beginnings could be found in “the cat and rat relationship” which characterised the interaction between communities and the police in the apartheid years.

The SAPS felt that attitudes were changing, but showed an awareness of these perceptions commenting that “people are frustrated with the police” and that “law abiding citizens look at the police as failing to arrest criminals”.

Although more tentative in its criticism of the service, the CPF noted that communities “are outraged by the levels of crime. However, the Forum generally viewed police-community relations in an altogether more positive light.

A point which was often made in connection with the poor relationship between the police and the community of Stanza Bopape relates to the distance of the community from its police station. The need for the police to come closer to the community translated into comments such as “the people want their own police station” and “the police are isolated from the community geographically”.
4.5 The “Think” Stage

The perceptions of community-police relations which emerged as a result of the small group process focused attention on two areas: the lack of community confidence in the formal policing system and the isolation of the Stanza Bopape settlement.

4.5.1 Sub Theme - The Need to Build Confidence

The problem of escalating crime undoubtedly has an adverse effect on police and community relations. When the community has a negative perception of the work of the police service this is generalised to the CPF. In the light of this, participants explored ways in which to shift these perceptions, placing strong emphasis on building confidence in the CPF by giving it more “muscle”. It seems that as long as the CPF remains restricted in its power to act, it is in danger of losing community support.

The call for more CPF “policing powers” emerged consistently in the context of more efficient and visible policing. However, this was a thorny issue and it sparked debate around the extent to which various groups “protect their powers” thereby excluding valuable resources and making it difficult for stakeholders to interact in a “mutually supportive manner”. Whilst it was not made explicit, this was evidently an issue between the CPF and the SAPS.

The groups, however, recognised that much of this dissatisfaction has arisen as a result of the blurred boundaries which exist between the activities of the police and the CPF. The general consensus of opinion is that since confusion gives rise to bad feeling, the roles of the police and the CPF should be “clearly defined” with regard to crime prevention.

The group agreed that responsibilities should be spelled out in a “simplified manner” so that every stakeholder would know “who should take responsibility for
what and under what circumstances this should happen”. The community representatives on the CPF indicated, however, that this should be an area for negotiation. The fact that Mamelodi, with its population of 1.4 million, has a police service numbering only 375 was taken as evidence of the need for police to open up further areas of responsibility such as the right of CPF members “to search premises when required”.

From this discussion it became clear that the CPF considers itself to be limited in terms of opportunities to “assist the police service in a hands-on way”. Active involvement is seen as a way of supporting the SAPS, helping to make it more effective and positively influencing community perceptions about a community-police partnership as represented by the Community Police Forum.

4.5.2 Sub-Theme - The Need for Accessibility

Small group commentary on the isolation of Stanza Bopape fuelled this debate, along with input from a member of the community who asked the question “where exactly are the offices of the CPF?” This very practical problem provided an opportunity to explore ways in which to make both the police and the CPF more accessible to residents of the settlement.

The forum and its sub-forums comprise a body of men and women who meet regularly. It does not operate as a public service during business hours and there is no permanently stationed person interacting with the public on a day-to-day basis. Currently a police representative deals with any queries concerning the CPF.

To make the CPF more service-orientated participants suggested a “multi-purpose community centre” which could function as a neutral base for the forum and reinforce its community commitment. This would be a sort of community nerve centre, supplying information, educating the public and housing a variety of
community support services. From a policing point of view it would constitute a positive step towards building confidence and trust.

4.6 The “Look” Stage - Perceptions of the CPF

The youth group was unclear about the CPF. Participants wanted to know “What is a CPF?”, whilst those who were familiar with the structure indicated that it might be dangerous to be associated with such a forum since CPF community representatives had been singled out as targets by criminals.

The CPF focused extensively on a need to educate the community, with participants agreeing that the forum “has a role in conscientising our people in working with the police”. From a police perspective the CPF had “improved relations with the community”.

4.7 The “Think” Stage

The relatively modest input at small group stage was greatly expanded at the “think” stage of the research. The groups focussed on a number of issues, some of which sprang from contributions made at the “look” phase. Other ideas represented new directions in thinking.

