

“This Pen is More Important Than This Firearm”:

**Exploring Security Sector Governance in South Africa During the COVID-19
Pandemic.**

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Law in Action: Research Methods [PBL5849F] – Minor Dissertation

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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Faculty of Law

“This Pen is More Important Than This Firearm”:

Exploring Security Sector Governance in South Africa During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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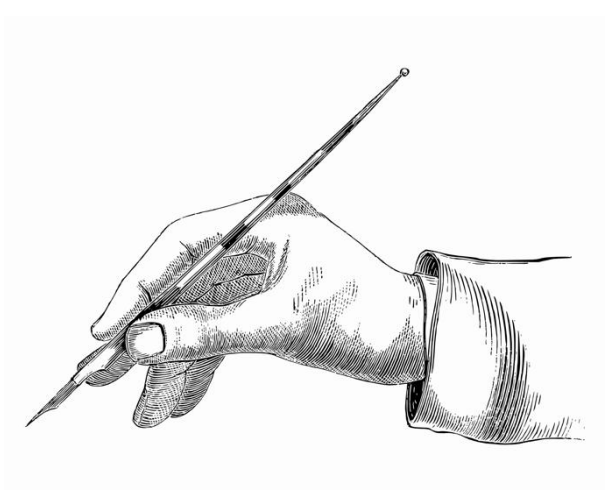
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Table of Contents

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN	1
Declaration.....	2
CHAPTER ONE	7
INTRODUCTION	7
1.1. Rationale	10
1.2. Problem statement.....	11
1.3. Research Questions.....	14
1.4. Aims & Objectives.....	14
1.4.1. Aims.....	15
1.4.2. Objectives	15
1.5. Conclusion	15
1.6. Dissertation Layout.....	16
CHAPTER TWO	17
LITERATURE REVIEW	17
2.1. COVID-19.....	17
2.2. International SSG During COVID-19	17
2.2.1. International public safety Directives During the COVID-19 Pandemic	17
2.2.2. International public health Directives During the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	19
2.3. History of SSG in South Africa	20
2.3.1. Non-state Security Actors	21
2.4. COVID-19 in South Africa	23
2.5. SSG in South Africa During the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	26
2.5.1. Coordinating Structures	26
2.5.2. Legislative Frameworks.....	30
2.6. Challenges of SSG in South Africa During The COVID-19 Pandemic	32
2.6.1. Use of Force.....	33
2.6.2. Contested Governance	34
2.6.3. Restriction On The Movement Of Groups Of Individuals	36
2.6.4. Militarized Police Tactics	37
2.6.5. Prevention of Alcohol-Related Trauma	38
2.6.6. Policing Gender-Based Violence and Femicide	39
2.7. Public Health & Public Safety in South Africa During the COVID-19 Pandemic	41
CHAPTER THREE	45
METHODOLOGY	45

3.1. Research Design.....	45
3.2. Conceptual Framework.....	45
3.4. Ethical Considerations	47
3.5. Timeframe.....	48
3.6. Negotiating Access	48
3.9. Data Analysis.....	49
3.10. Limitations	49
CHAPTER FOUR.....	51
THIS IS KRAAIFONTEIN	51
4.1. Introduction.....	51
4.2. Key Social, Economic, and Demographic Indicators of Kraaifontein.....	51
4.3. Kraaifontein Police Precinct Profile	55
4.4. Conclusion	57
CHAPTER FIVE	58
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SAPS MEMBERS DURING COVID-19	58
5.1. Introduction.....	58
5.2. Standard Operational Protocols	58
5.3. Taking on public health Roles	60
5.5. Please Behave Man.....	64
5.6. Use of Excessive Force.....	65
5.8. Ring Fencing of Informal Settlements.....	69
5.9. Policing of Alcohol.....	73
5.10. Conclusion	74
CHAPTER SIX.....	76
EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF SAPS MEMBERS DURING COVID-19.....	76
6.1. Introduction.....	76
6.2. Resilience and Professionalism.....	76
6.3. Experiences of Using PPE on Duty	79
6.3.1. Sometimes You Struggle with Masks, Sometimes You Struggle with Sanitizer	79
6.4. <i>If I Must Go to Another Station, It Will Be a Retirement</i>	82
6.5. Alert Level 5 – That Was the Best.....	84
6.6. Fears and Stressors.....	85
6.6.1. What Can You Do In Life Without Your Family?	87
6.6.2. High Stress and Low Morale	88
6.3. Employee Health and Wellness	89

6.3.1. SAPS Officers Experiences of EHW During COVID-19.....	89
6.4. Conclusion	91
CHAPTER SEVEN	93
ATTITUDE OF THE SAPS TOWARDS SSG DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.	93
7.1. Introduction.....	93
7.3. This Pen is More Important Than This Firearm	95
7.3.1. Or this Private Security Company (PSC).....	97
7.3.2. Or this Community	98
7.4. Conclusion	100
CHAPTER EIGHT	101
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	101
8.2. Conclusion	103
REFERENCE LIST:	104
Annexure A: Certificate of Approval for Ethical Clearance	116
Annexure B: National clearance to conduct research in SAPS	117
Annexure C: Provincial clearance to conduct research in SAPS.....	119
Annexure D: Interview Guide.....	120
Annexure E: Information Sheet	124
Annexure F: Informed Consent Form.....	127



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to the Geneva Centre for Security Governance (n.d.), Security Sector Governance (SSG) is a term used to describe the policies adopted by countries to ensure the provision of transparent, accountable, and effective governance within their respective security sectors. SSG encompasses two aspects, namely the security sector and governance. Although the landscape of each country's security sector varies significantly, it consists fundamentally of a range of state actors including public security organisations (E.g. police), and justice and law enforcement institutions (E.g. correctional facilities); as well as non-state security actors, such as non-statutory security forces (E.g. private security companies) and non-statutory civil society groups (E.g. non-governmental organisations) (United Nations Development Programme, n.d).

When attempting to conceptualize governance, however, it is important to distinguish between the term *government* - which describes processes and policies associated with state bureaucracy, legislation, and regulatory authority; and *governance*, which refers to the means by which different stakeholders engage with one another and describe how those interactions are conducted (Munzhedzi, 2021). In recent years, there has been an explosion of literature pertaining to SSG. The most notable theories of governance include *Nodal Governance* (Shearing & Wood, 2003), *Hybrid Governance* (Marks et al., 2011), and *Pluralised Governance* (Shearing & Marks, 2004). The hallmark characteristic of each theory is that they all describe a move away from a state-centric or Westphalian model of security governance to a model that encompasses a variety of security actors. For example, Hybrid security governance posits that both state and non-state actors can work collaboratively to address issues of ineffective SSG. Nodal Governance, conversely, explores the ways in which governance is

established through nodes, or entities which form networks to govern complex systems (Burris, Drahos, and Shearing, 2004). However, within the context of South Africa, SSG predominately draws inspiration from the model of Pluralised Governance, which argues that the roles of community-based and private security actors should be developed to coexist alongside those of state institutions (Kasipo, 2020).

To determine metrics for good SSG, it is important to look at how effective both state and non-state actors engage with one another at various levels of government and if their engagement promotes a sense of accountability, transparency, self-governance, and collective decision-making (Munzhedzi, 2021). The most commonly used tool to measure governance in Africa is the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2020). This index provides a framework in which African nations can measure the quality of the political goods they provide to their citizens and determine the efficacy of their overall governance according to four fundamental measures: Security and Rule of Law; Participation, Rights, and Inclusion; Foundations for Economic Growth; and Human Development. The IIAG also provides detailed sub-categories and sub-indicators within each respective measure. For example, when attempting to measure the quality of a nation's provision of public security goods, African nations can look to the Security and Rule of Law measure to assess their ability to provide safety and security to their citizens; their compliance with the rule of law by the executive; their ability to provide accountable and transparent security governance; and their ability to establish and adhere to anti-corruption mechanisms (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2020). Therefore, for the purpose of this research paper, the term SSG describes the framework in which government operates from, to engage with all stakeholders in the security sector to ensure the provision of safety and security for its citizens; by complying with national and international legislation which advocate for accountable, transparent governance, and is also measured against structured anti-corruption mechanisms.

SSG, unfortunately, tends to become fragmented when there is no platform for inter-governmental cooperation or engagement with other transitional actors at a regional or international level (Hänggi 2003; Janse van Rensburg et al., 2022). The absence of good SSG becomes especially more concerning in fragile or post-conflict states such as South Africa. It has long since been contested that the South African government still considers itself to be the monopolized provider of legitimate violence and effective public authority (Shearing & Marks, 2004; Shearing & Wood, 2003; Baker, 2002). Andrew Faull (2016) argues that this is largely due to police agencies in South Africa having been established within a framework of structural violence and a lengthy history of abuse of power and discrimination. In an attempt to eradicate its history of perpetuating decades of structural violence, the South African Police Service (SAPS) instead rebranded itself as crime fighters working for the community. However, this transition period has failed to yield effective results, as the SAPS continue to evoke perceptions of ineffective security governance owing to wide-scale corruption; militarized policing functions; mismanagement of resources; and a steady increase in crime and violence in South Africa. It is also stipulated within the South African Constitution that the government should be operating within a framework of cooperative governance. As such, a holistic approach towards crime prevention in South Africa involves the interaction of many state and non-state security actors, with the SAPS only serving as a single public organisation within the broader realms of SSG (Bester, Els and Olivier, 2020). This is especially true during states of exception, which often constitutes a situation in which a state is confronted by an imminent threat and in response to this threat, implements protocols which would never be justifiable under normal conditions regarding the nature of state operations (Scheppelle, 2004). Schwartz, et.al. (2021), also note that states of exceptionalism act as catalysts for putting forward key policy initiatives, which allow for the mobilisation of resources and for the state to adopt highly securitised measures to maintain public authority. The most recent state of exception in South Africa which

required all actors within the security sector to co-operate was the emergence of the COVID-19 health pandemic.

1.1. Rationale

The COVID-19 virus constituted an international health emergency, which placed a large strain on the healthcare systems of many countries across the world, including South Africa (World Health Organization, 2021). To further reduce the transmission of the virus and prevent major loss of life, the South African government implemented a nation-wide lockdown (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020a). Since state security actors such as the police and the army were frequently in contact with individuals, it was imperative that they adhere to strict protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 when engaging with community members. According to the South African Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster, these standard operational protocols relate to how officers should correctly equip themselves with personal protective equipment such as gloves and face masks; how officers should screen arrested individuals for COVID-19 before placing them in holding cells; and entailing how many individuals could be kept in holding cells (Whittle, 2020). Law enforcement officers, in addition to adhering to these operational protocols, were still tasked with carrying out police action in accordance with the police code of conduct.

As outlined by the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020a), the SAPS, under the Disaster Management Act, (DMA) 2002 and regulations, were also responsible for creating a safe and secure environment for all South African citizens. And in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002), the South African Government authorized that the SAPS were to:

- Participate in endeavours to enforce the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002)

- Prevent all actions that may threaten the health, safety, and security of any community;
and
- Collaborate in efforts to deal with the destructive nature and other effects of the disaster.

At the time, not much detail was provided regarding the exact nature of these standard operational protocols and what the roles and responsibilities of SAPS members were. The COVID-19 pandemic also constituted an unprecedented state of exception in the form of a global health pandemic. As such, not much was known about the experiences and perceptions of SAPS officials in relation to the roles and responsibilities they were tasked with during a pandemic. There also appeared to be a disparity between the enactment of legislation to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and SAPS' conceptualisation of (and adherence to) these policies. As such, it was also imperative to explore the attitudes towards SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of the SAPS officials whose mandate it was to ensure the protection of all South African citizens.

1.2. Problem statement

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, little was written about SSG in relation to national pandemic-preparedness policies. Many countries had, prior to COVID-19, not included any information relating to state policing actors in their pandemic-preparedness plans, including the United Kingdom (Department of Health, 2011); Switzerland (Federal Office of Public Health, 2018); and South Africa (World Health Organization, 2021). Instead, the focus had been placed on other emergency services, such as healthcare providers being equipped with enough resources to handle a health pandemic as opposed to law enforcement agencies who were to ensure that citizens adhered to the stay-at-home order. In South Africa, the Department of Public Service and Administration had no pandemic-preparedness policy in place before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and instead adopted a largely securitised approach by

enacting a public safety response to a public health crisis. This meant deploying the SAPS, SANDF and Metro Police personnel to restrict the movement of population groups by conducting large-scale arrests and issuing fines for those who violated the stay-at-home mandate (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020c). Despite purportedly receiving training on how to de-escalate conflict and only using violence as a last resort while enforcing lockdown restrictions; law enforcement officials continuously utilized militarized forms of policing against communities. Resulting in numerous reports of police brutality and military-related deaths – further eroding the legitimacy of/ and trust within the SAPS (Bruce, 2020).

During the initial lockdown period, which took place from the 26th of March 2020 until the 17th of April 2020, there had been 271 reported instances of assault committed by members of the SAPS (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020c). The Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) also reported that it was investigating 21 deaths as a result of police action and 9 deaths in police custody (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020c). Meško (2021), argued that the SAPS were constrained by a triad of administrative challenges including: adhering to rigid vertical governance frameworks, maintaining professional discretion, and a strong reliance on community adherence to the lockdown regulations. Owing to these challenges, during periods of crisis, the SAPS reverted back to what they were familiar with - which was adopting militarized policing actions toward community members. The pandemic also challenged how the SAPS were intended to contain a public health epidemic through a public safety approach, while contending with various issues pertaining to SSG at the start of the lockdown, including: a decreased reliance on parliament during crisis management; being ill-prepared with regards to the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); employing militarized policing tactics; and possessing a rudimentary understanding of the JCPS. While Parliamentary officials were afforded the luxury of establishing virtual office environments - police officers had to go to their respective

stations each day anticipating an imminent and unknown threat which could potentially result in life-threatening complications regarding their health and the health of their family members. It therefore, becomes important to consider the effectiveness of SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic and establish whether members of the SAPS had really received sufficient training regarding the enforcement of lockdown regulations; and to what extent they abided by the standard operational protocols outlined by the JCPS Cluster that were intended to assist them during the enforcement of the DMA (South African Police Service, 2020a). It was stated that if employees opted not to work, that they would be in breach of their contract and were ordered to prove that the workplace was unsafe. These mandates already posed a growing concern owing to the SAPS having previously experienced long-standing challenges of police absenteeism - and so questions must be asked in relation to how the COVID-19 pandemic affected rates of police absenteeism.

Concerns were also raised by the Parliament of South Africa regarding the necessary procurement of PPE and training to enforce the DMA – such as how to sanitise vehicles prior to apprehending suspects and who was responsible for sanitizing vehicles. More importantly, owing to a lack of public health training, questions were asked in relation to whether the SAPS were adequately trained to safely practice social distancing; correctly use PPE; and de-escalate conflict as mentioned in their briefings and protocols? This is crucial when attempting to understand how the SAPS were enforcing social distancing practices when arresting individuals. It is also important to note that: “enforcement officers are not empowered to authorise deviations or exceptions of the obligations created in terms of the regulations and Directions” (van Zyl-Gous, 2020). In other words, there was no room for interpretation of the mandate regarding certain protocols such as sanitising patrol vehicles before and after apprehending suspects or how to de-escalate conflict. Yet, how were they to navigate the risk of potentially contracting COVID-19 from an arrested person who did not want to submit to

custody while also enacting section 49(2) of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977, which describes how an enforcement officer is allowed to use “force that is reasonably necessary and proportional to overcome such resistance or attempt”? This is especially concerning, as the SAPS apprehended more than 411,309 individuals for violating lockdown restrictions before taking them to holding cells with limited capacity (BusinessTech, 2021). It is, therefore, imperative to explore the roles and responsibilities which the SAPS were tasked with during the COVID-19 pandemic. As well as understanding the experiences and perceptions of these SAPS officials while carrying out their roles and responsibilities and their attitudes toward broader SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3. Research Questions

This dissertation will attempt to answer 3 research questions:

- What were the roles and responsibilities of the SAPS during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What were the experiences and perceptions of individual members of the SAPS while conducting their roles and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What were the attitudes of SAPS officials towards SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.4. Aims & Objectives

While much scholarly literature has been written on policing during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the enforcement of pandemic-related laws (Meško, 2021); policing Gender-Based-Violence-and-Femicide (Hsu & Henke, 2021); and the mental wellbeing of its police members (Rooney & McNicholas, 2020); little empirical research has been conducted on the individual experiences and perceptions of SAPS members while carrying out their roles and

responsibilities. As well as exploring their attitudes toward SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to existing bodies of literature by setting out the following aims and objectives:

1.4.1. Aims

- To provide a description of the roles and responsibilities, which the SAPS fulfilled during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To explore the individual experiences and perceptions of members of the SAPS in relation to the roles and responsibilities they were tasked with fulfilling during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To explore the attitude of the SAPS towards SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4.2. Objectives

- To conduct semi-structured interviews with members of the SAPS regarding the roles and responsibilities which they were tasked with fulfilling during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To conduct semi-structured interviews with members of the SAPS regarding their individual experiences and perceptions regarding their roles and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To conduct semi-structured interviews with members of the SAPS regarding their attitude towards SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has introduced the concept of SSG which describes the framework in which the security sector operates to ensure the provision of safety and security for its citizens. It also described how these stakeholders are intended to feature more prominently

during states of exceptionalism, with the most recent state of exceptionalism being the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The scale of the pandemic was unprecedented and owing to a lack of effective pandemic-preparedness, the South African government opted to utilize a highly securitised approach by enacting the DMA and calling upon the SAPS, SANDF and Metro Police to ensure that residents adhered to the national stay-at-home order and the uninterrupted operation of essential services. However, at the time, little was known regarding the roles and responsibilities of the SAPS and even less was known about their experiences and perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.6. Dissertation Layout

The layout for this dissertation will begin with covering an extensive range of literature pertaining to SSG in Chapter 2. It will then discuss the research methodology employed during this study in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 will describe the setting of Kraaifontein, highlighting the degree of violence prevalent within the suburb and examining its crime statistics and various social, demographic, and economic indicators. After which, it will provide an overview of the findings through three discussion chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7) in relation to each of the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Finally, it will provide a brief overview of policy recommendations in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. COVID-19

According to the World Health Organization (2021), the COVID-19 virus is an infectious disease which causes infected individuals to experience mild to moderate respiratory illness syndrome. The virus can be transmitted through person-to-person contact, via respiratory droplets that are produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, which are then inhaled into the lungs by an uninfected individual (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). It can also spread between people who are within proximity of one another, typically about 1 meter (World Health Organization, 2021). As such, it was recommended that individuals practice social distancing by avoiding contact with one another (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

2.2. International SSG During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became apparent that different countries utilized different governance structures to combat the pandemic and to ensure the health and safety of their citizens. However, all countries operated on a spectrum that oscillated predominantly between a public health and public safety approach, and as such it is important to examine a few international case studies which depicted attributes of both public safety and public health interventions.

2.2.1. International public safety Directives During the COVID-19 Pandemic

A few countries including the Philippines and Zimbabwe opted for the use of highly securitised measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, former President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, directed all law enforcement agencies under his regime to

establish a sense of peace and order within COVID-19 hotspots (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2022). These orders resulted in the arrest of more than 120,000 individuals for violating nationally imposed curfews within the first month of the lockdown. While it was mostly the duty of the Philippine National Police (PNP) to ensure that residents obeyed the stay-at-home mandate; police officers also relied heavily on the support of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and private security agencies to bolster the security presence in affected areas with commercial activity (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2022).

While the Zimbabwean government initiated a series of prevention protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19, by implementing nationwide lockdowns, closing off its borders, and promulgating numerous health protocols (Farai & Own, 2021). To enforce these prevention protocols and ensure the continual operation of essential businesses, the government relied heavily on the deployment of the police force and armed military personnel. A narrative of ‘*civil disobedience*’ was also used to describe individuals who violated the lockdown, and in an attempt to ensure public order; law enforcement actors were called upon to conduct wide-scale arrests – often resulting in serious bodily injury (Farai & Owen, 2021). Altercations with police ensued owing to increased police brutality as citizens were ordered to remain at home, despite the majority living in impoverished communities and needing to seek out employment to provide for their families.

