



Outsider Resentment, Public Disengagement and other Factors Affecting Social Cohesion and Collective Violence in Orange Farm

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This report presents findings of research conducted by the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) in Orange Farm, City of Johannesburg, in April and October 2022. Conducted as part of -and for- the [Kagisano programme](#), this research builds on -and updates- an original study conducted in the same area in 2017. The 2017 study resulted in an [Orange Farm Case Study Report](#) (hereinafter referred to as the 'original report'). As an update of the original research, the current report should be read together with the above-mentioned detailed original report.

Like the original study, this research aims to identify obstacles to and opportunities for social cohesion to inform interventions to address collective or group-based violence and foster social cohesion in 16 selected sites and the country. Social cohesion, in its simplest form, refers to the ability of different population groups and people to peacefully live together differently (Freedom House 2017). Updating the original research was important to assess whether there may have been significant changes in the empirical reality in the targeted, highly mobile, and fluid communities, and by doing so, ensure that new interventions are not based on outdated data and information. Further, the new research collected additional baseline qualitative and quantitative data. This baseline data is not available in the original reports but is required for the new, planned community-based programmes.

This report has three main sections. The first section briefly discusses the research methods and data sources. . The second section provides a summary and a detailed presentation and analysis of the research findings. Thereafter, the third and concluding section reflects on the implications of the research findings for the promotion of social cohesion and prevention of collective violence.

1.2 METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

The findings discussed in this report are informed by three main data sources: i) desktop research or review of literature on relevant research themes, ii) qualitative interviews with key informants and general observations, and iii) community-based and targeted quantitative surveys.

In-depth face-to-face interviews and general observations were carried out in the area by a team of four researchers in April 2022. The team conducted a total of four focus group discussions and 10 in-depth face-

to-face individual interviews with purposively sampled key informants. Targeted key informants for this research were leaders or members of organizations and institutions living, working in, or familiar with the community. These include amongst others: faith-based organizations, women organizations, youth organizations, civic and political organizations, sports and cultural groups, business fora or associations, stokvels and self-help organizations, labour unions, advocacy groups, school and student bodies, migrant organizations, international NGOs, the police, CPF, ward council, and street communities, amongst others.

The research targeted key informants for two reasons: (i) to get a sense of their own experience living and/working in the community, and (ii) to ask them about the community experience i.e., to draw on their situated knowledge, perspective, and professional experience to reflect and share information on community's lived experiences concerning specific research themes (see interview guide in Annex II).

In addition to qualitative interviews, the research used community-based and targeted surveys to collect quantitative data. While digital, the surveys were administered by enumerators either in person or telephonically in October 2022. In Orange Farm, the surveys recorded answers from a total of 216 participants.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Like most townships in South Africa, Orange Farm is home to culturally and linguistically diverse population groups from both within and beyond the country's borders. Its population continues to rapidly grow, aided by a combination of natural increase and immigration. It is clear that Orange Farms' rapid population growth and urbanization have not been matched by an equally paced service provision capacity. This research identifies the following main issues that have direct or indirect implications for social cohesion and collective violence in this area. The Kagisano programme needs to address these issues to achieve its objective of promoting social cohesion and preventing collective violence in the area.

- *Group tensions and conflict:* Group relations and interactions, particularly between South Africans and foreign nationals, remain tense because of the locals' negative attitudes and resentment toward foreign nationals. The resentment is due to the locals' perceptions that the growing number of foreign nationals in the area is a threat to their lives and livelihoods. Like in many other places, locals accuse foreign nationals of stealing jobs and business opportunities, blame them for social ills including crime and drug abuse, as well as burdening the local public services. Similar tensions exist between local and foreign religious organizations. Local pastors expressed anger and frustration at the extent to which they are losing followership to what they perceived to be illegal, 'fake' and 'money-driven' immigrant-run churches and have called on the government to close those churches and for foreign pastors to go home'.
- *Socio-economic hardships:* Orange Farm is one of the most economically segregated townships in the Gauteng province, characterized by uneven development. Unlike other townships strategically located close to various economic hubs, Orange Farm is located on the margins of economic development, very far from economic hubs, especially in the greater Johannesburg area. Because of its spatial segregation and other governance-related problems, Orange Farm is fraught with various socioeconomic challenges such as high rates of unemployment, poverty, teenage pregnancies, poor service delivery, gender-based and group violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and crime, amongst others. As observed elsewhere, severe socio-economic hardships result in collective anger and frustration, tensions between groups due to competition over resources and opportunities, and

often lead to collective violence, particularly violent service delivery protests and sometimes xenophobic violence.