4.7.1 Sub-Theme - The Need for Resources

In an examination of the role of the CPF participants concurred that the forum is “simply expected to do to much”. The pressures associated with these expectations are exacerbated by a lack of resources. Stakeholder groups spoke of limited resources generally whilst the CPF emphasised its heavy reliance on the police for use of vehicles, telephones and so forth. Such facilities were not always available.
Building on this was the suggestion that the CPF would perhaps be less stretched and better supported if cognisance could be taken of the unofficial community policing structures such as people's courts, which exist in the township. As one person said "It is clear that there is concern about crime here in the community and that is exactly why such structures exist. They want to deal with crime and we cannot say that is a bad thing. In this respect we all share the same goal".

Participants identified as a challenge the possibility of bringing such structures together under the CPF. The possible involvement by the CPF of diverse ordering mechanisms gave rise to discourse focussing on the types of structure which might accommodate such an arrangement. The general consensus was that sub-forums operating under the "mother" CPF could play a role in this regard.

Sub-forums are seen to play an important part with regard to the co-ordination and integration of various community efforts. Ideally they should have the capacity to facilitate a good working relationship within and between groups and, importantly, they should make the CPF more accessible to the community. By expanding the opportunity for consultation across a broad spectrum, the sub-forums can ensure wider community representation and involvement and create an appreciation of the needs and resources within a given area.

The involvement of various alternative systems of ordering and justice is considered highly desirable. As a result of its acceptance of diverse anti-crime initiatives a possible spin-off for the CPF would be increased credibility. Beyond this, however, the possibilities for more unity and less fragmentation in an approach to crime would be greatly enhanced.

4.7.2 Sub-Theme - Uniting against Crime

The point was made that criminal elements appear to be better organised than the official structures which exist to combat crime. Fragmentation constitutes a
major problem. The effect of this was summed up with the observation that since "disunity gives criminals opportunity we must pull together and integrate our efforts".

By recognising diverse initiatives and bringing them under the umbrella of the CPF, the community and its police could create a united front and gradually close ranks against criminals. This was seen as an important step towards "breaking the silence around criminals and criminal activities" which many communities still maintain for fear of reprisals.

4.8 The “Look” Stage - Perceptions of Community Organisation against Crime

The activities of community courts and vigilante groups had been given a great deal of attention by the small groups. All were familiar with people's courts and vigilante groups and spoke freely about the negative as well as the positive aspects of these structures. The CPF group noted that "community courts have been there since our forefathers", whilst CIP group members observed that "people are familiar with the practice at the community courts". Where vigilantism is concerned the CPF saw such groups as having "good intentions as a sign of outrage against crime".

A problem for the SAPS, CPF and CIP groups was the methods used by these structures. For the SAPS the activities of community courts and vigilante groups "strain community-police relations". The police cannot allow members of the public to be assaulted and must act when this happens. Yet they bear the brunt of public anger when they intervene to halt vigilante group action or act on complaints laid against people's courts. The CPF is similarly compromised.

Whilst the youth group argued that the most effective deterrent against rape "is to cut off the private parts of rapists" and that stealing should be dealt with by lopping off the hands of offenders, the other groups emphasised human rights.
The CIP group described occasions when suspects had been “stripped naked and beaten around the streets with people watching” or were “burned to death”.

The problem of excesses is a grave one for this group and others. But there was no suggestion at any point that no place existed for such alternative structures.

4.9 The “Think” Stage

Vigilantism was clearly an area of concern for the three groups present. It was felt that vigilante action had reached such proportions that it needed to be addressed by the stakeholders.

4.9.1 Sub-Theme - Reaching Out

The need to ensure that vigilante groups and people’s courts operate within the scope of the law stimulated debate. Groups were resolute in their opinions that “you cannot combat crime by committing it” and that “under these circumstances the law must act”.

Reflecting on what is viewed as a transgression of human rights on the part of organisations which set themselves up to judge, sentence and punish suspected criminals, the group indicated its belief that it is the inability of South Africa’s justice system to process criminal cases and effectively deal with offenders which has contributed to widespread vigilante action and the continuing support of community courts.

Vigilante “policing structures” together with people’s courts stand in contradistinction to the official structures. Where the justice system is perceived to be slow, inefficient and ineffectual, alternative ordering mechanisms do not hesitate to act immediately in their dealings with criminals and to impose those punishments which they deem fitting to the crime. In some instances the
insistence that an offender makes good a wrong is altogether more acceptable to injured parties.