These case studies highlight that while both countries had deployed military personnel in a logistical and humanitarian endeavour to support the mobilisation and provision of adequate health resources, the extent to which they involved state law enforcement differed. And, in line with Lamb’s (2018) writing on interrelated catalysts for police militarisation; it is evident to see how the emergence of the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased militarised policing functions for both countries. This response to adopting militarised SSG protocols also came about when hostile metaphors such as ‘*civil disobedience*’ were pushed by

government officials to legitimise the deployment of law enforcement actors and justify instances of police brutality. These case studies also indicate how police militarisation during the COVID-19 pandemic has been intensified through the professionalisation of policing actors who were given more power under state sovereignty to uphold and ensure an ever-expanding mandate. For example, in the Philippines, more than 670,000 officers working at 1,675 private security companies were legitimised to enforce the national lockdown. This is in stark comparison to the number of members serving at both the AFP (130,000 personnel) and the PNP (160,000 personnel) (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2022). And although the enlistment of additional security actors assisted in allowing the government of the Philippines to procure and administer enough COVID-19 vaccines to inoculate most of its population very quickly; other countries were able to achieve similar results while enacting little if any law enforcement protocols.

2.2.2. International public health Directives During the COVID-19 Pandemic

There were also notable examples of well-executed public health directives during the pandemic, with countries such as New Zealand and Rwanda leading the way. First, it was evident that New Zealand displayed one of the best responses during the initial stages of the pandemic. It achieved this by taking decisive action to prohibit the transmission of the virus through the announcement of a nationwide lockdown and adopting an elimination response strategy before, which included tight border management and closing down businesses before any outbreaks had occurred (Stanley & Bradley, 2020). Strong public health directives were implemented at all spheres of government - being local, regional, and national. And as a result of the administration's decisive action; by the 8th of June 2020, there were no active COVID-19 cases in the entire country - despite reporting 22 confirmed COVID-19 deaths earlier that same month (Stanley & Bradley, 2020).

By capitalising on the lessons it learned from the Ebola outbreak; the Rwandan government opted for result-oriented public actions, and devoted additional public expenditure to healthcare infrastructure, as well as developing merit-based career systems and performance driven incentives to ensure efficient and sustainable service delivery (Delelelgn & Tesfachew, 2021). Although Rwanda implemented strict security protocols, such as improving border patrols and conducting thorough screening checks; they also supplemented these protocols with highly acclaimed public health interventions. These included the introduction of intensive COVID-19 awareness-raising campaigns through social media platforms and webinars (Delelelgn & Tesfachew, 2021). This hybrid approach resulted in Rwanda also having one of the lowest transmission rates during the pandemic with only 133,518 positive cases in a country with a population of more than 13 million (Delelelgn & Tesfachew, 2021).

These case studies illustrate how countries such as New Zealand and Rwanda who employed the use of a public health intervention strategy promoted a strong degree of transparency, self-governance, and collective decision-making while also reducing COVID-19 transmission rates. As such, they were able to contain the pandemic without much involvement from law enforcement. However, the question remains as to how SSG was employed in South Africa during the pandemic? To answer that question, it is important to first revisit the historical origins of SSG in South Africa, to understand the evolution of state and non-state security institutions which form part of the current security sector.

2.3. History of SSG in South Africa

Under the Apartheid regime, SSG embodied the virtues of the Westphalian project, whereby militarized forms of state policing were not only sanctioned but encouraged to diffuse the increasing levels of political unrest across the country during the 1980's (Theissen & Hamber, 1998). As a result, many victims of Apartheid experienced unlawful arrests, physical assault,

torture, and executions; in addition to poor socioeconomic conditions, such as malnutrition, mediocre education opportunities and extreme poverty (Theissen & Hamber, 1998). Over time, the narrative echoed by senior political party leaders and policing representatives concerning these areas, were that they were designated as high-crime areas and acted as dangerous spaces whereby contested governance routinely took place (Lamb, 2018). The only solution to displacing the violence, would be state-led reclamation through the appropriation of security forces to ensure that the state once again maintained its sovereign status. As such, various private security companies were contracted to assist the South African Defence Force and the South African Police in controlling instances of political unrest (Hesselink & Häefele, 2015). Following the resignation of the Apartheid regime and a shift towards democratic governance, non-state actors such as private security companies continued to operate outside of the public domain of security provision. The need for these actors remained, owing to the strong distrust of the government which had been cemented over the course of decades. As such, communities which were previously marginalized by the South African government, were apprehensive towards the state provision of goods and services during the early post-Apartheid era (Cooper-Knock, 2014). This included the newly rebranded SAPS, whose organisational mandate now became centred around the establishment of collaborative partnerships with community residents and allocating additional policing resources to achieve community-oriented policing objectives (Lamb, 2018).

2.3.1. Non-state Security Actors

South Africa has seen a significant growth in the non-state policing industry, with various non-state policing actors such as neighbourhood watch groups and citizen patrols becoming increasingly more desirable (Diphorn & Kyed, 2016). However, the most prevalent non-state policing actor to emerge since the post-Apartheid era has undoubtedly been private security companies (PSCs).

The increased need for PSCs came about due to an upward trend in reported crime; insurance companies requiring clients to implement adequate security measures to mitigate losses; and ineffective policing from the SAPS. PSCs have also been known to amalgamate clusters of clients to create ‘strongholds’, whereby they can focus a collective majority of their resources to ensure the protection of certain neighbourhoods and areas (Diphorn & Kyed, 2016). These strongholds therefore necessitate the concentration of PSC resources in typically affluent neighbourhoods, which place them in direct contention with state policing actors. And as a result, entanglements between state and non-state policing actors continue to challenge the state and non-state policing divide (Diphorn & Kyed, 2016).

Community Policing Forums (CPFs), however, have typically been known to serve as partners, mediating differences between the community and the SAPS. In South Africa, cooperation with civil society through CPFs is a legislative requirement of the South African Police Service Act (Act 68 of 1995), which states that the police should:

- Promote cooperation between the community and the police in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing.
- Improve the rendering of policing services to communities at national, provincial and local levels.
- Improve transparency in the Service and accountability of the Service to the community.
- Promote joint problem identification and problem-solving by the service and the community.

The role of the CPF is ultimately to empower the community to voice their concerns regarding state law enforcement and work with the SAPS to address issues regarding its service delivery in the communities. However, in the broader domain of SSG, both state and non-state actors

need to engage frequently with one another in a manner which promotes a certain degree of accountability, transparency, and self-governance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, non-state security actors such as PSCs, CPFs and Neighbourhood Watches featured very prominently in the conversation around SSG in South Africa. However, to understand the significance of their role, it is important to first explore the epidemiological impact of COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa.

2.4. COVID-19 in South Africa

In order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the effect on South Africa's public health infrastructure, the president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, according to the Disaster Management Act (DMA) 57 of 2002, declared a national lockdown on the 26th of March 2020 (South African Government News Agency, 2020). A system of various Alert Levels to manage the COVID-19 pandemic was also introduced, with each level having certain restrictions in place to contend with the severity of new cases (waves) of COVID-19. The national lockdown initially entailed an Alert Level 5, 21-day stay-at-home order, but was extended on multiple occasions owing to the easing and adjustment of alert levels, with the last recorded Adjusted Alert Level 1 timeframe slated from the 1st of October 2021 to the 4th of April 2022 (Department of Health, 2022). See Figure. 1 for a chronological history of all Alert Levels introduced during the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa. The daily routine of South Africans citizens was, therefore, determined by the fluctuating levels of these "lockdown restrictions" for little more than 2 years. That is, until the 5th of April 2022 when President Cyril Ramaphosa eventually lifted the National state of Disaster Management Act – resulting in the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. The DMA was lifted owing to the large-scale introduction of vaccines and availability of rapid testing kits, making COVID-19 much less of an immediate health risk concern. To the extent that during the peak of the third wave of COVID-19, on the 12th of December 2021, South Africa saw an unprecedented number of daily

cases with 37,875 cases being reported. This is in stark contrast to the most recent figures of the 2nd of January 2023, being 418 daily cases (Worldometers, 2023). South Africa has seen a total of 4,045,262 positive COVID-19 cases, with more than 3,933,546 patients having recovered, and 102,568 individuals having lost their lives due to COVID-19 (Worldometers, 2023).

South Africa COVID-19 Alert System Model

Alert Level	Period	Description
Level 5	26 March 2020 – 30 April 2020	Lockdown: Strictest measures with only essential services allowed.
Level 4	1 May 2020 – 31 May 2020	Reduced risk: Some businesses and services allowed to operate with strict protocols in place.
Level 3	1 June 2020 – 17 August 2020	Moderate risk: Most businesses and services allowed to operate with restrictions. Social gatherings limited.
Level 2	18 August 2020 – 31 August 2020	Low risk: More activities allowed with minimal restrictions. Some gatherings permitted with limits.
Level 1	21 September 2020 – 28 December 2020	New Normal: Lowest level of restrictions, with most activities allowed. Public health measures still in place.
Level 3	29 December 2020 – 28 February 2021	Moderate risk (again): Restrictions increased due to rising cases.
Level 1	1 March 2021 – 30 May 2021	Adjusted Level 1: Lower restrictions, most activities allowed with public health measures.
Level 2	31 May 2021 – 15 June 2021	Adjusted Level 2: Some restrictions still in place for high-risk activities.
Level 4	16 June 2021 – 25 July 2021	Adjusted Level 4: Further restrictions due to rising cases.
Level 3	26 July 2021 – 12 September 2021	Adjusted Level 3: Further easing of restrictions, but social distancing and public health measures remain.
Level 2	13 September 2021 – 30 September 2021	Adjusted Level 2: Some restrictions still in place but with greater freedom.
Level 1	1 October 2021 – Ongoing	Adjusted Level 1: The lowest level of restrictions with most activities permitted, but health measures remain.

Figure 1. List of COVID-19 Alert Levels in South Africa

2.5. SSG in South Africa During the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SSG was predicated on the participation of stakeholders operating across various national, provincial, and local coordinating structures. These structures were imperative in providing a collaborative framework which encouraged participation across all spheres of government. Established against the backdrop of a sound theoretical model which advocated for co-production – these coordinating structures, according to the legislation enacted, appeared to be well-aligned and effective in handling the COVID-19 pandemic on paper. But, in reality - it showcased how overlapping coordinating structures promoted controversial and discriminatory mandates which could not be implemented equally across South Africa.

2.5.1. Coordinating Structures

Following the announcement of the National Lockdown on the 26th of March 2020, President Ramaphosa also announced the establishment of the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC), which was chaired by the President and aimed to establish a framework of cooperative governance to address the COVID-19 Pandemic (see Figure 2). The NCCC held weekly virtual calls, whereby they discussed pertinent issues regarding the governance of the pandemic, such as the procurement of vaccines, epidemiological trends, and the COVID-19 Alert System (Schwartz et. al., 2021). In addition, the NCCC also established coronavirus command councils at both the provincial and district level through the Provincial

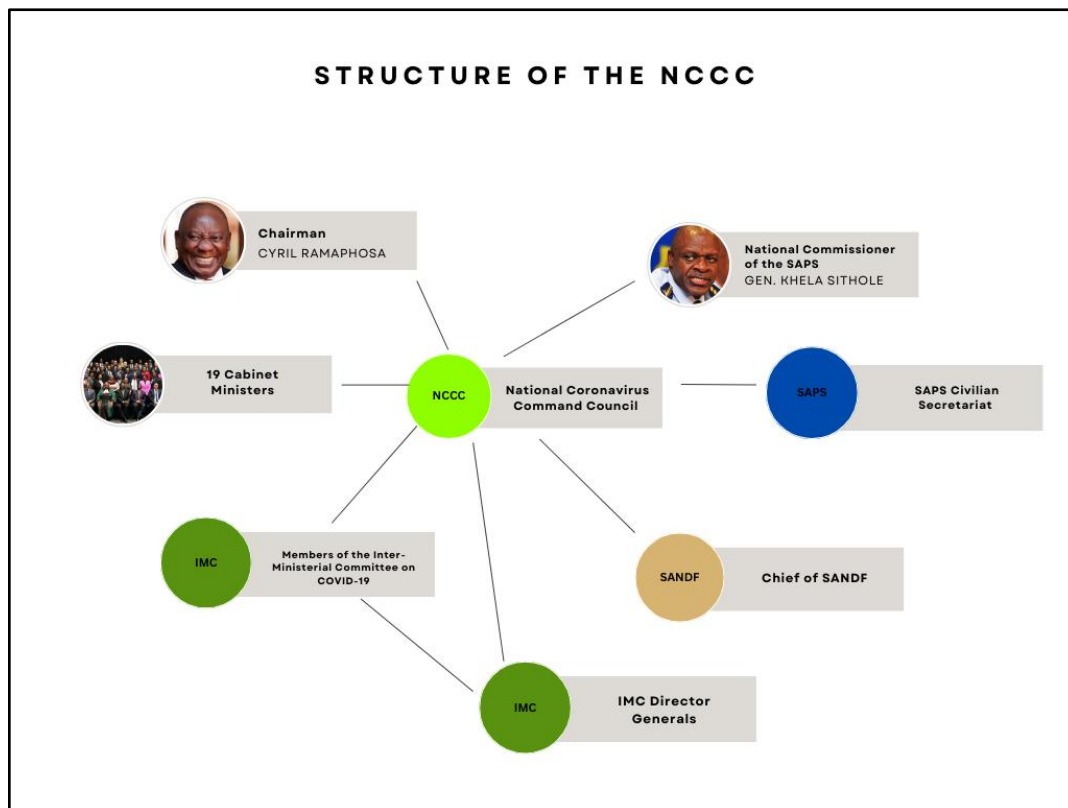


Figure 2. Structure of the NCCC

Coronavirus Command Council (PCCC) and District Coronavirus Command Council (DCCC) (Snyman et al., 2023). The PCCCs were chaired by each of the nine Provincial Premiers as well as a Member of their Executive Council (MEC). While DCCCs were chaired by District Executive Mayors, as well as local mayors. The PCCCs provided instructions for establishing effective community engagement to Provincial Community Policing Boards (PCPBs), which was then passed down to its local level structures - being CPFs (Schwartz et al., 2021).

However, owing to the severity and scale of the imminent pandemic, combined with limited pandemic-preparedness policies - the NCCC opted to utilise existing security coordination structures to contain the pandemic from the national level. The NCCC, therefore, chose to enact the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NatJOINTS). The mandate of the NATJOINTS is to provide a framework for the collective planning and coordination of all joint security and intelligence operations, while also providing spaces for participation from other sectors or clusters (News24, 2020). These government clusters, more specifically, constitute

groupings of governmental departments with cross-cutting programmes and were established to ensure effective coordination of national and provincial priority programmes (Republic of South Africa, 2021). In total there are five government clusters, however during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was the Justice, Crime, Prevention, and Security Cluster (JCPS) which became the central structure within this sphere of cooperative governance (see Figure 3).

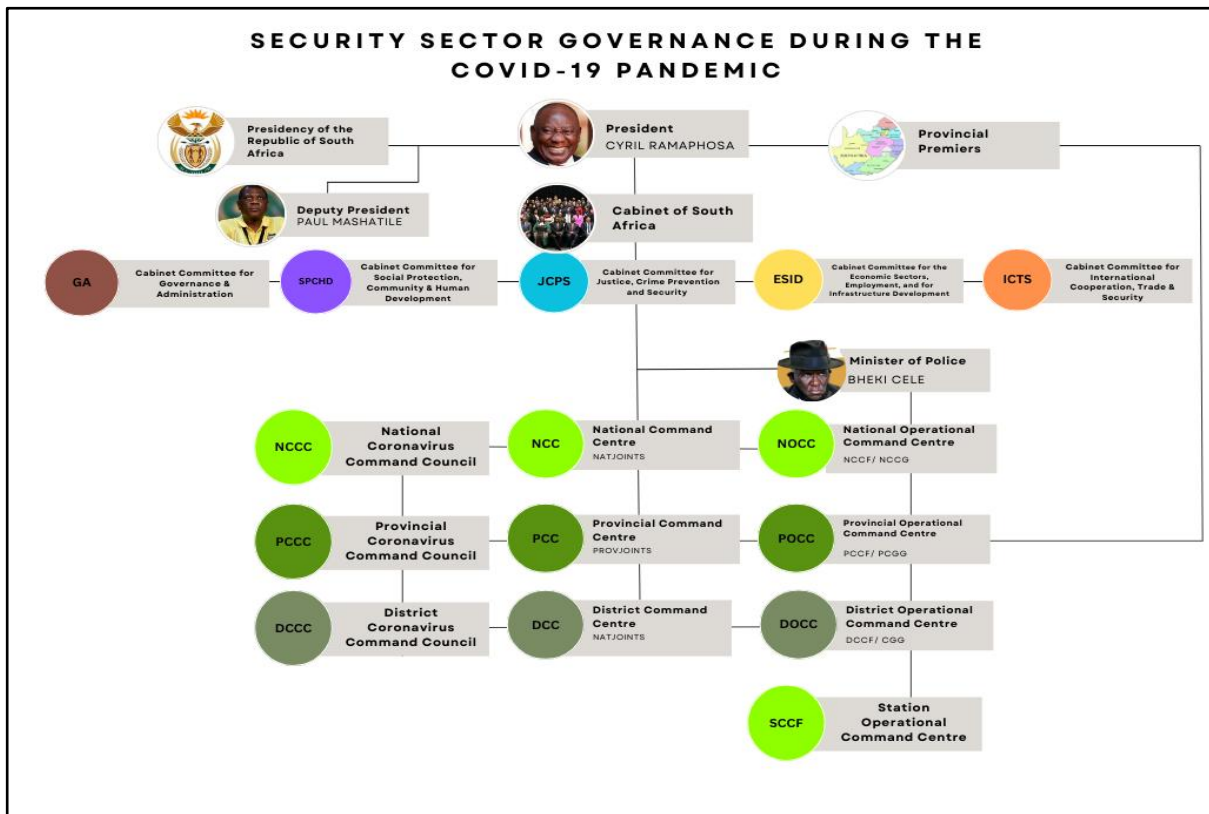


Figure 3. Overview of Security Sector Governance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This a very limited overview of SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the framework established by the NATJOINTS encourages more participation from other government entities, such as the SAPS; the SANDF; Department of Correctional Services (DCS); Department of Home Affairs; Department of Human Settlements; Department of Public Works; Department of Labour; and so many other non-statutory and civil society organisations (Parliamentary Monitoring Group , 2020). My critique of the adoption of this framework is that it is largely ineffective at facilitating any other executive function apart from *security and intelligence operations*. The professionalisation of some of these actors may have had some merit, whereby

certain stakeholders such as the Department of Home Affairs worked in tandem with the SAPS to carry out certain objectives or attend to imminent risk events, such as identifying and deporting illegal immigrants. However, this framework tends to become much more complicated further down the chain of command. Especially since the flexible nature of the NATJOINTS framework, meant that it could also be extended from national to provincial level (PROV JOINTS), as well as having certain mechanisms in place which allowed for even more interaction between district and local coordinating structures (Snyman et al., 2023). It was also responsible for the operationalization of Joint Operational Committees (JOCOMS) and Joint Operational Centres (JOCS), which acted as substructures to intervene during risk events before being disbanded once those risk events had concluded (Schwartz et al., 2021). Another key stakeholder operationalised underneath NATJOINTS was the National Core Command Group (NCCG), which consisted of various top level SAPS officials from every division and component, with the objective of strategizing operations for law enforcement intervention at the provincial (E.G. Provincial Core Command Group) and district (Core Command Group) level (Schwartz et al., 2021). In parallel with the NCCC, NATJOINTS, and NCCG; the pandemic also saw the involvement of the National Crime Combating Forum (NCCF), which outlined measures for addressing crime and violence during the pandemic (Schwartz et al., 2021). These measures were then communicated to Provincial Crime Combating Forums (PCCFs) and District Crime Combating Forums (DCCFs). Taken at face value, the NATJOINTS framework was indicative of a model which effectively promoted a sense of collaborative governance; however further exploration into the intricacies of this framework revealed a deep and systemic flaw, in the sense that all of the constituents embedded within this organizational hierarchy were operationalized under guise of providing input into *security and intelligence* operations. Therefore, the recommendations provided by the Department of

Health, for example, would only be adopted as necessary and in proportion to achieving the overarching mandate of the security risk event at the time.

