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The Effect of Community Policing Forums within Glenmore and Umbilo Communities in Durban, South Africa

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Abstract

This study explores the value and effectiveness of Community Policing Forums (CPF) in Glenmore and Umbilo communities, in Durban, South Africa. Drawing upon both Broken Windows Theory (BWT) and Social Disorganisation Theory (SDT), the research investigates diverse community and CPF member perspectives through a qualitative approach. Findings reveal variations in CPF awareness, with some participants demonstrating strong knowledge while others lacking familiarity. This disparity aligns with the potential "information disorder" suggested by BWT and social fragmentation identified by SDT. The study highlights the importance of multi-pronged communication strategies, including social media, local media, and posters, to bridge awareness gaps and foster broader engagement. However, acknowledging SDT's insights, the research emphasises tailoring communication to reach diverse segments and address potential digital divides. Beyond awareness, the study underscores the need for deeper collaboration between communities and police, addressing root causes of crime, and empowering residents to participate in safety efforts actively. By moving beyond the limitations of BWT and embracing the holistic perspectives offered by SDT, CPFs can contribute to sustainable solutions for safer and more inclusive communities.

Keywords: *Community Policing Forums, Broken Windows Theory, Social Disorganization Theory, Glenmore, Umbilo, Community Engagement, Safety, Empowerment*

Introduction

Community policing forums (CPF) strive to foster cooperation between law enforcement and the public in the constantly changing realm of security (Mhlongo & Mafika, 2021). The interesting topic of whether CPFs are beneficial in promoting safety and security—and, if so, how well-aligned the views of CPF members and society at large—arises in the lively villages of Glenmore and Umbilo, South Africa. Recent studies demonstrate the potential of CPFs to improve public safety and community trust in the police (Mhlongo & Mafika, 2021; Dlamini & Mthembu, 2020). However, issues with uneven execution, scarce resources, and different degrees of participation continue to be concerns (Oluwafisayo & Okeke, 2023; Adebayo & Adedokun, 2022). This paper explores these difficulties and offers a comprehensive picture of the usefulness and efficacy of these forums by examining the opinions of CPF members in Glenmore and Umbilo as well as members

of the general community. As a means of bridging the divide between the public and law enforcement, CPFs are seen as potential threads of collaboration in the fabric of South African communities, where security concerns are woven into daily life. A vital question emerges in the thriving communities of Glenmore and Umbilo: What is the general community's and committed CPF members' opinion of these forums' worth and efficacy? The ability of CPFs to promote safer neighbourhoods is shown by recent research. Research shows that they can enhance public safety by promoting confidence between the police and the public, increasing information sharing, and implementing crime prevention strategies (Mhlongo & Mafika, 2021; Dlamini & Mthembu, 2020). Still, all is not always as it seems. Uneven execution, scarce resources, and differing degrees of participation continue to be issued (Oluwafisayo & Okeke, 2023; Adebayo & Adedokun, 2022).

Although local CPF implementations may differ, the fundamental ideas of encouraging police-community relationships and citizen participation are universal. Recent studies conducted in South Africa have brought to light the advantages and disadvantages of CPFs. Olofinbiyi (2022) looked at urban and rural regions, and discovered that CPFs can help lower crime rates when the community is actively involved and works well with the police. However, the study also found that the programme's efficacy was hampered by several issues, including a lack of resources and training for CPF members. Similarly, Malatji et al. (2023) investigated the difficulties CPFs encounter, such as a deficiency in explicit communication and accountability between law enforcement and communities.

Collaboration and trust are the cornerstones of an effective CPF, but they can also be brittle. CPFs are nevertheless in use in several South African communities despite these difficulties. It appears that several variables, such as the degree of community involvement, the accessibility of resources, and the calibre of police-community partnerships, influence their efficacy. This study in Glenmore and Umbilo, which looks at residents' experiences and opinions of the local CPF's influence on community safety and crime prevention, will add to the continuing conversation. We can learn important lessons from the achievements and shortcomings of CPFs in Glenmore and Umbilo that will guide future efforts to improve police-community cooperation and foster safer communities throughout South Africa.

To provide a comprehensive picture of the significance and efficacy of these forums, this research explores these ambiguities by looking at

the perspectives of both CPF members and members of the wider community in Glenmore and Umbilo. We want to identify common and differing perspectives on how the CPF affects community safety and security by combining their many points of view.