The idea of legitimising community courts as a proactive means of addressing problems which exist within the justice system is seen as a way to reduce crime and involve the community, in particular the youth, in the administration of justice. The sense of ownership which a community derives from such involvement is one way of fostering commitment to the concept of community policing and the CPF.

Importantly, however, such structures would need to be monitored to ensure that they operate within the confines of the law. It would also be necessary to provide the appropriate training.

4.10 The “Act” Stage of Action Research

At this stage of the research participants focus on taking action. For the Stanza Bopape discussion group the “think” and “act” stages of the research merged so that thinking about a situation went hand in hand with the contemplation of possible solutions.

Thus, naming the problems associated with crime in the settlement prompted the group to take immediate and positive steps towards the formulation of concrete actions.

Nevertheless participants identified some priority areas. In order to facilitate further planning and action these are presented separately below.

4.10.1 The Road Ahead - A New Vision

The group spoke of a need to include those structures not represented on the CPF in planning and decision making. The decision was taken to involve as many “outsiders” as possible in CPF consultation. For instance, group members
advocated “meeting with representatives of vigilante groups, talking with them and finding ways to bring them on board”.

Certainly participants came to see structures such as vigilante groups and community courts as potential resources, pointing out that many operate on a full-time basis and are therefore in a position to provide committed players who can participate in the structuring of initiatives which would be both highly effective and legally acceptable.

As an initial step a summit meeting with vigilante groups has been proposed. Responsibility for the organisation of this was accepted by the Executive of the Mamelodi CPF which has invited input and ideas from all stakeholders who participated in the study.

Workshops coinciding with the summit are to focus on a wide variety of initiatives including community courts and street and block committees. This is in line with the perceived need to expand CPF-related initiatives so as to encourage fuller participation, interest, and support at grass roots level.

Finally the researcher undertook to present her study to the stakeholders in order that they might have access to the ideas, goals and objectives which their efforts have produced.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the study support the suggestion that the way in which a community organises itself against rampant crime has implications for Community Policing.

It is evident that the perceived failure of the police and the justice system to deal effectively with crime in the settlement of Stanza Bopape militates against a mutually supportive relationship between the community and the police, particularly since community members become inclined to use alternative systems of justice and ordering under these conditions.

The study indicates that the high crime rate in Stanza Bopape has strained relations between the SAPS and the community, that the community takes its own steps to address the crime problem and that this approach is detrimental to an aim of the CPF which is to build a healthy community-police partnership.

The argument that many organic ordering mechanisms have existed for decades and should have a place in the Community Policing model (Jagwanth, 1994; Ncholo, 1994; Shearing, 1994a) reflects a finding of the study which indicates that recognition of alternative systems of ordering is likely to enhance the credibility and legitimacy of formal policing structures.

It can also be speculated that acceptance of diverse structures such as people’s courts, will increase a community sense of ownership around Community Policing, thereby countering community apathy and enhancing commitment to the Community Policing concept.

Clearly, however, the tendency of the Stanza Bopape community to overstep the law represents one of the many challenges that confront the CPF.
The credibility of the Forum is at stake when crime levels soar yet the CPF has limited powers to act, and thus no real opportunity to change the status quo. A lack of resources, the part-time, voluntary nature of the work and uncertainty of regarding the exact nature of the role of the CPF are problematic factors and would suggest that the SAPS remains the dominant partner in the "partnership". From this perspective a finding that the CPF needs to increase its sphere of influence and become more visible in policing is perhaps not surprising.

5.1 New Directions

The story which unfolds in the course of this study is not just about crime and its effects on a disadvantaged community. It is about different perceptions of a problem. It is about the potential for conflict under such circumstances. Above all perhaps, it is about finding promising new possibilities and positive direction.

The research process contributed greatly to this outcome. The organisation of separate stakeholder groups in the initial stages of the research minimised the possibility of conflict and allowed individuals to explore facets of the problem reasonably freely. However, the researcher realised that the setting and conditions under which group discussions take place greatly influence the nature of the interaction. From this point of view, it is necessary to adapt one's approach, adjusting it to the needs and expectations of the different groups. For instance, the SAPS and CPF stakeholder groups required structure. Conversely, the youth group was comfortable with complete informality. What applies in one group is not necessarily helpful in another and sensitivity to conditions which are conducive to opening up discussion makes for a more fruitful outcome.