The South African Police Service together with the SANDF and Metro Police as defined in section 1 of the Criminal Procedure Act (Act No. 51 of 1977), under *Operation Notlela*, were primarily tasked with enforcing the DMA regulations (van Zyl-Gous, 2020). All policing activities and incidents relating to the COVID-19 pandemic which occurred during the period of 21 March 2020 to 31 July 2020, were to be captured on the Operational Planning and Monitoring System (OPAM) (van Zyl-Gous, 2020). In addition, roughly 73 180 SANDF soldiers were deployed across South Africa to ensure that residents were adhering to the stay-at-home order, as well as to deliver crucial personal protective equipment to vulnerable communities (Whittle, 2020). Members of the SANDF were also tasked with assisting police operations during roadblocks and on patrols in residential areas, which allowed the bulk of crucial police resources to be utilized for various other law enforcement needs and crime fighting tactics. The national regulations stipulated by the DMA also ensured that police restrict the movement of people and goods; the use of public transport (except for emergency and health workers); and to oversee the closure of non-essential businesses (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020a). However, the enactment of the DMA was largely based on a highly securitised approach to containing the spread of COVID-19, and called into question the legislative framework in which the Department of Public Service and Administration was operating from.

2.5.2. Legislative Frameworks

The mandate of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is noted under Section 195(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, which stipulates that the DPSA is legislatively required to establish performative standards for various functions

of the Public Service; as well as various organizational structures and establishments of departments in the Public Service; and to execute transformative, reformative, and innovative policies to improve service delivery to the public. These policies are often grounded in a variety of scientific, management, and institutional theories to serve the public good (Pietersen, 2020). In South Africa, the most widely known theoretical model utilized within the field of Public Administration is the theory of co-production, which advocates for the provision of public services in partnership with non-governmental institutions to facilitate the co-creation of value in communities (Pietersen, 2020). However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DPSA experienced severe challenges relating to the management of performance, employee well-being, absenteeism, and training. This had direct ramifications for other public agencies, especially within the security cluster – who were still expected to ensure the protection of citizens during the pandemic. And although the theory of co-production is a highly favoured approach to conveying effective policies for the community; during COVID-19, it was challenging to consult with other non-state security actors due to the DMA regulations which stipulated that only certain institutions were considered essential services.

Especially since co-production is heavily reliant on community participation and engagement, as well as professional and organisational input. And while community engagement would conventionally be considered voluntary in most instances; under the national state of disaster, members of the public were ordered to accept that the national state of disaster constituted a state of exception (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020a)). One, which required the cooperation of every citizen to prevent, limit, and contain the spread of the COVID-19 pathogen. Citizens were also required to familiarise themselves with the legislative provisions and regulations that were available on the internet domain pages of both the SAPS, as well as the South African Government's Coronavirus portal, to ensure that their conduct was in line with the law (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020a). This emphasis on community

adherence to the regulations to protect the health and wellbeing of all South African citizens became a central theme during the pandemic, that was constantly reiterated by the President during televised “family meetings”.

Instead, the focus of the DPSA now resembled historically established narratives regarding executive decision making on behalf of the state for the benefit of the entire South Africa. Such as enacting legislation like the DMA, which was very triggering to many South Africans who were subjected to the Group Areas Act of 1950; whereby these same community members were once again being told where they could and could not go without appropriate documentation; what they could and could not buy (or drink/ smoke); and ultimately only benefitted a minority of South Africans while having detrimental consequences for other community groupings. However, there had been significant reform within the DPSA which took place during the early 2000’s, with the intention of increasing operational performance, efficiency, and cooperation within the Department (Marks & Shearing, 2004). Therefore, despite the historical concerns of once again enforcing a policy which necessitated the restriction of movement of individuals; the DPSA proceeded with the enactment of the DMA to ensure that the Republic of South Africa responded effectively to the emerging health pandemic. This meant ensuring both a well-structured and effective public health and public safety approach to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.6. Challenges of SSG in South Africa During The COVID-19 Pandemic

With seemingly indivisible public safety and public health challenges plaguing police officers during the COVID-19 pandemic; it was clear that the SAPS now faced a war on multiple fronts: combatting the pandemic from an epidemiological standpoint, and then contending with the political, economic, and social ramifications of its epidemiological response as well.

2.6.1. Use of Force

South Africa's policy towards the basic protection of individuals is stipulated within the South African Police Act No. 68 of 1995, which states that the government is responsible for ensuring the protection of all South African citizens. However, Baker (2002), argues that during the post-Apartheid regime, the SAPS have consistently been depicted as displaying high levels of inefficiency and corruption and as a result, created the very conditions for high levels of public distrust. In addition, officers are placed in environments characterized by high levels of brutality and stress, which largely have an adverse effect on their physical and mental state (Gumani, 2014). As such, police action carried out by law enforcement officials might be influenced by pre-disposed instances of trauma and increased exposure to psychological stressors. This may in turn lead to police officers perpetuating those abusive or traumatic experiences against individuals at the receiving end of police action, which results in increased levels of police brutality and sexual offences committed by police officers. During COVID, this was extremely prevalent as it was reported by IPID that a staggering number of police officials were investigated for misconduct during the pandemic (Independent Police Investigative Directive, 2021). The most striking figure in this report was the approximate 4,228 officers who were investigated for assault against civilians. These statistics severely diminish the legitimacy of the SAPS, as continued trends of abuse of force negatively impacts upon community relations and also lead to an immense feeling of secondary victimisation on behalf of citizens reporting crimes to police officers, further alienating themselves from the state's supposed primary security provider.

Table 1(b): Annual intake comparisons	2019-2020	2020-2021	Percentage changes
Section 28(1)(a)-deaths in police custody	237	217	-8%
Section 28(1)(b)-deaths as a result of police action	392	353	-10%
Section 28(1)(c)-complaint of the discharge of official firearm(s)	684	830	21%
Section 28(1)(d)-rape by police officer	120	80	-33%
Section 28(1)(e)-rape in police custody	11	15	36%
Section 28(1)(f)-torture	216	256	19%
Section 28(1)(f)-assault	3 820	4 228	11%
Section 28(1)(g)-corruption	84	66	-21%
Section 28(1)(h)-other criminal matter	18	30	67%
Section 28(2)-systemic corruption	1	-	-100%
Non-compliance with Section 29 of IPID Act	57	47	-18%
Total	5 640*	6 122*	9%

Figure 4. Independent Police Investigative Directive Investigations Involving SAPS Officers

2.6.2. Contested Governance

During states of exception, communities in fragile states do not obey the rules of the state, but rather the rules of their social networks, which often include non-state actors to ensure that they receive essential goods and services (Bagayoko et al., 2016). For example, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Western Cape saw an unprecedented shift in its security landscape, with various communities including Lavender Hill and Mannenberg experiencing for the first time, an absence of gang violence and rival gang shootings owing to gang-initiated ceasefires. Something which, prior to the pandemic, would never have been conceived owing to the pervasive levels of gang-related violence in areas such as Manenberg, with an average murder rate of 100 murders annually per 100 000 residents alone (Parker, Thomans, & McLaggan, 2020). If we are to assume what Bagayoko is saying is true in relation to citizens aligning themselves with non-state actors during states of exceptionalism, then we first need to understand that owing to the vast scale of a gang's distribution network - gangs are able to source and distribute large quantities of goods in an efficient and timely manner. Secondly, in order for gangs to function within society, they need to ensure that their communities are

sustained through the continual provision of goods and services to community members. However, in the absence of an effective state-facilitated feeding scheme; it necessitates an intervention on behalf of the gangs to collectively negotiate a ceasefire in order to ensure the provision of essential meals to vulnerable community members. And yet, it is particularly worth noting that within the SAPS code of conduct, the SAPS are duty-bound to co-operate with other role players. But are gang members who have now agreed to a ceasefire considered temporary role players within the security sector? What does that mean for the legitimacy of the SAPS to collaborate with gang members to ensure the provision of goods and services to vulnerable community groupings, while also arresting gang members who continued to deal within the illicit alcohol and tobacco trade? This places the SAPS in a very contentious position, as tackling the illegal distribution of alcohol was one of the main objectives during the pandemic; but so too was ensuring the provision of peace and security (even if that meant food security) of citizens. It becomes clear to see how, as Kinnes (2017), points out that settings where different networks routinely experience conflict regarding the distribution of resources to effectively manage disruptions within the community - lead to a state of contested governance. The spaces in which multiple state and non-state actors such as the SAPS, gangs, PSCs, CPFs, and Neighbourhood Watch Groups operated were considered states of contested governance owing to the various roles they played in ensuring the provision of peace and security for community residents. And how, in the absence of transparent, self-governing, and accountable platforms to ensure inter-governmental cooperation with other transitional security actors - SSG became fragmented. Yet, contested governance, in the past, has shown an inclination towards democratic and community-based policing reform. And if that is the case, then we must be prepared to ask ourselves if this is what the impact of COVID-19 will necessitate for future conversations around SSG during states of exceptionalism? Another issue

broached during the security governance of the pandemic was the restriction on the movement of groups of individuals.

2.6.3. Restriction On the Movement of Groups of Individuals

According to existing theories of crime, the immediate and long-term restriction on the movement of groups of individuals resulting from natural disasters tend to have a drastic impact on crime levels (Nivette et al., 2021). For example, during the initial 3 months of the lockdown from April 2020 to June 2020, there was a 33.7% reduction in the total community reported serious crimes with 266,495 crimes reported (Schwartz et al., 2021). During the same period a year later, from April 2021 to June 2021, a total of 359,395 community reported serious crimes were reported. This is due to long established notions within structural strain theory, which stipulate that these restraints lead to heightened levels of stress and an increased display of negative emotions including anxiety, hostility, and anger, which lay the foundation for deviant and criminal behaviour (Nivette et al., 2021). And if we think about the mandated stay-at-home order that was implemented during COVID-19, it becomes clear that the SAPS now found themselves within an unprecedented policing space – fuelled by confounding levels of structural inequality. In the sense that for millions of South Africans, it was nearly impossible to ensure adequate social distancing as most households in impoverished communities sheltered at least 2 or 3 separate families, consisting of between 6 – 8 members each. Informal dwellings also provided no space for citizens to self-isolate if they were suspected of having contracted COVID-19. And with unemployment having severely risen owing to the pandemic, it became even more of a daily nuisance for police officers to tell people to return to their homes. Therefore, while ring-fencing large groupings of individuals sounds like a promising directive to combat the transmission of an airborne respiratory illness in theory; it is contingent on a strong sense of community adherence platforms to facilitate co-production within community spaces (Spennemann, 2021). In South Africa, this was something that had been

absent for decades due to a long-established sense of mistrust in SAPS and the political and paramilitary tools it utilized in maintaining dominance over marginalized population groupings. So, when the opportunity came for the South African government to deliver a political response to the enveloping pandemic, it was influenced largely by international trends pushing for highly securitized measures, as well as years of well-refined militarized tactics of population control.

2.6.4. Militarized Police Tactics

While the SAPS have not completely reverted to its pre-Apartheid tendencies of perpetuating violence against citizens, it has embodied various attributes of past militarized policing practices. Lamb (2018) discusses three crucial and interrelated catalysts responsible for the ramping up of militarized policing tactics, with the first being that police forces initially tend to evoke a militarised response during the emergence of a real and imminent threat to national security. Especially when the narrative around this threat is centred around jargon such as ‘the war on drugs’ – or in this case “South Africa’s war on COVID-19”, the title of Wiysonge’s (2020) article. Another catalyst linked to police militarisation, is the ‘professionalisation’ of police institutions, whereby police reform takes place in a similar manner to military personnel structures, with the objective of improving police efficiency and reducing corruption (Lamb, 2018). Finally, the third catalyst entails how militarisation begins to intensify when policing institutions are required to combat threatening groups such as terrorists, organised criminal groups – or an invisible pathogen in the form of COVID-19. During COVID-19, it was evident to see how militaristic jargon and rhetoric was conventionally used to justify an increasingly militarised response to a public health epidemic with the intention of improving the community’s perception of utilising a public safety approach, by framing COVID-19 as the real enemy and that the SAPS were fighting for the community. However, they failed to consider that the citizens that they were responsible for protecting - were the same carriers of

the ‘enemy’. As such, multiple instances of violence were committed by state actors. However, state violence against citizens, received less media coverage as opposed to ensuring the prevention of alcohol-related trauma through the prohibition of alcohol.

2.6.5. Prevention of Alcohol-Related Trauma

With a flailing public healthcare system already crippling under the weight of COVID-19 related cases, the excessive consumption of alcohol in impoverished communities could be seen as the final nail in the coffin for any public health intervention strategy. This is due to the exorbitant number of alcohol-related mortalities in South Africa, which are six times the global rate (Ngqangashe et al., 2021) and the fact that South Africa is known for having the highest level of adult per capita alcohol consumption in Africa (Nduna & Tshona, 2021). And when you consider that 43% of individuals who consume alcohol, reported binge drinking; the potential impact that excessive alcohol consumption may lead to drastic increases in violence and homicide, self-inflicted harm, and the contraction of non-communicable and communicable diseases, becomes a stark reality (Ngqangashe et al., 2021). Faull (2013), also notes that alcohol acts as one of the primary drivers of South Africa’s exorbitant rate of violence, especially when it is consumed at shebeens or illegal taverns. And since shebeens have become a regular scene for the perpetration of alcohol-related violence, owing to the space it provides for socialisation and consumption of cheap liquor – it was imperative that they and all other liquor outlets be prohibited from operating during the COVID-19 pandemic. Which is why the South African government, at the start of the national stay-at-home order, banned the sale of alcohol overnight through the prohibition of non-essential goods. With the rationale being to limit social gatherings and ease the burden of alcohol-related trauma incidents to provide more resources and services to assist in COVID-19 hospital wards. The regulations were amended in response to new COVID-19 cases, so when spikes in new cases emerged, restrictions on the sale or consumption of alcohol were tightened, resulting in the complete

prohibition of alcohol. Restrictions were also eased following waves of new cases, which allowed retail outlets to sell alcohol between the hours of 10h00 and 18h00 from Monday to Thursday and licensed outlets to serve drinks on-site from 10h00 to 22h00, after which they were forced to close.

These directives were seen as quite controversial, especially since the relaxing of the prohibition had long-lasting implications for alcohol-related trauma admissions, resulting in poor perceptions of service delivery. For example, Chu et al. (2022), conducted a study, which assessed the relationship between trauma volume and alcohol prohibition during the COVID-19 pandemic and looked at 5 calendar periods, ranging from a period where alcohol sales were permitted as per normal to when alcohol sales were completely prohibited or banned. The results indicate that the trauma admission rate was at 95 per 100 days before COVID-19 and dropped significantly to 39 during the first prohibition (Chu et al., 2022). This number increased to 74 during the partial prohibition, before dropping back to 40 during the complete prohibition (Chu et al., 2022). These statistics, therefore, paint a disturbing picture for the continued and long-term use of alcohol in South Africa, where the prohibition resulted in a net positive, being the decrease in alcohol-related trauma volume, but at the expense of facilitating more impulsive and reckless drinking behaviour once prohibitions were lifted (Chu et al., 2022). And once again the SAPS were tasked with addressing the aftermath of controversial state mandates, which now include a surge in alcohol-related violence turned inward and housebound, setting the scene for the next battlefield – policing Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.

2.6.6. Policing Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

While the dualistic approach of policing alcohol and enforcing stay-at-home orders worked to drastically reduce the strain placed on the public health sector, it also created the conditions for

the increased displacement of violence on women and children. South Africa has long been regarded as an international hotspot for the perpetration of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), with almost 1 in 5 partnered women over the age of 18 reported having experienced some form of physical violence by a partner, while 6.2% of women indicated that they were sexually violated (Statistics South Africa, 2022). These acts of violence are largely perpetuated by existing structural factors such as low job security; low levels of education; high levels of poverty and substance abuse (Dlamini, 2021). But what exactly transpired during the COVID-19 pandemic that led President Ramaphosa to declare GBVF as a “twin pandemic” (Dlamini, 2021)? Well, perhaps the fact that the South African GBVF Command Centre recorded having received calls from at least 120,000 victims within the first three weeks of the National Lockdown (Ndlovu, 2022). It is also important to note that victims were unable to seek out help due to a shortage of public transport to access critical care bodies, such as the police or social workers. In addition, victims who, prior to COVID-19, had the opportunity to make use of informal resources such as community-based initiatives providing support for victims of abuse; were also now unable to seek out help during the early stages of the lockdown restrictions, as non-essential businesses were not permitted to operate. It was only until the 13th of April 2020, in a Presidential Address, that President Ramaphosa issued a notice of clarification regarding the status of GBVF services and advised that they need to remain operational (News24, 2020a). One must speculate as to whether that notice came too late and if it would even have made a comparative difference in reported GBVF cases weeks prior, considering that there was a tenfold increase in the number of GBVF calls to a national counselling hotline – Lifeline SA – over a 2 month period since the implementation of the National Lockdown (Nkgadima, 2020). Therefore, in the absence of effective public health intervention strategies to manage increased rates of GBVF; it now forms part of the SAPS’s expanded mandate as they still need to ensure the basic protection of every citizen. But how

are the SAPS intended to police this twin pandemic, when they can only issue and execute a warrant of arrest for abusers *once* a case of GBVF has been reported? And yet out of the 2,300 reported calls that were made to the GBVF Command Centre between the 27th of March 2020 and the 31st of March 2020, only 148 suspects were criminally charged (News24, 2020a). But at the same time, SAPS also apprehended and fined more than 480,000 individuals for violating lockdown regulations, which raised the question as to where the priorities of the DSPA lay?

2.7. Public Health & Public Safety in South Africa During the COVID-19 Pandemic

To convey an effective disaster management response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the South African Government had to consolidate with all respective stakeholders, at national and provincial level to create a harmonious policy framework in which all key role players could collaborate clearly, effectively, and transparently with one another. These included many representatives within the health care and law enforcement sectors. Yet, considering the DSPA'S highly securitised response to COVID-19 owing to the deployment of SANDF personnel and police reservists that were called up to police what was essentially a public health epidemic; it becomes important to explore both public health and public safety directives which were implemented in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Academics and clinicians operating within the public health sphere have always maintained a sceptical attitude towards the adopted use of excessive force by SAPS officers under section 49(2) of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 and the militaristic style of commanding respect and order, without factoring in the emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing of citizens. According to the National Treasury Budget Review (2022), Police Services in South Africa have traditionally received more funding than the Department of Health. For example, in 2019 approximately R104.2bn of the National Treasury Budget was spent on Police Services, while the Department of Health received only R98.2bn for District Health Services (National

Treasury, 2022). Shearing and Wood (2003), note that public safety expenditure in South Africa has rarely modelled after a security budget that is representative of a “clean slate”. Instead, the resource allocation process of the SAPS is predicated on a theoretical requirement, which is calculated according to the total time officers take to complete their tasks and is inclusive of a host of factors including the influence of gangs and the average number of daily commuters within each police precinct’s jurisdiction (Redpath & Nagia-Luddy, 2015). The total time, therefore, is converted into numbers of employees and is ultimately defined as the Theoretical Human Resource Requirement (THRR) (Redpath & Nagia-Luddy, 2015). The sum of each THRR is then tallied up across all police precincts to provide an overall amount for all police requirements at station level and stipulates the number of employees needed according to each rank. Unfortunately, although the South African Government has continued to invest in its policing function, the actual THRR number is far greater than what annual budgets allocate. Meaning that, on an annual basis - the SAPS are continuously constrained by fiscal limitations and as such, are unable to ensure sufficient staffing at many stations across South Africa, particularly within low-income areas who receive approximately one-third of the average per capita allocation (Redpath & Nagia-Luddy, 2015).