2. Research Questions

This study attempts to provide a comprehensive view of the CPF landscape in Glenmore and Umbilo by investigating these important concerns. The influence and growth potential of the forum are shaped by a variety of viewpoints and lived experiences; thus, the goal is not just to quantify success or failure. This increased knowledge can help develop tactics that improve teamwork, communication, and ultimately the efficiency of CPFs in creating safer and more secure neighbourhoods. The reasons for selecting Glenmore and Umbilo were their historically high or rising rates of crime. An important way to gauge the success of CPF is to look at how well it works in communities that have serious problems with crime. Due to their representation of communities with a range of socioeconomic origins, the researchers selected Glenmore and Umbilo. The functioning of CPFs and their effects on various social strata within a community may now be understood more intricately.

- (a) . What is the role of the CPF within Glenmore and Umbilo communities?
- (b). What is the perspective of Glenmore and Umbilo community members on the effectiveness of CPF within the community?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Community Policing

The goal of community policing is to enhance public safety, prevent crime, and foster trust via the collaborative efforts of law enforcement and the community. It is a philosophy and set of practices. It relies on proactive and cooperative methods, going beyond conventional reactive police (Mhlongo & Mafika, 2021). Important ideas consist of: establishing rapport and cooperating with neighbours to pinpoint and resolve neighbourhood safety issues (Dlamini & Mthembu, 2020). Determining and examining the underlying reasons for criminal activity as opposed to concentrating only on isolated instances (Adebayo & Adedokun, 2022). Citizens are encouraged to actively participate in

community policing through a range of activities, including joint patrols, neighbourhood watches, and community policing forums (Oluwafisayo & Okeke, 2023). Enabling local law enforcement agencies to customise their strategies to the unique requirements and issues of their areas (Okeke et al., 2022).

3.2 An Account of South Africa's Community Policing Past

After tensions between communities and the apartheid-era police force increased, South Africa embarked on a community policing initiative in the late 1980s. Community Policing Forums (CPFs) became a fundamental component of police reform with the official establishment of the 1994 democratic transition (Dlamini & Mthembu, 2020). Yet, obstacles including a lack of funding, uneven application, and a lack of community and police capacity building have made it less effective (Adebayo & Adedokun, 2022).

Limited police resources: The police force faces resource constraints in south-eastern Nigeria, making collaboration with communities crucial for effective crime prevention and response (Okeke et al., 2022).

- **Lack of trust in police:** Historical tensions and negative experiences with law enforcement contribute to a trust deficit, highlighting the need for community engagement to rebuild trust (Dlamini & Mthembu, 2020).
- **Empowerment and ownership:** Community safety forums can empower residents to take ownership of their safety and work collaboratively with police to address local concerns (Oluwafisayo & Okeke, 2023).

3.2.1 The Role of Community Safety Forums

In South Africa, community safety is still a major concern, which has led to the investigation of several measures to improve communication between the public and police enforcement. Community Safety Forums (CSFs) are a new and important tactic that uses a multifaceted approach to improve public safety and encourage collaboration. The changing role of CSFs and the variables affecting their efficacy are clarified by recent research.

Fundamental Purposes and Goals

According to Denzin and Love (2017), CSFs involve a wider spectrum of stakeholders than CPFs, which have a more focused focus on police-community ties. As a result, a more all-encompassing approach to safety is fostered, involving government institutions, community organisations, and civil society (Civilian Secretariat for Police). The Civilian Secretariat for Police (2016) states that CSFs are essential in safety audits to identify security threats in communities. Working with stakeholders, they create and execute safety plans that align with local, state, and federal government priorities based on these assessments (Denzin & Love, 2017). CSFs can tackle crime prevention with a multifaceted strategy by assembling a variety of stakeholders. Projects like youth development, environmental enhancements, and social development programmes may be included in this (Co-ordinating Prevention: The Role of Community Safety Forums, 2016).

Efficiency and Difficulties

Notwithstanding the acknowledged promise of CSFs, current research reveals both advantages and disadvantages in their application. CSFs may play a significant role in lowering crime, according to Olofinbiyi's (2022) criminological research, especially in places with robust police-community relationships and active community participation. Like CPFs, though, CSF members' insufficient training and resource availability may compromise their efficacy (Olofinbiyi, 2022). Furthermore, their influence may be limited, and uncertainty may result from imprecise mandates and a lack of interaction with current governance frameworks (Malatji et al., 2023).

Despite these obstacles, CSFs are a viable strategy for enhancing community safety in South Africa. To augment their efficacy, current research proposes concentrating on promoting wider community involvement and guaranteeing representation from varied groups in the community (Denzin & Love, 2017); supplying sufficient resources for CSFs to operate efficiently, such as funding for projects and member training (Malatji et al., 2023); and formulating explicit directives for CSFs in conjunction with cultivating robust alliances with law enforcement and other stakeholders (Civilian Secretariat for Police, 2016). By taking these factors into account, CSFs have the potential to develop

into essential forums for group problem-solving, which will ultimately lead to safer and more secure communities throughout South Africa.

4. Theoretical Review

This study examined two important theories on Community Policing Forums (CPF's) in Durban: Social Disorganisation Theory and Broken Windows Theory (BWT). Below is a summary of their creators, reasons for existing, and relevance to this study:

4.1 Broken Windows Theory (BWT)

The Broken Windows Theory was first proposed by Wilson and Kelling in 1982. This theory was selected to explain the correlation between crime rates and outward manifestations of disorder. Through proactive policing and community involvement, CPF's seek to increase public safety. According to BWT, keeping the peace and dealing with minor infractions can help prevent more major crimes. By concentrating on stopping minor problems like graffiti or vandalism, CPF's may establish a more law-abiding atmosphere that deters criminal activities.

4.2 Social Disorganisation Theory

The Social Disorganisation Theory was introduced by Shaw and McKay in 1942. This theory was chosen to explain why some neighbourhoods have higher crime rates than others. According to the Social Disorganisation Theory, there is a higher likelihood of crime in communities that lack economic opportunity, strong social bonds, and social cohesion. CPF's have the potential to improve social links within local communities. CPF's can address some of the core causes of crime highlighted by this theory by promoting cooperation and collective action.

4.3 The rationale for using these theories

These theories provide contrasting viewpoints on the variables affecting crime rates, which makes them useful as theoretical frameworks for figuring out how CPF's might affect things. BWT offers justification for CPF's' proactive and preventative methods of upholding law and order and discouraging crime. The Social

Disorganisation Theory emphasises how crucial community-level interventions—like CPFs—are in tackling the social and economic causes of crime. In this study, the Broken Windows Theory was utilised to examine how residents perceived the influence of CPFs on outward manifestations of disorder in their neighbourhoods. Participants were questioned during interviews about how they felt about the CPF's establishment, whether they thought there was less graffiti or vandalism, whether they thought there was more police presence in places where there had been minor offences in the past, and whether or not these changes had affected their sense of safety. BWT Lens examines how CPFs respond to outward manifestations of chaos in these communities. Current incidents highlight the possible effects: Focusing on enforcing minor infractions such as public drinking and fare evasion (which align with BWT principles) has been linked to a notable decrease in violent crime in Newark, New Jersey (2017). BWT Lens collects resident opinions about how CPFs affect outward indications of disorder and safety.

In this study, the Social Disorganisation Theory was used to investigate how CPFs help communities overcome social and economic issues while fortifying social ties. In the course of interviews, participants were questioned about how the CPF promoted communication and cooperation among neighbours, whether the CPF collaborated with neighbourhood organisations to address issues such as youth unemployment or poverty, and whether or not neighbours now feel more a part of the community and have a greater sense of shared responsibility ever since the CPF was founded. The Social Disorganisation Lens investigates how CPFs address fundamental social concerns and promote social cohesion. According to a recent Chicago (2022) study, gang activity decreased when CPFs partnered with neighbourhood organisations to address poverty and youth mentorship programmes, which aligns with the Social Disorganisation Theory. Social Disorganisation Lens recognises the role CPFs play in fostering community involvement and social cohesiveness. The researchers obtain important insights into the perceived efficacy of CPFs in Durban by utilising these theories to analyse the interview data. BWT assisted in evaluating if CPFs are generating a more ordered atmosphere and discouraging minor infractions. The way that CPFs promote social cohesiveness and deal with underlying social problems that may fuel criminal activity is clarified by the Social Disorganisation Theory.

5. Methodology

In the South African cities of Glenmore and Umbilo, Durban, this study looks into how beneficial and effective Community Policing Forums (CPFs) are thought to be. Using a qualitative methodology based on an interpretivist paradigm, the study explores community members' perspectives and lived experiences. Through the gathering and examination of non-numerical data, qualitative research methods place a high priority on in-depth investigation and comprehension of social phenomena (Flick, 2018). Semi-structured interviews are used in this study to allow for flexibility while guaranteeing that important themes are covered (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Rich insights into the lived experiences and attitudes around CPFs will be obtained through interviews with locals, CPF members, and law enforcement personnel. The interpretivist paradigm places a strong emphasis on how reality is socially created and how crucial it is to comprehend how meaning is formed in certain circumstances (Willig, 2017). This aligns with the emphasis on resident viewpoints and firsthand experiences when evaluating the value and effectiveness of CPFs in Glenmore and Umbilo. The research aims to elucidate the subjective meanings and values connected with CPFs within these communities by interpreting participant narratives. Studies conducted in South Africa on CPFs demonstrate how they might enhance public safety by working together and involving the community (Olofinbiyi, 2022). Nevertheless, research also highlights issues including scarce resources and unclear directives (Malatji et al., 2023). This study adds to the current conversation by concentrating on the unique experiences of residents of Glenmore and Umbilo.

5.1 Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling enables researchers to choose participants based on particular traits or experiences pertinent to the research issue (Bryman, 2016). According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), this method guarantees that the data gathered provides deep insights into the topic being studied. Twenty participants discussed their viewpoints, attitudes, and personal experiences with CPFs in semi-structured interviews.

5.1.1 Recruitment:

Residents of Glenmore and Umbilo were reached through community gatherings and recruitment leaflets. Flyers with the study's inclusion requirements (described below) were distributed. Direct communication with locals and a more thorough description of the study's goals were made possible through community gatherings. The recruitment of CPF members with prior experience working within the Glenmore and Umbilo areas was made easier by cooperation with the local CPF leadership. Through established routes, police officers from the appropriate precincts were also invited to attend.

5.1.2 Selection Criteria:

To ensure familiarity with the community and its safety problems, the inclusion criteria concentrated on residents who had resided in Glenmore or Umbilo for at least two years. To capture a variety of viewpoints, a range of ages and socioeconomic backgrounds were also sought after. We selected people who have been actively associated with CPFs in Glenmore and Umbilo for at least one year. Included were police officers who had prior experience serving in these localities.

5.2 Data Collection

According to Liamputtong and Ezzy (2023), in-depth interviews facilitate the use of open-ended questions and follow-up suggestions, which incentivise participants to expound on their experiences and reveal their unique interpretations of CPFs. Understanding the varying subjective realities of residents, CPF members, and police officials concerning neighbourhood safety and policing tactics requires this level of data. In-depth interviews provide the freedom to explore unexpected themes or go deeper into areas of particular interest that develop during the conversation, unlike surveys with fixed answer choices (Seidman, 2019). This flexibility enables the researcher to obtain a deeper comprehension of the participants' viewpoints regarding CPFs. Because in-depth interviews are one-on-one, the researcher and participant can build a rapport that makes it easier for participants to be honest about their thoughts and experiences (Kahn & Canales, 2019).

This atmosphere of trust is crucial for revealing potentially delicate or nuanced opinions about the efficacy of CPF and community safety. A semi-structured interview guide was created, which included important themes and inquiries about the roles, efficacy, and perceptions of

community safety of CPF. While allowing for flexibility, open-ended questions ensured that all pertinent topics were covered. Potential participants were given a comprehensive information sheet outlining the research's goals, the data collection techniques, confidentiality policies, and their right to withdraw at any time before interviews were scheduled. For every subject, written informed permission was acquired. As was previously mentioned, citizens, CPF members, and law enforcement officers were recruited via purposive sampling by predetermined standards.

Convenient venues, including community centres and police stations, were chosen for the interviews. The site was selected to foster a welcoming and quiet space conducive to candid conversation. Before starting the interview, the researchers gave a brief introduction, reiterated the study's goals, and expressed gratitude to the participants for their time. Developing a relationship was essential to eliciting truthful and thorough answers. The interview guide acted as a road map, enabling the discussion of subjects that naturally came up during the interview and the asking of follow-up questions. This methodology guaranteed adaptability and comprehensive investigation of participant experiences. The researchers used few interruptions, kept eye contact, showed attentiveness through body language, and actively listened. This created a safe environment in which participants felt free to express their opinions. The inclusion of open-ended follow-up questions, such as "Can you elaborate on that?" and "What do you mean by that?" encouraged participants to share in-depth, in-depth accounts of their interactions with CPFs and how they felt about community safety. To guarantee accurate response recording, interviews were audio recorded with participant agreement. The audio was then verbatim transcribed for examination. Following every interview, the researchers meticulously documented the main ideas and recurring themes in their notes. This guaranteed no important information was overlooked and helped with data analysis. To safeguard participant identity, all audio recordings and transcripts were anonymised and given pseudonyms. Only the researcher had access to the safely stored data.

The in-depth interview approach collected rich and trustworthy data on the lived experiences and viewpoints of community residents, CPF members, and police officials on CPFs in Glenmore and Umbilo by adhering to these protocols. To ascertain the perceived efficacy of CPFs in fostering safety in these communities, this data was examined.

5.3 Data Analysis

The interview data was subjected to a thematic analysis approach to discover and examine recurrent themes that captured the essence of the participants' viewpoints and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The data was inductively coded using Nvivo, allowing themes to naturally emerge from the interviews. Two researchers independently analysed and coded the transcripts to ensure they were dependable and trustworthy (Bryman & Tee, 2023). Themes were interpreted to provide a more comprehensive picture of the CPF's potential and influence within these communities, taking into account the study goals, theoretical framework, and body of current literature. To find and investigate recurring themes that encapsulated the essence of the participants' perspectives and experiences, the interview data was treated to a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Themes spontaneously emerged from the interviews thanks to the inductive coding of the data, which was carried out using Nvivo. To ensure that the transcripts were reliable and trustworthy, two researchers examined and coded them independently (Bryman & Tee, 2023). The study goals, theoretical framework, and corpus of existing literature were all considered while interpreting the themes to present a more complete picture of the CPF's potential and influence within these communities.

To fully understand the experiences and viewpoints of the participants, the researchers read and reread the interview transcripts before beginning the data analysis process. In this phase, the researchers started to find and categorise significant passages of material about CPFs, how effective they are, and how people perceive community safety. Software or manual labour can be used for coding. After a study, the original codes were categorised into possible themes that best encapsulated the information. To guarantee a coherent and unambiguous portrayal of the results, themes were adjusted and combined as necessary. To make sure the themes accurately reflected the experiences of the participants, they were cross-checked against the complete dataset. At this point, themes might be further developed or rearranged. The last step was to clearly and succinctly define and present the themes that had been found. To show the findings and their significance in comprehending the function and efficacy of CPFs in Glenmore and Umbilo, participant statements and the researchers' interpretations were interwoven.

5.5 Ethical Considerations and Consent

All participants were given a comprehensive information sheet outlining the research's goals, the protocols for confidentiality, the data collection techniques, and the ability to withdraw from the study at any time before they began. For every subject, written informed permission was acquired. To safeguard their identities, interviewees were given pseudonyms, and all interview data was anonymised. The transcripts and tapes of the interviews were safely kept, with only the researchers having access.

6. Findings

6.1 Knowledge of the Community Police Forum in Local Communities

The majority of South African provinces have high crime rates, which make the residents feel unsafe. This occurs in both suburban and rural locations, and the offenders are typically motivated by various factors. The Broken Windows Theory indicates that it will be difficult to sustain community safety if there is no cooperation in trying to mend the brown window (which in this situation is the crime) of a building (which in this research is communities) (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). The goal of the community police forum is to establish a safe, crime-free neighbourhood where everyone feels welcome. The community and the police can work together to achieve this.

6.1.1 Understanding Community Police Forums

While some study participants had somewhat varied definitions or understandings of community police forums, it was evident from their answers that the forum has at least an understandable structure. The majority of study participants demonstrated a strong understanding of community police forums. A few participants described the community police forum as follows, to name just a few:

A collaborative framework between law enforcement and community people that aims to implement crime prevention strategies and engage the public in crime awareness campaigns to support police efforts to combat criminal activity. (Mpendulo, 38 October 11, 2016).

They are a volunteer organisation that collaborates closely with law enforcement and commercial security firms. With the limited resources already available to the police, the CPF is essential in helping to combat crime. (Smith, 47, October 5, 2016).

These definitions provided the clearest explanation of the objectives of the community police forum. They demonstrated that some community members comprehend community policing forums better, which is consistent with the definition of a community policing forum as a cooperative structure between law enforcement and the community aimed at resolving issues that prevent crime (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994). Based on their responses, it can be inferred that most sample members are aware of what the Community Police Forum (CPF) is. This is encouraging because the researcher believes that community members who are aware of the forum have a higher likelihood of joining and helping to combat crime in their communities.

6.1.2 Insufficient Knowledge About the Community Police Forum

Even though most community members surveyed demonstrated a general comprehension of the community police forum, several denied any knowledge of the forum existed. Even though the participants were unfamiliar with the forum, the researchers chose to interview them because they thought they could offer valuable insights into the current study. This participant's response is as follows:

First off, what is the Community Police Forum? I'd be embarrassed to admit I don't know if I was still living in a rural region; however, after I moved to Umbilo, I can no longer claim so because of my surroundings. Apologies for not knowing about this earlier. Sadly, if all of your questions are based on a topic that I am completely unaware of, I don't think I will be able to answer the rest of them! (Xolelwa, 33, On October 10, 2016)

The participant was so ashamed that it was difficult for her to feel comfortable, but the interview went on despite the researcher's genuine confusion about whether to ask more questions. The study discovered that some members of these communities are, in fact, completely unaware that there is a forum. In contrast to Glenmore, which has many private homes, Umbilo also contains affordable apartments available for rent for those without steady employment. The majority of residents are

not well-educated individuals who work in Durban to provide for their families. To raise awareness of the community police forum and its importance, it is also appropriate to include them in an image of it as community members.

6.2 Techniques for Announcing the Presence of CPFs in the Research Environment

6.2.1 Social Media: Twitter, Facebook, and newspapers

Social media is one tool that can be utilised to inform community members about the forum's existence within their communities. The social media platform that is used can change based on what each CPF member prefers. A participant mentioned:

There are a number of activities. The first is that the community has a Facebook page where members can report on incidents as they happen. We also broadcast any planned future activities using that Facebook page. Additionally, we have a place in the Berea Mail, a local daily, where we inform the community about our accomplishments in battling crime as well as any upcoming events or programming. (Thembisa, 26, October 21, 2017)

Regarding the platforms that the community police forum uses, the participant replies were highly instructive. Through the interviews, the researcher discovered that individuals who had close working relationships with the members of the community police forum were active on social media, or were newspaper buyers were the ones who knew the most about the forum and the strategies employed to publicise its existence within these communities.

6.2.2 Advertisement

While the statements made by a few participants did not provide much information, they did suggest that the community police forum indeed exists in the specific communities where they claimed to have seen cars with stickers from the site. The following are a few of the answers to the questions.

Although they don't always broadcast in our neighbourhood, I have seen cars with community police forum posters in them driving around

the neighbourhood. Even yet, certain information is difficult to understand because it is difficult to read while driving and the text is small. (Phelo, 27, October 10, 2016)

6.3 Not Knowing About the Airing of CPFs

If the forum is not well promoted within the community, some members will probably be unaware of its presence. A few attendees demonstrated ignorance of the techniques involved in transmitting community police forums. A participant said,

Saying things like, "I am not sure whether we have a community police forum in Umbilo or not because I have never seen even a pamphlet talking about it in the area where I live." (Mwali, 28, October 21, 2016)

I'm not really sure how to respond to that question. since I'm ignorant of the strategies employed in this community to expose the CPF. (Mrs. Bones, 54, October 11, 2016)

These comments have demonstrated that, despite the forum's existence inside these communities, the broadcasting technique is insufficiently successful. It is untrue that there is no broadcasting about the existence of CPF in these places, as many participants pointed out. The researcher feels, though, that consumers are not informed about the techniques employed, such as the Facebook page, about which Mpendulo claimed that particular demographics may only be served because of age or other specific circumstances, such as the need to have a Facebook account to access it. The dissemination of the forum's presence remains a major responsibility for members of the community police forum. The community's members must be actively involved in the forum for it to be meaningful to the community.

7. Discussions of Findings

7.1 Knowledge Gaps and BWT

Wilson and Kelling (1982) claim that the BWT shows that outward manifestations of disorder might engender an environment of fear and criminality. It may be argued that ignorance about CPFs, a possible means of resolving safety issues, represents a type of "information disorder." This may exacerbate feelings of unease and make it more difficult for the community to participate in safety initiatives. By

concentrating on resolving obvious difficulties, treating this "information disorder" is consistent with BWT concepts. As recommended by participants, using a variety of communication platforms, such as social media, regional newspapers, and posters, can boost CPF awareness and promote involvement.

7.2 Knowledge Gaps and SDT

According to Shaw and McKay (1942), the SDT highlights how social and economic inequality fuels crime and disarray in communities. Some inhabitants may not be aware of the CPF, which could reflect the community's current social division or uneven access to information. Recognising and navigating potential SDT-related issues is necessary to address this. To close knowledge gaps and promote greater participation, communication strategies should be tailored to target various community segments through reliable channels and languages.

Olofinbiyi (2022) highlights how public knowledge about CPFs is rising in South Africa. These results imply that people in Glenmore and Umbilo are aware of the idea and function of CPFs, which validates the trend. Malatji et al.'s study from 2023 acknowledges the difficulties CPFs face but also shows how they might increase safety by including the community. The resident understanding found in this study provides a foundation for investigating how CPFs in Glenmore and Umbilo use this understanding to promote cooperation. The survey found minor differences in definitions, even though most participants showed a high grasp. This is consistent with Smith's (2018) research, which indicates that local settings can affect the precise roles and functions of CPFs.

Olofinbiyi (2022) notes that although public awareness of CPFs has increased, outreach and communication initiatives are still essential to guarantee that community members are informed. The results of this study corroborate this idea and point to the necessity of investigating CPFs in Glenmore and Umbilo's communication tactics. The study conducted by Malatji et al. (2023) highlights that certain CPFs have difficulties due to unclear mandates and poor communication. The results of this study imply that poor communication may have contributed to the participants' scant knowledge of CPFs.

7.3 Social Media and Community Involvement

According to participants, social media can improve community-police involvement and communication. This is consistent with recent research on the subject (Cheng & Wu, 2020). But worries about digital gaps and unequal access to technology mean that other communication routes must also serve people who might not use social media. Incorporating social media alongside conventional techniques such as posters and local newspapers guarantees a multifaceted strategy that considers possible disparities in information availability connected to SDT.

The study by Williams et al. (2018) emphasises how social media can foster a better understanding between the public and law enforcement. The results of this study imply that social media is seen by people in Glenmore and Umbilo as a means of promoting improved understanding and communication. The study by SahlinLilja (2022) highlights the value of two-way social media communication for efficient police-community involvement. The results of this study support this theory by indicating that locals value the possibility of interactive contact via social media.

It is necessary to consider SDT's observations on social inequality and BWT's guidelines for dealing with visible disorders to comprehend differences in CPF awareness. By putting various communication tactics into practice and customising them to speak to various community segments, it is possible to close information gaps, encourage greater community involvement, and eventually increase the efficiency of Community Protection Funds (CPFs) in creating safer neighbourhoods.

8. Conclusion

This study examined the benefits and efficiency of Community Policing Forums (CPFs) in the communities of Glenmore and Umbilo, revealing a mosaic of viewpoints and experiences. A significant obstacle to optimising CPFs' impact is that, whereas some participants showed a clear understanding of CPFs and their operations, others did not. If one were to apply Broken Windows Theory (BWT) to the situation, ignorance of CPFs may be viewed as a type of "information disorder," which could exacerbate feelings of insecurity and impede community involvement. Taking up this issue is consistent with BWT principles, which demand focused communication tactics such as posters, social media, and local media, as recommended by the participants.

Nonetheless, as the Social Disorganisation Theory (SDT) points out, unequal access to information and social fragmentation can contribute to the persistence of awareness gaps. To ensure that marginalised perspectives are heard and included, communication strategies must be tailored to address varied community groups. The research highlights the significance of proficient communication in augmenting the efficacy of CPF. It is possible to close information gaps and promote greater participation by employing a multifaceted strategy that integrates social media with conventional techniques like posters and local newspapers. This aligns with new research that emphasises social media's potential while also pointing out the necessity for alternate avenues to overcome any potential digital gaps. Even though increasing awareness is important, closer community and police cooperation is required for CPFs to be truly effective.

To create safer communities, it is imperative to cultivate trust, address the underlying causes of crime, and provide residents with the necessary tools to fully participate. CPFs can go beyond merely resolving "visible disorder" and contribute to long-lasting solutions that address the intricate social dimensions of safety by accepting the holistic viewpoints provided by SDT and understanding the limits of BWT. The present study provides a foundation for further discussion and cooperative endeavours aimed at reinforcing CPFs as essential instruments for community empowerment and safety. Communities may cooperate to create a safer, more inclusive future for everybody by bringing together a variety of viewpoints, filling in knowledge gaps, and encouraging communication and teamwork.

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