In the researcher's opinion every phase of the research played a role in determining the end result. To use the metaphor of building blocks, each act of construction influenced the creative processes at every stage, shaping the design but also putting in place the necessary foundations. For instance, the
familiarisation phase brought a sense of ‘stuckness’. There was no action because there was no action.

At the small group stage, the mere act of getting together shifted people from an immobilized state and created the space for them to articulate and explore their expectations of others. The police, for example, voiced expectations of the community and vice versa.

In the context of crime prevention it was also the researcher’s sense that this was a phase where issues of “ownership” came to the fore. The control and use of resources, definitions of community policing, and the direction in which the process should be steered were variously ‘owned’ by the participating groups. Yet, at the same time, there was acknowledgment of the role which other stakeholders can and should play.

The final stage of the research was built on this flexibility of approach. It was a far cry from the stuckness of the familiarisation phase in that participants collectively took steps towards addressing their problems and jointly named a plethora of possibilities. There was also a noticeable shift from ownership to incorporation and space was made for new voices to be heard.

It is relevant to comment here on action research as the methodology for this study. Since it differs substantially from some of the more traditional ways of conducting research, its value as a participatory approach to community problems needs to be discussed with participants. This is important if there is to be a sense of ownership and commitment to the process. In the context of this study, clarification of the concept of action research was necessary in order to overcome some of the negative perceptions of research which were held in certain sectors of the community.
5.2 Limitations of the Study

In terms of the limitations of the study two difficulties confronted the researcher. Both relate to the length of time involved. In the first place it was not easy for the stakeholders to remain motivated about the study over an 18-month period. Consequently, levels of enthusiasm and commitment fluctuated and there may at times have been some doubt as to what the study could achieve. This again reinforces the need to clarify for participants the aims and objectives of the research process.

Secondly, the topicality of the subject matter meant that the situation was changing constantly as new players emerged. From this point of view it was not possible to include the stakeholder groups which then became relevant. This limitation of the study clearly placed some restrictions on the extent to which the diverse anti-crime initiatives within the community could be explored.

5.3 Further Research Suggestions

Since the study was first conceptualised at the end of 1997 there have been a number of noteworthy developments. One is a call for the introduction of a community justice system which is structured in compliance with the South African Constitution and other legislation. Commenting on the introduction of community courts within the proposed system Justice Minister Dullah Omar noted that these "would be regulated within a framework of democracy which compelled people to observe certain structures and norms" (Nxusani, 1998, p.2).

These legitimate community-based mechanisms for dispute resolution are viewed as a means of bringing justice to the people and relieving the SAPS of the task of dealing with a host of minor offences which continue to stretch the capacity of the police service, the courts and correctional services.
Gauteng Premier, Mathole Motshekga said the courts "would deal with petty squabbles, public indecency, neighbourhood disputes, soft-drug abuse, contravention of municipal by-laws and petty theft" ("Bring back people's", 1998, p.2.). Sentences would include remedy to the complainant as well as community service such as working in hospitals or clearing up litter.

Currently a community justice pilot project is underway in Khayalami, Gauteng and it is proposed that this will also be introduced into Stanza Bopape. Further, on a visit to Stanza Bopape on March 15, 1999, the Gauteng MEC for Public Safety and Security proposed that the issue of crime should be addressed at grass-roots level with the formation of street committee structures which would ultimately feed into the Community Police Forum.

These developments suggest the need for further investigation in order to assess the community's views on such initiatives, the impact on crime in the area and the effect of this on perceptions of the police and the CPF.

Finally the researcher acknowledges that whilst community policing has an important role to play in addressing the crime problem, it must be appreciated that if crime is to be dealt with more efficiently it is necessary to consider those factors which give rise to it in the first place. From this perspective it is important to attend to the socio-economic and environmental conditions which are so often at the root of crime in underprivileged areas (White Paper on Safety and Security, 1998). With its lack of infrastructure and overcrowded living conditions Stanza Bopape is no exception.
REFERENCE LIST


APPENDIX A

SMALL GROUP INPUT CATEGORISED THEMATICALLY

Stanza Bopape Youth Group

Perceptions of a Community: Stanza Bopape

“A lot of problem with crime.”