However, research indicates that a focus on law enforcement is beneficial, in the sense that, working from within the legislative framework, it engages more law enforcement actors in the discussion around public safety (Davis 2018, Fair and Just Prosecution 2018; Wood & Griffin, 2021). Consequently, utilizing public safety actors to control public health crises also create and perpetuate cycles of fear and punishment, which are not conducive for positive behavioural change (Meško, 2021). This is especially true in marginalized and disadvantaged communities where residents have long had conflicting and hostile relations with law enforcement agencies, and who now continue to suffer from second-hand trauma. The continuous display of systematic violence towards these communities only serves to further regress public health

initiatives, such as understanding the socio-developmental needs of community members to provide key public healthcare infrastructure.

There also appeared to be a substantial shift in state expenditure on public health, with the Department of Health receiving approximately R259bn in government funding during the 2022 fiscal year, as opposed to R222.6bn in 2019 (National Treasury, 2022). And although the majority of funds (R115.7bn) went towards improving District Health Services, it is also important to remember that a large portion of state health expenditure also went towards the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines. These unredacted contracts between several pharmaceutical companies and the South African government ultimately revealed a certain degree of pharmaceutical extortion, with South Africa having to pay between 15 and 33 percent more for COVID-19 vaccine doses from suppliers Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer, as opposed to countries belonging to the European Union (Ismail, 2023). Exorbitant inflation for the purchasing of vaccines, accompanied by substantial international debt and a growing concern to contain the spread of COVID-19 also paved the way for the relaxation of tender and procurement processes to improve service delivery of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for critical care health workers (Mlambo & Masuku, 2020). However, due to the hastiness of approving tenders and not conducting adequate supplier risk screening; also necessitated a certain degree of corruption. Corruption was evident to see in the minimal provision of PPE within all functions of government including the security sector, as there were no effective tender approval monitoring systems in place. For example, the Department of Social Development purportedly misappropriated approximately R30m worth of COVID-19 related funds, by procuring 48,000 blankets, despite only having received 4,982 blankets while under investigation (Mlambo & Masuku, 2020). The Department of Health's financial and administrative negligence was a major setback in relation to the strategic objectives set out by the NCCC.

2.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided an overview as to how the COVID-19 pathogen constituted an unprecedented global health pandemic. Many countries responded by enacting various public health and public safety directives. South Africa opted for a highly securitized approach to managing the pandemic. Under the DMA, the president declared a national lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID. To enforce the pandemic, the SAPS, together with SANDF and Metro were ordered to ensure that citizens adhere to regulations. Finally, this chapter has also discussed how the South African government attempted to provide an effective response to the pandemic, while simultaneously contending with various public health and public safety challenges including insufficient funding for policing functions; tender fraud for the procurement of PPE; and debt expenditure regarding vaccines.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study is descriptive in nature and utilized a qualitative research design to explore the topic of SSG in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purpose of this study, I employed the use of a single-case study research design for the collection and analysis of data. The setting for this case study in question, was set at Kraaifontein Police Station, which is situated in the suburb of Kraaifontein in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Owing to the unique setting of Kraaifontein, I opted to use an instrumental case study design. The rationale behind using an instrumental case study design, was to utilize the findings derived from a single case study (Kraaifontein Police Station); to identify similar themes within SSG across other police stations in the Western Cape.

3.2. Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of this study, I utilized the IIAG as the conceptual framework in which to explore SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic. The IIAG scores represent the performance of each country according to each governance measure for that specific year, which are calculated out of 100.0 (rounded to one decimal point). For example, a country which scores 70.5 for its overall Anti-Corruption governance measure in 2021 can be interpreted as having satisfactory anti-corruption governance mechanisms in place. However, the same country could also receive a score of 60.3 the following year, which would indicate a decline in good anti-corruption mechanisms. Scores are relative to each country's performance in relation to the other 54 African countries. These ranks are then calculated based on the respective scores and expressed as a position within the hierarchy of other African countries. This study will

exclusively focus on the pillar of Security and Rule of Law, which comprises four sub-categories, twenty-one indicators, and fifty-four sub-indicators (Figure 4). This study will not utilize every measure within its analysis, however, it will speak to certain indicators and sub-indicators which are relevant to the research questions outlined, as well as the responses of participants.

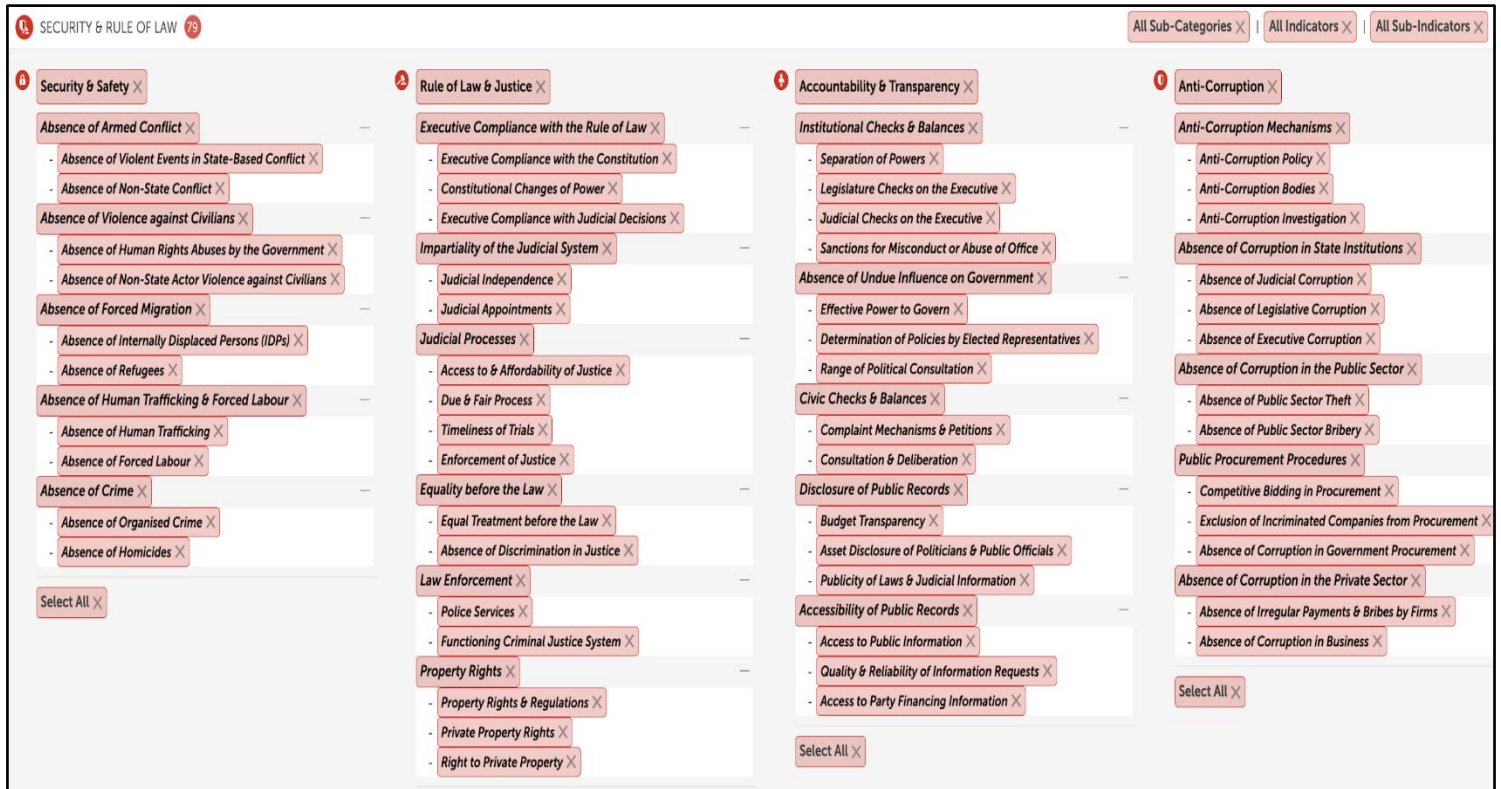


Figure 5. Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance

3.3. Sampling

I employed the use of a purposive sampling technique. For this study, I purposefully sampled ten members from Kraaifontein Police Station. For additional commentary and insight, one Chairperson of a Community Police Forum, and one Policing Scholar were also interviewed.

3.3.1. Police Officers

All SAPS members from Kraaifontein Police Station were between the ages of 32 and 55 with a median age of 49.7. Half of the participants were female, while the other half were male. Only 10% of participants had been working at SAPS for eight years or less, while most participants (90%) have been working for SAPS on average for about 14.7 years. The ranks of police officers consisted of two Warrant officers, four Sergeant officers, one Captain, two Constables, and one Detective.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

In line with the University of Cape Town's Research Regulations Involving Human Participants, this research study was approved and given ethical clearance by the University of Cape Town Law Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (L0155-2020) to be conducted between the 1st of December 2022 and the 30th of November 2023 (see Annexure A). Additionally, I was also required to receive ethical clearance from the SAPS's Research Division to conduct this study. Through email correspondence, I received National clearance from the Head of the SAPS's Research Division in December 2020 (Ref No. 3/34/2) (see Annexure B). I was then granted clearance by the Provincial Commissioner of the SAPS Research Division to conduct research in February 2021, within an allocated time frame of three years beginning in December 2020 and concluding in December 2023 (see Annexure C). For the purpose of this study, I adhered to the ethical code of conduct outlined by the Criminological Society of Africa (CRIMSA). I also piloted my interview questions beforehand during various mock interviews to ensure that the interview guide (see Annexure D) was aligned to the University of Cape Town's policy on Research Regulations Involving Human Participants. Before each interview, I provided participants with both an information sheet (see Annexure E) and informed consent form (see Annexure F), to participants which detailed the purpose of the interview; the benefits

of the research; and the potential risks associated with participation. I then explained to participants the definitions of key concepts such as consent, participant anonymity, participant confidentiality, voluntary participant withdrawal, and audio-recordings, before providing them with my contact details in case participants would like to contact me for follow-up information. I also prioritized the anonymity of all participants involved in the study, by providing participants with a unique participant ID to protect their identity, which requires a cipher to decode that only I had access to. Other important ethical considerations to note was due to the lifting of the National Disaster Management Act and the relaxing of COVID-19 health protocols, I was able to conduct interviews with participants in closed spaces, without the use of hand sanitizer or the wearing of face masks.

3.5. Timeframe

The timeframe for this study was conducted between the 1st of December 2022 and the 30th of November 2023.

3.6. Negotiating Access

I was granted permission by the Kraaifontein VisPol Commander to conduct research at Kraaifontein police station and allowed to interview 10 officers within the Station.

3.7. Data Collection

I opted to use semi-structured interviews as my primary data collection tool, as they allowed me special access into the metaphysical reality of being a police officer in South Africa. Only two interviews were not audio-recorded as participants indicated that they did not want to be audio-recorded. I, therefore, had to improvise by making extensive notes and had to immediately recall all the information once the interviews were completed. The length of participant interviews ranged from 32 minutes to 74 minutes, with the median time of 45 minutes.

3.8. Data Storage

I ensured that all data collected in the form of interview recordings, transcribed interviews, and field notes were safely protected by uploading all documentation onto a secure, and encrypted cloud-based server which was password protected, while the original notes were stored in a safe.

3.9. Data Analysis

The transcribed interviews and field notes were then analysed using a thematic analysis. First, I routinely familiarized myself with the data by re-reading field notes, which assisted in writing up notes for preliminary themes (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). I also used Otter.ai, which is a software transcription tool, for the purpose of transcribing and analysing interviews. I was also initially able to identify several key central themes within the findings; however, I was mindful that a thematic analysis is a dynamic process which involves continuously shifting between reviewing, analysing, and returning to the original dataset, the identified codes and preliminary themes (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). As such, I found myself reverting to the dataset and switching between the outlined steps before finally determining the themes which were included in the final report.

3.10. Limitations

There are quite a few limitations of this study that are worth noting. Firstly, I was advised by the Human Resource Manager at Kraaifontein Police Station that it would be nearly impossible to visit the station on Mondays and Fridays due to inspections, meetings and administrative responsibilities being carried out on those days. Weekends were also out of the question, as I was informed that the majority of VisPol officers would be too busy attending to community complaints within the CSC and carrying out patrols, as well as being on cell duty. Therefore, I was only able to conduct research on Tuesdays and Thursdays and had to negotiate certain time

slots with supervisors beforehand so that they could inform participants. However, not all my communication was acknowledged or responded to, leaving me with little choice but to go to the station during the evening with the hope that someone would be willing to be interviewed, but was told to leave on multiple occasions as employees at the station were not properly informed. These were days when a completely new shift was on duty, who had no context as to who I was or the research I was carrying out. It was a futile attempt trying to show proof of my clearance as long lines within the Community Service Centre completely overshadowed my attempts to gain access.

3.11. Conclusion

In conclusion, I utilized a single case-study research design, set at Kraaifontein Police Station and conducted semi-structured interviews with ten police members and two non-state actors, who were purposefully sampled to explore the roles and responsibilities they carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of a thematic analysis was employed to code the data from the transcribed interviews to allow for a more refined and focussed interpretation of the findings. Ethical clearance for this study was also granted by the South African Police Services' Research Division and the University of Cape Town's Ethics Committee.

CHAPTER FOUR

THIS IS KRAAIFONTEIN

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the case study of Kraaifontein. This will also include analyzing its various social, economic and demographic indicators in addition to Kraaifontein's police precinct profile.

4.2. Key Social, Economic, and Demographic Indicators of Kraaifontein

Kraaifontein is collectively made up of 6 wards that are inclusive of multiple sub-places (see Table 1 and 2). These sub-places vary in geographical size, population density, and household structure. However, it was evident from my conversations with police officials stationed at Kraaifontein Police Station, that there were 3 major areas that were consistently brought up as being key crime hotspots: Bloekombos, Wallacedene, and Scottsdene. Therefore, to truly understand the SSG landscape which Kraaifontein Police Station is situated within; it is important to identify the demographic, social, and economic profiles of these various sub-places. For comparative purposes, the sub-places of Bloekombos, Wallacedene, and Scottsdene will be explored regarding their social, economic, and demographic indicators (Table 3, 4, & 5).

Table 1. List of Sub-Places within Kraaifontein

Suburb	Sub-Places
Kraaifontein	Avalon Estate, Belmont Park, Bonnie Brae, Bonny Brook, Bloekombos, Cape Gate, Eikendal, JoostenbergVlakte SH, Klein Begin, Kleinbron, Kleinbron Estate, Kraaifontein Ext17, Kraaifontein Industrial, Langeberg Glen, Langeberg Hoogte, Langeberg Ridge, Peerless Park East, Peerless Park North, Peerless Park West, PineHurst Security Estate, Scottsville, Scottsdale, Summerville, Uitzicht, Uitzicht Security Estate, Wallacedene, Windsor Park, Windsor Park Estate, and Zoo Park.

Sub-Place	Population Group	Average Age	Home Language
Bloekombos	Black African	24	IsiXhosa
Scottsdale	Coloured	29	Afrikaans
Wallacedene	Coloured	28	Afrikaans

Table 2. Social indicators of Kraaifontein Sub-Places (Statistics South Africa, 2012)

The predominant population group for Bloekombos are young Black Africans who are on average 24 years old, with IsiXhosa being their designated home language. The leading racial demographic for Scottsdale and Wallacedene, however, are Coloured individuals, with a median age of 28, who are traditionally Afrikaans speaking.

Sub-Place	Annual Household Income	Employment Status of Households	Households	Households (Informal dwellings)
Bloekombos	R14,600	45.1%	12,373	15.2%
Scottsdene	R115,100	58.7%	7,329	1.5%
Wallacedene	R57,300	54.8%	8,822	6.2%

Table 3. Economic indicators of Kraaifontein Sub-Places (Statistics South Africa, 2012)

There were pervasive gaps in annual household income, with Scottsdene reporting an average household annual income of R115,100, while Wallacedene accounted for R57,300, and most concerningly Bloekombos, which reported an average of R14,600. There were also notable differences in the housing structure of all 3 sub-places, with Scottsdene depicting 79% of its 7,239 households' structure as formal housing (E.G., houses, apartments, and townhouses). Meanwhile, Bloekombos had an exorbitantly high level of informal housing, with 15.2% of all households being considered informal dwellings, alternatively known as shacks.

Sub-Place	Population Size	Km ²	People Per Km ²
Bloekombos	37,084	4.2	8,839.6
Scottsdene	27,867	8.9	3,122.2
Wallacedene	35,104	5.9	5,963.2

Table 4. Demographic indicators of Kraaifontein Sub-Places Statistics South Africa, 2012)

Out of the 3 sub-places, Bloekombos was the most densely populated area with 8,839.6 people per km², all residing within a 4.2 km² radius. As opposed to Scottsdene, which had an estimated population size of 27,867 residents and an average of 3,122.2 people per km², all residing within an 8.9 km² radius.

These social, economic, and demographic indicators are vital to consider before establishing how SAPS resources are allocated across different areas and are necessary to understand the macro SSG landscape which Kraaifontein Police Station operates within. The pervasive income inequality gaps between these sub-places also raise important questions as to the economic stability of each of these geographical areas, as well as their employment status, levels of education and degree of skill. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was the responsibility of members of Kraaifontein Police Station to ensure public order across all sub-places in Kraaifontein, despite disparities in social, economic, and demographic.

4.3. Kraaifontein Police Precinct Profile

For areas such as Bloekombos, Wallacedene, and Scottsdene, it was the men and women of Kraaifontein Police Station whose task it was to provide law-and-order to these sprawling microcosms of criminality. And while it was predominantly VisPol units that were considered the most important division within SAPS during the COVID-19 pandemic, owing to their ability to convey a strong visible policing presence within the boundaries of their respective policing sectors; other divisions also merit acknowledgment for their role in policing the pandemic. See Table 5 for an overview of police personnel serving at Kraaifontein Police Station. These other divisions played a crucial supporting role during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the Crime Prevention Unit, which was referred to as a quick reaction team that carried out various raids in gang hotspots. Their shifts also varied and often overlapped with VisPol's shifts depending on the results from the crime pattern analysis model. This model is compiled by the Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre (CIMAC), a separate division housed within Kraaifontein Police Station, which produces daily reports that contain all criminal activity reported on by various Kraaifontein SAPS and neighbourhood watch WhatsApp groups for the previous 24 hours.

Table 5. Kraaifontein Police Precinct Profile

Division	Number of Members	Number of Shifts
Operational Support	350 (of which 260 were Uniformed Officers)	8am – 5pm
Crime Prevention Unit	60	4 (hours overlapped)
Visible Policing	100	4 (6am – 6pm)
Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit	10	No data
Detective Unit	54	No data
Serious and Violent Crimes	10	No data
Economic Crimes	10	No data
General Crimes	10	No data

As well as the Detective Unit that was responsible for investigating COVID-19 related deaths and all murders which occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it was the Kraaifontein’s VisPol unit that was tasked with carrying out sector patrols, attending to community complaints, and documenting murder scenes, among a host of other additional roles and responsibilities during COVID-19, while working their 4-day shifts. These shifts are split up into four 12-hour shifts, with two shifts occurring in the morning from 06:00 until 18:00, while the other two being night shifts, which take place from 18:00 until 06:00. For example, officers would start Monday working from 06:00 until 18:00, then return on Tuesday to work from 18:00 until 06:00, with officers returning on Thursday to work 06:00 until 18:00, and finally ending on Friday working 18:00 until Saturday at 06:00, before subsequently taking 4 days consecutive leave.

4.4. Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter has provided an overview of the various social, economic, and demographic indicators of residents within Kraaifontein situated within the most prevalent crime hotspots being Bloekombos, Wallacedene, and Scottsdene. It also provided an overview of all other sub-places listed under Kraaifontein Police station's jurisdiction. Finally, it also provided a brief overview of Kraaifontein's Police Precinct profile in terms of the number of staff per division and the various roles each department played during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER FIVE

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SAPS

MEMBERS DURING COVID-19

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the findings derived from personnel stationed at Kraaifontein Police Station relating to the roles and responsibilities which they fulfilled during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.2. Standard Operational Protocols

When the national stay-at-home mandate was issued, the SAPS were primarily tasked with ensuring the protection of South African citizens against a public health epidemic. During this unprecedented state of the South African nation, questions were asked about how effective the state's response would be, even by the state itself. Especially, considering that the standard operational protocols issued by the JCPS Cluster, which provided a rubric for policing during COVID-19 were not publicly disclosed at the time (Whittle, 2020). These standard operational protocols were intended to provide much needed clarity and reassurance for SAPS members. Yet, according to the academic policing scholar whom I interviewed; I was informed that contradictory standard operational protocols and policy directives were seen as some of the most prominent issues facing the SAPS during the pandemic. For example, the 411,309 arrests that were carried out in connection with curfew violations brought into question the exact arrest and detainment procedures that the SAPS used, and whether they correctly screened individuals before placing them in the back of police vehicles. So, when I was initially given clearance to conduct interviews with members of Kraaifontein's VisPol unit, I was in the fortuitous position

to ask the exact Warrant and Sergeant officers who conducted these arrests how they did it.