- Lack of trust in -and disengagement from- formal local structures of authority and leadership:* According to participants, Orange Farm residents generally do not trust the formal structures of authority and community leadership, particularly the police and ward councillors. Residents perceive these structures as incompetent, corrupt, and unhelpful, and have subsequently given up engaging with them with regard to their daily concerns, such as crime, conflict resolution, and service provision. As a result, approaches to addressing conflict and societal challenges are often ‘violence and mob-driven’. Indeed, and as also noted in the original report, the absence of a fully trusted local authority and formal and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms is an obstacle to social cohesion and is a driver of collective violence. In a diverse and fluid space like Orange Farm, individual and group conflict is to be expected. However, “a socially cohesive community is one which is able to deal with and resolve its conflicts in ways that do not result in violence, chronic tensions, or extreme marginalization of certain sub-groups” (Monson et al, 2012:20)
- Collective violence:* Orange Farm has a longstanding history of collective or group violence. The common and current types of group violence in the area include political violence, violent service delivery protests, xenophobic violence, taxi violence, gang violence, and mob justice. In particular, gang violence is terrorizing schools and the community at large, and has its origins in illegal initiation schools. Like elsewhere, Orange Farm residents use violent service delivery protests to draw the government’s attention to their otherwise ignored service delivery grievances. While generally perceived as effective in dealing with crime, mob justice is a threat to social cohesion in Orange Farm and similar highly diverse communities characterized by group tensions and resentment. Very often, mob justice is meted out on group members wrongly accused of having committed crime. This exacerbates already tense group relations.

2.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS

2.2.1 Population groups and their interactions

Like other townships in South Africa, Orange Farm hosts a heterogeneous population comprising mixed ethnic groups of South Africans and different nationalities of immigrants. As such, the township is culturally and linguistically diverse. Almost all the local languages in South Africa are well-represented in Orange Farm. According to respondents, isiZulu is the dominant language spoken in the township, followed by Sesotho.

Other spoken languages include isiXhosa, Xitsonga, Setswana, and Tshivenda, among others. Some residents engage in language-switching to accommodate different members of the community. Asked how different groups communicate, one participant responded:

On the field, we speak IsiZulu, Sesotho, and English. When I arrive at a school, I observe first, and if the kids speak Sesotho, I speak Sesotho and add a little bit of English in between because I'm at school. Sometimes you can find out that there are people from different groups. Even though many of them can understand isiZulu, it is important that you mix the languages when you are addressing them.¹

Due to its history of informal dwellings and its distance from greater Johannesburg, which makes the rentals cheaper, the area has high mobility, attracting people within and outside the country. It serves as a reception area accommodating new urban migrants to the city. Its growing population is therefore a result of a combination of migration (internal and international) and natural increase. The township is home to migrants from both within and beyond the borders of South Africa. Most of the foreign nationals are from countries within the SADC region (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho) and from countries in South Asia (Bangladesh and Pakistan). Many participants confirmed that they continue to see new people in their communities, some of them from foreign countries. One participant said: “There is a very high population here in Orange Farm. Every day, we see new faces. Many people come and stay here because the rents are affordable.”²

Group relations and interactions, particularly between South Africans and foreign nationals, remain tense because of the locals’ negative attitudes and resentment toward foreign nationals. Indeed, participants indicated that residents perceived the growing number of foreign nationals in the area as a threat to their lives and livelihoods. Residents accuse foreign nationals of stealing jobs and business opportunities, blame them for social ills including crime and drug abuse, as well as burdening the local public services. One participant, for example, stated: “ There are too many people that are using drugs especially those who finish their matric and they are not working, they end up being frustrated, not knowing what to do and they end up taking drugs and people are not working because we have too many foreigners, and they are the ones who are working, they settle for less.”³

Similar tensions exist between local and foreign religious organizations. Some local pastors accuse foreign religious organizations and pastors of being ‘fake’ and only using desperate residents to make money. Airing

¹ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 25 April 2022

² Participant 1, 26 April 2022

³ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 26 April 2022

his views on foreign-owned churches in Orange Farm, one pastor had this to say: “Most churches especially the churches that are from outside South Africa are not after the gospel of Christ they are after money. They are doing that to gain money⁴ Local pastors bemoaned the extent to which they are losing followership to immigrant-run churches because they promise followers miracles and potential solutions to their everyday challenges. One pastor for example stated:

These churches affect us a lot. It takes many years to build a church and attract many church members. But these churches just come and in two days, they say, come to my church, I am doing miracles. In two weeks, you will lose two members to them. They will keep on doing that, and before the year ends, you will see that you would have lost 15 members.⁵

He called on the government to close all immigrant-run churches, or at least, audit their legality. He charged: “...the government must do something about them. They must close all these churches. The police must stop sitting on their backs at the police station. On Sundays, they must go around and see if these churches are legal, these pastors are legal in South Africa, if not, they must go home, thank you.”⁶

2.2.2 Livelihoods and socio-economic challenges

Participants cited unemployment and related poverty, poor service delivery, crime, gender-based and group violence, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancy as some of the main challenges Orange Farm residents face.

Unemployment and poverty

All the respondents unanimously cited very limited employment opportunities as one of the main challenges faced and a major contributor to the growing levels of poverty in the township. According to one participant:

The economy of Orange Farm is only around this mall (Orange Farm Mall) that is the only economic activity that’s happening within the area. We do not have an economy that creates jobs, as a result, when children complete matric, they form part of the population of people who are unemployed in the community.⁷

Indeed, the City of Joburg (2018) characterizes Orange Farm as a “dormitory town geographically displaced from the business districts of greater Joburg”, as marginalized, “with no economic base of its own, it is dependent on Joburg.”

⁴ Pastor 1, 26 April 2022

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Pastor 2, 26 April 2022

⁷ Participant 2, 26 April 2022

According to respondents, it is not even feasible for some residents to meet the necessary transport costs, even if they are fortunate enough to secure an employment opportunity elsewhere around greater Johannesburg. One participant explained:

Imagine that you are working somewhere in Johannesburg. Let's say in the CBD. But there are some people are working as far as Sandton who stay here. [...] You start calculating how much you are spending on transport alone, and you will notice that almost all your salary is going to transport. It was at least better when we had the train, but because of Covid, they suspended it.⁸

Sometimes, employers in some parts of Johannesburg are reluctant to hire people from Orange Farm because of the long distance they have to travel daily. As confirmed by one participant, people from Orange Farm find it hard to secure jobs in Johannesburg. In her words:

When you go look for a job in Joburg, they say how are you going to get to work? It means you will always be late. There is a railway that goes from Vereeniging to Joburg, it always gets stuck midway, and people get to work at 9 or 10 o'clock, so those are some of the challenges that people face. It puts them at a disadvantage, and employers end up not hiring people from here because of that...⁹

Respondents indicated that, due to the high unemployment rate, the majority of Orange Farm residents rely on government grants and informal businesses as their main sources of livelihood. One participant explained: "Many people here survive on government social grants and operate small businesses. Because when you step out into the street, there's a salon, shops, and street vendors everywhere."¹⁰ Another respondent confirmed the reliance on government grants by the majority of the residents in Orange Farm: "If you come here on the grant pay-out dates, you'll see the queues, this (mall) is the only economic hub we have so if you can come here then you'll see the queues are very long, people come here early, and they go back home very late." Participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic and rising cost of living (rise in fuel and food prices) have exacerbated the already dire conditions of poor people in Orange Farm.

Some respondents opined that, while they are playing an instrumental role in alleviating poverty in Orange Farms, government grants, in particular the child support grant, have contributed to high levels of teenage pregnancies in the community. One community leader said: "It's a mess in this area, my next-door neighbour, her daughter is turning 21 years old this year. She is already on her fourth baby. Meaning all her life she'll be living on a child grant..."¹¹

Poor service delivery

⁸ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 26 April 2022

⁹ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 26 April 2022

¹⁰ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 28 April 2022.

¹¹ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 28 April 2022

According to the respondents, the Orange Farm residents are generally not satisfied with the level and quality of service delivery in the township. Lack of adequate housing and associated services, including water, sewer systems, roads, and electricity, are some of the pressing challenges faced by many residents in Orange Farm. Indeed, as Figure 1 shows, 40% and 30% of surveyed residents (n=108) feel that there is no change or improvement, and service delivery is getting worse in their area.

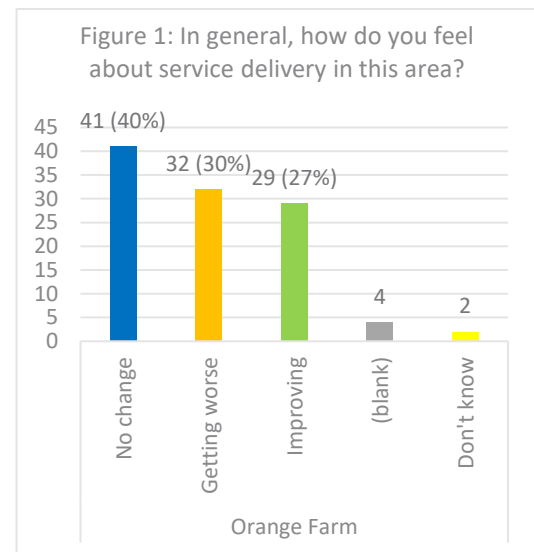
Asked about service delivery in Orange Farm, a representative of the Department of Social Development explained:

The fact that we still have people staying in shacks and have informal structures here in Orange Farm is a clear indication that people do not have houses. Who would want to stay in a shack anyway? ...another thing, the roads here in Orange Farm are a mess. You should see how they are when it rains. They are inaccessible.¹²

These conditions are health hazards to many residents, as some die trying to get comfort through alternative means. The Department of Social Development official added: "...remember most of the areas do not have services like, electricity, water, supply and all those kinds of things, so some people still use paraffin; they still use fire and when it's cold, the death rates will increase because people will burn in the house...(ibid)

Participants further indicated that gravel roads are a threat to schooling and business activities, especially during rainy seasons. A local businessman expressed his frustrations over the state of the roads and the inefficiencies of councillors to respond to the general needs of the people:

The development of Orange Farm is very worrying, our councillors are not doing their jobs, and people are tired and have given up on trying to communicate with our councillor on things we need. We are desperate for roads in our streets because when it rains, it's a struggle for a car to move here until it reaches the main road. I'm buying tires endlessly because of the mess in our street, when it rains my cars get stuck in the mud which derails my business, children can't go to school because their shoes get stuck in the mud, no one walks outside when it rains in the street, meaning no one can even access the shop but he (councillor) says he is one of us. So, the mood is very down because people are tired of empty promises.¹³



¹² Interview, Orange Farm resident, 28 April 2022

¹³ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 28 April 2022

Like elsewhere in the country, poor service delivery often leads to violent protests in Orange Farm. As discussed later in this report, Orange Farm residents have, over the years, embarked on a series of service delivery protests, especially over housing, electricity, roads, and water.

High crime rates

All the participants expressed concern over the rising cases of criminal activities in Orange Farm. They indicated that contact crimes (murder, attempted murder, common assault, gender-based violence (GBV), sexual offenses, aggravated robbery, and common robbery) and property-related crimes such as house break-ins or burglaries and vehicle theft are the most common crimes in Orange Farm. Indeed, as recent crime stats in Table I below show, crime has increased in most major crime categories, particularly murder, sexual offenses, robberies, and burglaries. Notably, murder increased by 152.6% in the Q2 of 2022 compared to the same period last year. Further, according to crime offenses recorded by the Orange Farm police station, Orange Farm is ranked among the top 30 nationally for murder, rape, sexual offenses, and kidnapping. In the province, Orange Farm ranks 2nd and 5th for murder and rape respectively.¹⁴

Participants cited economic factors as the major drivers of crime in the township. A participant for example stated:

I feel like crime is worse if the youth is unemployed and they wait for us on the corner to mug us. In this community, you can't walk holding your phone. You will never walk from Drieziek to Orange Farm 7A holding your phone in your hand. Some get mugged as soon as they get off the taxi. That's how serious crime is in Orange Farm.¹⁵

¹⁴ Stas SA, 2022. https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=73290

¹⁵ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 25 April 2022

Table I: Crime stats for Orange Farm Police Station¹⁶

CRIME CATEGORY	April to June 2018	April to June 2019	April to June 2020	April to June 2021	April to June 2022	Count Diff	% Change
CONTACT CRIMES (CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON)							
Murder	22	15	18	19	48	29	152.6%
Sexual Offences	51	38	33	44	46	2	4.5%
Attempted murder	22	13	8	14	16	2	14.3%
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	142	122	61	116	92	-24	-20.7%
Common assault	67	63	51	83	60	-23	-27.7%
Common robbery	22	18	16	16	8	-8	-50.0%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	127	148	88	131	145	14	10.7%
Total Contact Crimes (Crimes Against The Person)	453	417	275	423	415	-8	-1.9%
Total Sexual Offences							
Rape	49	35	30	37	37	0	0.0%
Sexual Assault	0	2	3	5	8	3	60.0%
Attempted sexual offences	2	1	0	2	1	-1	-50.0%
Contact sexual offences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 Count
Total Sexual Offences	51	38	33	44	46	2	4.5%
SOME SUBCATEGORIES OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY							
Carjacking	22	24	12	36	43	7	19.4%
Robbery at residential premises	11	36	21	17	23	6	35.3%
Robbery at non-residential premises	17	16	14	14	24	10	71.4%
Bank Robbery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 Count
Robbery of cash in transit	0	1	0	0	0	0	0 Count
Truck hijacking	2	2	2	13	14	1	7.7%
CONTACT-RELATED CRIMES							
Arson	1	1	1	2	0	-2	-100.0%
Malicious damage to property	50	52	39	54	61	7	13.0%
Total Contact-Related Crimes	51	53	40	56	61	5	8.9%
PROPERTY-RELATED CRIMES							
Burglary at non-residential premises	32	27	31	20	21	1	5.0%
Burglary at residential premises	139	123	94	46	48	2	4.3%
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	26	22	15	19	18	-1	-5.3%
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	43	40	25	17	16	-1	-5.9%
Stock-theft	6	3	1	5	4	-1	-20.0%
Total Property-Related Crimes	246	215	166	107	107	0	0.0%
OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES							
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	84	67	63	61	69	8	13.1%
Commercial crime	30	33	29	33	32	-1	-3.0%
Shoplifting	13	36	11	15	17	2	13.3%
Total Other Serious Crimes	127	136	103	109	118	9	8.3%
Total 17 Community Reported Serious Crimes	877	821	584	695	701	6	0.9%
CRIME DETECTED AS A RESULT OF POLICE ACTION							
Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition	16	39	25	14	8	-6	-42.9%
Drug-related crime	534	104	53	143	162	19	13.3%
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	110	66	5	48	50	2	4.2%
Sexual offences detected as a result of police action	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 Count
Total Crime Detected As A Result Of Police Action	660	209	83	205	220	15	7.3%

Another participant painted a worrying picture of violent crime in the area:

[...] I'm sure you've heard about this quantum that has been driving around terrorizing people, I'm sure you've heard about people just randomly shooting everyone, particularly on this road, every week, someone dies, because they've been stabbed or something like that. I think on Sunday that other week, I was driving to Vereeniging, I passed a very terrible shootout there. They said one of the taxi owners was shot there. So, the shooting here is nothing new, it's something that if you hear

¹⁶ Stas SA, 2022. https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=73290

about it, you are not shocked because if you hear gunshots you just wait for 5 minutes, so our phones are always ringing, you hear gunshots, you wait for five minutes you get a call from the police.... there's a person who has died, you drive there you'll find a person lying there dead and then we do our job, we go to the mortuary and call the family, they'll come and identify that person, so there is gang violence.

Violent crimes against women and girls

According to all the respondents, GBV in Orange Farm is rife and a serious concern, even though most of the cases remain unreported. A representative of a local health centre explained:

The problem is high. The reporting might be less, but the problem is generally high. In my experience of working as a case worker for GBV, I have noticed that it's a norm in most families. That is why the reporting is so less because it has become a norm and a way of life. For example, if I get raped and I tell my mom, she says she also got raped at some point many times. The same goes with my granny, my sister, and my aunt. Some parents are strict with their children and try to monitor their behaviour as much as possible and notice the changes. But with other parents, it's the opposite, it's a matter of, it's okay, you'll be fine, we all went through it.¹⁷

The growing cases of GBV in Orange Farm are reflected in the recently released crime statistics by the SAPS. In Q2 of 2022, Orange Farm police station recorded a 4.5% increase in sexual offenses compared to the same period last year (see Table I above). On sexual offenses, Orange Farm ranks 19th in the country and 5th in Gauteng¹⁸. The Women in Motion activists marched against GBV in October 2020 after another woman had been killed. The women related to SABC News that violence against women in the township is rife and women's lives are not valued, as demonstrated by the killing of women (and children) with impunity in the area (Tsotetsi 2021). In March 2021, women and residents took to the streets to raise awareness of GBV and bring attention to the killing of three women (Khumalo 2021). A female participant confirmed that women are regularly killed in Orange Farm and expressed frustration over the lack of effective response by the local authority. In her own words:

As I'm sitting here, I just received a call and a woman has been killed in Dukeng, every time it's women, what have we done so much and the people who are supposed to help us are not helping, you'll end up seeing your perpetrator just walking freely on the streets, it's very frustrating guys. I'm 72 years old, but I'm stressed, I'll go down my grave without seeing any change, the very same things that happened back in the day are still happening even today.

¹⁷ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 26 April 2022

¹⁸ Stas SA, 2022. https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0211&SCH=73290

The views above are confirmed by our survey data indicating that 87% of surveyed women and girls believe that violent crimes against women are a major problem in Orange Farm; 66% do not feel safe at home and in public spaces; 96% do not feel safe at night in the area, and only 21% generally feel safe in the township.

2.3 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Orange Farm has a diversity of leadership structures, both formal and informal. These include the local SAPS, ward councils, political parties, street committees and civic organizations, community-based organizations, and religious institutions. The ANC is the governing party (i.e. there are ANC Councillors) in all six wards of Orange Farm.

According to participants, Orange Farm residents generally do not trust the formal structures of authority and community leadership, particularly the police and ward councillors. Indeed, our survey reveals that 63% and 59% of surveyed residents do not trust the police and the ward councillor respectively. Similarly, 66% and 68% of surveyed women and girls do not trust the police and the ward councillor with GBV concerns respectively.

Residents perceive these structures as incompetent and corrupt. Indeed, participants unanimously agreed that there is a general lack of trust between the police and the residents because of poor policing in the community. The members of SAPS are often accused of being corrupt and ineffective with regard to dealing with the policing needs of the community. One participant explained:

Like I said ... the police are criminals, they are selling drugs so there is no way that we can win this battle if the police are selling drugs, and we know them, those who are selling drugs, vividly so, we see them on a daily basis some are collecting weed money, we know them so we are not going to overcome an administration that is corrupt, they will end up corrupting or killing you, one of the two. So now the fear within our community is to be killed.

Participants indicated that most residents have given up reporting crime to the police. They do not trust or depend on the police to assist or protect them against criminals, they just let it go. One participant, for example, stated:

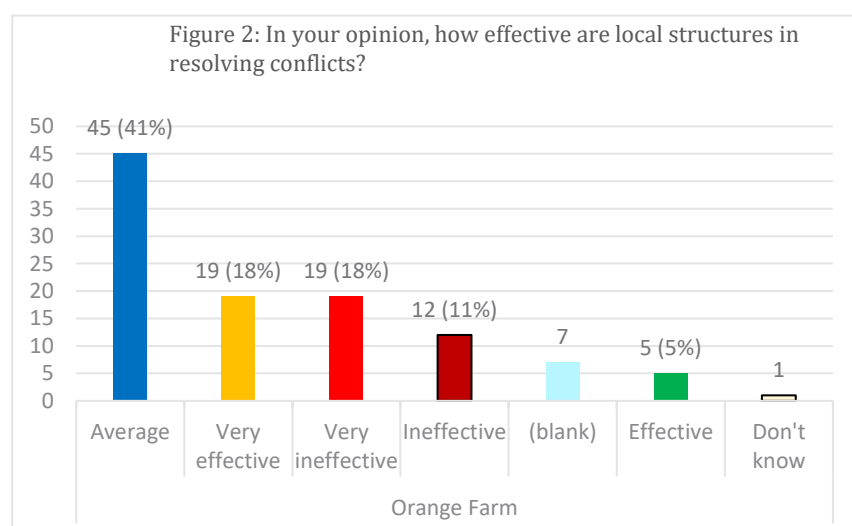
And when it comes to illegal electricity connections, we never involve the police because they don't have anything to do with it. Even if we were to involve them, they won't give us any solution. Because those who were against us calling the man who knows how to fix transformers also didn't go to the police to report. We don't involve the police in everything here. We have hope that they'll do their job, but we do not rely on them, as I've said that we made a plan as a community to find someone who will help us fix our transformer.

Similarly, participants indicated that residents have no trust in councillors and have also given up contacting them for assistance with their concerns. In the words of one participant:

The development of Orange Farm is very worrying, our councillors are not doing their jobs, people are tired and have given up on trying to communicate with our councillor on things we need. We are desperate for roads in our streets because when it rains, it's a struggle for a car to move here until they reach the main road.

With regard to the involvement of women in community leadership, this research confirms the general view that the representation of women in positions of leadership and authority in different sectors across the country remains relatively low (Kuagbedzi, Dhlamini, and Njenga 2022). Indeed, despite the 'presence' of women in 'leadership' positions in various organizations in Orange Farm, the majority of the respondents noted that the decision-making power often rests with men. A leader of a local NGO stated: "...our coordinator is female but she reports to a man before taking any decision so we can't really say we see female leadership taking over. Women are taking the front seat. But men are calling the shots behind the seat."¹⁹

According to participants, with a lack of trust in -and disengagement from- formal community leadership structures, residents generally turn to civil society and informal leadership structures for help, including with conflict resolution. This means, there are no trusted, effective formal conflict resolution mechanisms in Orange Farm. Indeed, 70% of surveyed residents do not find local structures effective in resolving conflicts (see Figure 2 below).



¹⁹ Respondent 1, Love Life Y, 25 April 2022

This explains why residents turn to informal leaders for help, but also why they often take matters into their own hands and use violence and mob justice to resolve crime-related conflicts. Indeed, 69% of surveyed youth agree that youth generally use violence to resolve conflict in Orange Farm

As also noted in the original report, the absence of a fully trusted local authority and formal and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms is an obstacle to social cohesion and is a driver of collective violence. In a diverse and fluid space like Orange Farm, individual and group conflict is to be expected. However, “a socially cohesive community is one which is able to deal with and resolve its conflicts in ways that do not result in violence, chronic tensions, or extreme marginalisation of certain sub-groups” (Monson et 2021:20).

2.4 COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

As also discussed in the original report, Orange Farm has a longstanding history of collective or group violence. The common and current types of group violence in the area include political violence, violent service delivery protests, xenophobic violence, taxi violence, gang violence, and mob justice.

2.4.1 Political tensions and violence

According to respondents, violent attacks between supporters of different political parties are not as prevalent as they were in the 90s, however, they still occasionally take place, especially in the lead-up to local elections. Commenting on the extent and nature of politically motivated violence in Orange Farm, an ANC Youth League representative confirmed that tensions between political organizations are often not physical, but “heated discussions in terms of the exchange of words.”²⁰

However, in September 2021, violence erupted in Tjovitjo, an informal settlement in Orange Farm when members of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) were subjected to attacks by a group of people who claimed to be members of Black First Land First (BLF) as they embarked on a voter registration campaign in the area (UDM 2021). The attacks, UDM noted, signalled an uneven political field as the elections would not be free and fair.²¹

2.4.2 Taxi violence

South Africa’s ‘townships’ have a long history of taxi violence, and Orange Farm is no exception. The majority of the taxi wars are over the control of routes and commuters (Sekhonyane and Dugard 2004; Mmakwena

²⁰ ANCYL representative, 26 April 2022

²¹ <https://udm.org.za/22092021/>

2022; Dugard 2001; Vegter 2020). Over the past years, Orange Farm has had its fair share of taxi violence. In 2020, the Chairperson of the Taxi Association was shot dead at the Taxi Association Office in Extension 10. This incident followed another shooting incident at Eyethu Orange Farm Mall Taxi Rank where 6 members of the Orange Farm Taxi Association (OFUTA) and a bystander were shot at by unknown assailants (Mohlamme 2020).

While there is a general perception that taxi violence is over routes, it has also emerged that some of the violence is driven by considerations of ethnic superiority. Violence in this case is used as a sign of expressing power and dominance over a particular ethnic group. Speaking on condition of anonymity, a local businessman and taxi owner stated:

[...] in most cases, conflict between us as taxi owners and taxi drivers is due to who we are, if you are Venda like me, you aren't recognized as anything but if you are Zulu, you have a certain quality that only they know. Often, I take a back seat and observe from a distance. I know I can easily be attacked because I am Venda.²²

The above brief discussion indicates that taxi violence and the associated perceptions of ethnic superiority are a threat to social cohesion in Orange Farm as they lead to conflict and violence that disrupt peaceful co-existence.

2.4.3 Gang violence

Gangsterism and related forms of crime and violence are a common phenomenon in Orange Farm, especially in schools. According to participants, the gang members are commonly identified by their distinctive type of clothing and, in some instances, by painting building walls to signify their presence. According to participants, the gangs often engage in violent fights with other gangs from other sections or extensions of the community. These fights, a participant noted, have often led to learners being "scared to go to school because they could be identified as the enemy over a stupid gang war that has nothing to do with other people"²³. The territoriality of gangsters in Orange Farm was also explained by a member of the CPF, who opined that even if the different gangs fight on their own, the impacts of these fights are felt by the entire community.²⁴

Participants agreed that cultural practices such as initiation practices are the main contributors to gang violence among young people in Orange Farm. Orange Farm has a long tradition of illegal initiation schools (also known as 'Makholwane') where young boys often go either voluntarily or out of coercion to participate

²² Interview, Orange Farm resident, 26 April 2022

²³ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 26 April 2022

²⁴ Interview, CPF representative, 25 April 2022

in practices that are associated with a transition from boyhood to manhood. Once the initiates come back from the mountains, they come back as “men” with visible violent behavioural changes. They carry pangas, knives, guns, and knobkerries and intimidate young boys who didn’t go to the mountain. One participant stated that they: “... carry every weapon you can imagine, guns, knives, and others.”²⁵

Violence between gangs in Orange Farm is about territorial control, exercising power, and masculinity. In 2016, a matric pupil at Aha-Thuto secondary school was stabbed to death by a rival group of initiates formed at illegal initiation schools in Orange Farm. A member of the Majantja gang, the victim was allegedly killed by one of the members of the Divers, another rival gang from a local school (Monama 2016).

2.4.4 Xenophobic violence

Like many other South African townships, Orange experiences xenophobic violence from time to time, as far back as 2008 (Freedom House 2017). Over the years, a series of attacks on foreign nationals happened, especially in 2010, 2013, 2015, and 2016. Like elsewhere, the attacks resulted in loss of lives, destruction of property and livelihoods, looting, and displacements.

According to the community leaders who participated in this study, there have not been any incidents of xenophobic attacks in Orange Farm in the last two to three years. However, while there have been no physical attacks recorded recently, there is a brewing ‘silent war’ against foreign nationals, which may likely culminate in violent attacks. This was evidenced by the negative perceptions and resentment that participants had towards foreign nationals and the ordinary mood of the community in this regard.

Participants indicated that, like them, the community is ‘fed up’ by the growing number of foreigners in Orange Farm. As discussed earlier, foreign nationals are accused of stealing jobs and opportunities, crime, and illegality. As discussed in the original report, due to socio-economic hardships faced by locals, negative attitudes and strong resentments towards foreign nationals are fertile grounds for xenophobic violence usually organized by local business owners and informal leadership groups for their interests.

2.4.5 Violent service delivery protests

As the previous sections of this report have shown, Orange Farm continues to be plagued by the challenges of service delivery regarding housing, roads, electricity, policing, and access to health care, amongst others. The situation in Orange Farm is further worsened by the fact that the township is located some distance away

²⁵ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 25 April 2022

from other locations where residents would potentially access services. As a response, Orange Farm residents often engage in protests (often violent) to express their frustrations over poor service delivery in their community.

In most cases, service delivery protests are not just random acts and are well coordinated by informal community leaders such as SANCO (see details in the original report). Like elsewhere, Orange Farm residents use violent service delivery protests to draw the government's attention to their otherwise ignored service delivery grievances.

2.4.6 Mob justice

As participants indicated, the general lack of trust in the police²⁶ and pervasive perceptions of police incompetence and corruption²⁷ lead Orange Farm residents to resort to mob justice to deal with rampant crime in the area. One respondent stated: "because the community will say, we will call the police and then arrest this person, tomorrow we see him roaming in the streets so it's better for us to do mob justice, that's what the community will end up doing"²⁶ Another respondent added in a similar vein: "In that situation, we either feel guilty of taking the law into our own hands, or we become guilty of not doing anything at all, so it's rather better of being guilty of taking the law into your own hands than being guilty of not doing anything in a situation like that."²⁷

According to participants, Orange Farm residents are united in their use of mob justice as a crime-fighting strategy, and this unity shields them from police arrests. One respondent stated²⁸ when asked how the community deals with criminals:

What unites us is fighting a cause like crime. If you see your neighbour being robbed, you must intervene as a neighbour because tomorrow it could be you. So, we work together to beat the culprit before we even involve the police. When a criminal is caught stealing²⁸ the community resolves the matter by beating him²⁸ and when the police get there and they ask who did it, we tell them that it's the community. Who will they arrest because they can't arrest all of us. So that's how we live. Now, when a criminal comes into my house I will deal with them the way I see fit, even if the culprit opens a case against me, it's a case against the community so the police must arrest us all.²⁸

While generally perceived as effective in dealing with crime, mob justice is a threat to social cohesion in Orange Farm and similar highly diverse communities characterized by group tensions and resentment. Very

²⁶ Interview Orange Farm resident, 27 April 2022

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Interview, Orange Farm resident, 28 April 2022

often, mob justice is meted out on group members wrongly accused of having committed a crime. This exacerbates already tense group relations.

3. CONCLUSION

Like most townships in South Africa, Orange Farm is home to culturally and linguistically diverse population groups from both within and beyond the country's borders. Its population continues to rapidly grow, aided by a combination of natural increase and immigration. It is clear that Orange Farms' rapid population growth and urbanization have not been matched by an equally paced service provision capacity. This research identifies the following main issues that have direct or indirect implications for social cohesion and collective violence in this area. The Kagisano programme needs to address these issues to achieve its objective of promoting social cohesion and preventing collective violence in the area.

Group tensions and conflict

Group relations and interactions, particularly between South Africans and foreign nationals, remain tense because of the locals' negative attitudes and resentment toward foreign nationals. The resentment is due to the locals' perception that the growing number of foreign nationals in the area is a threat to their lives and livelihoods. Like in many other places, locals accuse foreign nationals of stealing jobs and business opportunities, blame them for social ills, including crime and drug abuse, and also for burdening the local public services. Similar tensions exist between local and foreign religious organizations. Local pastors expressed anger and frustration at the extent to which they are losing followership to what they perceived to be illegal, 'fake' and 'money-driven' immigrant-run churches and have called on the government to close those churches and for foreign pastors to go home'.

Socio-economic hardships

Orange Farm is one of the most economically segregated townships, characterized by uneven development. Unlike other townships strategically located close to various economic hubs, Orange Farm is located on the margins of economic development, very far from economic hubs especially in the greater Johannesburg. Because of its spatial segregation and other governance-related problems, Orange Farm is fraught with various socioeconomic challenges such as high rates of unemployment, poverty, teenage pregnancies, poor service delivery, gender-based and group violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and crime, amongst others. As observed elsewhere, severe socio-economic hardships result in collective anger and frustration, tensions

between groups due to competition over resources and opportunities, and often lead to collective violence, particularly violent service delivery protests and sometimes xenophobic violence

Lack of trust in -and disengagement from- formal local structures of authority and leadership

According to participants, Orange Farm residents generally do not trust the formal structures of authority and community leadership, particularly the police and ward councillors. Residents perceive these structures as incompetent, corrupt, and unhelpful, and have subsequently given up engaging with them about their daily concerns such as crime, conflict resolution, and service provision. As a result, approaches to addressing conflict and societal challenges are often 'violence and mob-driven'. Indeed, and as also noted in the original report, the absence of a fully trusted local authority and formal and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms is an obstacle to social cohesion and is a driver of collective violence. In a diverse and fluid space like Orange Farm, individual and group conflict is to be expected. However, "a socially cohesive community is one which is able to deal with and resolve its conflicts in ways that do not result in violence, chronic tensions, or extreme marginalization of certain sub-groups" (Monson et al, 2012:20)

Collective violence

Orange Farm has a longstanding history of collective or group violence. The common and current types of group violence in the area include political violence, violent service delivery protests, xenophobic violence, taxi violence, gang violence, and mob justice. In particular, gang violence is terrorizing schools and the community at large, and has its origins in illegal initiation schools. Like elsewhere, Orange Farm residents use violent service delivery protests to draw the government's attention to their otherwise ignored service delivery grievances. While generally perceived as effective in dealing with crime, mob justice is a threat to social cohesion in Orange Farm and similar highly diverse communities characterized by group tensions and resentment. Very often, mob justice is meted out on group members wrongly accused of having committed crime. This exacerbates already tense group relations.

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