“It is a frightening place.”

“..they kill people in daylight.”

“There is no security in this place.”

“...very unsafe...at night you hear gunshots in the neighbourhood.”

“You don’t sleep at night.”

“Gangsterism.”

“We are afraid of walking, of driving, of being raped.”

Perceptions of Community-Police Relations

“If you go to the police station...they won’t even bother to listen...they will tell you there is no van/car here...”

“They will tell you to go to another police station..”

“...the people from where the boy that shot the policeman came wanted to know why we had to give first aid to a policeman. Then they started searching for us..”

“The community feels bad about the police...”

“There are lots of problems involving the police and the community.”

“When a person is arrested...the police release that person...”

“Some...police are eating with the criminals.”

“The police are corrupt...”

“If something has been stolen and they find it...it will not end up in a court it will end up in the hands of that policeman or women and either he/she will sell that product...”

“The arrested person is going to be released..”

“You go to the police station. You report a case...the policeman doesn’t know whether it is fraud or theft.”

“Bribery. That thing exists too much.”

“Maybe today I kill someone. Tomorrow I will be out.”

“...like buying dockets...I’ve seen that happen in front of my eyes...”
"The police steal."

**Perceptions of the Community Police Forum**

"If we want to help the CPF some people (in the community) are saying they are going to kill us..."

"I wanted to be part of the CPF but they are fighting me..."

"We must go to the police and join hands. We must help the police."

"Here there is not a CPF. What is a CPF?"

"I only know three guys who were involved with the CPF but one of them was killed..."

"We wanted to join the CPF but we were scared."

**Perceptions of Community Organisation Against Crime**

"There are street committees in our streets...they send you to the police."

"There are some forms of community courts which solve only the problems of individuals..."

"They don't always allow people to argue their cases there."

"There are not people there at all times..."

"They solve family disputes..."

"We use kangaroo courts because the police are not doing their job..."

"It is okay to cut off the private parts of a rapist...we think it is okay...like if you steal they must cut your hands..."

"We need to investigate why people are being released...we need to be in charge of such incidents..."

"We need to train matriculants to tackle all the problems of the community."

"You can say one crime is a small problem...but if I steal bread tomorrow then it might be a car next. All crime is a problem and must be dealt with."

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**The South African Police Service**

**Perceptions of a Community - Stanza Bopape**

"It is isolated"

"Crime is very high."

"It is a flash area."

"There are no lights."

"The roads are bad."

"People are scared."
"They live in fear. They are not safe."

'It affects business'

"Insurance premiums are high."

Perceptions of Police-Community Relations

"...the law abiding citizens look at the police as failing to arrest criminals."

"The police are battling to police such large areas."

"It is dangerous for the police."

"We are trying to make the police more user-friendly."

"The people want their own police station."

"The majority of the community know their rights in regard to policing matters like making a citizen's arrest."

"It is difficult. People say they were trying to help the police, but the police acted against us."

"People are frustrated with the police..."

Perceptions of the Community Police Forum

"It has improved relations with the community."

Perceptions of Community Organisation Against Crime

"...people overstep their rights."

"We appreciate their services."

"They mustn't take the law into their own hands."

"People are too impatient, if the police don't respond quickly they start hitting on him or her (the suspect)."

"A community can manage its own conflicts but when they sentence people to corporal punishment or to pay certain fines it's wrong...where does the money go to?"

"They (vigilantes etc) strain community police relationships."

"The one who is punished...(by People's Courts)...the only place he can go is to the police...we have an obligation to arrest these people (who administered the punishment), but then they say they were trying to assist the police..."

"Who are these people? Who are they chosen by...the street committees? Who?"

"Legislation could be passed to state who must be trial officers and the kind of punishment."
“People must be trained, regulated by the law they will work better…”
“Petty cases can be handled by official community courts, the police can concentrate on serious matters.”
“…now they do not reduce crime because they are committing crime (e.g. by meting out justice, beatings etc”).
“If it was legislated and Mr-so-and-so was sentenced he would get community service and it will serve as a deterrent...others will be scared that if they do the same thing they will wear the orange overall and be seen as a criminal in their own community.”