With one participant stating that:

The thing is when we start the shift, we will go ‘*how many people in the cells*’ and ‘*how many people we can **take***’ or ‘*how many people we can arrest for the 12 hours*’, and we stay to that amount of people. – [Participant ID 33422608191515]

Due to the size of the detainment cells at Kraaifontein SAPS, a maximum of 15 individuals were allowed to be detained at any given time to adhere to social distancing regulations. Therefore, it was essential that officers who were on shift duty began their day with taking inventory of the number of individuals they had already detained, to determine how many individuals they could arrest during their shift. For example, if there were only 8 individuals being held in custody, only 7 arrests could be made for that day depending on the release conditions of those offenders. And despite the growing concern of COVID-19 waves becoming more severe, more residents leaving their homes after curfew, and stricter mandates being enforced by senior management to ensure that citizens adhered to the stay-at-home order; the SAPS still had to contend with the issue of limited space in holding cells. However, this attitude towards the maximum number of detainees was the same – rigid adherence:

You can say how many people you keep in the cells, but the captain will come inspect it – that’s unexpected inspections, then they will come visit and then if it’s too crowded, then the commander of the shift will be charged. – [Participant ID 33422608191515]

These unexpected inspections were carried out quite frequently, since shift commanders were obliged to patrol the cells every hour to ensure proof of life of the detainees and to avoid criminal prosecution of potentially having more than 15 defendants in custody at any given point. Another participant also noted how they would intentionally place individuals with suicidal inclinations with other cell mates who would “supervise” them to prevent loss of life.

This suggests an expansion of the roles of SAPS officials, who were now serving as Mental Health Watchdogs.

5.3. Taking on public health Roles

The use of the phrase “*how many people we can **take***” is also suggestive of the capacity of the SAPS, to serve as an anecdotal public health institution. In the sense that SAPS officers were still intended to provide inmates with their basic human rights including food, water, shelter, and most importantly their right to a safe environment. And during my conversations with some participants responsible for supervising the holding cells during the pandemic, I was told that they frequently saw the “*same faces, same offences*”. These were mostly drug addicts that they were referring to, but one participant went on to describe how they could:

See in their **faces** that they’re getting older. (We) Tell them that they are gonna be like these old *ballies* and they laugh. They get fucked up in front of us and unfortunately, we can’t do anything, but sometimes you *feel* for those persons, these people who are selling drugs are cruel. (You) Can see (how) they are going down like this man. - [Participant ID 334208113020]

This response was particularly striking as it highlights the pervasive levels of substance abuse within Kraaifontein and how officers who are stationed there for a period of roughly six to nine years will be able to see an entire generation succumb to their own addictive vices. It was also somewhat moving to hear how SAPS officers can “*sometimes feel*” for these disaffected youth and genuinely wish to assist them in their rehabilitative process, but “*unfortunately*” they are not in the position to. As long-standing challenges related to tackling substance use in impoverished communities with low job opportunities; high truancy rates; gangsterism; and increasingly displaced interpersonal violence are not going to be solved by one police officer or one police station. But, what they can do, at the very least, is to offer them a bed to sleep in;

a plate of food to eat; something to drink; while their body begrudgingly returns to a state of homeostasis after the effects of the substances they had consumed wear off.

5.4. Business As Usual

But how was it possible to determine if the holding cells inmates were kept in were sanitized as frequently and vigorously as outlined by the standard operational protocols - to ensure a safe and clean environment? I received conflicting responses from my participants in this regard as one of my participants indicated that:

During COVID, arrests was minimal. Because a cell is this big (small hand gesture), how are you going to get 10-15 people in there? How are you going to **block** the COVID? -
[Participant ID 334208113020]

The participant raised important questions regarding the standard operational protocols and how effective detaining only a maximum of 10 to 15 people at any given time would be in reducing COVID-19 transmissions in such a confined setting while still fulfilling additional policing objectives. These policies were unfortunately established upon data derived from aggregate datasets and failed to account for high-risk criminality hotspots with limited policing resources such as Kraaifontein. However, SAPS officials would not have known that, but like any other public enterprise - they needed to ensure business continuity. As indicated by one of my participants who stated that:

Everyone has **targets**, who's the **top** performer, who's the **lowest** performer/ conviction per shift/ **target** for liquor/ drug that needs to be confiscated on a daily basis and present exhibit/ suspect. – [Participant ID 334208113020]

I had never considered that SAPS members had Key Performance Indicators - yet they did during COVID-19. And what is more concerning is that within crime hotspots, such as Kraaifontein, these attitudes towards incentivized and performance-driven policing underscore

(or at least influences) their ability to conduct their roles and responsibilities. Performance-driven policing was still at the heart of policing during the pandemic, as arrest targets had, prior to COVID-19, typically been around seven hundred individuals per weekend. However, during COVID it was around 200 as indicated by one of my participants. This was especially true during the pandemic where public perceptions of policing were critical. The agitation and uncertainty that was then placed on SAPS officials to respond in a calm and professional manner was in some instances overwhelming - resulting in a slight decrease of resilience and professionalism and a slight increase in blood pressure and excessive force. However, as van Zyl-Gous (2020) highlights that these instances of excessive use of force have severe repercussions for community relations. Parliament warned that the actions of the SAPS during the pandemic would have a definitive impact on the performance evaluation of the 2020/2021 Annual Performance Plan and the availability of funding that stations will receive for the following year (van Zyl-Gous, 2020). Faull (2016) goes on to describe how these performance-driven models of policing often correlate with an increase in police presence, which necessitate instances of abuse of force; and ultimately have an impact on the availability of departmental funding. The IIAG also assessed the sub-indicators of the *Absence of Fear of Crime*, *Public Satisfaction with the Government Handling Crime* and the *Public Trust in the Police* for South Africa from 2014 to 2023 and identified a sharp decline in the trend scores of all three measures, with each measure reporting a (-) 20.2, (-) 15.5, and (-) 17.3 score respectively (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2024).

Not only were there negative trends associated with an increase in citizens' fear of crime and a decrease in trusting policing institutions; but it was the sheer magnitude of the discrepancies in reported scores that is the most concerning. For example, citizens had been relatively satisfied with the Government's approach to handling crime up until 2021, whereby only 3.4% of South African citizens were satisfied with the Government's handling of crime in both 2022 and 2023.



Figure 7. Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2024)

From these statistics, it is evident to see that public perceptions of the SAPS declined significantly during the pandemic and highlighted how citizens felt nearly twice as unsafe to walk in their neighbourhood than they did 10 years ago. And while there was a notable decrease in crime trends during the initial stages of the pandemic owing to the severity of the lockdown restrictions and fear of the virus; the SAPS undeservingly praised these results as one of the most crucial wins in the war against COVID. Yet, the public became more and more disdained with the effectiveness of the SAPS and the flailing operational protocols they were provided with during the latter stages of the pandemic, whereby only 1 year after the commencement of the lockdown, had crime once again risen back up to pre-pandemic levels. However, this narrative was subdued owing to the manipulation of station/ provincial/ and national statistics regarding incidents involving police work, such as quarterly crime statistics and police precinct performance reviews (Faull, 2016). And while the SAPS were able to paint the not so black-and-white picture on reported crime levels through their published reports; what they could not control was the narrative surrounding Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and their response to the *twin pandemic*.

5.5. Please Behave Man

I continued to wonder about what would happen if SAPS officers already had 15 violent offenders in the holding cells, but were called out to apprehend a suspect accused of GBV? I was then informed that:

No, we will *accommodate* it. The thing is *we'll see what it looks like*, but if it's rape – you must go to the cells. Domestic – *we'll see what the situation is you know* –
[Participant ID 33422608191515]

Yet:

The law is supposedly protecting the wife and the child, but now the charge is being dropped due to COVID. Because now even though you have an interdict against that female, the *law is asking you to behave*, but is the law actually (or) in a sense, do they have the *right* to ask you? Nobody has the right to ask nobody, brah. '*Please behave man brah*, there's no other place for you to be taken to, otherwise I need to arrest you'.
– [Participant ID 334208113020]

These statements once again call into question the effectiveness of these operational mandates; this time, now being applied to the second of the 'twin pandemics' – Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. And how the SAPS were required to once again "*accommodate*" another nationwide public health emergency of policing domestic violence, while being constrained by legislative requirements. It also showcases the pragmatic and resourceful nature of SAPS personnel to use discretionary ambit to enforce the regulations, by conducting somewhat of a risk assessment for households experiencing domestic violence and to find alternative solutions to circumvent the "*situation*". Even if those solutions ultimately meant asking assailants with court-ordered interdicts to "*please behave man*", as most court cases were postponed due to COVID-19 and that there was no place for them to be taken to. For example, in a circular

released by Parliament, all criminal trials held within regional and district courts enrolled between the 23rd of March and the 9th of April 2020, were ultimately postponed until the 14th of April 2020, with no prisoners awaiting trial or those being confined within holding cells being brought to court, except for first appearances or bail applications (Parliament, 2020c). However, according to the IIAG, South Africa’s sub-indicator for assessing the state of a *Functioning Criminal Justice System* revealed a steadily increasing score from 41.6 in 2014 to 44.2 in 2023 (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2024). This increase does not necessarily infer that there have been large-scale reforms within the criminal judicial framework (although there have been). But instead, this increase should be looked at holistically as it measures a diverse

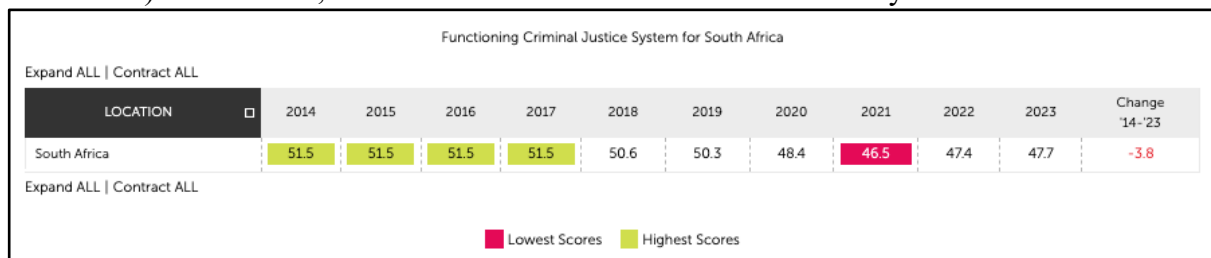


Figure 8. Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2024)

range of criteria including whether criminal prosecutors are using advanced data and analytical software to support criminal investigators; conducting covert investigations; and employing systems to protect witnesses and whistle-blowers, etc. (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2024)

5.6. Use of Excessive Force

The case of Petrus "Pietman" Miggels who died of apparent heart failure owing to a violent altercation with the SAPS on the first day of the COVID-19 lockdown, resonated very strongly with many civil justice groupings (Knoetze, 2020). The 55-year-old man from Ravensmead had been caught by SAPS officials for breaching the lockdown regulations by illegally purchasing beer at a local tavern. He was subsequently assaulted, abducted and taken away in the back of a police vehicle, only to be returned hours later when he eventually succumbed to his injuries later that day (Knoetze, 2020). This case and all 216 other deaths in police custody

reported on by the Independent Police Investigative Directorate during 2020/2021, became a central topic of discussion for the Minister of Police, Bheki Cele. With the general narrative being one that argued for deaths being attributed to “natural causes” and “not by police action” (Knoetze, 2020).

And although there is a marked difference between the case of Petrus Miggels and individuals already being held within police custody; statistics do not discriminate, with reported deaths in police custody increasing from 217 during 2020/2021 to 223 in 2021/202, while 4,228 cases of assault by a police officer were reported in 2020/2021 alone (Independent Police Investigative Directive, 2021). These statistics were also corroborated by the IIAG when examining the *Absence of Violence against Civilians* sub-sub-indicator, whereby there was a 33.7 decrease from a score of 90.0 in 2019, to 56.3 in 2020 (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2024). These figures therefore confirm a pervasive theme of the use of excessive force by the SAPS when arresting individuals for not abiding by the stay-at-home order. One of my participants also stated that the use of excessive force and conducting arbitrary arrests have always been two of the most prevalent issues facing the SAPS, especially during spaces of contested governance. And with more than 480,000 nationwide arrests having taken place during the pandemic; the probability of these two issues becoming more and more enmeshed was inevitable. Therefore, while shift commanders “maintained order during COVID through clear instruction and adherence to the protocols” [Participant ID 334225103019], by utilising unconventional tactics such as informant-conducted suicide watch in the holding cells; there was always a sense of being both publicly scrutinised and criminally prosecuted while carrying

out their roles and responsibilities for infractions of using excessive force to apprehend suspects.

5.7. Not So Just Administrative Action

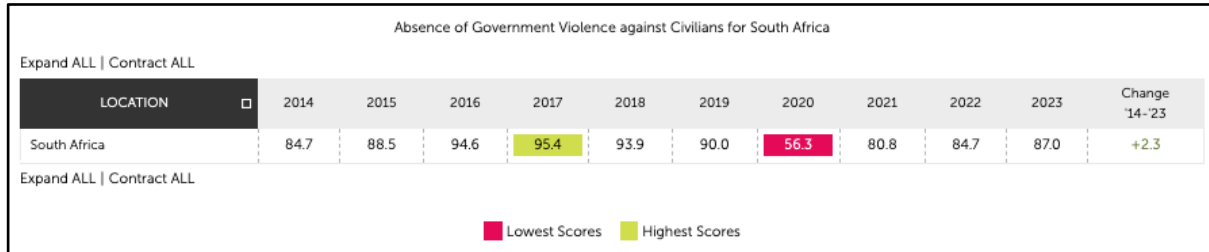


Figure 9. Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2024)

However, not everyone who was arrested by the SAPS was placed on suicide watch. So, what happened to the rest of the more than 480,000 individuals arrested by the SAPS during the lockdown? As my one participant pointed out:

We had to put less people in the cells, because we were limited. So, there can't be a lot of people because of COVID. So, *they came*, then *they went through the books* and then *they go*. – [Participant ID 33422608191515].

Therefore, for most individuals, they were simply processed within a matter of minutes, ordered to pay a R1,000 fine and allowed to return home. Hornberger (2020), however, noted that before they were allowed to leave, these individuals had to sign what is termed “an admission of guilt”, a routinely used protocol by SAPS officials. This document simultaneously allows SAPS to bypass the judicial system and successfully close the case docket, by placing the responsibility on the signature of the individual being arrested – while unbeknownst to them, also necessitating a criminal record (Hornberger, 2020). This practice calls into question the procedural fairness or just administrative action followed by the SAPS when detaining individuals under the enforcement of the DMA. Citizens are granted their constitutional right to be protected from arbitrary and unfair treatment by the government under Section 33 of the Constitution of South Africa. This section states that citizens are intended to be subjected to

administrative action that is intended to promote a sense of lawfulness, reasonability, and procedural fairness. Yet, they were not provided with pertinent information regarding the nature of their arrests and pre-trial detention; and instead, were told to just sign a document then they could leave, as if it were some high school class register sheet without knowing that it would entail a lifelong detention hearing. The failure of the SAPS to adhere to fair and due process also disproportionately affected areas with high rates of unemployment and low levels of education as they were most at risk of being subjected to these unlawful procedures. Yet, according to the IIAG, there was no apparent decline in the measurement of the sub-sub-indicator *Due & Fair Process* and instead seemed to show an uptick with a score of 88.4 being reported in 2020, which increased to 90.4 in 2021.

Due & Fair Process for South Africa											
Expand ALL Contract ALL	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change '14-'23
South Africa	85.1	85.1	85.1	85.1	89.3	87.3	88.8	90.4	84.0	85.1	0.0

Expand ALL | Contract ALL

Lowest Scores Highest Scores

Figure 10. Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2024)

However, there was a significant drop during the following year, with a score of 84.0 being reported in 2022. This may be explained by the fluctuations in the lockdown restrictions with COVID waves becoming less severe and citizens becoming more aware of their constitutional rights regarding administrative action. So, while individuals might be spared from contracting COVID-19 in holding cells, they continue to experience long-lasting implications regarding job security and credit applications. Yet, within the Cape Cluster specifically, it was noted that courts were returning documentation as they were not equipped to handle the average of 100 arrests per day and so the courts released and withdrew cases, with the expectation of fines being refunded by police stations (Schwartz et al., 2021). However, this created another opportunity for illegal profiting and corruption, as some of these funds were stolen or

“misallocated”. Most often through fraudulent PPE procurement schemes which became a pivotal point of discussion during the pandemic. In addition to the provision (or lack thereof) of PPE for SAPS officials, which proved to be instrumental as they carried out their roles and responsibilities. Most notably since Kraaifontein VisPol units had to attend to many community complaints - with many of those complaints stemming from an entirely new microcosm that seemingly sprawled up overnight within the desolate wastelands of Bloekombos and Wallacedene.

5.8. Ring Fencing of Informal Settlements

As outlined in the previous chapter, Kraaifontein constitutes a unique case study in which we can draw inferences from which relate to broader SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa. Most notably due to the diverse array of security actors and community residents who regularly contest one another for gang territory; job security; shebeen superiority; or in the odd instance a tin roof (or 3000) over their heads.

Kraaifontein SAPS had to contend with an unprecedented influx of migrant workers and foreign nationals during the COVID-19 pandemic, which according to the City of Cape Town’s aerial photographs suggest that they appeared overnight despite the pictures being taken one year apart (see Figures 11 and 12). These images depict an explosion in the population density of informal settlements in Bloekombos and Wallacedene, but unfortunately only provide a brief snapshot of the tip of the iceberg which SAPS now must excavate, preserve, and eventually transport. From the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the size of these informal settlements had grown to roughly the same size of the sub-place of Bloekombos by January 2021. Not only would this scenario have posed numerous socio-economic nightmares, had the pandemic not have occurred, including excessive overcrowding, low service density, and significant resource constraints - but the pandemic **had** occurred, and the onus was on SAPS to ensure public order

and prevent this unique ecosystem from tearing itself apart. This not only resulted in community patrols having to expand their scope of coverage but also incurred additional policing resources having to be redirected to account for new (and illegal) residents that fell within the boundaries of their jurisdiction. For example, having to create some structure within

this sprawling community to process case dockets and attend to community complaints as they were obligated to serve these residents and evictions or forced displacement of tenants was



Figure 11. Overview of Kraaifontein (March 2020)

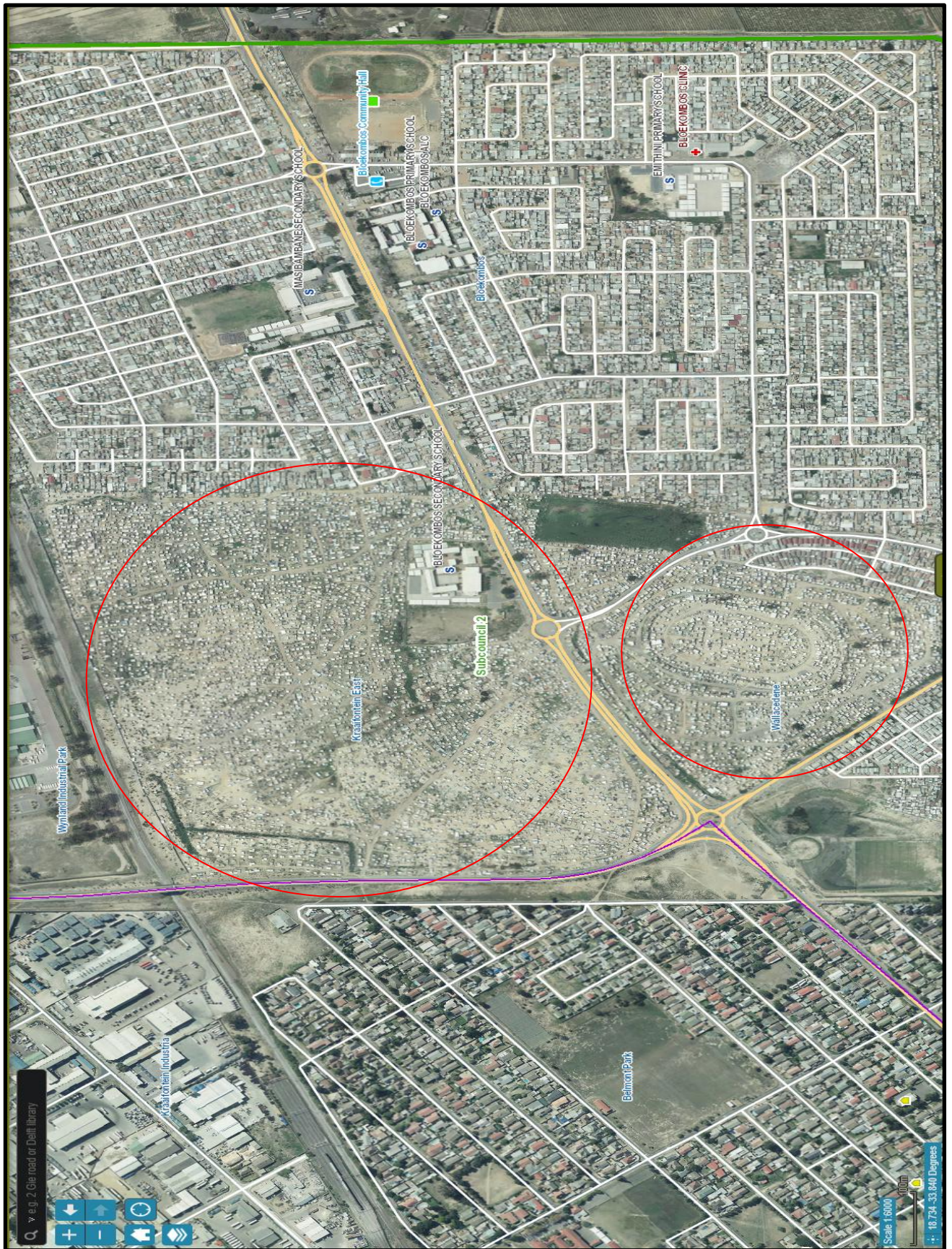


Figure 12. Overview of Kraaifontein (January 2021)

considered unconstitutional during the pandemic and therefore prohibited. And as the size of informal settlements in Bloekombos and Wallacedene grew, so too did tensions between foreign nationals and residents within Bloekombos and Wallacedene, who were now in direct opposition regarding job security, housing, and social space. This growing tension then escalated and manifested in the form of frequent xenophobic attacks and racially motivated assault being reported over weekends, owing to excessive alcohol consumption at communally shared shebeens. According to most of my participants, the number of illegal taverns (colloquially referred to as shebeens) situated in informal settlements in Bloekombos and Wallacedene grew significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SAPS then had to redirect its efforts towards fulfilling a strategic objective set out by the NCCC – the prevention of alcohol-related trauma.

5.9. Policing of Alcohol

Although the prevention of alcohol-related trauma was a critical component of South Africa's public health response to COVID and proved to be relatively successful in providing the Department of Health with enough time to acquire essential resources in combating waves of COVID-19 patients; the implementation of intermittent alcohol bans consequentially had long-lasting implications on national crime trends and alcohol-related trauma cases. In the sense that, following the immediate lifting of the alcohol ban, alcohol consumption would soar, and so too would levels of alcohol-related violence and alcohol-related trauma (Chu et al., 2022).

However, while shebeens continued to operate, it became apparent that the policing landscape within these settlements became a space for contested governance, with the foreshadowing conflict not boding well for containing the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, during the alcohol prohibition, it was imperative that these shebeens be prohibited from operating and that the alcohol be confiscated – which was one of the main roles of the Crime Prevention Unit (CPU). I personally witnessed the SAP-13 exhibit room at Kraaifontein Police Station and the

collection of confiscated alcohol, which towered high above me with crates of Carling Black Label stacked to the ceiling. This was one of the many ad-hoc responsibilities SAPS members were tasked with, in addition to acclimatising to an ever-expanding police mandate, which often overlapped with/and over-shadowed conventional policing duties, such as ensuring that residents adhered to the stay-at-home mandate; policing the number of attendees at social gatherings; ensuring that taxi's obeyed maximum occupancy laws; and conducting roadblocks with the assistance of SANDF to ensure the prohibition of the sale alcohol and tobacco (Kriegler et al., 2022). These roles were to be carried out in conjunction with pre-existing policing duties, such as attending to community complaints and conducting sector patrols. Which, according to one of my participants was a 24/7 operation, as Kraaifontein police station had:

13 out of 14 operational vehicles during COVID-19, and at all times we had at least 6 vehicles on patrol, with 5 of those vehicles attending to crime scenes. – [Participant ID 334225103019]

And although there were continuous ongoing surveillance operations being carried out in the heart of Bloekombos and Wallacedene to disrupt the illicit alcohol trade; the logistical challenge of accounting for the position of each patrol unit was an immense stressor for shift commanders. As limited resources had to be strategically managed to provide a Visible Policing presence in 6 sectors throughout the areas surrounding Kraaifontein *at all times*.

5.10. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the roles and responsibilities of the SAPS during COVID-19. It also explored Kraaifontein's security governance landscape during the pandemic and challenged SAPS's adoption of largely contradictory and controversial policy directives by asking perpetrators of GBVF to *behave*, as there was limited space within holding cells. And discussed

how those who were arrested, but not placed in holding cells, were fined and left with a criminal record which would adversely have long-lasting financial implications. It also described how resource intensive it was to conduct visible policing patrols in entirely new districts established during the pandemic. Lastly, it highlights how important it was to confiscate all liquor distributed at shebeens operating without liquor licenses to ensure that hospitals had sufficient beds for COVID-19 patients and not alcohol-related trauma.

CHAPTER SIX

EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF SAPS

MEMBERS DURING COVID-19

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will explore the experiences and perceptions of the SAPS while conducting their roles and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also provide commentary on the provision and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by the SAPS while carrying out their roles and responsibilities. This chapter will also discuss how members experienced the pandemic, and the fears and stressors associated with it. Lastly, it will provide an overview of the Employee, Health, and Wellness function used by members during the pandemic.

6.2. Resilience and Professionalism

While my leading question regarding the roles and responsibilities which SAPS members were tasked with during COVID-19 gained me access to an audience with VisPol members at Kraaifontein police station, the responses carried a lot of emotional weight to them. For some officers, the sentiment towards COVID was that of little concern, with one participant reporting:

As Officer (redacted) said, ‘we didn’t have COVID’, I don’t know how we passed that but (sic) OKAY. Our shift was the only shift that didn’t go into isolation. – [Participant ID 33422608191515]

While other participants articulated that COVID-19 brought about a high degree of personal stress and cause for occupational distress:

But it was **difficult** for us man, you know, most people they don't do what we do, like what I mean is, they aren't in close contact with the community. - [Participant ID 3342260819158]

Don't ask me about COVID, because I only have bad things to say about it. – [Participant ID 3342261023151]

(When participants tested positive for COVID-19) how are people going to look at me?

Who's going to sit next to me? – [Participant ID 334208113020]

Through these interactions and many more, I was provided the opportunity to see and experience the *humanness* in South Africa police officers. Which fundamentally changed my perception from seeing them as a regimented sea of slightly discoloured blue servicemen and women to simply being human beings. Human beings who went to work like everyone else and who came back home to some familial or kinship environment. Only in this instance - during the pandemic, when they and other essential service personnel had to go to work when the rest of the world had to remain at home. How their job description essentially changed overnight from visiting community members, engaging in street imbizos, and attending CPF meetings; to now having to court martial entire suburbs and refrain from engaging with their colleagues.

From my findings, I think this was the most essential thing that came out of the pandemic. As it brought to the fore, many frustrations, fears, and long suppressed attitudes of individual SAPS personnel, especially those serving at high-priority stations with far fewer resources and unmanageable caseloads. For one of my participants, not going into isolation was seen as a 'celebration' – as if they triumphed over an enemy, with that win not representing much in the greater scheme of things, as they were losing the war on other fronts (or other shifts). The downplaying of their own experiences by words such as '*but OKAY*', also ties in with conventional policing literature, with many SAPS officers ascribing to an organisational

culture that is constituted by a strong degree of discipline, restraint and authority (Shearing & Marks, 2004). As outlined in the South African Police Service Organisational Climate Survey (Schwartz et al., 2021), members of SAPS are also expected to carry out their roles and responsibilities with the highest degree of “resilience and professionalism”. The hallmark of these SAPS officers, according to this cultural framework, is indicative of one that suppresses personal sentiment in service of a greater overarching principle of collective organisational security. This may bode well for a unanimous and shared attitude towards crime prevention, but at what personal cost to employees? This theme featured very prominently during my interviews, as any showcasing of emotional responses was immediately circumvented by a dismissal and an invalidation of their own experiences:

Yes it (covid) was *bad* for us... *lucky* for us we came out *victorious*, because yeah I’m a *diabetic* mos... but I’m a *strong* man (laughs). - [Participant ID 3342260819158]

You *don’t worry*, you just *go on*. You *can’t stress* about other people’s stuff. – [Participant ID 33422608191515]

What does *going on* look like? What does being a *strong man* mean? These are questions I never got the answer to and answers I am afraid I will never get an answer to. As I think that only those who wear the infamous uniform will truly be able to understand what the *Code* in the SAPS’s Code of Conduct really means. In the sense that yes, most people do not actually know what a routine day-to-day or six-to-six looks like for a VisPol Officer and the extent to which they are actively involved within the community, or the roles they need to fulfil to establish and maintain good SSG within their communities. Yet, most officers returned to work every day and approached it like any other day – with hand sanitizer in their pocket and a face mask strapped across their face.

6.3. Experiences of Using PPE on Duty

Many of the participants all had families of their own and took extreme precautions to protect themselves from the lurking danger of an invisible pathogen. Yet it was the state's primary response to ensure the health security of SAPS personnel through the provision of PPE such as face masks, sanitizer, and gloves. However, during my conversations with SAPS officials, it was evident that there were large inconsistencies regarding the procurement of PPE at station level. This is especially concerning, as my interview with the policing scholar revealed that the police were very anxious about COVID-19, as they were first line responders in a public health situation and expected to police a public health disaster despite never having received training in public health or being linked to public health professionals. Taking this into consideration, it was apparent to explore the experiences of SAPS officers regarding the use of PPE and the employment of social distancing mechanisms to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

6.3.1. Sometimes You Struggle with Masks, Sometimes You Struggle with Sanitizer

First, it was important to understand the relationship that SAPS officials had with PPE by enquiring as to the availability of PPE at the station. All participants said that they abided by COVID-19 health protocols, including the use of PPE, and maintaining social distancing and said that they had sufficient PPE. However, what was most notable was that after probing a bit more into the procurement of PPE, it was revealed that not all the participants felt that way:

Yoh my bru, I was *steaming* a lot, *boiling water*, putting *vicks* on to sweat everything out and they gave us some *equipment*, but it *didn't work*. Even the masks were just a *waste of time*, people were getting *it* when they have their *masks on*. – [Participant ID 334226104013]

[hesitant] Ehhhh...it's like any company in any workplace (it) has *problems* right. It's like the problems you feel the *people* is *not* doing *enough* to support *us* with the

COVID thingy (that) *you* are *struggling* with. *Sometimes you struggle with masks, sometimes you struggle with sanitizer.* But you must be above that man. - [Participant ID 3342260819158]

What struck me most from the second response was the hesitancy and the surveillance that came with it. The sudden awkward pause, even though there were no other personnel around, to ensure that the participant's responses would remain confidential and would not be overheard. I had to stress the fact that it was okay to share their opinion, which highlighted an undertone of strict adherence to the code and not speaking 'outside of your household'. Reference was made to "*us*" and the use of third person commentary ("*you*") in sacrifice of personal views once again in the name of unanimous and anonymous protection. And how "*the people*" (the higher policing powers at be), tried to provide members with the necessary resources that they required to carry out their roles and responsibilities, "*but it didn't work*". The first respondent also indicated how other members were contracting COVID-19, despite wearing face masks and did not see the point in wearing them. Especially since PPE made policing work very challenging according to one of my participants, who stated that running after assailants with face masks, or having to pick up case information with gloves were not easily achievable feats. They also commented that nobody had really explained what PPE was to SAPS or the purpose thereof.

At the time, there were also notable allegations regarding improper supply chain management of PPE, through inconsistent expenditure and logistical challenges (Schwartz et al., 2021). Yet, members showed that they were "*above that man*" by adapting to the shortage of PPE and continued to internalize a strong degree of *resilience and professionalism* put forward by the SAPS handbook. Even resorting to unscientific and largely unproven COVID-19 prevention techniques in the form of using boiling water to steam their face and to release all toxins (or supposed COVID-19 pathogens) within the facial pores. It also includes adopting an infamous

and long-held South African belief of applying Vicks VapoRub, a relieving agent of cough and nasal congestion, to prevent the contraction of COVID-19. This response also corroborates the findings uncovered by Kriegler et al. (2022) regarding the wide-scale adaptability of SAPS to wage war against crime and the pandemic with insufficient PPE. And despite being seen as ‘invisible’ front line workers, they were able to access other available resources to ensure that they carried out their duties in fulfilment of a rapidly expanding mandate (Schwartz et al., 2021). One participant even described how SAPS utilised these ‘other available resources’ to keep the station in a constant operational status:

There was people that tested positive for COVID and when they were cleaning, then we had to move to the DPO office for them to sanitise the station. And if someone tested positive in the CSC, then they close the CSC and we move to the firearm department and work from that side. The station never closed, just the department, because if the station closed, the *whole world will be fucked up*. – [Participant ID 33422608191515]

The logistical nightmare that this scenario presented was a weekly occurrence in some departments during COVID-19 and knowing that whatever department had a positive COVID-19 case, had direct ramifications for other departments. For example, having to share the same occupational space with additional personnel, equipment, and documents for almost 24 to 48 hours most likely incited feelings of confusion, frustration, stress, and service delay. A strong reliance on internal communication and coordination was needed to ensure that members of the public would still be able to lay complaints and to ensure that the entire station would remain operational. As improper management of departmental deep cleansing and a lack of coordination between departments would potentially have resulted in the station having to close. Luckily, this was not the case and members of Kraaifontein police station did not have to debate as whether “*the whole world will be fucked up*” or not without their presence to enforce the law.

6.4. *If I Must Go to Another Station, It Will Be a Retirement*

Kraaifontein police station is significantly under-resourced in terms of its policing capabilities. Especially, considering that the ideal police-to-population ratio in South Africa is one officer for every 413 residents (Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety, 2023). Yet, Kraaifontein is considered one of the Western Cape's 13 priority stations with a ratio of one officer for every 721 residents (Department of Police Oversight and Community Safety, 2023). However, the issue of insufficient police resources to tackle high crime rates is not a Kraaifontein specific issue, as there are many other policing stations situated within high density urban populations who face similar problems. Yet, according to one of my participants:

Gangsters, fighting, drinking, stabbing, murders, assaulting – here's everything...If I must go to other stations, smaller stations, then it will be a *retirement*. I'm *gatvol* of this station, I can go on *retirement* now. – [Participant ID 33422608191515]

Kraaifontein is therefore seen as an epicentre for criminal activity, with different areas each presenting different challenges to law enforcement. Therefore, in addition to having to contend with prolific issues of substance-abuse, gender-based violence, gangsterism, and xenophobia; SAPS officials stationed at Kraaifontein were also expected to police an unprecedented public health emergency with limited resources and personnel. And although the setting of Kraaifontein does not present an entirely unique case study to explore SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic; it ultimately presents a grim picture of the policing landscape in many low-income and highly populated areas. For example, according to one of my participants, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were primarily called out to Scottsdeane and Scottsville to police issues involving gangsterism, such as gang shootings and conducting gang-related arrests. While some of my other participants reported on various seizures of illegal taverns operating within informal settlements located in Bloekombos and Wallacedene, which

ultimately resulted in massive quantities of bootleg alcohol being confiscated. As well as responding to many alcohol-related cases of assault, domestic violence, and murder in the same areas, with reported murder rates for the entirety of Kraaifontein increasing 20.9%, while assault increased 13.5% from 2020 to 2021 (South African Police Services, 2023). These statistics, which only until June 2023, substantiate the many reasons as to why Kraaifontein was regarded as one of South Africa's Top 10 most dangerous police stations during the pandemic. And why for this participant specifically, being transferred to another station would be seen as a "*retirement*". In the sense that Kraaifontein is a "*highly demanding station*" [Participant ID 3342261019153], and that working 4-day shifts without much rest, while attending to community complaints, conducting sector patrols, investigating crime scenes, and filing copious amounts of administrative paperwork would result in anyone feeling overwhelmed. The participant also made use of the word "*gatvol*", which is a colloquial South African term used to explain when someone is very upset or fed up with something. It could be that bearing witness to grotesque murders, inhumane violence being perpetrated against women, and the destruction of families caused by gangsterism – all of which form part of this officers' daily experiences, result in the classical conditioning of desensitisation to all stressful situations. Over time, the continuous repetition of conditioned responses may result in being desensitised to/ or "*gatvol*" of the same occupational stressors, which were exacerbated by the physiological stress of the pandemic itself. But what was this participant "*gatvol*" for exactly? The South African Police Service? The pervasive levels of disrespect shown towards members by the community? The lack of career direction within the SAPS? The "*gangsters, fighting, drinking, stabbing, murders, assaulting*"? Most likely it would be all of the above, however, for other participants, the pandemic was in fact a sort of *retirement*.

6.5. Alert Level 5 – That Was the Best

The prohibition of alcohol during the COVID-19 pandemic was also seen as being one of the most pressing mandates of the NCCC. Most participants also continuously referred to alcohol as being the biggest “*crime-generator*” in areas surrounding Kraaifontein police station during the COVID-19 pandemic; in the sense that it acted as a strong precursor for most assault and murder cases. Statistics indicate that while the country was placed on COVID-19 alert levels 4 and 5, there was a significant decrease in reported crime, with a total of 90,376 contact crimes reported between April and June 2020/2021, when the alcohol prohibition was put into effect (South African Police Services, 2023). As opposed to 144,267 reported contact crimes between April and June 2020/2021, when the country was placed on alert levels 1 and 2, and where alcohol was permitted for both onsite and offsite consumption (South African Police Services, 2023).

However, it was during the period of alert level 5, where *retirement* denotes a different connotation, as one participant notes that at alert level 5:

That was the *best*, people were *behaving*, because there was not a lot of alcohol, that was the main reason why the crime rate was so low. Our crime is *mos* based on alcohol, you know. People are drinking and when the cars are moving then people are delivering (sic) drugs to townships – there was nothing like that (during COVID-19). Because everyone had to go through *roadblocks* and there was roadblocks all over. - [Participant ID 334226104013]

As a result of COVID-19, many residents in low-income and densely populated areas were left unemployed. And when the prohibition of alcohol was lifted, there was a subsequent increase in alcohol consumption in these areas, with increased alcohol use ultimately leading to an increase in alcohol-related violent crime. Yet, I was still quite surprised to hear that the “*best*”

time for a police officer who had been on the force for nearly 23 years, was during COVID-19, and more surprisingly during the initial lockdown period. This comes as most participants indicated that the pandemic was a strange and difficult period in their lives, yet this participant said that it was the best owing to decreased crime rates based on a lack of alcohol.