The Community Police Forum, Mamelodi Executive

Perceptions of a Community - Stanza Bopape
“Not a hot spot compared to other informal settlements in Gauteng.”
“...criminals hide themselves in that area.”
“hard to trace criminals there...a congestion of shacks.”
“Criminal activity reduces the possibility of development...nobody wants to go into a crime-ridden area.”
“Psychologically it has a negative effect.”
“Crime is the inheritance of young people...”
“If you look at hijacking it is negative...in a sense we accept that this is how society has to be.”

Perceptions of Police-Community Relations
“...outraged by the levels of crime.”
“Police have limited resources...”
“The fact that the Premier identified Stanza for a pilot project in alternative justice says that the link which has been created between the police and the community in that particular area is a strong relationship...”
“Confidence is developing...when there is potential for violence then the community...will report such things.”
“The community is providing information” (to the police about criminals).

Perceptions of the Community Police Forum
“It has a role in conscientising our people in working with the police...”
"It must educate our people in terms of the role of citizen's arrest...make sure that it is within the scope of the law and does not violate the fundamental human rights of the constitution."

"The CPF is a community construction..."

"Stakeholders include SANCO and NGOs and our role is to be sure that in the formulation of community courts there is community participation in these structures."

Perceptions of Community Organisation Against Crime

"Vigilantes...had good intentions as a sign of outrage against crime..."

"Community courts have been there since our forefathers."

"They (community courts) have been helpful but only if they are well co-ordinated."

"Once criminals begin to infiltrate structures they become a problem."

"The alternative justice system will lessen the burden of minor crimes...community courts will handle them."

"The Departments of Justice and Correctional Services should be involved."

The Centre for Innovation and Productivity, Vista University, Mamelodi Campus

Perceptions of a Community: Stanza Bopape

"Crime is a serious problem there..."

"People live in shacks"

"There is no privacy"

"Abuse is rife"

"People are afraid..."

Perceptions of Police-Community Relations

"The police are not always welcome..."

"People are not well informed in terms of the law..."

"It goes much deeper, to the question of literacy."

"There are serious effects for the police and community."

"The police are isolated from the community geographically."

"The community perceive that the police are not supportive e.g. evictions."

"The police are not trusted."

"The community does not go to the police for protection."
“It's a long term problem...from apartheid...the police would jump out of their cars and the people would run away. There is still this rat and cat relationship between communities and the police.”

“Young people have been able to establish a relationship with the police.”

“Police are not always involved by the community, eg., in an abuse case where there is a fear of losing the breadwinner of the family.”

Perceptions of Community Organisation Against Crime

“Community courts are trusted by the community.”

“People are familiar with the practice at the community courts.”

“Many settlements have been established under Stanza Bopape and people look for security in their particular zones...they agree on making an area safe and if someone gets attacked or hurt...they use a whistle for security and the leaders come...”

“The form of punishment used is detrimental to humanity.”

“...the people are not trained...policemen are trained to deal with certain situations.”

“At times people are burned to death by vigilantes. They are stripped naked and beaten around the streets with people watching...”

“A respected man can be accused of a rape and forced to say he is a rapist...”

“They (the vigilantes) don’t know about fundamental human rights.”

“Vigilantes are not formal they are just people who incite each other.”

“In community courts people are designated to deal with the issues...but their manner of sentencing is not different to that of vigilantes.”

“Things get too personal.”

“The community needs to take more personal responsibility.”

“The solution is a community justice system, modified and integrated within the legitimate and legal justice system.”

“We must take justice to the people. There is a need for a justice system that will be seen and felt by the people of the whole community.”

“A legitimate system will have a positive effect on police-community relations.”

“Some offences have to be de-criminalised and dealt with in community courts.”

“The police should deal with serious crimes like murder, rape and robbery.”

“If I steal bread to feed my family, I shouldn’t go to prison. I will retain my role as breadwinner but will render services to the community...”

“The youth is an asset to the community. They need to be involved.”

“We must educate people.”
"We want formally recognised community structures that are there to solve problems in a very professional way."