So, although the long-term ring-fencing of large groups of individuals act as a precursor for heightened levels of stress and an increased display of negative emotions (Nivette et al., 2021), resulting in criminality – it provided short-term relief for public safety officials who described it as the “*best*” period during an unprecedented state of emergency. More importantly, the prohibition of alcohol played an instrumental role in reducing crime levels, as the limited availability of alcohol necessitated that people adhered to the stay-at-home order (for the most part). Roadblocks were also pivotal in the “*war*” against alcohol and cigarettes, as they were co-ordinated by SAPS personnel, but backed up by SANDF and Metro Police members and provided a resolute deterrence mechanism to bootlegging alcohol during alert level 5 and 4 (Schwartz et al., 2021). However, while the low crime rates during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic served as a career highlight for certain police members, it also may have served as one of the most uncertain and stressful time periods in the lives of many officers evoking several fears and stressors.

6.6. Fears and Stressors

Many SAPS officials found the COVID-19 pandemic to be an extremely tenuous and fragmented period in their lives. As they were considered essential workers during the pandemic and therefore put their lives on the line everyday - not knowing if they would face a physical or biological threat. With the latter having the potential to strike at any moment, causing harm to their lives and the lives of their family members. And for the first time in South African law enforcement history, officers were now afraid to attend crime scenes, with those

crime scenes involving the death of someone who suffered from COVID-19. Considering this, one of my participants noted the following:

Only problem we had *neh*, was to attend to a *sudden death* who suffered from **COVID**, that was the *major challenge*. That was *not nice*. It was *difficult*. Because, you are *afraid* of a crime scene, the *first time* the *police* are *afraid* to go to a *crime scene*, because they don't know if the body has **COVID** or not. – [Participant ID 334226104013]

While another stated:

(Working in the CSC) “you are in direct contact with the community, you *don't know* if they have the COVID or not” – [Participant ID 3342261023151]

And although SAPS officials had to take many precautions while conducting their roles and responsibilities, such as wearing face masks and using hand sanitiser, they were still extremely anxious about contracting COVID-19. Many members expressed a sense of confusion, shock, and fear when engaging with other members and the communities they served. Even something minor, such as handing over a pen to a member of the public was a cause for immediate distress. Not to mention adapting their public safety protocols to fit public safety directives in terms of evidence collection. For example, limiting how many SAPS personnel were allowed to be present at crime scenes – which impacted the chain of custody of evidence collection significantly. And although, according to one of my participants, the SAPS had not received any training in public health; they were forced to work with public health issues - with most of those extending beyond the death of someone who suffered from COVID-19. These included the management of overcrowding of social gatherings; as well as picking up discarded medical waste such as needles and syringes; and transporting victims of accidents to hospitals when ambulances were not available. And further beyond dealing with some of those public health

issues, was a family or household which they had to return to. Now VisPol officers had to be on 24-hour surveillance, as opposed to 12 hours; with 12 hours on duty and 12 hours off duty at home with their families and loved ones.

6.6.1. What Can You Do in Life Without Your Family?

It is one thing to prioritize the Service above a member's own personal sentiment and conviction; it is another to prioritize the well-being of their families. It quickly became apparent that while conducting my interviews, SAPS officials were slightly apprehensive toward their own well-being but highly emphasized the concern for family members. One participant even went as far as noting that:

17 years that I'm in the police now and *nothing has changed, nothing has changed*. Maybe your salary change, but salary is nothing, *feeling* and *to be a human is something* - to have a *family*, to try and *support* your family is something, because yoh *what can you do in life without your family* - [Participant ID 3342260819158]

This statement stresses the stagnant organisational culture of the SAPS and how it has failed to adopt more progressive modalities of policing which can be seen throughout the entire supply chain. Most importantly, however, it addresses the quintessential feature contributing to police officer's experiences of humanness - family. This response also emphasises the need to be "*human*" and how no amount of compensation or promotion will be able to provide that same sense of unquantifiable being. It highlights the true risk of the job – not routinely arresting gangsters in Bloekombos or intervening in Bundu courts (informal community courts which carry out mob justice on offenders) in informal settlements in Scottsdene, but rather the unimaginable consequence of losing those who give you some sense of safety and feeling when you go home.

6.6.2. High Stress and Low Morale

Despite expressing the fact that participants had good working relationships with other colleagues and generally felt supported by their supervisors during the COVID-19 pandemic; most expressed that they were poorly supported by the SAPS as an organisation. With some stating that they had to prevent themselves from becoming anxious regarding the lack of PPE provision at station level; while others were preoccupied with intrusive thoughts of potentially bringing the virus home to their family members and had to find other ways to cope with the stress, such as consuming a beer or two after a long day and feeling a sense of relief after exiting the gates of Kraaifontein police station.

Yet, for many SAPS officers, the stress was too much, which consequently resulted in many officers taking (and most often depleting) their sick leave. One participant even went as far as to say:

yoh the police, employ a lot of sick people hey. If you go to HR and ask them how many people booked off sick for this week and for next week...*weekends* are even *better*. So, what does it say? What does it speak to the *morale*? No human being is supposed to be *that sick* and we are supposed to be the *most fittest* isn't it? Some people's sick leave is depleted before your cycle is done because you get 36 days for 3 years. – [Participant ID 3342261019153]

It appears as if the SAPS purposefully selects those who do not pass the medical assessment to join its ranks, as the rate of absenteeism far exceeded what I anticipated. And it appears as if I was not the only one caught off guard, as the participant's "*yoh*" describes the feeling of surprise to learn that the SAPS have a lot of employees who are physically unfit to work. So, when I saw the overwhelming number of officers who had booked sick leave, it was quite alarming and raised a few red flags as to whether they were trying to get a few extra days off

or if they were indeed unfit to work. Especially since, as this participant pointed out, that “*weekends are even better*” in terms of increased absentee rates and was right to ask the question of morale. This decreased sense of morale can oddly enough be explained by the SAPS itself, as the South African Police Service Organisational Climate Survey (Schwartz et al., 2021) highlighted that there are a variety of factors which contribute to this low sense of morale. This includes a strong degree of feeling unsafe while on duty; limited career prospects; discrimination within the organisation itself; working overtime without compensation; feeling physically and emotionally overwhelmed with an unbearable amount of case dockets; and routinely bearing witness to traumatic incidents (Schwartz et al., 2021). I then asked participants if the SAPS had mental health resources to assist with officers feeling mentally, physically, and emotionally drained from carrying out their duties during the pandemic? I was then informed of a division within SAPS called EHW.

6.3. Employee Health and Wellness

EHW, formally known as Employee Health and Wellness, is a component housed within the SAPS’s organisational structure which aims to ensure a healthy and productive workforce through the establishment and implementation of health and wellness programmes (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2019). Interventions are targeted towards preventing stress from affecting employees’ ability to carry out their duties, minimizing the severity and duration of presenting symptoms and ensuring rehabilitation (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2019).

6.3.1. SAPS Officers Experiences of EHW During COVID-19

During my interviews, it was apparent that participants were aware of the SAPS EHW program, but not entirely knowledgeable as to their purpose or function. Other concerns were centred around the credibility, confidentiality, and adherence by EHW professionals to the ethical code

of conduct (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2019). The EHW also provided 24-hour contact details for the consultation of issues pertaining to an imbalance in the quality of work life, psychological stressors, as well as offering social work and spiritual services (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020b). Yet not much information was provided regarding how many members (if any) were making use of the 24/7 service and if those consultations included some form of emotional assessment to establish the wellbeing of the members (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020b). Instead, it was the primary responsibility of shift commanders to liaise with EHW to ensure that employees were supported during the COVID-19 pandemic, by visiting members that were booked off sick and enquiring as to their mental wellbeing. And although this was extremely taxing on senior officials, it was necessary to motivate and support members – otherwise, morale would continue to decrease and so too would the effectiveness of crime-prevention measures (Schwartz et al., 2021). Only one participant, however, stated that they were in regular conversations with EHW staff to ensure the well-being of their reporting members during the pandemic and that they played a crucial role in providing emotional and psychological support, especially during house visits. Another participant noted that none of their superiors checked up on them while they were on sick leave:

They didn't even come visit me, when I was booked off sick. They **didn't even bother** to come see me, I could've been **pushing up daisies** and you couldn't even come to see me. – [Participant ID 334224103022]

Unfortunately, this participant was not the only individual I interviewed who went through an incredibly distressing period during the pandemic. As I heard from another participant who went to great lengths to provide a detailed description about being pregnant during COVID-19. The participant requested to be declared unable to work owing to the high-risk that was associated with being pregnant during COVID-19. Her request was denied, and she was

immensely fearful of returning to work. She also stated how hurt and angry she felt about her request not being considered, while other employees with asthma were reportedly allowed to stay home:

Because I was pregnant *mos* and I tried multiple times to get a hold of EHW, because I have *diabetes* and the *depression* and working during COVID was *not easy*. But then I *gave up* and just decided to *leave it*. – [Participant ID 3342261023151]

These co-morbidities and increased risks while being unvaccinated took a severe toll on the participant's psychological and emotional state, which in turn affected her ability to perform her roles and responsibilities. And although multiple attempts were made to contact EHW, she did not receive a single response and so turned to her reliable self-held belief of resiliency and decided to "*leave it*". This participant's response was also not an isolated incident, as the SAPS Organisational Climate Survey stated that most of its participants (25.84%) strongly disagreed that the SAPS effectively managed the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the well-being of its employees (Schwartz et al., 2021). Therefore, while an Employee Assistance Program partially helped and supported certain employees within SAPS during the COVID-19 pandemic, it may also have simultaneously marginalized an extremely vulnerable group of individuals with overwhelming emotions of fear, anxiety, depression, anger, and feelings of injustice.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of how SAPS carried out their roles and responsibilities in the face of adversity, despite experiencing personal challenges. It also discussed how officers struggled with the procurement of PPE at station level, and how officers used largely unproven and unscientific means of ensuring that they did not contract the COVID-19 pathogen. Lastly, this chapter also discussed the various fears and stressors associated with conducting their roles

and responsibilities. And how some employees reached out to EHW but instead experienced more emotional distress trying to ask for help.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ATTITUDE OF THE SAPS TOWARDS SSG DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

7.1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on the attitude of the SAPS towards SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also discuss how the SAPS viewed other stakeholders within their security sector and the importance of legislation that is inclusive of the experiences of SAPS officials.

7.2. Too Many Chiefs

It is evident that a host of committees and stakeholders at all levels of government were brought in to address the pandemic, but at the local law enforcement level – it was all extremely confusing and frustrating. As according to one of my participants, when asked about the interdepartmental relationships with other security sector actors, stated that:

You see what I mean, department to department, we don't speak the *same language*. So that is where we call these ABT meetings, where all the key role players come in and then we start talking: Why isn't the *Department of Correctional Facilities* on board with us in terms of *parolees*? Why isn't the *NPA* communicating with us in terms of *bail conditions* (regarding) the terms and conditions as well as rehabilitation? You see what I mean, **too many chiefs**.

[Participant ID 33422608231519]

And although the participant alluded to the difficult working relationship that the SAPS had with the Department of Correctional Facilities and the lack of communication from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) regarding bail conditions after throwing out cases because the courts could not handle the number of daily arrests; they raise a relevant argument

as to how there were no streamlined processes in place to facilitate interagency cooperation despite having numerous oversight committees in place. In theory, these structures should have depicted measures of transparent and accountable SSG. However, without fully being immersed in every briefing, it does become quite daunting to identify their role in the macro

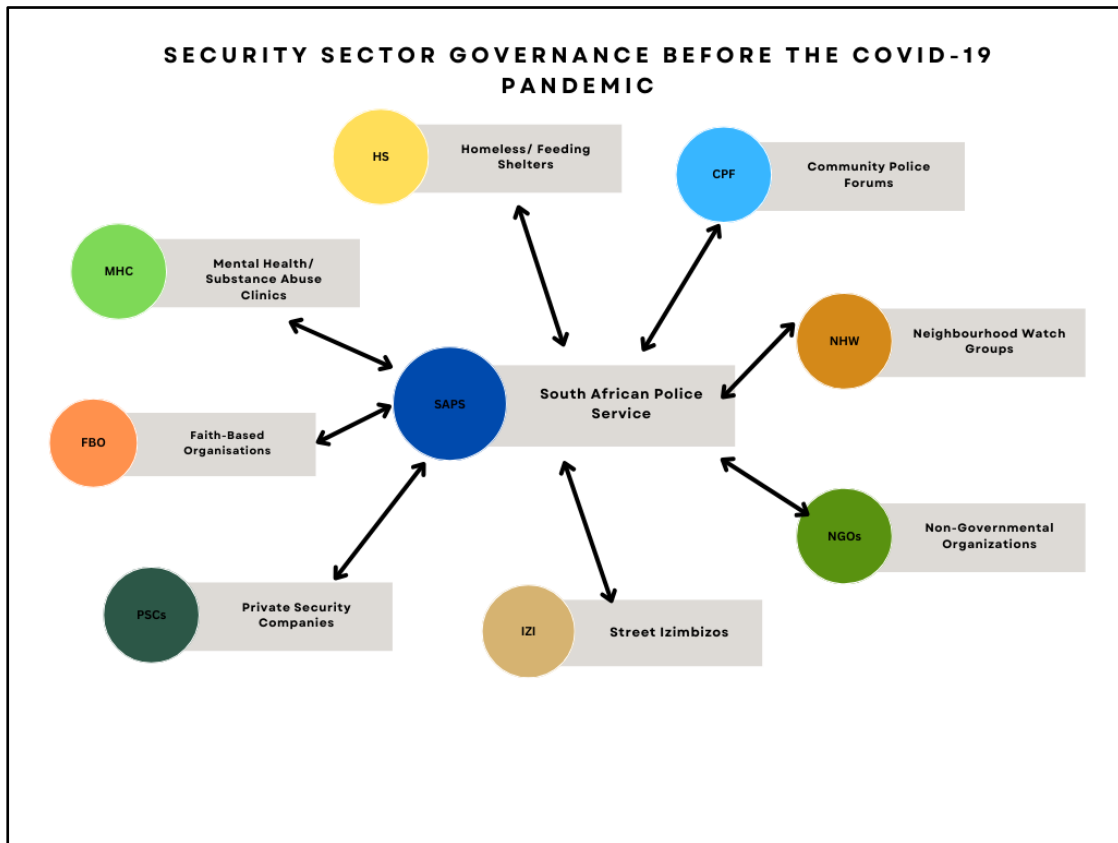


Figure 13. Security Sector Governance Before the COVID-19 Pandemic

policing landscape as a rank-and-file police officer. In fact, several participants were not fully aware as to all the SSG structures implemented at the start of the pandemic and despite finding some of the regulations problematic – were quite content with not knowing about all the SSG committees. For example, according to one of my participants:

We *didn't* actually *receive* any *communication* from discussions coming out of meetings with the stakeholders. There was a lot of *miscommunication*, but you will *get it after a week or 2*, you will *hear* what happens. We just say *okay*. *They have meetings every week, but we don't see* what's going on. [Participant ID 33422608191515]

This highlights a strategic flaw in South Africa's adoption of SSG protocols during the pandemic, as communication with line managers regarding discussions with key security actors was not passed down with any real sense of urgency. During an interview with the policing scholar, I was made aware of the fact that without the presence of proper line management and constant monitoring and observation of the protocols; it is impossible for the SAPS to implement and retain any changes made to the police at an organizational level. Especially when these solutions were collectively put forward during collaborative discussions with stakeholders at all spheres of government. But, unfortunately, these suggested interventions cannot be sustained and improved if senior police officials are not involving members in the briefings and garnering their input for future meetings. And with an extremely low sense of morale during the pandemic, members were not incentivised to actively participate or become involved in these discussions.

7.3. This Pen is More Important Than This Firearm

According to the policing scholar interviewed, if people want to work with the police, they need to understand the constraints and contradictions in the policy arena that the SAPS are currently dealing with to really change or transform the policing space. The regulations promulgated under the DMA during the COVID-19 pandemic serve as a perfect illustration of this. The SAPS received much criticism, even from its own personnel, as to how it handled the enforcement of the lockdown, with 37.89% of respondents indicating that they strongly disagreed with the statement that the SAPS was winning the war against crime (South African Police Services, 2021). And the blame should not reside with SAPS officers, who operate under very strict instruction and mandate, but rather the institution that specialises in blame and punishment and advocates for a militarised policing function during periods of uncertainty. During one of my interviews, one participant spoke at length about the consequences of using

excessive force and said something so profound that I have not quite been able to forget and so I eventually ended up making it the title of this dissertation:

But, because of the *firearm* it's easy. It's easy to take out your *firearm* and shoot someone, but after that (holds up pen) this is the difficult part. *This pen is more important than this firearm* (holds up firearm). You must now try to *defend* yourself from *your (sic) own people, your own police*. Every round you fire from a *firearm* this (holds up pen) must come in and you must *defend* yourself, (because) *the police is going to charge you now*. So, you are now a criminal, or not a criminal, but a suspect, you are a *suspect* now, you're going to be charged now so the pen must talk for you now. And when this (*pen*) and this (*firearm*) doesn't correspond, you will pay a lot (laughs). - [Participant ID 3342260819158]

Although the participant spoke about the administrative procedures members must follow after discharging their firearm to account for proper case management and auditing protocols – deeper inferences had to be drawn from this analogy. More broadly, this pen serves as a powerful metaphor for accountable and transparent SSG that is guided by a legislative framework which aligns the legitimate use of force under constitutions which promote internationally accepted human rights. As noted by the participant, the pen (SSG) should not be disproportionate to the firearm (militarised policing functions), but rather they should be weighted equally to establish a well-structured security sector that is characterised by both systems of governance and oversight, as well as being well-resourced regarding personnel and equipment. Over reliance on governance structures without an adequate law enforcement response is a threat to national security. Consequentially maintaining a highly militarised approach creates the breeding ground for the establishment of authoritarian regimes. And that is exactly what the *payment* will result in if the *pen* and the *firearm* do not correspond.

7.3.1. Or this Private Security Company (PSC)

Owing to COVID-19, more than 2,495,899 Private Security Officers (PSOs) stationed across 10,298 PSCs were now required to assist both the public and private sector in curtailing the spread of COVID-19 through the enforcement of various health protocols (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2022). These included conducting temperature screening and sanitising access points across various areas including shopping malls, industrial and commercial zones, and gated residential communities (Mkhwanazi, 2022). And yet, these officers were still intended to carry out their daily responsibilities, which often involved working with and alongside the SAPS on law enforcement operations, detaining suspects, and providing a visible policing presence within the community. According to my participants, PSCs were called in to assist SAPS officials at Kraaifontein police station during peak increases in crime trends, whereby the SAPS would handle case dockets and reported cases while PSCs would deal with many unreported cases. This action toward sustainable policing was highly favoured by some participants, while other participants had their reservations working with PSCs. For example, according to one of my participants:

They want to be more **serious** than us. Because you know what? They *mos* normally drive nice cars like mustangs that's why. And their equipment is **better** than ours. Because you know why? If you have two people working for you, you are gonna sort them out *mos*? Easily. But if you have one hundred people working for you, it's not that easy to sort them out. I don't say its **right**, but you're gonna take the cheapest stuff for your members, because it's a lot of members that must be **sorted out**. - [Participant ID 3342260819158]

Whittle (2020) argues that PSCs have decorated their officers with police-like uniforms, utilised police-like cars, and equipped officers with police-like equipment for years to blur the

state and non-state policing divide. These incentives, along with other benefits while working on the job is the reason many of the contracted PSOs are ex-police officials and why some SAPS members are resentful towards PSCs. A host of reasons could explain why PSOs are seen to be more “*sorted out*” in comparison to SAPS officials, but the simple reason is that budget constraints, mismanagement of allocated funds, deficits in relation to equipment and vehicles, bribery and corruption are at the heart of the SAPS organisational structure. And although PSCs were of immense aid to the SAPS, the unsung heroes of the pandemic ironically turned out to be the very community that the SAPS were responsible for protecting.

7.3.2. Or this Community

I was shocked to hear that community members have arguably been the most notable security actors to emerge out of the pandemic. Why would it be that residents would be so critical to ensuring the effective governance of their community during the lockdown? Especially considering that it was a challenge for law enforcement to keep residents at home, particularly residents in informal settlements who were disparately affected by the lockdown owing to lack of employment opportunities, PPE, and spaces to practice social distancing. It is also worth noting that at the beginning of the lockdown only essential services were allowed to operate. As a result, many civil society organizations including neighbourhood watches, CPFs, and volunteer programs intended to aid the community regarding pressing issues such as crime and violence, substance abuse and GBVF were suspended. This had a drastic impact on the policing landscape as SAPS personnel had to allocate sufficient resources to address new and emerging threats that would typically be handled by these non-state actors. Yet, for some participants the suspension of these non-state actors was seen as a celebration, as one participant noted that:

They were in lockdown, praise the Lord, the neighbourhood watches was in Lockdown.

They are *lastige* people. They think they are the police. When they weren't working, we

were working nicely, but when they started it was headaches again from the beginning -
[Participant ID 33422608191515]

The word “*lastige*” is a colloquially South African Afrikaans term used to describe someone who is annoying and persistent. Yet, neighbourhood watches serve as important stakeholders within the security sector and are integral to deterring crime and maintaining good police-community relations. However, their status and jurisdiction does not supersede the SAPS. So, when they were deemed as non-essential services, for this participant at least, it was a great experience not having them present in engagements with the SAPS. Yet, other participants noticed the absence of these non-state actors and had to lean on the standard operational protocols for guidance as noted by one participant:

The regulations helped us since there were no monthly meetings with the community, neighbourhood watch, and sector commanders, where we would usually have listened to grievances from the community and exchanged ideas. [Participant ID 33422608191515]

In line with broader issues surrounding SSG, the timid adoption of the virtual office environment by the Parliament of South Africa during the initial lockdown limited transparency within the security sector as parliamentary tools for oversight were not utilised to their full capacity (Schwartz et al., 2021). This issue also persisted at the local level, whereby monthly meetings involving CPFs, neighbourhood watches and the SAPS would conventionally be held in person – had suddenly shifted to virtual platforms with little preparation. As such, SAPS officials had to rely predominantly on the standard operational protocols during the initial lockdown period. Regardless, these community representatives continued to inform the SAPS about emerging issues in the community through social media platforms like WhatsApp. More specifically, residents would provide SAPS officials with information relating to criminal activity on various WhatsApp groups, with that data then being

processed through the Crime Information Management Centre (CIMAC) to create crime trend analysis reports for the previous day. These reports would then be used as intelligence during law enforcement operations and used to inform the VisPol units on patrol who would subsequently intervene.

7.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter examined the experiences and perceptions of SAPS officers and their attitude toward SSG during the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlighted the various challenges experienced by SAPS officers regarding their engagement with various stakeholders, in addition to managing communication within the department. Although the overarching operational framework of NATJOINTS assisted in managing broad objectives relating to policing the pandemic; it became highly convoluted for members who had no idea that these frameworks had been enacted and what the outcomes of these meetings were. The metaphor of the pen being more important than the firearm severely underscores the need for a policing framework that is guided by human rights and legislative oversight, ensuring accountability alongside enforcement. During the drafting up of future pandemic-preparedness reports, the involvement of private security companies (PSCs) and community members cannot be omitted, as they served as critical assets during the pandemic and demonstrated the value of partnerships and collaboration.

CHAPTER EIGHT

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Introduction

The pen also serves as a metaphor for the discretionary ambit that SAPS officials used to enforce the lockdown and how SAPS officials had to defend themselves for deviating from the standard operational protocols (I.E. firearm). However, for future pandemic-preparedness reports, the **pen** should:

- Be given more political power to sign off on the construction of new homeless shelters instead of signing eviction notices or fines for homeless people being outside during a lockdown.
- Be used to draft new legislation that advocates for better pre-emptive risk screening measures for the release of inmates during another health pandemic.
- Be used to faster enlist supportive community organisations (rehabilitation clinics and GBVF support centres) as essential services.
- Be used to procure vaccines and PPE at market costs from trusted partners and sourced from sustainable distribution centres before they become available.
- Be used to sign a declaration that SAPS officials will form part of the first essential service providers group to receive vaccines once they become available.
- Be used to draft a policy on alcoholism treatment programmes to reduce alcohol-related harm without enacting a total prohibition on non-essential goods to prevent the consumption of alcohol.

- Be more considerate of impoverished and rural communities when enacting national stay-at-home orders and drafting legislation that promote the collective health and welfare of these citizens.
- Be more concise in terms of how the narrative concerning the next pathogen is conveyed to avoid militaristic jargon being associated with the virus.
- Be more cautious regarding the labelling of certain criminal offences such as breaching lockdown restrictions which convey a sense of criminal deviance.
- Be used to change the flows of the national budget to be redirected towards institutions and activities that advocate for harm-prevention instead of blame and punishment.
- Be used to create structures for the humanitarian cluster, which include the Departments of Social Development and Education – in tandem with the security cluster.
- Be used to further inter-sectoral coordination through cross-cutting integrated efforts and include even more role players operating within streamlined workflows.
- Be used to draft legislation that clearly advocates the roles and responsibilities of all security actors including SANDF and the SAPS.
- Be used to create a platform whereby SAPS officials can communicate their experiences of carrying out their roles and responsibilities, which can be taken up to national policy makers through proper line management.
- Be used to procure investment in better virtual office infrastructure for Parliament and its reporting substructures.
- Be used to improve psychosocial support services for the public sector, more specifically improving the EHW component housed within the SAPS.
- Be used to draft legislation responsible for establishing a nexus for public health and public safety issues that brings together all stakeholders including health practitioners, academics, the SAPS, and other law enforcement actors.

- Be used to develop cross-referral mechanisms for the SAPS to engage with health organisations to deal with public health issues.
- And to be used to draft essential training sessions for law enforcement actors regarding key health and safety protocols and the rationale behind it.

8.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a range of policy interventions to improve SSG in South Africa. By focussing on the lived experiences of SAPS officers and the roles and responsibilities they are tasked with – we can gain a better understanding of the nature of police work. However, true reform is established when SAPS officers at all station ranks are involved within policy intervention, with their experiences serving as key and instrumental data points, upon which we can properly allocate resources to the precincts that require it the most. And in conjunction with other civil society actors, more collaboration must take place, even in the absence of an overarching framework dedicated to facilitating coordination intelligence operations. Modelling after this paradigm then paves the way for a historic new chapter to be written in the conversation around SSG, one which portrays the state and the SAPS working harmoniously to protect collective security – but is negotiated and moderated by the community itself. And how, the pen and the firearm can instead point toward one another in a continuous endeavour to ensure effective SSG is backed by strong policy intervention and a capable and effective security sector.

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Annexure A: Certificate of Approval for Ethical Clearance



Faculty of Law: Research Ethics Committee

Private Bag X3 ▪ Rondebosch ▪ 7701 ▪ South Africa
Room 6.29 ▪ Kramer Building ▪ Middle Campus
Tel: +27 021 650 3080 Fax: +27 021 650 5660
E-mail: lamize.viljoen@uct.ac.za Internet: www.law.uct.ac.za

Certificate of Approval for Ethical Clearance

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/SUPERVISOR: IRVIN KINNES	ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBER: L0155-2020
STUDENT: GINO MICHAELS - [MCHGIN 001]	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 01-DECEMBER-2022
FACULTY: LAW	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 30-NOVEMBER-2023
DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC LAW	
PROJECT TITLE: Policing Pandemics: An Investigation into Hybrid Forms of Security Cooperation Under Conditions of Lockdown – A Multiple-Case Study Approach.	
PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: Towards MPhil in Criminology, Law and Society	
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL	
This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.	
Modifications To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a formal "Request for a Modification" to the REC Administrative Office. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.	
Renewals Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You are responsible for submitting this by at least 2 months prior to the expiry date of clearance date issued.	
Project Closures When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please formally notify the REC: Law as well as your supervisor where applicable.	
Certification	
This certifies that the University of Cape Town Law Faculty's Research Ethics Committee has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Cape Town Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.	
<hr/> PROFESSOR KELLEY MOULT REC: CHAIRPERSON	

Certificate Issued On: 05/12/2022

Annexure B: National clearance to conduct research in SAPS

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS  SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

Privaatsak/Private Bag X 94

Verwysing/Reference:	3/34/2
Navrae/Enquiries:	Lt Col Joubert AC Thenga
Telefoon/Telephone:	(012) 393 3118
Email Address:	JoubertG@saps.gov.za

THE HEAD: RESEARCH
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE
PRETORIA
0001

The Provincial Commissioner
WESTERN CAPE

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: POLICING PANDEMICS: AN INVESTIGATION INTO HYBRID FORM OF SECURITY COOPERATION UNDER CONDITION OF LOCKDOWN – A MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY APPROACH: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: GS MICHAELS

1. The above subject matter refers.
2. The researcher, Mr GS Michaelis, is conducting a study titled: Policing pandemics: An investigation into hybrid form of security cooperation under condition of lockdown – A multiple-Case study approach, with the aim *to investigate the role and responsibilities of the SAPS as well as private security officials during the COVID-19 pandemic.*
3. The researcher is requesting permission to interview approximately fifteen (15) respondents, including police members and administrative personnel, at Kraaifontein police station in Western Cape.
4. The proposal was perused according to National Instruction 1 of 2006. This office recommends that permission be granted for the research study, subject to the final approval and further arrangements by the office of the Provincial Commissioner: Western Cape.
5. We hereby request the final approval by your office if you concur with our recommendation. Your office is also at liberty to set terms and conditions to the researcher to ensure that compliance standards are adhered to during the research process and that research has impact to the organisation.
6. If approval is granted by your office, this office will obtain a signed undertaking from researcher prior to the commencement of the research which will include your terms and conditions if there are any and the following:
 - 6.1. The research will be conducted at his/her exclusive cost.

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: POLICING PANDEMICS: AN INVESTIGATION INTO HYBRID FORM OF SECURITY COOPERATION UNDER CONDITION OF LOCKDOWN – A MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY APPROACH: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: GS MICHAELS


- 6.2 The researcher will conduct the research without the disruption of the duties of members of the Service and where it is necessary for the research goals, research procedures or research instruments to disrupt the duties of a member, prior arrangements must be made with the commander of such member.
- 6.3 The researcher should bear in mind that participation in the interviews must be on a voluntary basis.
- 6.4 The information will at all times be treated as strictly confidential.
- 6.5 The researcher will provide an annotated copy of the research work to the Service.
- 6.6 The researcher will ensure that research report / publication complies with all conditions for the approval of research.
7. If approval is granted by your office, for smooth coordination of research process between your office and the researcher, the following information is kindly requested to be forwarded to our office:
 - **Contact person:** Rank, Initials and Surname.
 - **Contact details:** Office telephone number and email address.
8. A copy of the approval (if granted) and signed undertaking as per paragraph 6 supra to be provided to this office within 21 days after receipt of this letter.
9. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

MAJOR GENERAL

**THE HEAD: RESEARCH
DR PR VUMA**

DATE: 2020 -12- 21

Annexure C: Provincial clearance to conduct research in SAPS

<i>South African Police Service</i>		<i>Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie</i>	
Private Sak Private Bag X94	Pretoria 0001	Fax No. Fax No.	(012) 393 2128
Your reference/U verwysing:		THE HEAD: RESEARCH SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE PRETORIA 0001	
My reference/My verwysing: 3/34/2			
Enquiries/Navrae:	Lt Col Joubert AC Thenga (012) 393 3118		
Tel:	JoubertG@saps.gov.za		
Email:			
Mr GS Michael UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN			
RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: POLICING PANDEMICS: AN INVESTIGATION INTO HYBRID FORM OF SECURITY COOPERATION UNDER CONDITION OF LOCKDOWN- A MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY APPROACH: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: GS MICHAEL			
The above subject matter refers.			
You are hereby granted approval for your research study on the above mentioned topic in terms of National Instruction 1 of 2006.			
Further arrangements regarding the research study may be made with the following office:			
The Provincial Commissioner: Western Cape			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Contact Person: AC Gomo▪ Contact Details: (021) 417 7520▪ E Mail Address : wc.od.research@saps.gov.za			
Kindly adhere to paragraph 6 of our attached letter signed on the 2020-12-21 with the same above reference number.			
<p style="text-align: center;">MAJOR GENERAL THE HEAD: RESEARCH DR PR VUMA</p> <p>DATE: 2021-02-04</p>			
1			

Annexure D: Interview Guide

Participant ID:

Age:

Sex:

Occupation:

Workplace:

Position/ Rank (if applicable):

Number of years on duty:

List of questions include:

- What made you decide to join the SAPS/ private security industry?
- How did you feel when you first joined the SAPS/ private security industry?
- Has your attitude towards your job changed since you started working? Why is that so?
- Do you have a good relationship with your colleagues?
- Has your relationship with other staff members contributed positively or negatively to your attitude towards your job? Why is that so?
- Has your relationship with colleagues changed due to the COVID-19 health pandemic? How so?
- Has COVID-19 also affected your relationship with others, including community members, *victims of crime and offenders*? Would you care to explain in more detail?

- What were your roles and responsibilities prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What are your current roles and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How has COVID-19 affected your ability to carry out your roles and responsibilities?
- What do you think about the protocols you were given to carry out your respective duties? Do you agree with it?
- Do you think the protocols made a difference in terms of crime prevention? How so?
- In your expert opinion, which aspects of the standard operational protocols were the most successful in terms of managing and preventing crime?
- Which aspects of the standard operational protocols were the least successful? Why is that the case?
- Is there anything your unit could have done differently in terms of carrying out and implementing orders issued by the mandate?

- Did you experience any feelings of tiredness, lethargy, exhaustion because of carrying out your duties? If you don't mind, would you explain further?
- At times did you feel overwhelmed, anxious, sad, nervous or fearful while exercising your roles and responsibilities?
- What were the main causes of stress for you while on the job?
- Is there anything you felt, that your department was not fully providing you with (information, emotional support, assistance with your duties, PPE, testing, etc.)?

Interview Guide

Date:

Participant Name: _____

List of questions include:

- In your research experience, what has been the most identifiable and prominent issue facing state policing in South Africa?
- Has this issue been exacerbated by the COVID-19 health pandemic?
- Have aspects of class, race and space influenced this issue?
- Have aspects of class, race and space influenced this issue during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
- Has there been a noticeable shift in the policing landscape before and during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
- Once the COVID-19 health pandemic made its way into South Africa, what were the imminent threats state policing actors had to deal with?

- How has the COVID-19 health pandemic exposed institutional inefficiency at all spheres of government?
- What are the most prominent aspects of the managerial inefficiency of state policing during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
- How has the phenomenon of hybrid policing evolved during the COVID-19 health pandemic in South Africa?
- How has corruption and bribery appeared in the policing landscape before and during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
- How are state policing actors being held accountable for their actions such as abuse, assault, bribery and corruption during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
- How have the internal structures of state policing institutions evolved during the COVID-19 health pandemic?

- How has the transportation of illicit goods such as narcotics and firearms evolved during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
- How have state policing actors gone about ensuring good relationships with communities and other non-state actors like neighbourhood watches and community policing forums?
- What were the chronological order of key policing events that occurred prior to the looting of shopping centres during July 2021?

- What were the repercussions for state policing after this incident, as some policing officials were caught looting?
 - Has the reputation of the SAPS and other policing actors come into question following this incident?
 - What were some of the most noticeable crime trends during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
 - How has SAPS and other policing actors handled the shift in different crime trends during the COVID-19 health pandemic?

 - What were some of the achievements made by state policing actors during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
 - What improvements or positive changes have been implemented in the internal processes of state policing in South Africa during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
 - Which state policing lessons can we draw up for future health pandemics in South Africa?
 - What are some lessons we could draw from other countries in terms of their policing mandates during the COVID-19 health pandemic?
 - DO you think that the case study of state policing in South Africa during the COVID-19 health pandemic could be of any use for international policy makers and international state policing actors?
-

Annexure E: Information Sheet



Informed Consent Form for Criminological Research

The University of Cape Town

Title of Research Project: Policing Pandemics: An Investigation into Hybrid Forms of Security Cooperation Under Conditions of Lockdown – A Multiple-Case Study Approach

Primary Researcher: Mr. Gino Michaels
UCT MPhil Criminology, Law and Society Student
+27 79 717 2273; MCHGIN001@myuct.ac.za

- 1) **Purpose of this Study:** The purpose of this study is to provide a description of the roles and responsibilities, which members of both the Kraaifontein police station and employees of a Kraaifontein Private Security Company fulfilled during the COVID-19 health pandemic. It also attempts to gain an understanding of the individual experiences of members of the Kraaifontein police station and employees of the Private Security Company in relation to the roles and responsibilities they were/are tasked with fulfilling during the COVID-19 health pandemic.
- 2) **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked a series of questions in the form of a one-on-one semi-structured interview format. These questions relate to your experiences while on the job (job satisfaction, relationships with colleagues, etc.), as well as how COVID-19 has impacted your ability to perform at work and what impact the lockdown had on your home environment. Interviews will be conducted on a once-off basis, but there may be a need to schedule another interview if I require more information. In which case, permission will need to be sought from the participant again and the procedure of explaining informed consent will be re-explained. All interviews will be tape-recorded, and the audio recordings will be transcribed and analysed verbatim. The identity of all participants will remain completely anonymous and will be coded under pseudonyms.

- 3) **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no imminent risks involved in this study, however there is always the risk of contracting COVID-19 through symptomatic or asymptomatic transmission. Measures will be put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, by asking you to wear your face mask and always maintain a distance of 2m from yourself. I will also be providing hand sanitizer and will be recommending both myself and you (the participant) ensure that we sanitize our hands and any objects we touch. There is also the possibility that some questions may elicit a traumatic response that might cause personal discomfort. As such, I have taken the initiative to create a flyer which contains information regarding three mental health facilities in or near the suburb of Kraaifontein, which you can access if you feel that you have experienced psychological harm as a result of participating in this study (see flyer on mental health facilities).
- 4) **Benefits of this Research:** The benefits of this research is that it will provide a background for future researchers and policy developers to draw lessons for inter-agency cooperation between the SAPS and private security officials based on their interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also highlight the crucial role members of the SAPS and PSC's played during the COVID-19 pandemic and allow the voices of state and non-security actors to be heard.
- 5) **Duration:** The interview should take between 30-60 minutes. If this is not possible, I can conduct several 10-15-minute interviews for each category of questions.
- 6) **statement of Confidentiality:** Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology being used. I will ensure that all data collected in the form of audio tapes, transcribed interviews and field notes are safely protected. He will achieve this, by uploading all documentation onto a secure and encrypted cloud-based server which is password protected, as well as ensuring that all hard-copy data such as the original field notes and transcribed interviews remain in a locked safe with a pin-protected keypad, which can only be accessed by I and three other members in his household. All interview notes will be scanned and uploaded to the same encrypted, password-protected cloud-based server and the original notes will be stored in the household safe.
- 7) **Right to Ask Questions:** You have the right to ask questions and inform me about any queries or concerns you may have. If you have concerns about the research, its risks and benefits or about your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Law Faculty Research Ethics Committee Administrator, Ms Lamize Viljoen, at +27 (0)21 650 3080 or at lamize.viljoen@uct.ac.za. Alternatively, you may write to the Law

Faculty Research Ethics Committee Administrator, Room 6.29 Kramer Law Building,
Law Faculty, UCT, Private Bag, Rondebosch 7701.

8) **Incentive for Participating:** Unfortunately, there is no incentive for participating and participation in this study is completely voluntary.

9) **Voluntary Participation:** Should you wish to participate in this study, you need to be between the ages of 20-65. Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary and you may request to leave the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with answering. No harm or consequences shall befall you if you request to withdraw from the study.

Annexure F: Informed Consent Form

Please now complete the following form to indicate which procedures you agree to

	Yes	No
1. I consent to voluntarily participate in the one-on-one semi-structured interview.		
2. I consent to the researcher storing my information in a secured and encrypted database.		
3. I acknowledge that all my information will remain confidential and that my identity will remain anonymous.		
4. I consent to my interview being audio-recorded and transcribed.		
5. I consent to all my confidential responses being published and used for further research.		

I have read and understood the above and give my consent to those parts indicated.

I also acknowledge that all information provided will be published and used for further research.

I, (*name of participant in block capitals, E.G – JAY Z*), with signature (*signature of participant*), hereby voluntarily agree to participate in the study, at the (*place of signature*) on the (*date*) / /2022.

(Researcher will complete):

Participant ID:
