



## **Danger and Death**

### **Organisational and Occupational Responses to the Murder of Police in South Africa – a Case Study.**

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## **Declaration**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work(s) of other people has been attributed and has been cited and referenced.

Gráinne Perkins

April 2018

## Abstract

Danger has long been assumed a critical feature of the occupational identity of police officials. Much of the scholarly literature on the topic has been dominated by research originating in Europe and the United States. This study draws inspiration from the literature of the global North but investigates danger and death in a Southern locality. South Africa provides a case study for an exploration of danger and death as perceived, experienced and acted upon by a police institution with long-standing paramilitary origins and one that continues to confront high rates of violent crime in contemporary South Africa.

In comparative terms South Africa continues to exhibit high rates of police homicide. Research into the context within which such homicides occur, the associative factors that accompany danger and death and the impact thereof on subcultural identity and operational responses remain under-investigated. This thesis attempts to fill this gap by examining how danger and death are perceived, experienced and acted upon by police officials across three units in a police station located in an urban settlement situated on the fringe of Cape Town. The inquiry draws on the conceptual work of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Theodore Sarbin, and utilises both quantitative and qualitative research methods. An analysis of investigative files of police murders in the Western Cape combined with observation of memorial services and extensive participant observation of three police units in a high-crime area of urban settlement, yielded rich data.

The research concludes that police construct danger as much as danger, as an objective reality, shapes the police's experience of danger and their responses to danger. Danger can be said to have both an objective and subjective reality – it is at once constituted and constitutive. The findings illustrate that danger is given material effect through risk reduction strategies; that danger is dramatised through its memorialisation and that danger is normalised and routinised in everyday police practices. Responses to danger and police murder vary from formal or organisational to informal or occupational responses. The relationship between organisational (formal) responses and occupational (informal) responses is complex - there is evidence of both overlap and contradiction to be found in that relationship.

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## **Dedication**

*In memory of a dear friend and colleague, Garda Sergeant John Hyland of*

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*You gave meaning to the song 'Copacabana' and then went there without us.*

*I wish you could have read this.*

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## Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
AVLS	Automatic Vehicle Location System
BRVs	Bullet Resistant Vests
CAS	Crime Administrative System
CCCF	Cluster Crime Combating Forum
CPF	Community Police Forum
CPU	Crime Prevention Unit
CSC	Community Service Centre / Charge Office or the Client Service Centre.
CSVR	The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DCS	Department of Correctional Services
DPS	Directorate of Police Safety
DSO	Directorate of Special Operations (also referred to as the Scorpions)
EHW	Employee Health and Wellness
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FLASH	Firearms Liquor and Second-hand Goods Control
HAWKS	The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (also referred to as Hawks)
ICD	Independent Complaints Directorate
IPID	The Independent Police Investigative Directorate
LEOKA	Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Attacked
MDC	Multi-Disciplinary Enquiry Committee
NIJ	National Institute of Justice (United States)
NIU	National Intelligence Unit
PCCF	Provincial Crime Combatting Forum
PDR	Police Death Rate
POPCRU	The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union
R5	5.6 mm Assault Rifle
ROC	Resolving of Crime Learnership Course
RTA/RTC	Road Traffic Accident/ Road Traffic Collision
SJC	Social Justice Coalition
SAP	The South African Police
SAPS	The South African Police Service
SAPU	The South African Policing Union
STF	Special Task Force
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat Analysis
TRT	Tactical Response Team
VISPOL	Visible Policing Unit
WCOD	Western Cape Organisational Development

## Glossary

<b>Word/Phrase</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Bakkie	A Pick-up truck, normally with front two seats
Braai/ing	BBQ
Bundu murder	Reference to a vigilante murder
Shack/Hokkie	A colloquial expression for an informal residential dwelling normally constructed from metal sheets
Isingqi	The beat - the sound made from an nMpampampa (hand-made drum) when struck
Moer	To beat someone up
Mos	Indeed. Also used at the beginning and end of sentences
Né	Term of affirmation, such as 'is that so'
nMpampampa	Handmade drum, onomatopoeia word owing to the sound it makes when struck, i.e. mpa-mpa-mpa
Shebeen	An unlicensed bar
Sjambok	A long stiff whip originally made from rhinoceros hide. Often plaited strips of leather are used in lieu of rhinoceros hide
Skollie	Hooligan/ Gangster. Believed to have originally derived from the Dutch word for 'scavenging'
Smiley	A sheep's head cooked on a braai
Umhlungu	Umhlungu refers to a white person in the Isixhosa language

## Chapter 1. Introduction

In the early hours of the morning on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2018, a group of men entered a small police station and, without warning, opened fire on officers there. Three police officers were killed instantly, others wounded and two taken as hostages in a small rural town in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Ngcobo police station is located in the centre of the town and caters to less than ten thousand citizens in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The suspects fled in a police van with the officer-hostages and 10 firearms. Later, six kilometres away along the roadside, the bullet ridden bodies of officer-hostages were found, making for a total of five murdered police officers.<sup>1</sup>

This incident bore all the hallmarks of the ambush-style attacks on police personnel and property as experienced during the Apartheid era. Although Apartheid ended nearly 25 years ago these scenes are an echo from the past where many police killings were at the time linked to fierce political contestations between the Apartheid state and its racial outcasts. This type of violence easily comes to mind when considering the historical context of police murders in South Africa. Violence, however, is multifaceted and nuanced. This research does not concentrate on this obvious violence associated with political resistance or organised crime. Instead it will explore a more interesting and elusive, but related, subject matter: the everyday, ordinary dangers that shape police activities.

In many jurisdictions the murder of a police officer is a newsworthy event. By comparison to other developed countries, the number of police officers murdered in South Africa is high. Violence in South Africa continues to receive considerable attention from media sources, academics, governments and non-governmental organisations alike. However, in South Africa lethal violence against the police is a relatively under-explored area. The murder of police officers is often regarded as an occupational hazard, which serves as a reminder of the inherent dangers of police work. Although police murders can be attributed to various factors, understanding the way in which police operate can aid in revealing how they perceive and experience danger. Organisational and occupational responses to danger influence how officers<sup>2</sup> experience danger and in turn their likelihood of being murdered. This thesis seeks

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<sup>1</sup> Before entering the station, the suspects were believed to have robbed a cash machine. An off-duty soldier was also shot dead as the suspects were fleeing, bringing the total murder count to six (“Eastern Cape Attack”, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this research the term ‘officer’ refers to a member of the police service and not specifically to a senior-ranking official. The term officer, member and police are used interchangeably throughout this discussion.

to explore how police culture and subculture are influenced by police murders and how this cycles back to impact understandings of danger.

Many may confuse danger and violence and thus it is important to note that, while violence is an act, danger is denoted by a relationship. As with most relationships, the people in them both define and are defined by that relationship. The experiences, perceptions, and actions of the South African police and their relationship with danger in the communities they police are the subjects of this study.

## **1.1 Murders**

Murders, or the wider classification of homicides, are often used as a proxy to indicate how violent a society is. The murder rate in South Africa is amongst the highest in the world (UNDOC, 2011, 2013). Although there is no objective measure for an acceptable murder rate, on the global scale the current average is approximately 6.2 deaths per population of 100, 000. Murder rates are considered high when they exceed 20 per 100, 000, and very high when above 30 (UNDOC, 2013:22). The South African murder rate in 2014/2015 was 33 per 100, 000, which is over five times the global average (SAPS, 2014/2015). If murders rates are indicative of levels of violence, South Africa is embedded in violence.

Although murder rates are high in South Africa, they have been declining over the last decade (Kriegler and Shaw, 2016) and so too has the number of police deaths (SAPS, 2002-2014). In the Western Cape Province, however, on-duty police deaths have shown a slight upward trend between 2002 and 2014. On a national scale and in the Western Cape, off-duty murders have actually accounted for more murders than on-duty. In many cases those murdered off-duty are known to be police officers and this speaks to larger concerns regarding the standing of police within the community. This research aims to contribute to our understanding of the murders of police officers by exploring how officers experience and perceive danger on-duty.

### **1.1.1 South African Police Murders**

On a global scale, it is difficult to compare the rates at which police officers are murdered to general murder rates. Police corps sizes vary and the low occurrence of police murders in many jurisdictions make any direct comparison difficult. For example, the United States has about 18,000 separate police agencies in contrast to the singular South African Police Service (SAPS) (Blair *et al*, 2016; Cordner, 2017). In his work on police trauma, Dussich (2003) used a ratio of officers killed per 100,000 police population. Using his calculation method, in 2014

the Police Death Rate (PDR) in South Africa was 49. This contrasts with the PDR in the United States, which was 15.3 during the same period. Put simply, in South Africa in 2014, the Police Death Rate was 3.2 times higher than the United States.

Brazil, like South Africa, ranks among the highest homicide rates in the world with a rate of 25.2 per 100,000 (Braithwaite, 2013; UNDOC, 2011, 2013). Larkins (2015) notes that Brazilian police are killing *and* being killed at rates higher than any other place in the world. Identifying the PDR in Brazil, however, is challenging as the Brazilian government is reluctant to make available data on the number of police deaths (Larkins 2015:59). This makes direct comparisons of police murders difficult between Brazil and South Africa. What we can say is that the general murder rate in Brazil, with a population roughly four times greater, is 7.8 per 100,000 less than that of South Africa.

If the police services in the United Kingdom are combined they are roughly the same size as the SAPS organisation and the populations they police are approximately similar. While still not a perfect like-for-like comparison, between 2002 and 2014, 161 officers were killed on-duty in the United Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> In South Africa during the same time period, 1184<sup>4</sup> members of the SAPS were murdered on-duty (SAPS, 2002-2014). So, whether a comparison is made between population and police service sizes (UK/South Africa) or armed police services in societies with ease of access to firearms (USA/South Africa) South African officers are routinely murdered at a higher rate.

### **1.1.2 Research on SAPS Murder**

As mentioned above, even though South African police murder rates have declined nationally, they still remain an issue of concern. The last empirical research conducted on SAPS murders was in 2002. This was explored by a Multi-Disciplinary Committee (MDC) emanating from a government-led initiative examining the causes behind attacks on, and killings of police (Conradie, 2000, 2001; Minnaar 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2000e, 2003).

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<sup>3</sup> In 2014, the UK population was approximately 64.5 million (Office of National Statistics Great Britain, 2014) and South Africa 54 million (Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2014). In 2014, the numbers of police officers in the UK combined services (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) was approximately 186,000 (Home Office, 2015) and in South Africa, 150,950 (SAPS 2014/2015). Administrative staff numbers are not included here. In the UK between the years 2002-2014, 161 officers died in the line of duty. Of these, 17 have been through homicides. The remaining were all accidental deaths, most notably road traffic collisions (RTCs) (Police Roll of Honour Trust, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> This total (1184) is taken from the body of the SAPS reports (2002-2014). It is not possible to determine the specific cause of death as they are not listed. When the roll of honour is examined the total is 1252. The increase is assumed to be inclusive of other (non-murder) deaths on duty, such as road traffic collisions.

Although this work examined violence directed at South African police, its findings were essentially descriptive.

Like most international research, the MDC research was largely focused on the statistics of the actual event and biographical information about the perpetrators and victims.<sup>5</sup> Based on this committee's findings the SAPS established a Directorate of Police Safety (DPS). Safety evaluations were conducted at 'hot spot'<sup>6</sup> stations, personnel matters were identified, and a reassessment of all training was conducted. However, despite the directorate's wide mandate and scope of enquiry it was found to be ineffective in reducing police murders. A review by the Police Advisory Committee (PAC) in 2008 found that many of the internal challenges facing the SAPS after the MDC report persisted in spite of the directorate's work (Newham, 2011). Since the MDC there has been limited empirical research on the murders of South African police officers. There have been individual commentaries reflecting on the many possible causes of police murders, but in-depth research projects are scarce.

Various academic commentaries followed on from increased media attention around the murder of police officers in 2011. These news stories contrasted against reports of police brutality, particularly that of the police killing of activist Andries Tatane (Newham, 2011). Some suggested that the shift of attention to the killing of police officials was an attempt by the police to deflect attention away from accusations of excessive use of force and abuse of power by officers (Faull, 2011). Police statistics, however, indicated that officers were still dying at an alarmingly high rate. In 2010/2011 a total of 93 officers died, both on- and off-duty (SAPS, 2012).

In July 2011, police leadership convened a summit to examine the extent of attacks on and killings of SAPS members. Although the Minister of the Police referred to the killing of officers as a 'national crisis' (Institute of Security Studies [ISS], 2013) there was no reference to this epidemic in the SAPS Strategic Plan of 2010-2014 (SAPS, 2010). Stemming from this police summit, a ten-point plan was announced to help eradicate the killings and attacks on officers.<sup>7</sup> Media reports, however, stated that the plan contained a mixture of management-

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<sup>5</sup> This research is explored further in Chapter 4 against the findings from this research, which examines the data gleaned from the examination of police murder dockets between 2002 and 2014.

<sup>6</sup> In policing terms, 'hot spots' often denote areas with high crime rates. In this research the term 'hot spot' is a location where more than one police officer has been killed (SAPS, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> This ten-point plan was outlined by the then Minister of Police Nathi Mthethwa (2011) and focused on the following ten incentives: 1) Adopt a cop awareness campaign; 2) Establish a multi-disciplinary committee within the SAPS; 3) Review the 2000 Ministerial Task Team findings; 4) Make police deaths a priority agenda for other justice Crime-Prevention and Security departments and the cabinet; 5) Offer psychological and human

style phrases, symbolic gestures and some practical suggestions to boost police morale, but little in actual changes (Mallinson, 2011).

In a more recent examination of SAPS murders, Mkhize and Madumi (2016) suggested the SAPS ten-point plan, which stemmed from the MDC findings, has been ineffective in reducing police murders. The authors used a SWOT<sup>8</sup> analysis on events and cited that poor leadership was a key contributor in ongoing police deaths. The authors indicated that corruption and a lack of effective leadership damaged public trust and inhibited partnership and collaboration between police officers and the community. The authors also suggested that the killings are further compounded by the flawed and ill-conceived selection and appointment of National Police Commissioners. What this study signifies is that, within South Africa, there is acknowledgement that the organisational culture can impact police murders.

Drawing on SAPS statistics, Bruce (2002, 2010, 2016) highlights concerns regarding how the data on police murders is recorded. In the Western Cape more than 60 percent of these murders occurred when the officer was off-duty and took place in conjunction with another crime where the officer was a victim. Bruce argues that the lack of information surrounding these murders blurs an understanding of the problem. Overarching commentaries on this topic have mainly examined police deaths from the organisational perspective rather than the individual officer or occupational perspective (Newham, 2011; Faull, 2011). Adding a view from the occupational perspective further enriches both the discussion and the understanding of police deaths. This thesis aims to build upon where Bruce (2002, 2010, 2016) and Newham (2011) and Faull (2011) left off by looking at both the organisational and occupational perspectives.

## **1.2 What is being Researched?**

This thesis investigates how danger is recorded, perceived and experienced by the South African police and uses the murder of officers as a gateway into the discussion. How police activities shape and are shaped by the danger perceived is of interest. The primary research question examines the response to police murder from both an organisational (formal) and an

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resources support to families and colleagues; 6) Improve the training of police officers; 7) Strengthen partnerships with researchers; 8) Hold provincial summits to mobilise communities; 9) Review the SAPS annual commemoration for fallen police heroes; 10) Fly national flags at police stations at half-mast in honour of killed police officers.

<sup>8</sup> SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is a commonly-used business analysis method.

occupational (informal) perspective. The discussion builds on four main questions that are examined through a critical review of police murder docket, observation of police funerals and memorial services, an inspection of material artefacts and over 900 hours of participant observation. These questions are:

1. What do the official records of police murders reveal about the organisational and occupational perceptions of and responses to danger?
2. How are the dangers of police work symbolised and encoded through the process of memorialisation?
3. What do police interactions with the material artefacts of policing reveal about their perceptions and experiences of danger?
4. How do police dispositions and everyday practices shape, and become shaped by, perceptions and experiences of danger?

These questions are addressed separately in each of the substantive chapters and aim to examine how danger becomes embedded in the organisational and occupational subculture of the police.

It has also been previously argued that the murder of police officers is a poor method by which to interpret the danger they face (Crank, 2004). Such statements are correct, as not all danger results in death. In this research however, death is not being considered as a proxy for the danger perceived, but rather death is merely the lethal outcome of an encounter with danger. Owing to the high rate of murders in South Africa, danger and death are more closely linked than in other jurisdictions.

### **1.3 Research Motivation**

My personal interest in researching homicide is no doubt a result of my own professional background as a detective sergeant in the Irish police service. In conducting this research, I wanted to understand how South African police officers go about their daily routines when they and their colleagues are so often the victims. I was interested in how danger and death conditioned the police and their routines, if at all. My academic interest was stimulated by both the rate and circumstances in which police officers were being murdered across South Africa. This curiosity coupled with the scarcity of empirical research about the murders motivated me to conduct the research.

## 1.4 Contextualising Danger

Police organisations everywhere are characterised by considerable complexity. The culture and practices, both formal and informal, within the police are multifaceted, making it challenging to use a single theoretical construct to examine police experiences of danger. Aside from actual physical hazards, danger is arguably a subjective concept. What one person or group deems as danger, another may not. As such the examination of the occupational and organisational response to danger is not straightforward. Before one can understand the police response, danger must first be made visible. Applying a framework that can accommodate and capture danger's many ambiguous forms can help to make clearer group perceptions. In search of a theoretical framework, this thesis draws on three theorists, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Theodore Sarbin, to refract organisational and occupational police cultures in order to make visible their responses to danger.

Bourdieu's *Theory of Practice* (1977) and Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1979) are two of the most influential contributions to post-structural and postmodern theory, yet their similarities are under analysed (Schlosser, 2013). Central to both concepts is the issue of power. Commenting on Foucault's interpretation of power, Deleuze (2006:59) indicates that power is, 'a relation between forces, or rather every relation between forces is a power relation'. Building on this understanding, Bang (2014) proposes the examination of how power behaves and is manifested in society. He argues that the examination of power helps one to understand how society works and operates on its subjects. By using the primary concepts within these different theories danger can be seen to be linked to issues of power.

It is important to note however, that this research is not itself an introspective study of the applicability and relevance of a Foucauldian conceptual framework to policing. Rather, this study will draw on Foucault's work as a conceptual 'toolbox' by which to explain the manner in which danger has been discursively invented. In examining power, Foucault started from a structuralist perspective, focusing on linguistics, symbolic and discursive narratives, although he is not considered as structuralist in the sense of one who strictly follows the methodological rules of structuralist analysis. Foucault's approach was concerned with the identification of the structures that define the shape and limits of discourses and institutional practices (Garland, 1990). Semantics matter in Foucauldian analysis and as such by reorienting an understanding of the contemporary meanings attached to danger a fresh perspective may be gained on how these elements influence police practice. Foucault is used

for a historical perspective, to understand how the idea of danger has become embedded within police culture.

Foucault's (1972) approach of archaeology and genealogy, both lend themselves to the construction of a framework with which to examine the discourses surrounding danger, as interpreted by the South African police. The archaeological method will be used to analyse statements made by police and to identify key troupes and relationships that define the concepts of danger both structurally and conversationally. Examining danger in such a manner allows for an understanding of its many constructs, all of which co-exist and are used interchangeably by the police.

Genealogy allows for a construction of the history of the present through a history of the way in which the world has been articulated through discourse. Adapting a genealogical analysis to examine the 'micro-physics' of power as part of danger in the informal responses of the police can assist in establishing what Foucault refers to as a 'history of the present' through a police lens. What is told, in the process, is a history of the subject in the present, a key analytical strategy with which to understand how police identify and understand danger. Adapting a genealogical approach also allows for a critique of the significance of the different discourses which constitute danger and risk.

As such, the archaeological method will be used to analyse the statements made by police, in the identification of key troupes and relationships which serve to define the concepts of danger. With this in place, the genealogical analysis will seek to understand how these structures and relationships manifest in the lived reality of policing, and what effects they have in the creation of, and the performance by, contemporary police officers.

This thesis also draws on Foucault's technical term for an 'archive', which relates to the collection of all material traces left behind by a particular historical period and culture (1972:128-130). In adopting his analytical framework, one can look at the docketts of murdered police officers, SAPS reports, and police memorials as particular types of archives. Indeed, the sheer number of police murder docketts is a statistical archive in and of itself. Collectively these docketts and reports reveal much more about the actions of the police in responding to the murders of their colleagues and to murders more broadly.

As well as understanding police actions and perceptions through archives, understanding the social context in which danger is experienced and perceived is also of relevance. Drawing on

Bourdieu's (1977) constructs of field, habitus, and capital from his theory of culture and practice helps to describe police practices and the influence of the communities, structures, and social spaces in which police officers work and often reside. From this viewpoint the social context in which danger is perceived and experienced can be surveyed.

Bourdieu's theory of practice can be regarded as 'a science of human practice in its most diverse manifestations' (Wacquant, 2006:3). This social context can then be further explored through Bourdieu's idea of the habitus. Habitus is best understood as a system of dispositions that integrate past experience and enable individuals to cope with the diversity of unforeseen situations (Wacquant, 1992:18). The habitus has many layers, the first being the primary set of dispositions acquired in childhood. Secondary and subsequent habitus form as a person ages and relates to later experiences, such as becoming a police officer, and the dispositions that are then acquired. The primary and secondary habitus influence how individuals and groups might experience and respond to danger.

Police responses are further shaped by an understanding of 'why things are done the way they are', in what Bourdieu refers to as *doxa* (Chan, 2004:333). Policing is influenced by many of these taken-for-granted assumptions about how police operate. The *doxa* here is the taken for granted, yet often unspoken, aspect which has influence on how police can perceive danger.

For Bourdieu, the notion of *doxa* is essential to understanding the habitus and the field. A field is a social space which consists of a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (Wacquant 1992:16). One of the most examined aspects of the field relates to issues of power and where agents position themselves relative to it. This is of note when examining police actions relative to their understandings of danger.

In addition to the *doxa*, field and habitus, Bourdieu also considers capital as important in gauging the amount of power a person or group possesses. He locates capital in three, field-dependent, guises consisting of economic, social, and cultural capital. Whatever the type of capital, the central tenant is that capital is a form of power (Chan, 1996:114). Capital is also of interest when unpacking the idea of habitus in relation to danger. Swartz (1997), for example, underlines the importance of capital in the field where positions of agents are ranked whether dominantly or subordinately depending on their volume of capital. Bourdieu (2008:21) states that objective relations of power tend to reproduce themselves as relations of symbolic power. As such, danger can be examined relative to police culture around space and

the dispositions of police within this space. Or to put it in Bourdieu's terms, the field and habitus combined with capital could be said to impact the perception or experience of danger.

Chan's (1996, 2004) use of Bourdieu's framework highlighted how social and political sensitivities in the wider policing landscape have the potential to shape police organisations. In this sense, the organisational culture is fluid and responds to changes in the field. On a more micro, occupational level, Chan also explains how individuals can react differently to similar situations within these different landscapes. Chan places great emphasis on understanding the interaction between the existing attitudes of individuals and the occupational police culture into which they then become socialised. Echoes of what one person considers as dangerous whereas another may not, come to the fore here. In this sense the primary habitus directly influences how danger becomes responded to in the routine duties of police officers. This response in turn influences the larger occupational culture, where what often is an engrained response eventually becomes a standard operating procedure amongst police.

From a methodological approach, 'Bourdieu's thought and practice is synthetic in the way that they simultaneously straddle disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological divides' (Wacquant, 2006: 4). Although Bourdieu did not develop a formal and total theoretical model, he did propose a meta-theory that requires continuous adjustment to empirical conclusions (Navarro, 2006). As such it lends itself to the methodological approach in this research.

A Bourdieusian approach also encourages researchers to look at the individual as well as the collective dimension (Swartz, 1997). This is important in understanding both the formal (group) and informal (individual) responses of the police to danger. However, the individual and group are not separate entities of study. The actions of social groups cannot be explained simplistically as the aggregate of individual behaviours. They should be understood as actions that incorporate influences from culture, traditions and objective structures within the real world (Crawshaw and Bunton, 2009; Jenkins, 1992). The individual and group should be examined with respect to each other.

Bourdieu also cautions researchers about their own biases. He proposes a reflexive approach where self-critical knowledge underscores the researcher's ability to 'recognise ones biases, beliefs and assumptions in the act of sense-making' (Navarro, 2006:15-16). Bourdieu (1977) argues that it is nearly impossible to be truly objective when conducting research and a

researcher must critically analyse ones place in the field. For Bourdieu, ‘an empirical study of a culture different from that of the researcher’s requires a self-reflexive mode of thinking about methodology’ (Schlosser, 2013:4). Loader and Walker (2007) concur that researchers should be aware of the cultural baggage that they bring with them to the field and how it can influence observational objectivity.

Where Bourdieu’s work looked at the field and habitus, Sarbin’s (1967) work explored how an individual becomes perceived as dangerous. His primary objective was to understand the concept of danger itself. In examining how prisoners come to be regarded as ‘dangerous’ Sarbin uses a model as ‘a means to assess the total value of a person’s social identity at any point in time’ (1967:287). Arguing that words do not arise without motivation, he finds the linguistic roots of the word ‘danger’ in the Latin derivative of ‘dominium’ meaning ‘lordship or sovereignty’ (1967:286). In this way danger becomes linked to the positionality of the individual. Sarbin encourages us to accept the etymological origins of danger, which also leads us away from the idea of danger as ‘falling rocks, dangerous curves ahead’ (1967:286). In this sense danger becomes more focused on the relationship between individuals than on violence or the threat thereof.

Similar to Foucault and Bourdieu, Sarbins model rests on power relationships. This relationship revolves around Sarbin’s understanding of the interplay between the role, value, and involvement of the individual. When components within these roles are displaced, a shift occurs in one’s social identity, their understanding of the role-relationship, and their social placement. The effect of this shift in power is what causes an individual to be perceived as dangerous.

While Sarbin’s (1967) model is not being used here as a prescriptive template, his components offer a useful starting point from which to consider how danger becomes realised by the police. Instead of assessing how dangerous a prisoner is, Sarbin’s constructs are used to identify shifts in the police-public role-relationship, which then create perceptions of danger for officers. At a more basic level his approach helps to unpack the habitus. While this thesis does not aim to explore the social identity of the police, it uses these individual, overlapping elements to understand how danger becomes conceived and responded to from a police perspective.

In the case of this research, instead of assessing the individual as dangerous, I am repurposing part of Sarbin’s model to assess danger as seen through the eyes of the police. While Foucault

helps in looking at historical trajectories and Bourdieu exposes the habitus, borrowing parts of Sarbin's construct allows for a consideration of how the habitus becomes operational in the field of policing and how this in turn influences police perceptions of danger.

The works of these theorists allow an anchoring of the construction of danger so that police perceptions and experiences can be discussed. One could think of the theories as a prism through which danger would pass to expose police perceptions. Much like light dispersion through a prism, each theorist's work selected allows police culture to be viewed from different angles, as danger filters through the prism.

It is not my aim to use Foucault, Bourdieu and Sarbin in a manner that would constitute a closed, prescriptive framework. Instead their general constructs are used as a way to situate danger within the larger police culture and subcultures. As mentioned previously, taken together, the works of these three theorists form a prism. As danger passes through this prism much like light and is dispersed. This makes the constituent parts more visible than they would be by simply passing through a single lens. While it is possible to view danger through a single theorist's eyes, a greater perspective is gained in combining the three. Such positioning makes danger visible thus allowing both the organisational and occupational cultures responses to danger to be examined.

#### **1.4.1 Danger**

While the literature review in Chapter 2 examines danger in the police subculture through this prism it is important to note how the term is being interpreted in this text. Early ethnographic research on policing identified danger as a central and essential element in the manner in which policing is understood and how the police understand themselves. However, most research fails to actually define the conceptual parameters by which danger is constituted. The result is that danger takes on a meaning or a perception of some risk of physical harm. Contemporary explanations often describe danger as a risk of a physical harm that has stemmed from some physical act, in most cases an act of violence. As a result, violence and danger are often considered as interchangeable constructs. Universally, violence is often regarded as a hallmark of danger (Floud and Young, 1981). While both violence and danger may be on the same spectrum, they should not be used interchangeably. The two concepts are not synonymous, although police officers often use one to explain the other. Instead, they need to be recognised as overlapping yet independent subjects. In this research danger is

initially recognised as both a possibility (of occurrence) and as a state of being (in the moment), where someone is vulnerable to injury or death.

## **1.5 Main Argument of the Thesis**

Filtering everyday police practices through the theoretical prism can help to clarify police perceptions and experiences of danger. By combining the reviews of police archives and artefacts with over 900 hours of participant observation, indicators about these perceptions are surfaced. Collectively these examinations, within the context of the four research questions, contribute to a more wide-ranging understanding of danger in the daily routines of the police.

The way in which police murder investigations are recorded and memorialised, the way officers interact with the artefacts of policing and the impact of their behaviour in the field are of relevance. Archives, such as the actual murder files and memorial services, are rich data sources that expose more than just statistics. The artefacts of policing such as bullet resistant vests (BRV) and firearms also tell as much of a story as the officers themselves and their observable actions. Together, all of these speak to aspects of the police culture and show that, like danger, that culture is not monolithic. There are variations between the organisational and occupational police cultures as well as variations within the occupational culture at the unit level. These variations contribute to the contradictions and connections that exist in terms of how danger is responded to by each subculture.

This thesis subsequently explores how the organisational and occupational police cultures experience and perceive danger. Through the findings, danger is seen as being created both by and for the police. Moreover, within the occupational police culture, there is no homogeneous understanding or indeed response to how danger is constituted. Likewise, the organisational culture does not appear to understand these differences and so struggles to address the danger as perceived by the occupational culture. The thesis argues that there is a tension and a slippage between how the organisational and occupational police cultures perceive and experience danger in South African policing. The first step in reducing this danger, therefore, is recognising these differences as well as the similarities.

## **1.6 Contribution of the Research**

Of late there has been an increase in calls to recognise the difference in policing between the global North and global South (Carrington, Hogg and Sozzo, 2016; Nyamnjoh, 2012). In

drawing on theoretical exportations of police culture from modern Western democracies this thesis aims to examine how they relate and are contextualised in the specific policing environment of South Africa. As such, this research aims to contribute to this global discussion by examining policing from a South African perspective. To date there has been limited theoretical framing in the examination of police murder in South Africa and this research also aims to bridge this gap.

Additionally, the research aims to contribute to discussions about police culture. While this research does not suggest a new theoretical direction per se, it does argue for a reconsideration of some taken- for-granted concepts, such as danger, in policing, in order to assess its contemporary standing and influence. Marenin (2016:463) has recently argued that, ‘if one wants to understand why the police use force and why they react to criticism...one has to start with how the police understand and react to dangers’. This research demonstrates the relevance of re-factoring the concept and understandings of danger into discussions about police and police work.

In a local context this research aims to fill the knowledge gap at both a quantitative and qualitative level relating to the murder of police officers in the Western Cape Province between 2002 and 2014. Such findings can also add to the discussions on how such incidents affect the police officers and the police organisation in the execution of their routine activities. While this research may be perceived as a case study, its findings reflect similar issues in other townships (crime-prone, underdeveloped and high- density spaces) across South Africa. As such this work will additionally contribute to discussions that have been carried out with respect to policing across South Africa more generally and the challenges of policing in township spaces more specifically.

The practical contribution of this research is directed at public administrators. By identifying how police cultures may be shaped by danger, practical interventions can be developed to address it. This is done through the examination of the ordinary, everyday aspects of policing. As danger is considered as a central tenet of the police personality and role, subsequent police practices can be improved as a result. Through this understanding the research also hopes to incentivise the development of future strategic and/or tactical initiatives to reduce and/or prevent the murder of police officials in South Africa.

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

Worldwide, police practices are under continuous scrutiny. Complaints about the excessive use of police force and poor police practices dominate both academic and public media debates. More often than not, I was asked by individuals why my research did not focus on unlawful killings *by* the police as opposed to killings *of* the police. My response to this underlines the significance of this research in that one way to understand *why* the police may operate in a certain manner is to examine what it is they believe they are reacting to. How danger is conceptualised and how it may shape police culture is of relevance when examining police practices.

How the police go about the daily business of policing also reflects their relationship with the state and the public. If the police behave poorly, this reflects poorly on the state and damages community trust. If citizens have little trust in the police as state operatives it flags more serious concerns for the larger organs of the state. How the state responds to the killings of police can also indicate the value the state and community place on the law-and-order function of the police role.

## 1.8 Thesis Outline

The thesis is divided into eight chapters.

**Chapter 1** introduces the research topic and outlines the reasoning, motivation and rationale behind the research. The conceptual lens used to make danger more visible, in order to examine police responses, is highlighted.

**Chapter 2** uses the conceptual lens, outlined in Chapter 1, and describes how danger has become framed within and across the organisational and occupational police culture. A brief historical overview of the SAPS is given and a review of available literature about policing and the SAPS specifically is undertaken.

**Chapter 3** explains the research methods employed. Issues relating to (quantitative and qualitative) access, sampling, data collection, data analysis are discussed along with some of the key challenges faced and how they were overcome.

**Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7** detail the empirical findings from the review of the archives and ethnographic fieldwork.

**Chapter 4** examines the records (dockets) of murdered police officials from 2002- 2014, in the Western Cape Province. Quantitative and qualitative findings from the dockets are also extrapolated here.

**Chapter 5** explores how the dangers of police work are encoded and symbolised through the process of memorialisation. In examining police funerals from the inside-out, what is said at these services is seen to be as significant as the ceremony itself. This chapter supports an examination beyond the dramaturgical performances at these services.

**Chapter 6** provides an account of police engagement with the ordinary everyday material artefacts of policing. The equipment used by the police (firearms, bullet resistant vests and vehicles), not only influence police occupational culture but also bring to light the slippage between the organisational and occupational understanding of danger. Through the examination of the use of these artefacts a narrative develops that speaks to how the interaction with them reveals differing levels of danger amongst police personnel.

**Chapter 7** traces how police dispositions and practices shape understandings of danger as examined from the police's perspective. This chapter draws on over 900 hours of participant observation across three police units. It examines how and why the police operate in the manner that they do and how this in turn affects the danger perceived. In addition to understanding what activities police engage in, examining what they avoid can also underline what is perceived as dangerous to them and why.

**Chapter 8** discusses the relevance of the main findings from the previous four chapters and discusses the tensions and overlap between the organisational and occupational responses to danger.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines scholarly literature about police culture and danger and is divided into three broad sections. The first section examines what is meant by the term ‘police culture’ and explains the variation between occupational and organisational police culture. The second section re-orientates global North discussions about police culture and danger through the theoretical prism as described in chapter one. The third section then contextualises danger in policing from a South African vantage point by first providing a brief historical overview of political policing before drawing on select writings.

### 2.2 Police Culture

Although this research is about how danger is perceived and experienced, it is explored in the context of police culture. In the classic work *Organizational Culture and Leadership* by sociologist Edgar Schein (2004), ‘culture’ is understood as a basic sharing of beliefs and values.<sup>9</sup> In this research culture denotes both the shared beliefs and values but also incorporates knowledge of how police act and think about police work. This culture often becomes visible through the vocabulary used (Shearing and Ericson, 1991). In this sense culture is something which the police are socialised into, while also constructing it (Waddington, 1999). In police cultural studies, the concepts of ‘organisational culture’ and ‘occupational culture’ have been used interchangeably by many academics (Bacon, 2014; Cockcroft, 2013). Here, however, these two concepts are regarded separately to acknowledge the variation in the responses to danger between the formal and informal cultures.

Paolines (2003) asserts that there is a fundamental difference between organisational and occupational culture where organisational culture is a *top down* structure driven by management and occupational is *bottom up* driven by frontline operational members. In this research references to the ‘formal organisation’ are directly associated with the organisational culture of the SAPS whereas the ‘informal organisation’ speaks to the occupational culture. The organisational culture is representative of the police organisation at large while the occupational culture speaks to the manner in how the members of the police operate on a day-to-day basis.

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<sup>9</sup> Schein’s full definition of culture is ‘a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved problems of external adoption and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems’ (Schein, 2004:14).

In examining the fluidity of the term ‘cop culture’, Marks, Howell, and Shelly (2016) underscore the difficulties in the use of a singular term. They argue that using the singular term has negative connotations which may limit responses and reform by presupposing the existence of the issues being examined. Accepting the heterogeneous nature of police culture, the term has also been used ‘to explain and condemn a broad spectrum of policing practice’ (Waddington, 1999:287) as if it is a monolithic entity. Although many police organisations exhibit similar traits and characteristics, and as such indicate a singular culture, research has shown the existence of multiple cultures within the overarching occupational culture.

### **2.2.1 Occupational Culture**

In examining organisational and occupational commonalities, Fielding (1984) denotes the occupational culture as one which develops out of police members responses to official structures and orders. These occupational responses have been examined along the lines of street and management police, uniform and detective ranks, and variations within single police units (Hobbs, 1991; Manning, 1993, 2012; Muir, 1977; Ruess-Ianni and Ianni, 1983; Young, 1991). While there have been differences noted between these occupational cultures they also seem to share commonalities relative to key characteristics and requirements of the police role.

One of the most widely cited similarities across all these different groups is the presence or potential for danger (Barker, 1999; Chan, 1996; Cullen, Link, Travis and Lemming, 1983; Reiner, 1985, Skolnick, 1994; Van Maanen, 1974; Westley, 1970). Commonalities have also been observed between police services in different countries (Brewer *et al*, 1996; Waddington, 1999). While these works acknowledge danger as part of the occupational environment, my research explores how the occupational culture both responds to and is itself influenced by danger.

### **2.2.2 Organisational Culture**

Organisational culture is aligned with a focus on the more traditional, authoritative structures present in the police. Marenin (2016:477) describes this as ‘managers represent the formal culture of the police, street cops the informal culture’. These formal structures represent and create the formal responses of the organisation, which are pursued through policies such as National Instructions and Standing Orders enforced by a hierarchical command structure.

To date, traditional organisational theories tend to focus more on ‘systemic and structural issues’ of an organisation, whereas the cultural perspective is more interested in the ‘values,

attitudes and beliefs' of members (Modaff and De Wine, 2002:83). In this research organisational culture relates to the formal and public responses of the police organisation. Outside of the police, but related to it as an organisation, is the state. While this research will not be directly concerned with how the state influences the police, it will inherently link the formal organisational culture to that of the state as well.

### 2.3 Historical Context of Police Culture

Previous academic writings about danger in police culture suffer from what Slansky (2007) refers to as 'cognitive burn in'. Overall, discussions about danger have not shifted far from their origins. In early accounts of police culture (1950-1970), although danger was not defined, it manifested in three forms. Danger was perceived as part of the role relationship between the police and the public they served, a physical danger to which they were often potentially exposed, and a symbolic idea that appeared to be more imagined by the police than experienced on the ground. What is common throughout these earlier accounts of police culture is the unification of the idea of danger across the occupational (informal) culture of the police. Although aspects of the organisational culture's (formal) understanding of danger could be drawn from these accounts, they are never explicitly examined.<sup>10</sup>

In later accounts of police culture (1970-1990), danger, as a combination of the three forms, is perceived as an almost taken-for-granted aspect of the police role. These accounts challenge the monolithic explanations of police culture and through these studies it becomes apparent that more than one police culture exists. Police culture was seen to vary not only between the organisational and occupational units but within and amongst these different groups. Even with acceptance of these varying cultures, discussions about danger did not alter. For my research what this means is that danger can be used as a lens through which to examine these different cultures. As a core tenet of the police role, consideration should be given to understanding how the police culture influences the danger perceived and how it in turn influences these cultures.

More contemporary examinations of police culture also fall short of understanding the relevance of danger to police culture. Although Chan (1996) developed a new framework to examine it, she states that police culture has been developed by the police as a mechanism for 'coping with the dangers and unpredictability of police work' (2003:28). By incorporating

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<sup>10</sup> This is not particularly surprising owing to the fact that research into organisational culture only really began to flourish in the 1980s (Hartnell *et al*, 2011).

danger as part of a meta-police culture she fails to see danger as an influencer in its own right.

In a more recent examination of contemporary policing in Britain, Loftus (2009) suggests that changes in legislation, management, recruitment, and the politicisation of the police have resulted in changes in the police occupation. She argues that there is a new 'politics of policing diversity' (2009:35) that conflicts with the traditional cultural tenets of the occupation. While she observes different factors influencing the police role, her understandings of danger appear to remain the same. Although not explored, danger seems to survive as a cultural reference point in the examinations of police culture.

In these orthodox, middle and contemporary accounts, danger remains central to the discussion yet sits on the periphery as a monolith in itself. In its presentation within police culture it maintains an almost mythical quality (Marenin, 2016). In order to re-orientate the focus of danger within the discussion, this chapter now filters these writings through the prism, as discussed in Chapter 1. The primary focus of these works was not 'danger' and filtering the literature in this way allows danger to be made more visible. Through this approach it becomes easier to recognise how the police then perceive and experience its presence. This is not to suggest that discussions about danger in police culture will fit neatly into these individual refractions; in many cases the different lenses and discussions could easily overlap. However, key texts relating to police culture are selected and placed under a single prism in an effort to clarify perceptions and experiences of danger rather than attempting to describe each text in relation to all three lenses.

The following review of the literature does not discuss texts chronologically but groups these texts according to the emergent themes that arise when viewed through the three different lenses.

### **2.3.1 Filtering with Foucault: Tracing Danger**

Viewing discussions about danger through a Foucauldian lens is challenging. Foucault's archaeological and genealogical approach draws on observations of discourse in terms of the vocabulary used as well as what is not said. This makes for a somewhat indirect examination but also exposes influences or interpretations that might otherwise go unnoticed.

In examining the murder of Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)<sup>11</sup> officers, Brewer (1990) missed an opportunity to leverage some of Foucault's ideas to enhance the discussion. Brewer's sociologically informed approach examines discourse in the RUC to describe how the police normalised the inherent dangers of being a police officer in politically volatile Northern Ireland. At the time of the research, political violence was rife and counterinsurgency measures were an integral part of policing there. As the conflict between two opposing communities raged on, the police were caught in the order- maintenance middle. The police, as physical representatives of the state, were also often regarded as legitimate targets. During this period the murder rate of RUC officers was regarded as amongst the highest in the policing world.<sup>12</sup>

Brewer's (1990) research departed from the orthodox idea of danger as something imagined to danger as real and experienced. He illuminated the differences of 'real' and 'perceived dangers' by comparing the stories of Northern Irish police officers to their American and British counterparts. He stated that for the American and British officers the 'degree of danger faced is out of all proportion to its centrality' (1990:658). While danger may have been a central component of what the police did in liberal democracies, in comparison to the RUC, it was not 'real' danger. Real danger related to life changing injuries or death.

For the RUC danger was closely associated with areas that were flashpoints for violence. In this sense danger became linked to space. Owing to the volatility of communities, police officers working in these contested areas were more susceptible to injury than their colleagues who worked in lower risk areas. Bombings and attacks on police patrol vehicles were a regular occurrence. In this context, danger presented as a physical hazard.

One of the shortcomings of his research, though, was that the site itself. Perhaps owing to researcher safety concerns, the research site was not considered a 'high risk area' where officers were targeted, injured or killed (1990:658). As such, questions arise whether the officers in this station had personally 'walked the talk' and experienced the danger described in their discourse. Nonetheless, Brewer's research illustrates a different view of danger as seen and experienced from a police perspective.

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<sup>11</sup> The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was the police service of Northern Ireland during the period 1922 to 2001. The name was subsequently changed to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) after agreement was reached during the transformation of the police service on the recommendation of the 1998 Patten Report, which was central in the transformative process.

<sup>12</sup> Brewer (1990: 658) states that from the beginning of the political violence in Northern Ireland to December 1988, 258 police officers had been killed and over 8000 injured, representing a death or injury to approximately one in every 16 members in the police. There had also been over 1700 attacks on the police in the same period.

Brewer underscored how police normalised the event of a police murder and how normality was sustained by behaviours through discourse. While such identification serves as a useful tool in contextualising how officers cope, what the research failed to adequately address was how, and if, while coping with such real dangers, officers may have actively avoided potential threats. Avoidance of danger could take many forms, including the action of inaction and might impact police culture.

Building on the idea of discourse as a tool, Shearing and Ericson (1991) recognised that talk was as important as action in shaping police culture. According to them, how danger was talked about, as opposed to merely actioned, has relevance in understanding police perceptions. This is similar to Foucault's idea that what is said, as well as what is not said, helps to expose the true story. Shearing and Ericson argued that the figurative use of language in the storytelling process allows the police to tell a truth that reveals the hidden world of policing. The vocabulary, according to Shearing and Ericson, acts as a prescript for many officers and shapes how they may respond to a similar situation in the future. So, to use a Foucauldian term, the storytelling becomes a living archive of police culture, practices and dispositions.

Storytelling and heroic episodes shared between officers ensure that the idea of danger is centrally featured in the ideology of police work (Martin, 1980). The exaggeration of dangerous encounters is often shaped by the 'cautionary tales' of lucky escapes by police officers (Anderson *et al*, 1994). Waddington (1999) argued that this storytelling process was often a glorification of action and excitement as most of police work is routine and boring. He further argued that the greatest threat most officers face is not to their lives but rather to their occupational self-esteem. This is played out in the process of convincing themselves that their work is worthwhile in the absence of physical dangers. While Waddington was not necessarily applying Foucault's construct to the discourse, it is the negative space created by what officers didn't say that Waddington was calling out: the boredom and monotony of most of their work in contrast to the exciting and danger-filled stories they told. Through discursive processes like these police officers are regarded as continually making sense of the events that have happened. These stories of danger then also contribute to the police culture and further anchor danger as part of it.

### 2.3.2 Filtering with Bourdieu: Spaces and Places of Danger

To date, critiques of the examinations of police culture have focused on how it is conceptualised and the assumed insularity from the broader social, economic, legal, and political landscape in which it operates (Loftus, 2009:17). Although Chan (1996, 2003) rebooted this debate regarding the field as historical, social, socio-economic, and political conditions of police work, few have incorporated these aspects into ongoing discussions about police culture. In addition to incorporating these concerns, adopting a Bourdieusian approach also encourages the examination of the individual as well as the collective dimension of police culture. This is important in understanding both the organisational (formal) and occupational (informal) responses of the police to danger. This section touches on previous literature, using the work of Bourdieu as a filter to anchor a more nuanced understanding of danger relative to the space, the policing field, within which the police work and the dispositions, or habitus, they use to navigate that space.

In her examination of corrupt and racist elements amongst the New South Wales Police in Australia, Chan (1996) puts elements of Bourdieu's theory of practice to work. Unhappy with previous theoretical frameworks, Chan used Bourdieu's concepts of the habitus and field to situate police culture in the social and political context of police work. She highlighted how social and political sensitivities of the field have the potential to shape the organisational police culture. While Chan's framework certainly offered a new way of thinking about police culture, her research focused primarily on the influence of the secondary habitus in how police operated. Chan also used Sackmann's (1991) cultural knowledge model to advance the understanding of habitus. While my research aims to build on Chan's idea of the influence of the field on the secondary police habitus, it also aims to reference the influence of violence in the primary habitus. In doing so further understandings about how the police perceive and experience danger can be probed.

Chan (2003) observed danger as one of the key themes in the doxic vision of policing. She identified the habitus as the cultural knowledge and practices of the police and argued that it is incorrect to ignore the links between it and the field (Chan, 1996, 2004). She indicated that if these links are ignored an impression is falsely created that by changing one condition, the other may be altered. In practice, this meant that changing police dispositions did not necessarily lead to a substantial improvement in relations between the police and community. Any changes to the police habitus were quickly dissolved when submerged in the field where minority communities were still in a relatively powerless position in society. Understanding

the active role played by the police, their location and local culture is then a crucial link between these elements (Chan, 2003). Expanding on her approach, how danger becomes an active part of this perceived culture is where my discussion regarding how the police perceive and experience danger continues by using a Bourdieusian lens as part of a larger examination.

Whereas Chan intentionally used Bourdieu's analytical construct in her research, Holdaway (1977, 1980, 1983) leveraged Goffman's (1969) stage metaphor, yet his work too can be reviewed through a Bourdieusian lens. Holdaway touched on the influence of the field and habitus even though he did not identify it as such. In describing the backstage inner world of policing, he gives many examples where the police use illegitimate force.<sup>13</sup> His depiction of police work is littered with stories about such force. For example, he described a scene where officers shattered a car windscreen and physically dragged an individual out through it to arrest him. Holdaway stated that the officers he studied expressed that 'real police work' involved the use of force. The 'softer' more social side of policing was seen as a form of social work by the same officers. In this description violence can be seen on somewhat of a continuum where the more violence that is used the more it relates to the secondary police habitus - 'real police work' as it were. Through such linkages, the secondary habitus of the police role becomes connected to the idea of the use of force and actual danger sits at the periphery somewhat.

Holdaway also observed that despite the use of force by the police 'many (police) do not want to get hurt and are often as frightened as anyone else when danger is present: it would be stupid to suggest otherwise' (1983:132). In his attempt to humanise the police by calling out their fears, he fails to shed any light on the actual danger that frightens them and how this fear may then shape subsequent practices. From his description, the police response to danger was primarily the use of excessive force or violence.

Holdaway also highlighted how the police believed that, when a police officer was attacked, the perpetrator 'deserved to be hung' (1983:123). Although capital punishment had been rescinded and would not have been an actual sentence, what the police say often shapes and resonates with what they then do. In the police world 'walking the talk' has relevance and as such interrogating such statements, particularly when they concern attacks upon the police, is

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<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, he opted to use the term force instead of violence or brutality as he considered it a less emotive term (Holdaway, 1983:120). One cannot help but wonder whether his previous career as a police officer influenced this decision.

of importance. This connects with Foucault's identification of discourse as critical to the understanding of culture as well.

Van Maanen (1978) was another scholar who explored how police officers learned the inner workings of the police culture and became socialised within the police habitus. Building on the associated traits of the police personality, Van Maanen's field study involved first-hand observations of an American metropolitan police service. He observed that, 'the police enter a subculture governed by norms and values designed to manage the strains created by their unique roles in communities' (1978:116). This view approaches Bourdieu's understanding of the secondary (police) habitus. Their unique role was one in which Van Maanen (1978) observed the occupational characteristic of danger as a centripetal force, essentially pulling patrol men together in the work that they did. In his understanding, danger was a solidifying element of police work. Put another way, danger both creates and supports the police habitus.

In addition to reinforcing this 'us' (the police) and 'them' (the public) divide, Van Maanen identified two distinctive types of perceived danger relative to the secondary police habitus. Unlike Holdaway, he identified one type of danger as more of avoidance - where one 'stays out of trouble' (1978:125). This meant both avoiding danger as well as not bringing any undue attention or indeed disciplinary action to oneself. Van Maanen also described how an officer who regularly arrives at a backup call well after the danger has passed, is considered by other officers as fearful or 'loafing' (Van Maanen, 1973). In actively avoiding danger in this way, Van Maanen stated that an officer would be 'expelled from the squad' for such avoidance behaviour (1973:125). In this sense the secondary habitus of the occupational culture could be said to draw officers towards danger even if they feared that danger. This centripetal force reinforced the solidarity of the police culture and might further be said to exasperate the 'us' and 'them' construct.

The second type of danger was something veteran officers became exposed to via the inexperience of the 'rookie' officer. He underlined this by relaying a conversation where an officer said he 'worked with a guy who was so gung-ho that every time I got in the car with him, I figured I was gonna get killed' (1978:125). The cultural capital, i.e. the knowledge, skills, and experience of the officer, is central in addressing potential danger. Danger then takes a symbolic form in the occupational police culture and is linked to experience. This appears to be almost the opposite of avoidance and Van Maanen missed the opportunity to

unpack the contradiction between the officer who arrives late and the veteran who does not wish to be rushed in to a dangerous situation by an inexperienced officer.

In his discussion about these inherent dangers Van Maanen argued that ‘it would be a mistake to view police work from a danger aspect only’ (1978:118). Although he argued this, he failed to expand on why. Van Maanen defined danger as a prime occupational characteristic, but his research explored more the behaviours associated with these occupational characteristics than the characteristic of danger as experienced by the police themselves. Nonetheless, in a very practical way, Van Maanen drew the idea of danger towards the centre of the police role and one could say, in doing so, linked it directly to the police habitus.

Much like the examinations of police homicide, early examinations about the occupational culture of policing were developed from a North American perspective. These studies located the idea of a police subculture through field observations in different cities across the United States (Skolnick, 1966; Van Maanen, 1969; Westley, 1970). When the police culture is viewed through the Bourdieusian lens, these differing fields are seen as significant influencers in tracing how the police perceive danger. Banton (1964) also showed location to be an active component of the danger faced by the police. In later studies, such as Manning’s (1977), the relevance of where the police were located became an important consideration in understanding how police culture was shaped and influenced by the location.

Drawing on experiences with English and US police, Manning’s (1977, 1978) research continued the investigation into how different fields influenced police perceptions of danger. He observed how danger was perceived versus its actual occurrence in policing and framed it in terms of ‘chases and gun fights’ (1978:13). He found that the actual number of dangerous incidents attended by the police made up less than 10 percent of actual patrol time (1977:261). In drawing this distinction, Manning indicated that the police exhibit a ‘threat-danger-hero’ syndrome (1978:261).

By facing potentially dangerous situations where they can be injured or killed, officers subsequently drew admiration from other colleagues and believed their chances of promotion were improved. As such, to engage in dangerous situations came with significant occupational rewards. This speaks to how the cultural capital of officers becomes translated into symbolic capital within the field of policing. Bourdieu (1990:93) states that symbolic capital is based on the reputation, opinion, and representation of the individual. The missing element, though, is if or how this capital is connected to society outside the police. Manning

did not probe if such behaviour also improved the officer's, or the wider group of the police's, relationship with the public.

### **2.3.3 Filtering with Sarbin: The Habitus in Action**

Westley (1970) was one of the first to explore how the relationship of the police and the public shaped police practices. The self-image that the police created was one of isolation and solidarity, which was amplified by the racial tensions during the period. The relationship that the police had with the public was determined by the larger field of policing at the time. He demonstrated the danger experienced by the police by contrasting the police-public ratio. He quoted an officer as saying, 'we are only one hundred and forty against one hundred and forty thousand' (Westley, 1970:110). The verb 'against' instead of 'serving' or 'working for' denoted the police-public relationship at that time but also embedded the idea of danger firmly within police field.

Westley (1970) suggested that these tensions arose because the police wanted public validation for the work they did. Yet these tensions were seen to have become exposed due to the police treatment of African American residents. These residents openly protested and fought against the segregation laws of the time while the police responded with attempts to continually control the population, mostly by violent means. Had Westley been able to apply Sarbin's (1967) construct to these events he might have noted that the tensions of racial protest challenged police authority thereby disrupting the police-public relationship. According to Sarbin, it is the disruption of such relationships that can create perceptions of danger.

Westley went on to note that the police-public stress or conflict that resulted became akin to a psychological barrier, which separated the police from the public in both their professional and social lives. Individuals who were not part of the police group and who failed to understand the tensions of this police role were subsequently regarded as being a danger to the police; they were outsiders. Danger was regarded as the outcome of interpersonal conflict that resulted from occupational role enactments, the struggle for status, and identity validation (Tauber, 1967). For the police officer, the crime was in the relationship and not necessarily in the act as it was in the law (Westley, 1970:67).

Westley's (1970) research also examined how the police used violence to maintain their powerful position in their relationship with the public. In his and other works of the time, the idea of respect, both getting it and maintaining it, was a focus of how the police constructed

their identity. Police used violence to maintain, and garner a sense of respect for the police, if not for the law itself (Greene, 2010:462). Making or breaking relationships determined the danger that the police then faced. Police were seen to use their authoritative roles as agents of the state through violence. When racial protests ignited, the police felt almost justified in using violent measures to calm the situation. As such, danger, authority, and the police identity became intertwined. This too alludes to the interplay between habitus and field, linking Bourdieu and Sarbin's ideas. More importantly though it sketches out how the police-public relationship comes to be defined and viewed by the police themselves.

Skolnick (1966) also suggested that danger was less on the periphery of the relationship and was more central in the working personality of the police officer. From his participant observations across uniform, detective, and specialist units he concluded that the police working personality was primarily constructed from three converging factors: danger, authority, and efficiency. Danger and authority became seen as the principal variables and two essential elements in the discussion about a police subculture.

Skolnick (1966:41) suggested that the factors of danger, authority, and efficiency would merge to form 'distinctive cognitive and behavioural responses'. So, while all the units had these core personality characteristics, their responses would not necessarily be the same. Although differences were noted across the three operational units, he did not elaborate on them and readers are left wondering whether they are superficial or influential in police practices. What Skolnick succeeded in doing however was to turn the idea of the police subculture inwards and question how police personality traits could subsequently influence operational police practices. By turning the focus inward Skolnick inadvertently upheld Sarbin's identification of role, value and involvement as being important in the discussions about police culture.

Skolnick, however, failed to define danger in his discussion. Danger was assumed as some type of risk of physical harm. Indeed, in likening the police occupational culture to that of a soldier, Skolnick (1966) inadvertently depicts danger as being like the harm to which soldiers are exposed. Danger takes on a physical reality, which is action orientated. According to Skolnick (1966) this orientation appears to be dependent on the police officers themselves, their levels of involvement - as Sarbin would denote - and is central to their 'working personality'.

In traversing from the United States to the United Kingdom, Banton (1964) took a comparative approach in examining how the two countries' police forces operated. He also underlined how such differences influenced police practices and behaviour. He highlighted how police in the US took a more authoritative approach to policing than their British counterparts. The American police adopted a more aggressive approach, using flashing lights and sirens to require a driver to stop, whereas the English approach was to merely pull up alongside the driver and indicate for them to pull over (1964:112). He suggested that the American policeman may have a more difficult job because they are exposed to 'greater danger' than their English counterparts (Skolnick, 1966:68). However, there was no expansion on how this danger becomes realised or identified by the different police forces.

Banton (1964) also examined the relationship of the police with the public. His observations were that the police believed that the use of violence was justified when an individual shows disrespect to the police. The police were seen to use violence to rebalance and reposition themselves in the more powerful position within the community and as a result limit the danger to which, they believed, they were exposed. Banton also suggested that the perceived danger was often addressed by the police through acts of corruption and violence. This speaks to Sarbin's idea of danger being part of a relationship and how power and capital influence this construct. What is missing from Banton's analysis, though, is whether corruption and violence were a reaction to the danger the police perceived, or if these actions created the danger itself.

In research around police culture, the individuality of police roles began to feature. In examining different police subcultures, danger became linked to the relationship between each police group. Ruess-Ianni and Ianni (1983) suggested that cultures were shaped more by the behaviours and habits of their immediate social (working) circles than the wider organisation. They found that the street cop culture was influenced by reminiscing about the 'good old days' (1983:300), times when, whether real or merely nostalgic, there was no real interference from supervisors about how police work should be done. In the 'good old days', the street cops argued, they were left to their own devices where their actions were not controlled by bureaucratic regimes.

The fragmentation of the once monolithic police culture appeared to have both internal and external splinters for the street cops and both presented as a danger to them. Increased internal authority restricted officer discretion in the field and intensified the danger that street

cops believed they faced. Street cops believed that if they could not deal with situations as they saw fit, they themselves were more likely to be in physical danger.

In 1983, in the United States, Cullen and colleagues explored the ‘paradox of policing’, namely the imbalance between the infrequent threat of actual danger and the perceptions held by officers. They found that it was not the actual danger which caused the fear of officers as much as the potential for danger. Officers regarded their role as being both safe and unsafe. Cullen (*et al*, 1983) also highlighted a second paradox in that the fear of this danger was both functional and dysfunctional. Officers had to be vigilant regarding potential dangers yet this sensitivity also has a negative impact on the individual officers. Cullen (*et al*, 1983) argued that as a result of these paradoxes, police became preoccupied with the idea of danger in their role.

In more recent works the danger associated with policing has often led to a description of the police role as a reflection of *what* it is the police do. Police have been described as ‘violence workers’ (Huggins, 2002), ‘death workers’ (Henry, 2004) and ‘dirty workers’ (Altbeker, 2005). Kidder (2006) argues that what is missing from research on dirty occupations, such as policing, is an understanding of the emotional involvement in the creation of the self-identity. Understanding *why* individuals may engage in police work, as opposed to merely understanding what they do, has relevance in the examination of danger in the police role rather than the actuality. Edgework is more about the experience of the engagement than the outcome of the process. The thrill of policing can be found in the ‘chase’ as opposed to the actual arrest, just as in skydiving, the thrill is the skydive itself and not necessarily just in the landing.

In adapting Hunter Thompson’s (1971) concept of edgework, Lyng (1990) described an archetypical edgework experience as one where failure to meet the challenge can result in serious injury or death. In his examination of skydiving, Lyng argues that edgework activities ‘involve a clearly observable threat to one's physical or mental well-being or one's sense of an ordered existence’ (1990:857). Negotiating ‘the edge’ between safety and danger therefore is an intrinsic part of the experience of edgework. What is central to this process is the negotiation of boundaries between chaos and disorder. Understanding how the police negotiate these boundaries becomes significant to how they then perceive and experience danger.

However, when police perceptions of danger are compared to the actual numbers of officers killed, ‘the apparent dangers of police work appear to melt away’ (Crank, 2004:107). In terms of likelihood, death and serious injury in most police settings around the world is low. While these dangers may melt away in an American climate, the South African situation is different and calls for a review of police perception and realities and it is to this that the discussion now turns.

## 2.4 South African Police Literature

The history of policing in South Africa makes it difficult to get a clear view on how the police culture experiences and perceives danger. Untangling the evolutionary history of the police organisation therefore can help contextualise the organisational and occupational culture’s views of danger. This section first begins with a brief historical overview of the evolution of policing in South African. The discussion then refracts South African literature through the theoretical prism described in Chapter 1 to understand how danger has become contextualised in a South African policing context.

### 2.4.1 History of South African Police

It is widely recognised that South African police history should be understood against the backdrop of colonial conquest, industrial development (spurred by the discovery of diamonds and gold) and more than 40 years of racial rule under the Apartheid regime. Each of these processes had formative effects on the system of policing and, by implication, on police culture (Brewer, 1994; Brogden, 1994; Brogden and Shearing, 1993; Cawthra, 1993; Shaw, 2002).

Colonial models of policing share certain generic features. In terms of *structure*, such police institutions tend to be hierarchically organised with a clear centralisation of police power and a strict line of command and control.<sup>14</sup> Colonial police institutions are armed as a matter of course. Embedded within these kinds of institutions are paramilitary dispositions (Brogden, 1987). In terms of *function*, colonial police institutions are responsible for the protection first and foremost of the political and economic interests of the colonial rulers. Colonial police institutions are subsequently experienced by the indigenous population as an occupying force. The relationship between the police and the indigenous population is a deeply adversarial one. The containment and suppression of public disorder is a key function of colonial police institutions (Brogden, 1987; Buys, 2007). As in the South African case wide discretionary

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<sup>14</sup> Appendix 1 provides a current overview of the command and control structure of the SAPS.

powers were bestowed on the police to do just that (Brewer, 1994; Brogden, 1994; Cawthra, 1993). Resistance to colonial rule is met with force. Amongst the bodies of armed men operating in the troublesome quarters of the colony a siege mentality is instilled. In terms of *legitimacy*, colonial police institutions draw their authority from the barrel of the gun as opposed to popular consent as in the case of democratic models of policing.

In the settler colony of South Africa, a sharp distinction emerged between the political fortunes of the white settler minority and the indigenous population, as well as slaves and their descendants (Hattersley, 1960). This bifurcation between White and Black populations had implications for the police too.<sup>15</sup> From 1948 onwards the South African Police became a critical instrument in the arsenal of the Apartheid state (Van der Spuy, 1989). The police had to enforce swaths of racial legislation that aimed at a spatial and political separation of the different population groups. The police thus had a key role in upholding a system of racial privilege. Described by Brewer (1994) as ‘the Stormtroopers of Apartheid’ the police were feared, hated and despised by political minorities. As popular resistance against Apartheid increased, the police as the public face of the racial state became targets of political attack and sabotage. During the post-1976 period of popular insurgency the police adopted a counter-insurgency strategy (Brewer, 1994). Permissive security legislation bestowed on the police extremely wide powers. Lethal force was deployed in defence of the racial order, not only in the Border wars against Communist- backed liberation armies, but also inside the townships. The use of various surrogate forces (extra-legal police groups and death squads) and the rampant abuse of police powers resulted in ‘dirty tactics’ and the torture of political detainees became widespread.

Political violence was rife and undesirable in the emerging new democracy. To address these issues the emerging government established the Goldstone Commission (Goldstone, 1992). The commission was tasked with investigating allegations of political violence and intimidation against the security forces, private armies and security firms. A number of subcommittees were formed from the Commission and one of these, set up on the 14 July 1993, was tasked with investigating the origins of serious attacks on members of the South

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<sup>15</sup> During Apartheid, race was categorised according to an individual’s skin colour. This nomenclature remains in use within the South African criminal justice system and the South African Police Service. In this research, for ease of categorisation and to align with current practices these terms are adopted without any racist intentions. Black refers to people of Nguni- and Sotho-speaking origin; Coloured refers to people of mixed race; Indian to people of Indian origin; and White to people of European origin (South African History Online [SAHO], 2016).

African Police Force. The time period under investigation (1 July 1991 to 31 December 1992) was chosen for practical reasons including a desire to have the report submitted prior to the first national democratic elections in 1994. The Committee found that the primary causes of police killings were entrenched in the political history of the country, where communities were led to believe, through propaganda or otherwise, that the police were the enemy. As such, an attack on them was seen as justified because they represented the state.

The paramilitary impulse of the police institution became consolidated during the latter decades of Apartheid. An analysis of policing discourse during this period captures the sanctity of the police brotherhood locked in a battle with 'evil' as personified by the populist struggle waged by the armed wings of the liberation movements (Brogden, 1994; Marks, 2000; Weitzer, 1993). Excesses on the ground were tolerated as an unfortunate consequence of having to repress a political onslaught against the Apartheid state. In 1995 the excesses of the Apartheid state and its police institution were put on record through the deliberations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Brogden and Shearing (1993:15-16) argued that 'South African policing has not simply promoted an order that has devastated the lives of black South Africans, but has been an essential part of that order'. Hills (2000) observes that in many African counties police forces have been regarded as instruments of personal power by the state. Both danger and violence were inscribed into the very job of policing as part of the routine maintenance of Apartheid and its more spectacular suppression of popular resistance. During this period, to use the phrase coined by Martha Huggins (2002), police were in fact 'violence workers'. Their work was sanctioned by the state, secrecy and duplicity defined their routine modes operandi, and an all-embracing political ideology justified their actions. Policing relied on the use of coercive force, both legal and extra-legal, embedding danger in the very theatre of policing.

From 1990 the racial state became dismantled. Its place was taken by a constitutional rule of law. In the image of the new polity, the South African police institution had to be re-engineered so that the structure, function and legitimacy of the police institution could give content to constitutionally entrenched human rights. Police reform became a critical aspect of large-scale state reconstruction, redefining the function of the police to focus on the protection of citizen safety rather than state security (Rauch, 2001; Shaw, 2002). The values of accountability and oversight were inscribed into the mission statement, and the non-partisan delivery of service to all South African citizens became a normative injunction. The

philosophy of community policing was adopted to chart the rebuilding of fractured relations between the police and black communities, and the use of force became legally circumscribed. It was envisioned that peaceful co-existence would define the relationship between the police and the policed. In the rainbow nation of Nelson Mandela, the job of the police, it was thought, would become normalised as the new democratic social contract between equals would harmonise racial relationships. In pursuing 'Project Police Reform', South Africans looked North for guidance, drawing on the modalities of policing in western democracies.

Despite much effort, the vision of a country at peace with itself did not quite materialise. Political freedom failed to translate into economic prosperity for all and social inequality continued to grow. Interpersonal violent crime too remained at high levels and although murder rates declined significantly until 2015, forms of property crime increased and pushed fear levels upwards. Political discourse soon portrayed the need for making 'war on criminals' and on the threat of social anarchy posed by criminals.

As in the past the police institution became locked into a battle for order versus anarchy. The job itself was a dangerous one and the echoes of the past could not be mistaken. After a brief respite that accompanied the early years of democracy, the signs of growing social instability of the new democratic polity could not be dismissed. Public protests against a wide variety of service delivery issues increased exponentially. In the front line of the struggle between disenchanted members of the poor and the state, stood members of the South African Police Service. The officers making up Steinberg's (2008) 'thin blue line' were now responsible for what Altbeker (2005) referred to as the 'dirty work of democracy'.

One of the difficulties emerging from the pre-1994 policing landscape was the difficulties in gaining an understanding of Apartheid police culture. Academic examination of the then South African Police (SAP) was much curbed by the Apartheid government and so commentaries about the SAP culture were very much from the outside looking in (Brewer, 1990; Brogden and Shearing, 1993). However, post -1994, new opportunities for researchers emerged and through this came opportunities to examine the police. Many of these subsequent studies mapped the transformation of the police while highlighting operational practices along the way. It is to these examinations to which our attention now turns.

#### 2.4.2 Foucault: Tracing the History

The history of the SAPS culture is bookended by two separate archives that speak to the organisational and the occupational culture in the SAPS. The first text, Dippenaar's (1998) *History of the South African Police from 1918-1998*, traces not only what the police did but how they did it, albeit from a partisan police perspective. The second text, a commission of inquiry report, is a more recent document that depicts the contemporary challenges of policing townships in South Africa. This report emanated from a commission of inquiry into ineffective police practices in the township Khayelitsha.<sup>16</sup>

In the first text, Dippenaar's (1998) historical overview, the former South African Police (SAP) and the current SAPS come to life and makes clear how danger has become embedded in the police culture. The epoch is brought to life through text and photographs which relay the images of the police being 'at war'. In this depiction of the 'old' police, their activities at the time were described as 'soberingly dangerous' and reflected the counterinsurgency role of the SAP (Dippenaar, 1998:427). Danger became associated with the nature of the police role and became embedded in the psyche of not only what the police did, but how they did it.

To highlight police operations during this time, Dippenaar traces the social unrest and statistically frames the violence in terms of incidents. He noted how in 1985 there were escalating attacks on Black members of the South African Police as well as railway police (1998:735). He indicates how 'attacks on the police including stone-throwing, petrol bombs, acid bombs, hand grenades, and even shooting incidents were frequent occurrences' (1998:736). Dippenaar's text has been acknowledged as being from a distinct insider's perspective and amounts to an 'ethnocentric and self-congratulatory account of the evolution of the SAP' (Van der Spuy, 2004:197). However, the text not only traces the evolution of the SAP into the SAPS but also demonstrates how centrally embedded danger was in South African policing at that time. As an archive the text speaks to the fact that the SAP was representative of the Apartheid policies then in force.

Although others have examined policing during the SAP period their discussions related to the operational methods employed. Understandings of danger relative to the police are tangential in discovery. Brewer (1990, 1994) examined how during the late 1970s right through to the 1990s brute force and fire power became a common SAP response to ongoing

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<sup>16</sup> These are not the only texts per se. Kok and Van der Spuy (2015) highlight that over a 100-year period there have been 44 commissions of inquiry in which police conduct features in some form. These two texts have been purposively selected as they lend themselves more to the focus of this discussion.

civil unrest. The danger the police experience was born out of the communities' response to these police actions; where violence was met with violence.

Super (2010) also describes how during this period tear gas and heavy armoury were regularly used by the police. In the 1980s, the focus on policing became increasingly concerned with keeping Blacks out of White areas. Resistance to minority rule grew and there was a shift in the intensity of politically- inspired violence. In townships the fight against Apartheid made the spaces ungovernable and thus forced more attention on the politics at the time. Super (2010) underlines how preventative policing approaches essentially became riot policing, with raids and blitzes becoming commonplace. In response to such approaches, the police were met with violence. The vigilante acts that were occurring in the communities, which were facilitated by police, were then used to justify the escalating police crackdowns and use of violence. What started as political protest in township spaces often descended into criminal activity as well. Looting and robbery became disguised as acts of political protest in many townships (Jensen, 2008) causing townships to become commonly regarded as dangerous areas for the police and the public alike.

On the opposite end of the South African policing archive is a more recent document, which contextualises the contemporary SAPS organisational and occupational police culture. Focusing on policing in these previously described dangerous spaces, i.e. townships, this archive replaces Dippenaar's representation of the police 'war on terror' with 'the war on crime'. This modern archive emerged from a commission of inquiry, which was established to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of policing in the township of Khayelitsha, which is situated on the fringes of Cape Town. In contrast to Dippenaar's account, this archive explores both police practises and the spaces in which they occur.

Townships are regarded as historical and physical remnants of South Africa's Apartheid history and have been shaped to a large degree by planning practices that were a result of Apartheid policies. The prevalence of violence in these spaces can be traced through the historic roots of Apartheid-based social institutions that were often complicit in preventing individuals from meeting basic social needs. In this sense townships are a physical representation of a structural type of violence, where the invisible social machinery of inequality continues to house communities in spaces where the basic living requirements are rarely or barely met. This structural violence is often overlooked as it 'naturalizes' poverty, sickness, hunger, and premature death erasing their social and political origins (Scheper-

Hughes, 2004:13). As police operate within, and are often members of, these socially vulnerable communities, this hidden structural violence requires acknowledgment. In examining township violence or at least the genesis of violence, in a South African context therefore needs to be acknowledged beyond the parameters of force, assault or physical pain.

The Khayelitsha Commission emerged because a non-governmental consortium, the Social Justice Coalition's (SJC)<sup>17</sup>, active in that township, desired to bring numerous complaints regarding police inefficiency in this particular township to the attention of the police, and the national and provincial government. The application was originally contested by the National Minister of the Police regarding the constitutional power to set up such a commission by the provincial authorities, so there was a breakdown of relations before the Commission even began.

Once established, the public hearings ran over the course of 40 days. In these hearings community members, police officers, and academics gave oral testimony of policing practices, bringing the reality of townships to life.<sup>18</sup> Administrative insight into the larger organisational culture was gleaned from senior officer's testimonies while frontline officers highlighted the occupational culture in the township space. In hearing from communities and police alike, this archive provides a more balanced understanding of the realities of policing than had been previously available. Overall the findings of the Commission are of particular relevance to the research enquiry of this thesis, providing a much needed structural and contextual description of the challenges confronting the police and their mandate in townships.

From the outset, the Commission described the social and economic contours of the space characterised by population density, infrastructural development and host of social and economic problems in which the community lived and police operated. Poor roads and inadequate street lightening, as well as other infrastructure issues, all contribute to the problems that the community endures and what the police in townships must navigate daily. In the discussion of these infrastructural challenges the police highlighted the dangers they

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<sup>17</sup> The Social Justice Coalition (SJC) was established in 2008 and is a membership-based social movement made up of 12 branches, located mainly in informal settlements across Khayelitsha, Cape Town.

<sup>18</sup> The Commission was held in two phases of public hearings. The first took place between January and March 2014 and the second in May 2014 with closing arguments on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2014. There were approximately 40 days of hearings. The commission's findings were presented in a 580-page document, 'Towards a Safer Khayelitsha' the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Police Inefficiency and a Breakdown in Relations between SAPS and the Community in Khayelitsha, on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014, which detailed the many aspects of the inquiry.

believed they faced in their daily routines. Streets with no names, witnesses who did not want to assist in reported crimes, and an inhospitable terrain all contributed to the difficulties the police encountered.

Townships still reflect Apartheid dynamics. Between 2002 and 2014, households with a Black African head of household were more likely to be in informal dwellings than other population groups. Indeed, 42.6 percent of Black Africans and 28.7 percent of Coloured households lived in formal dwellings with a property value of less than R50 000, whereas most White (83.8 percent) and Asians/Indian households (63.1 percent) lived in properties valued at R400 000 or more (Stats SA, 2016:158). Townships are constructed of formal and informal settlements. 'Formal settlements' are akin to a more traditional style of housing where brick is used to construct one- or two-roomed dwellings with tiled or tin roofs. Unlike more urban settings, there are limited grid references and dwellings rarely have numbers.

Although the number of informal settlements in South Africa has decreased from 17 percent in 2002 to 11 percent in 2014 they remain a permanent fixture of the township landscape (Stats SA, 2016:131). Most informal housing is constructed from relatively basic, temporary, non-weather-proofed materials (namely cardboard, mud, plastic, wooden boards and sheet metal) and are usually a single story construction (Meth, 2016:7). These informal dwellings are colloquially referred to as 'shacks' or 'hokkies'. Most dwellings in townships are small and average between 2.3 and 2.7 rooms for the entire family (Stats SA, 2016:51). More often than not, a dwelling consists of one large room that is partitioned by a curtain. Few of these dwellings have running water and as such communal toilets and taps are commonplace. In 2014 in the Western Cape Province, 48 percent of families in informal settlements were living in overcrowded conditions (Stats SA, 2016:125).

Opening statements by the police in the Khayelitsha Commission reflected on these policing challenges and described the police mandate as 'an impossible one.' These difficult situations become interpreted by the police as being not only difficult, but dangerous. Police argued that if they could not identify a location they could hardly be expected to navigate it safely. In one officer's submission he stated that the township police had in effect become 'the whipping boys' for the larger police organisation.<sup>19</sup> The police case was subsequently presented as one where they were expected to create order amidst large-scale chaos.

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<sup>19</sup> Oral submission of Brigadier Zithulele Dladla made to the Khayelitsha Commission on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at 3506 (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014).

From the police perspective what this inquiry, and the subsequent report revealed was how deeply engrained organisational practices were. The rules governing where staff were allocated were found to be so outdated and complex that few senior officers could explain or indeed understand them (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014:450). Staffing was, as the presiding judge commented, an Apartheid-style allocation, where the resources required to adequately police the space were being ignored, this while 70 percent of all police stations across the country were understaffed.

Khayelitsha appeared to be a microcosm of a larger organisational problem in terms of staff deployment and adequate coverage. The lack of staffing echoed in individual officer statements. Low morale was a constant challenge in the station, which was compounded by high crime rates, high absenteeism and complaints of poor service delivery (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014:242). The low morale also appeared to merely feed the negative behaviour of police there.

These difficulties across the different working police groups in the township were also highlighted. As one officer stated, '*in the movies...you see a team (detectives) descending to a crime scene, attending to a docket, but here, you have a team of dockets descending on a detective*'.<sup>20</sup> Detectives were being swamped by the amount of crimes they were expected to investigate. This massive workload combined with understaffing resulted in inadequate investigations, files going missing, and many cases being struck off the court roll. The Commission reported that the detective services were close to 'crisis point' (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014:27). In this sense the occupational and organisational cultures were in alignment regarding understanding the difficulties involved in township policing. Yet the larger police organisation was still seen as an unyielding institution that stuck rigidly to the dysfunctional rule-book and the occupational culture was one where the officers merely had to make do.

Ultimately, what the Commission succeeded in doing was establishing the realities of what it meant to police in a township space. Population density, socio-economic underdevelopment, and high rates of unemployment were all regarded as contributory factors in escalating crime within the space. Of particular relevance to this research was how the report also succeeded in portraying the inherent tension in the police role. As noted by Steinberg, himself an expert witness at the Inquiry, the difficulty relates to the fact that the goals of the police are at times in tension with each other. The prevention of crime requires the police to be proactive; to

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

anticipate what is about to happen and stop it, while maintaining order requires the police to be reactive, to respond when trouble breaks out, and these two approaches are not always complimentary (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014:298). This tension is further highlighted when the desires of the community are compared to the policing experiences heard throughout the Commission (Van der Spuy and Armstrong, 2014).

Even in this comprehensive Report, the dangers for the police are not adequately addressed. Its meaning must be extracted through discussions around the challenges of the space itself. The word 'danger', or derivatives thereof, is mentioned only 11 times in all of the 580 pages of the Report. Of these mentions, only three refer to the police perceptions and they relate to the danger of reporting corrupt colleagues, the constant risk officers face (which the Report does not define or describe), and the potential for developing post-traumatic stress symptoms.

Although the dangers the police perceive and experience are not explicitly examined, they are, in the genealogical sense of the archive, distinguishable through the statements heard. For the police in township spaces, danger becomes part of the helix of the socio-economic and political conditions in which they must function. These spaces are fraught with violence and just as violence must be considered as separate from danger, violence in South Africa also must be viewed in the specific context of South Africa.

#### **2.4.3 Bourdieu's lens: Police Culture and Place**

In order to examine violence in a South African context it is important to move beyond western moral and legal discourses. In developed democracies, the use of violence, and even the threat to use it, is considered, illegitimate and unacceptable (Beek and Gopfert, 2012). By adopting a Bourdieusian lens to this examination provides an opportunity to examine violence in terms of the culture in which it is situated. By understanding the historical aspect of the field, the functioning of the habitus becomes easier to place.

Auyero and Sobering (2017) suggest that in the analysis of violence there is a tendency to look at it as either deviant or as a continuation from the past. In the context of South Africa, violence appears to stem from both. The presence of violence has been considered as a recycled struggling narrative of the Apartheid legacy where violence became a recognised form of communication for many. Violence was seen as a response to the poverty and social exclusion thus resulting in an ongoing 'culture of violence' (Altbeker, 2007; Collins, 2013; The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2008; Faull, 2011; Steinberg, 2014; Van der Spuy and Shearing, 2014). The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

(CSVR) found that violence in South Africa has come to be regarded ‘as a valid means of self-assertion, and of gaining cooperation, respect and compliance by others, especially young men’ (2007:170). Such is its prevalence that violence is regarded as an innate part of the social fabric in South Africa. In a Bourdieusian sense, this normalisation is part of the primary habitus of most police officers; how they think and use violence has been influenced by childhood acquired dispositions. It is these dispositions which then shape and influence the secondary police habitus.

Before discussing violence in South Africa it is perhaps best to define its parameters. In policing, violence is best considered as existing on a continuum. In South Africa the use of police force has garnered much attention (Bruce, 2003, 2005, 2011; Faull, 2013; Hornberger, 2011; Mistry, Minnaar, Redpath and Dhlamini, 2001; Steinberg, 2008, 2012). On one end of the spectrum is the legitimate use of force by the police and on the other the use of coercive force or extra-legal force. These two different types of violence tend to become blurred in discussions about the use of discretion by the police. Much of this discussion has been generated by the legal changes regarding the use of lethal (also referred to as deadly) force<sup>21</sup> over the last ten years.

Discussions in South Africa about violence and the police have evolved into two main overarching conversations. These are the incorrect use of force by the police and the pathologies of power within the use of such force (Bruce, 2003, 2005, 2011; Faull, 2013; Hornberger, 2013; Marks, 2005). More recent discussions about the police use of violence in South Africa however have indicated a variety of causes, ranging from a lack of police professionalism (Faull, 2016) to its use in the intimidation of political opponents who may be taking part in local protests (Bregman and Bici, 2011).

Prior to 1998, the use of lethal force by police was deemed appropriate once the suspected offender was alleged to have committed an offence carrying a penalty of six years or more (Bruce, 2010). In the early 2000s this was changed in law to state that lethal force was allowed only if there was a suggestion that the person presented ‘a future danger’ (Bruce, 2010; Hornberger, 2013). Interpretation of the Act and what this meant for policing was one of the main issues for frontline police officers (Bruce, 2011). Apart from attempting to

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<sup>21</sup> In the legislation, lethal force is regarded as deadly force. Of note is the fact that ‘force’ is not prescriptively defined. Section 2(d) defines force as any form of force which is applied to the body of a suspect and which is not of a trivial nature. In an amendment bill in 2010 a section was inserted in which lethal force is defined as ‘force that is likely to cause serious bodily harm or death and includes, but is not limited to, shooting a suspect with a firearm’.

elucidate a 'future danger' officers had to determine in what circumstances they could now defend themselves.

For the police, with these changes, the rules of engagement had changed. In a Bourdieusian sense, these rules are akin to the doxa which govern how they act in the field, they are the rules of the game. Changes in legislation spoke to the formal rules, but how officers interpreted these rules became the issue. Despite these challenges, it is the informal, illegal use of force or violence, which raises more concerns relating to the dangers that the police perceive on a day-to-day basis.

On the other end of this continuum of violence it has been suggested that the use of violence is not a crime (Collins, 2013). In examining violence, Collins suggests that it is best examined from a social and cultural perspective. Although not directly implied this examines violence from a Bourdieusian positionality. Collins does not suggest that violence is entirely separate from criminal or dangerous acts but moreover encourages one to think of violence as an act which is not always linked to danger. In a South African context such thinking has particular relevance. The use of 'violence' comes in many forms and on different scales, from parents administering '*klaps*' – from hard slaps to punches - as a form of discipline, to outright murders in the community. Indeed, in his own multi-year survey of student attitudes towards violence, Collins found that 90 percent support the 'right' of adults to hit their children. As such, the use of violence becomes part of the primary habitus of many individuals, who in turn may become police officers.

In an examination of policing practices in Johannesburg, Steinberg (2008) examined how the field impacted the police habitus. He defined this relationship as the unwritten rules of policing and ultimately concluded that in public spaces at least, policing only occurs with the consent of the community. Steinberg's (2008, 2012) interpretation of the relationship offered a new perspective on the idea of the authority of the police. Their authority was only recognised and indeed tolerated by the community when the community wanted it to be so recognised. Steinberg acknowledges the influence of the police authority in the police-public relationship. Although the relationship between danger and authority previously had been identified by Skolnick (1966), in looking at how they interact with each other questions then arise as to what this mean for police perceptions and experiences of that danger.

Faull's (2013) examination of the frequent use of police violence links directly to issues of police authority and respect. Through ethnographic research with the SAPS, Faull highlights

how closely interlinked the two concepts are. If individuals fail to comply with the police, i.e. ignore their authority, the police interpreted this as a form of disrespect both for them and their role. The subsequent use of violence by the SAPS was then seen as a way to reassert their authoritative position and gain compliance in many situations. Reflecting on Collins' positionality on violence in South Africa, Faull also denotes how deeply connected the idea of violence and respect is from a South African perspective, where issues of violence and masculinity are embedded in the social identity of many male South Africans.

In relation to off-duty police murders, Faull (2017) argues that, rather than reflecting the danger of the police job in South Africa, these murders are more indicative of the violent networks and neighbourhoods that officers live in. He goes on to say that off-duty police murders are synonymous with the high rate of violence already present in communities. The fact that the victims are police officers appears to be incidental relative to the larger problem of violent crime in South Africa.

In a different explanation, Hornberger (2013) argues that while the increased use of violence by the police is indeed a threat to fair practices, it is also a popular desire within certain communities. She suggests that this understanding emerged due to an inherent failure of the criminal justice process, leaving communities wanting justice that was both immediate and tangible. Police were then regarded by some community members as a legitimate means to distribute violent punishment to achieve these desires. Here the police habitus is responding to changes in the field yet the tension is maintained as such actions are not desired by the larger police organisation.

While Hornberger is quick to point out that the victims themselves may obviously not desire the violence, it is the desire by communities for a more authoritarian state, which encourages its continued use by the police. Similarly, Steinberg (2011) also links the violence of the post-Apartheid police practices and the resurgence of the remilitarisation within the police service. What both authors offer is that in South Africa the violence of the police is not necessarily a straightforward issue. Police dispositions on the use of violence underline how it comes to shape their daily practices and how these in turn affect the danger they then perceive.

While all the aforementioned accounts discuss how and why violence becomes regarded as a functional tool in the SAPS arsenal, they fail to adequately examine what this then means for the reciprocity of violence that the police may then face. Faull (2011) argues that the lack of police professionalism is a contributory factor in on-duty murders of SAPS officers. He

underlines that the murder of police is rooted in organisational issues, which were originally identified by the previously mentioned 2003 MDC. He suggests that police safety is 'bound to improve' if the SAPS can just sort out issues such as poor command and control, poor training, and incorrect application of police procedure.

Echoing Faull's (2011) call for more professionalism in policing, Newham (2011) argues for improved accountability within the SAPS organisation to counteract police murders. He highlights how corrupt practices and police brutality continually erode public trust in the police and are unlikely to improve officer's safety. He argues for more focus on strategic, managerial and internal accountability to support a professional police service. Additionally, he indicates that harsher sentences for those who assault or kill police would be counterproductive and, if anything, would perpetuate the danger the police face. This research aims to examine the idea that police violence or actions can impact the danger they perceive and experience.

#### **2.4.4 Sarbin Lens: Relationships**

As Bourdieu is used to extrapolate the relationship between the field and the habitus, this section focuses more on how the SAPS relate to their own roles and what this in turn means for the danger then perceived. As previously discussed, transformation processes were at the forefront of the agenda when the SAPS began allowing research of the organisation in the late 1990s. To understand this change process the relationship between the police and the public had to be understood. In Marks' (2005) ethnographic examination of a Public Order Policing Unit (POPs) in Durban she undertook the task of exploring whether the SAPS culture was capable of such change. This involved looking at both the occupational and organisational relationship of the SAPS.

As previously observed it is feasible to place many of these writings under the different lenses adopted in the prism. Indeed, in her own examination of POPs Monique Marks uses a Bourdieusian lens to situate her examination of the police subculture.<sup>22</sup> However as Marks' focus was on a single police unit it makes the adaption of a Sarbin lens particularly suitable, where Sarbin's axis of involvement, role and value are easier extrapolated through a single unit than the larger police organisation. Although she does not explicitly examine danger, some understandings of danger come to the fore when examining her work.

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<sup>22</sup> Marks also availed of Della Porta's (1995) framework in framing historic understandings of the evolution of the POPS unit. Of interest here, relative to the use of Sarbins lens, is that Porter herself recognised that police culture involves understandings that police have about their own role (2005:21).

Just as in Altbeker's (2005) work, which spoke about the fear involved in ethnographic work, readers get an initial sense of the danger in Mark's research through the ethnographers' own experiences in the field. Her account of being taught to use an Uzi machine gun leaves little to the imagination and reinforces the sense of danger that officers had about her and indeed their own safety (2005:100). In teaching Marks how to use a machine gun it became apparent that the SAPS believed that anyone who worked with them needed to be able to address the danger they perceived. Indeed, danger appears to be close to the surface throughout Marks experiences as she readily admits that on more than one occasion she wanted to just 'leave and go home' (2005:98). Through such self-reflexivity her experiences with the police and their role appeared even more risky than perhaps they actually were.

As Marks' research extended over a five-year period (1996-2001) she offers insight into both the organisational and occupational culture's understandings of change. In doing so she highlights a selective deafness, a tension that appears to exist between these two cultures. Marks emphasised that unless change occurs via organisational structures and permeates occupational belief systems, change will not occur in a way that significantly transforms the larger police organisation. The sum of what Marks explores is the relationship of the police to both the public they serve as well as the relationship between the organisational and occupational cultures. This offers a useful starting point from which to begin to understand possible differences in how both cultures then perceive danger.

Even when all these texts are viewed through the individual theories of the theoretical prism, none adequately capture how danger has been perceived and experienced by the police. Much like the literature from North America and the United Kingdom, danger is central yet remains very much at the margins of examinations of police culture. This is, as previously suggested, the research gap that this thesis aims to fill. Danger has yet to be regarded as a topic in police subculture in its own right and only by doing so will more insight into both the organisational and occupational police cultures be realised. The steps taken to examine this are discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This research required a methodological framework through which I could navigate the world of the SAPS. My primary aim was to understand how the police perceive the idea of danger and whether the extraordinary event of a police murder influenced routine police practices. Adopting the qualitative approaches of participant observation and semi-structured interviews allowed me to observe this first hand.

This research is best described as exploratory, but draws on the rich tradition of ethnographic studies of police work dating back to the early 1960s (Cain, 1973; Faull, 2016; Hornberger, 2007; Manning, 1977; Marks, 2005; Skolnick, 1966; Van Maanen, 1978; Wardrop, 2009). Although the research initially explores the ‘how much’ and ‘how many’ aspects of police murder through the examination of police murder files, the focus was more on the ‘how’ and ‘why’ police perspective of the danger perceived about these murders. Creswell (2013:48) supports a qualitative approach when a problem or issue needs to be explored and ‘silenced voices’ need to be heard. Alder and Alder (2000) also note that such an observational research can provide rich, detailed descriptions about the unknown or the little known. The qualitative data gathered from participant observation of police behaviour, discourses, and actions is examined against the backdrop of the available statistical information on police murders in the Western Cape Province during the period 2002 until 2014. This mixed-method approach does not necessarily seek to marry the qualitative and quantitative findings but allows them to be read in relation to each other.

However well designed the research plan is, fieldwork rarely occurs without verging off a well-intentioned research path. Fraser (2012:6) argues that ‘field research actually entails weaving together what we plan to do in the field with accidents, chance and happenstance’. Although I had not predicated the happenstances and accidental occurrences that transpired during my research, I believe that they enriched the research findings. One example was an invitation to attend and present my preliminary research findings to a meeting of all station commanders at a Provincial Crime Combatting Forum (PCCF) in the Western Cape Province.<sup>23</sup> The discussion that ensued allowed me to identify further areas to explore with

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<sup>23</sup> Other unscripted events during this research were also utilised. On one occasion I was invited to attend and participate in two separate SAPS physical training courses. On another occasion I was invited to work with the Special Investigation Unit of the Metro police. In attending both events I gained further insight into different aspects of the SAPS from both an organisational and occupational angle.

participants during field observations. The research design remained flexible to accommodate such occurrences, enriching the various fieldwork phases.

## 3.2 Qualitative Data Gathering

### 3.2.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation allowed me to observe the police from their own perspective. Overall, I spent more than 900 hours conducting participant observation both out on patrols and in the police station. These hours were inclusive of attendance at police funerals and memorials services, management meetings, and SAPS training courses.<sup>24</sup>

Observing the daily routine of officers enabled me to make better sense of, and interpret, the meaning that the police attribute to danger and death. The more time I spent with the individuals and groups of police, the more relaxed they became in my presence. This allowed insight into their everyday behaviours as their censorship of outsiders naturally waned. Such insights varied from officers sharing stories of how they cried in their father's arms on hearing of a colleague's murder<sup>25</sup> to observing their reactions as they cocked their firearms while they approached a group of men.<sup>26</sup>

During the phase of participant observation I arrived at the station when tours of duty began and worked with the officers for the whole shift. I wanted them to consider me as someone who was willing to participate and experience the reality of their world. Punch's (1989) comment of fieldwork being a younger person's craft resonated as consecutive 12-hour shifts took their toll on my 40-year-old body. That said, my previous experience of the late nights, early mornings and long days of shift had me well prepared for the energy, patience and endurance that was required. My aim was for officers to become familiar with me, and I with them. Full-shift work fostered positive relationships between us and helped to dispel concerns that I may be there under false pretences. Due to my constant presence, I became accepted by many. This was seen in comments and statements by officers that never appeared to be guarded and the fact they were happy to openly argue in my presence.

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<sup>24</sup> Appendix 2 provides a timetable of the hours and days spent with the various units and acts as a participant observational overview of with whom, when and where I spent time in the field. Every week there was a cluster meeting, referred to as the Cluster Crime Combating Forum (CCCF), which was also attended and is not delineated separately. In this strategic meeting senior station managers attended and crime statistics were spoken about at length. SAPS courses which I attended are noted separately.

<sup>25</sup> Interview B.

<sup>26</sup> Cocking of a firearm refers to having the firearm in the 'ready' position for instantly firing ammunition.

Being immersed in the day-to-day activities of the police can facilitate the direct study of the behaviour, language and the interaction amongst members in the group (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Bryman 2003; Creswell, 2013; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). However, Van Maanen (2006) states that in order to understand a group one has to go out and live like and with that group. I took every opportunity to bridge the obvious distance of a white, Irish, female working in a predominantly African male environment. One officer commended me for willingness to eat with and like the officers. I had been eating a smiley<sup>27</sup> with them, when he said: *'you must taste this place in the same way you taste the crime, you must eat everything, so when you go back home you can say you have lived here.'*<sup>28</sup> I also took a beginner's class in the IsiXhosa language. While mostly amused at my effort, and lilting Irish accent, one officer commented, *'in my twelve years working at this station, you are the first person to try and learn isiXhosa. I think it is good that you learn isiXhosa, some people are here all their life and don't learn isiXhosa.'*<sup>29</sup> Eating with officers and learning their language was part of the ritual of being a police officer in a township station and was my attempt at integrating into their world.

Being present for so much time with the police allowed me to get a sense of how the police groups constructed, and at times contributed to, the danger in the world around them. It helped me to understand the context in which certain behaviours occurred, and allowed me to build relationships with police members so that I could ask questions about their actions later during interviews. On many occasions I was more a participant by holding seized evidence or searching a female prisoner when no female officers were present. Taking on the participant role allowed me more scope to ask questions without sounding judgmental about many aspects of how and why they police in the manner that they do.

During the data gathering and analysis process I drew on Corbin-Dwyer and Buckle's (2009) monitoring of the use of the terms 'I', 'we' and 'they' as part of the overall reflective process. Throughout the data gathering and analysis stages such monitoring assisted in noting my own movement between the statuses of insider and outsider. Merton (1972:37) argues that the boundaries between insider and outsider are permeable. This permeability allows a researcher to access the space between the status of being an insider and an outsider (Fay, 1996). As a

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<sup>27</sup> Smiley (in Afrikaans 'Skaapkop') is a colloquial term for a cooked sheep's head because the head looks like its smiling as the skin cooks and shrinks, revealing the sheep's teeth.

<sup>28</sup> Field Notes 0033.

<sup>29</sup> Field Notes 0020. I undertook a basic course in isiXhosa at the University of Cape Town, which lasted over a 12-week period. The course offered an elementary introduction to the basics of the language.

police officer I was familiar with many aspects of the administrative processes involved in the role. However, I merely had a police ‘sense’ of what was happening in many instances. Although close interaction is fundamental and integral to the research a balance had to be maintained between the insider-outsider statuses. In being conscious of this movement I acknowledge where the liminality of observer as participant often arises.

### 3.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Using a single research method, such as participant observation, can open research up to bias (Hill *et al*, 1966). To counter this, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews provided me an opportunity to cross-check my observations from the field. Bryman (2012) supports how the use of semi-structured interviews allows researchers to explore and clarify ambivalence and uncertainty. In this research, the interviews were used to explore such aspects and to probe observations from the field.

Even though police stations are meant to be a place where interviews can be held, conducting them in the police station proved difficult. Most uniformed officers work 12-hour shifts and arrived half-an-hour early for a briefing. Long working days meant that it was unrealistic to ask or indeed expect individuals to come in even earlier or stay later to be interviewed. The interviews were therefore conducted while officers worked.

The second difficulty was the lack of suitable interview locations. The station did not have interview rooms and detainees were regularly interviewed in cells. When I asked about where criminal interviews were conducted I was told, ‘*we mostly interview people in cells, we don’t have a room*’.<sup>30</sup> On one occasion, while attempting to interview an officer in an available space, the interview had to be stopped three times to accommodate other officers who needed the space for operational reasons. To overcome these issues I undertook what I refer to as ‘rolling interviews’, which were done as officers worked, primarily in police vehicles. In the patrol cars officers appeared to speak freely and naturally as if conversing. The police vehicle, as will be explored in Chapter 6 is considered as a police space where officers converse freely. Speaking with officers as they drove around reinforced what is referred to as the active nature of the interview process, which, according to Fontana and Frey (2005), leads to a contextually bound story. During one such interview, an officer interrupted his own telling of a story to reinforce his point, stopping to point out people and places while using

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<sup>30</sup> Field Notes 0077.

his working environment as the natural backdrop to foreground the information that he provided in the interview itself.

A total of 19 interviews were conducted of which three had more than one participant.<sup>31</sup> The interviewees varied in rank, role, age, race and gender. The racial and gender breakdown of the interviews was: six Black males, four Black females, five Coloured males and four White males. Additionally, one female administrator was also interviewed. The function of the police interviewed varied between operational Visible Policing (Vispol), detectives and Tactical Response Team (TRT) members, commanders, an Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) worker, SAPS physical and field Trainers and administrative staff.

The most junior member had six years' service with the most senior having more than 35 years' service. Some officers had been raised in townships and many of the Black interviewees lived in this or another township. Some of the detectives lived in formal settlements in township spaces while all of the White officers resided outside of townships. Through these interviews, themes emerged about police roles and how these roles were understood and operationalised in township spaces. Sample questions guided the interview. Each participant was given an information sheet and a copy of the consent form.<sup>32</sup>

Interviews alone cannot necessarily discover 'the truth'. Inferences are required in the interpretation of the answers which expand beyond the interview itself. In some cases the mood or attitude of the interviewee can change depending on recent experiences (Berg, 2009). This was evidenced in one interview conducted shortly after a memorial service for a murdered colleague. The interviewee became tearful at reminiscing about colleagues who had been killed which was more than likely heightened by his recent attendance of the memorial service.

Question construction can alter answers and, indeed, misunderstood answers can alter analysis (Creswell, 2013). On one occasion I misheard an officer say '*the one thing you have to check on is sex*'. On clarification he had said '*shacks*' not '*sex*'.<sup>33</sup> The misunderstanding can be a two-way street, so I was conscious to keep clarifying what was said with what I thought I heard. Although police are recognised as storytellers (Faull, 2016) their stories offer more than a self-indulgent monologue. Shearing and Ericson (1991) exhort researchers to

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<sup>31</sup> Appendix 3.

<sup>32</sup> Appendices 4-7.

<sup>33</sup> Interview R.

take police accounts seriously as these accounts can be used to understand the principles which underpin their decisions and subsequent practices in the field.

A mobile phone was used, with participant consent, to audio record all the interviews. The length of the interviews varied from 35 to 65 minutes as officers responded to police calls in-between. External noises, such as the police radio, and varying accents made the transcription process more difficult than if it were conducted in an interview room. However, I believe that in capturing interviews in this manner they were much more reflective of what the officer thought. They reflected a normal conversation that could happen in the car on any other day. Although I initially used assistants for some transcribing, I chose to re-transcribe and check all interviews. This was done to ensure that every comment, pause or sigh was noted so as to contextualise what was being expressed and to avoid the possible misinterpretation of meaning. As Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) argue, through such processes the transcription became an interpretive act where meanings became created.

### **3.2.3 Funerals and Memorial Services**

Talking about death is never easy, particularly when the death in question is that of a colleague. This is compounded by the occupational culture of policing which does not encourage overt emotional expressions. These challenges were counterbalanced by attending the memorial services of murdered officers. These services provided valuable insight into the way that the SAPS organisation, and the individuals in it, view police murders. During the course of my research, I attended nine services: one formal police funeral and eight memorial services.<sup>34</sup>

Memorial services and funerals accounted for approximately 40 hours of observation. While funerals are more formalised religious events, memorial services are conducted by the police station in which the deceased officer worked. The station commander organises the ceremony and invites local representatives, such as Community Police Forum (CPF) members, the station staff and the public to memorialise the deceased. These memorial services allow colleagues to attend a service without having to travel across the country, as formal funerals are usually held in the town or village where the deceased is born or raised.

As Silverman (2011) notes, memorial services are naturally occurring empirical material. They are open to the public and research access did not have to be negotiated. At South

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<sup>34</sup> Appendix 16 is a list of the services attended.

African services video recording is normally done at the services by (or for) the deceased's family members for relations who live elsewhere in the country and cannot make the journey to the Western Cape. Depending on the publicity that the murder has attracted, media representatives may also be in attendance and photographers were not an uncommon sight. As such, note taking, audio recording, and the taking of photographs for the research process were made easier by the presence of others recording the occasion.

### 3.3 Quantitative Data

The paucity of quantitative research on SAPS murders, coupled with the bursts of information provided (with little methodological detail) during police presentations to Parliament made docket analysis a valuable activity. The dockets were not only a critical part of telling the story of police murders, but also an important mechanism for triangulating the data from other data collection phases.

In reading police dockets a researcher gains access to the inner sanctums of both the formal and informal organisation. In addition to illuminating how investigations are conducted the dockets also bear record of the on- and off-duty exploits of the deceased. Permission to access dockets was received early in the application process, and this quantitative data was supplemented with data from SAPS reports which are in the public domain.

Picking up from information from the last empirical research into police murders left off in 2002, my research covers up to 2014, as dockets would likely be accessible in 2015/2016 for collection and analysis.<sup>35</sup> The SAPS research unit, the Western Cape Organisational Development Unit (WCOD), provided a list of members who had been murdered during the period 2002-2014<sup>36</sup>, which included gender, rank, race, location, date of occurrence and the force numbers of the deceased member. Police who died from non-natural deaths<sup>37</sup> (including on-duty accidents as well as road traffic collisions) were included on this list.

Despite this relatively easy access to names, locating the physical dockets proved difficult. Police murder dockets are archived in the same manner as all other crimes at the investigating station. This meant that the dockets of police murders were located across the Province and were not readily accessible. Dockets can only be located via the Crime Administrative

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<sup>35</sup> This research however did not include dockets analyses. However, the variables examined then were incorporated into my research instrument.

<sup>36</sup> The list provided by the organisational development unit was cross referenced with the SAPS Roll of Honour to ensure that all names of members listed were included.

<sup>37</sup> The suicides of police officers were not included in this study as they fell outside the scope of the research.

System (CAS) number, which is a unique reference allocated when a criminal investigation case is opened. Once the police research unit had identified the dockets' locations, a request letter was sent with a formal email, via a senior police manager to all stations in the Western Cape Province.<sup>38</sup> The email requested the dockets to be located and forwarded to either the Directorate of Priority Investigations (Hawks) or to the Detective Headquarters in Cape Town. The viewing of these dockets was then facilitated through the Hawks and the Organisational Research Development Office.

Sending dockets from the police stations to these two police locations appeared to make practical sense as the dockets would remain under the administrative watch of those responsible for them. The negotiation of access to the physical dockets themselves, however, then involved another two groups, HQ detectives and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations (Hawks).

### 3.3.1 Detective Headquarters

The first gatekeeper in the data collection process was a senior police commander to whom all the older dockets (2002-2010) were sent. On meeting with the commander I was surprised that I was allowed (almost requested) to remove the dockets from the office for further analysis.<sup>39</sup> My field notes reflect that,

*'I was surprised that X was letting me take them (the dockets) - but I think our telephone conversation the day before may have worked in my favour in terms of telling X that it normally takes me 3 to 4 hours to process a docket- which is the truth, but I don't think X was enamoured with the idea of me being camped out in their office for a couple of weeks any more than I really wanted to be'.<sup>40</sup>*

This coupled with the fact that the dockets occupied much-needed space appeared to underlie the manager's decision to allow me take them away.

### 3.3.2 The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks)

The open-access, take-away approach of the detective commander was in stark contrast to the experience with the Hawks. The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks) have

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<sup>38</sup> Appendix 9.

<sup>39</sup> This surprised me because these dockets were official documents that could still have potentially come before a court. The continuity of evidence could be an issue in court where challenges regarding interference with the evidence therein could arise. To ensure some accountability dockets were accounted for (at my request) prior to me signing them out and taking responsibility of them.

<sup>40</sup> Field Notes 0113.

investigated police murders since 2009 and their mandate was amended in May 2016 to include investigation of attempted murders (on- and off-duty) where the member is shot or seriously injured by other means.<sup>41</sup> Any cases which were still open or currently being investigated were in their possession.

Access to the dockets was strictly controlled and had preconditions. Before arriving at the Hawks' office the assisting officer emailed me saying that neither he nor I would get access to the dockets until I provided my final analysis tool template.<sup>42</sup> The Hawks appeared to be concerned with demonstrating their thorough vetting of my research. This may have been a result of the criticism their predecessors received regarding professionalism and corruption, which resulted in the unit's disbandment.<sup>43</sup> Whether this was the case or not all the dockets remained in the Hawks custody during my examinations.

There was, probably, a concern regarding what my analysis could reveal about the Hawks' own police practices. It became apparent that the Hawks perceived themselves as having a reputation to uphold and any access given to me had to ensure that this investigative reputation wasn't going to be marred through external criticism. How gatekeepers, like the Hawks, restrict access to their worlds may reveal more about the gatekeeper than the access. Goldstein states that, 'a spectacle is as much about obscuring what performers wish to conceal as it is about putting on a display' (2004:16). How the gatekeeper protects and negotiates access reflects their own social identity construction as police officers. Understanding how the police construct this social identity is the beginning of understanding how officers then relate to the idea of what becomes dangerous.

### **3.3.3 The Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID)**

Another source of dockets was the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID). IPID investigates cases where police are suspected of involvement in a murder of a SAPS member or a civilian. One could think of IPID as the SAPS Internal Affairs Unit, only completely independent of the organisation. In this research arena were two cases where officers were suspects and the matter had been forwarded on to IPID. As the dockets were in IPID's

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<sup>41</sup> Personal email communication 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Personal email communication 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

<sup>43</sup> In 2009, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), referred to as the Hawks, rose from the ashes of the Directorate of Special Operations (DSO), otherwise known as the Scorpions. See Mashele (2006), Minnaar, (2008), and Kutnjak, Ivkovic and Sauerman, (2013) for the history of the Hawks and Scorpions.

possession they could not be viewed.<sup>44</sup> Although two dockets were known to have been sent to IPID, it is unknown how many other cases may also be under their remit. Even though contacts were made with IPID, they failed to answer any emails in relation to accessing dockets. Being unable to identify exactly how many dockets are in the possession of IPID contributes to the challenge in accurately gathering data on police murders.

### 3.4 Collecting the Data

Key variables from previous quantitative examinations of police murders were reviewed to create a data collection instrument.<sup>45</sup> When the dockets were mined for information, the data was captured in an Excel spreadsheet version of this instrument.<sup>46</sup> A single docket took anywhere between one and over four hours to examine. Dockets were mined by reading every report and statement within and, where available, crime scene and post mortem photographs were also examined. This was especially useful in supplementing information. For example, when there was no written indication of whether the officer had been wearing a bullet proof vest the photographs were frequently able to provide this information.<sup>47</sup>

During the research process, the data collection instrument was revised,<sup>48</sup> paring down the number of variables collected due to the significant lack of standardised data available in each docket, and the large amounts of missing information. For example, out of the 118 sources of information available, only 39 records had noted whether or not the deceased was married, single or in a relationship. The length of service of the officer was also missing. A subsequent request was sent to the WCOD to ascertain such missing information, but no response was forthcoming.

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<sup>44</sup> Email contact was made with IPID in order to identify possible dockets. The Initial email request sent 19th November 2015 with a subsequent follow up request email on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2016. No reply was received.

<sup>45</sup> This was largely structured on variables used in other known data bases on police murders. This information was gleaned during the literature review of police murders both internationally and in South Africa. Anthony Minnaars (2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2000e; 2003) and Herman Conradie's (2000, 2001) previous research on homicide of SAPS was used as foundation literature in the creation of the research instrument. In addition to this the variables examined in the CSVr (2008) study of homicide dockets were also taken into consideration. Variables were also sourced from the FBI's Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Attacked (LEOKA) database.

<sup>46</sup> Microsoft Excel (2010) was used as a data collection tool owing to the user-friendly interface and the ease with which the data collected could subsequently be manipulated. The ability to be able to graphically depict the data via pivot charts was also useful. Microsoft Excel Cooperation 2010 was used as the researcher had the licence to use this version.

<sup>47</sup> This did not include statements and reports which were written in either Isixhosa or Afrikaans. Only one docket was completely in Afrikaans and was translated by a native Afrikaans speaker, in order to ensure that no data was omitted.

<sup>48</sup> A revised Research Instrument was created for analysis purposes after the dockets had been initially examined. Appendix 10 refers.

The data was re-examined for errors with an independent person reading the table as the information was revisited. In the collection of data, all identifiable information was redacted.

### 3.4.1 Research Site Identification

Across South Africa, the SAPS identify specific policing areas as ‘hot spots’ where more than one police member has been killed.<sup>49</sup> Between 2014 and 2016, six police stations in the Western Cape Province were identified as such. These hotspots are located in areas of social and economic deprivation; primarily townships where the rate of civilian casualties is also high. Creswell (2013) states that qualitative data is usually collected at the site of study where the issue or problem can be observed. As such a research site was selected where there was a high incidence of attacks on and murder of police officers. The site was a township<sup>50</sup> in the Western Cape, which was recognised as a hotspot and to which I also had reasonable practical access. When formal written permission was given by the then-police commissioner of the Western Cape, he indicated the specific hot spots where the research should be conducted, adding, ‘*This will provide for a more realistic finding*’ on the sanctioned application.<sup>51</sup>

The reality of conducting research in South Africa is that danger is not just confined to the research site. Getting into the township to conduct fieldwork proved troubling. During the research there had been several incidents where obstructions and debris intentionally placed in the road forced vehicles to pull over or stop. When this happened the driver was ambushed, robbed, and on occasion killed. One such incident involved a police member being murdered and resulted in one of memorial services that I attended. Most of these incidents occurred either late at night or early morning and aligned with my arrival and departure time at the police station. It was something which after a 12-hour shift often kept me more than alert on the drive home. Officers often offered to escort me and on one occasion an officer said in

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<sup>49</sup> Hot spots were defined in this manner by the SAPS in a briefing presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Police on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2015 entitled, ‘Measures implemented to ensure safety of SAPS members and address unnatural deaths’.

<sup>50</sup> There are various working definitions of townships. Townships are generally comprised of communities or individuals housed in self-constructed shelters on land that they do not have legal claim to or occupy illegally (Chenwi, 2012). Informal settlements are characterised by substandard housing or illegal and inadequate building structures, lack of basic services, overcrowding and high density, poverty and social exclusion, insecure tenure (residential status), and minimum settlement size. An informal settlement is where housing has been created in an urban or peri-urban location without official approval (National Upgrading Support Program [NUSP], 2016).

<sup>51</sup> Comments made by the Provincial Commissioner on original application to conduct research.

almost disbelief, ‘*Driving, on your own? Are you not frightened?*.’ I answered ‘*no*’ but in reality, I was.<sup>52</sup>

The police fears were grounded in that townships are physical markers of high-crime rates, which, along with associated informal settlements are frequently perceived as manifestations of poverty, social and economic exclusion, social inequality, marginalisation and discrimination (Chenwi, 2012; Manaliyo, 2014; Turok, 2013). Indeed, most researches try to avoid working in dangerous fields (Lee, 1995). However, to observe the first-hand experiences of the police engaging with danger was central to the overall research, so experiencing danger was part of the overall approach.

### 3.4.2 The Research Site

The township where the research was conducted is given the pseudonym, ‘*Baile*’.<sup>53</sup> *Baile* is situated approximately 30km from the Cape Town central business district and lacks any proper infrastructure. The former Apartheid government stipulated that townships be accessed by only one main roadway (Lester, Menguele, Karurui-Sebina and Kruger, 2009). Today there has been little improvement in the infrastructure where roads, lighting and basic amenities remain as ongoing problems for residents there. Additional access routes have been created organically by the movement of residences as opposed to by design. While such infrastructure restricts the movement of residents it also restricts the movement of the police.

*Baile* is evenly divided between formal and informal settlements and many members in the community rely heavily on public transport in order to get to work and to shopping centres, etc. (Department of Community Safety [DOCS], 2015/2016). Queues for mini-bus taxis begin before the sun rises as over 80 percent of residents commute via this and other forms of public transport (Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading [VPUU], 2012). The taxi queue rarely diminishes before 10am.

In 2001 the population of *Baile* was 116,000. Since then the population has come close to doubling, with approximately 200,000 people living there (Stats SA, 2014). Needless to say, the infrastructure has not expanded in a reciprocal fashion. There are approximately 30 schools and 80 preschools in contrast to over 25,000 illegal *shebeens* in the area (Parliamentary Monitoring Group [PMG], 2014). This burgeoning population, a shortage in

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<sup>52</sup> Field Notes 0030.

<sup>53</sup> *Baile* is a word from the Irish language which can mean ‘home’ and variations of the word can also mean ‘town’. As such it was deemed suitable to refer to the research site. As a place name it also has no direct affiliations which could reference back to the research site.

basic housing and facilities, and high levels of unemployment creates a fertile ground for social disorder and criminal activities. This firmly affixes the ‘crime ridden’ label to the location of *Baile*.

Head (2017) observes that residents here are on the edge of society, out of sight and out of mind. The lack of space within these dwelling has shaped interpersonal violence in these spaces (Meth, 2003, 2016). The close proximity of individuals living together in such conditions can escalate small arguments into larger ones. In hot summer months the lack of adequate space and aerations within the dwelling naturally cause more people to move out towards the cooler space of the street. For the police, this ‘problem’ manifests itself as a form of large crowds that, to the officers, represents a danger.

Poor housing and high unemployment in townships has also created a rich ground for the proliferation of criminal gangs. In the post-Apartheid period gangs have undergone a transformation (Kinnes, 2012, 2014). They have evolved and extended their activities into different criminal economies (Pinnock, 1984, 2016) and children are recruited from a young age. Indeed, many youths are inducted into gangs while they are still in school (Jensen, 2008). During my research an officer offered, ‘*Most of these people, they are not working. So that is why they join in these gangs, they become criminals; it’s the poverty.*’<sup>54</sup> According to South African statistics, *Baile*’s unemployment currently stands at 56 percent, and has one of the highest rates of premature mortality in Cape Town and high rates of infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS.

Many Cape Town residents have referred to *Baile* as being ‘backward’ and ‘crime ridden’ (Sikwebu, 1984). The lack of accommodation coupled with the high numbers of lowly-skilled workers being forced into the segregated township areas did little to detach these labels. According to Elias (1983 quoted by Fast, 1995) by the 1980s, because of the high levels of murders in the space, residents in Cape Town referred to the area as the ‘*slagpaal*’ (abattoir) of the Cape peninsula. Since this label was created, *Baile* has consistently recorded some of the highest rates of civilian and police murders in the country (DOCS, 2015/2016). As a result, *Baile* maintains this lowly reputation where the sheer mention of its name becomes synonymous with the idea of danger and death.

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<sup>54</sup> Interview D.

### 3.4.3 The Police Station

The overcrowding and proximity of buildings was not restricted to the shacks. The police station itself was also hemmed in and was actually a repurposed old beer hall.<sup>55</sup> It has no physical symmetry and has been continually expanded in the form of shipping containers used for storage and additional offices. The station did not necessarily stand out amongst other buildings and the heavy fortification of iron grid windows was unwelcoming. Although there was a sign at the entrance and a SAPS flag, unless you were at the front of the building it was difficult to identify as a police station. If anything, the building appeared to be camouflaged within its surroundings.

A liquor store of the same red brick sat directly behind the station and as a result the two appeared to be one building. Sandwiched between was a small yard where paraffin was sold by the litre. Queues of people buying paraffin for heat and lightening purposes was common. No-one ever commented on the danger of having alcohol, flammable liquids and police ammunition in close proximity. The regularity of people coming and going from the liquor store, paraffin centre and the station kept the essence of the station as a beer hall very much alive.

The station has approximately 250 staff members of which 200 are full-time police employees. Absenteeism is a consistent problem and the number of members on a Vispol shift rarely exceeds 12 on any given day. The majority of Vispol officers are Africans and age between 30-40 years old. Many of the police in *Baile* live in or near the township and some officers have worked there for all of their careers. All officers complained about the lack of promotions emanating from the station and refer to it as 'a dumping ground'.

Owing to space constraints the detectives are located in a building approximately 3 km away from the main police building. Their offices are cramped and are supplemented by a few windowless shipping containers in which they work. Detectives are understaffed by approximately 40 members and of the 50 employed the average detective has about 17 years of experience. About 38 of them have over 11 years of experience working as detectives. In *Baile*, detectives carry an overall docket load of 9000 with each detective investigating about 200 dockets (PMG, 2014). Indeed, the officers that I shadowed carried between 200 and 600 dockets with the variance dependent on the unit to which they were attached.

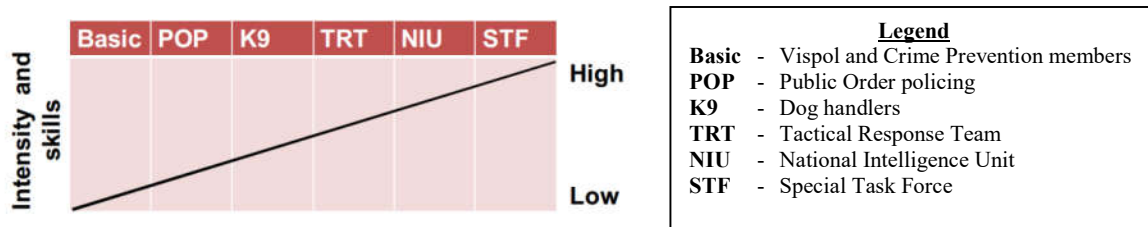
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<sup>55</sup> Interview M.

Prior to starting fieldwork, I held an informal meeting with the SAPS commander of the *Baile* cluster<sup>56</sup> to introduce myself and the research aims. He was matter of fact in his depiction of *Baile* and continually referred to it as a ‘dumping ground’.<sup>57</sup> ‘Dumping ground’ expressions seemed to suggest that the officers who work in the buildings and the community who live nearby, are themselves rubbish.

### 3.5 Selecting Participants

While the architecture is interesting and impacts this research, it was the police I was most interested in. Police members receive different levels of training relative to their roles. Below is a diagram which indicates how the police groups are recognised according to the training intensity and skill levels required.<sup>58</sup>



**Figure 1: Intensity and Skill SAPS Matrix**

Participant were selected to reflect the variety of officers within different policing units at a station level. In the SAPS, Vispol officers are murdered most frequently. It was therefore logical that working with this group should form a large part of the observations. While understanding danger and death from this frontline perspective is important, I also wanted to see how other officers viewed the issue. Detectives also operate at the community level and could therefore offer an alternative perspective within the same social space (field).

I selected the Tactical Response Team (TRT) as the third group to research over other specialist units for several reasons. First, there has been limited research on their activities<sup>59</sup> and they too have a wide exposure to policing issues. This contrasts with other specialist units who are more specialised or nationally coordinated and deployed, like the National

<sup>56</sup> Cluster is the administrative name given to a specific group of stations within a geographical area. All stations would administratively report through one office in the cluster. In 2015, the number of clusters in the Western Cape Province was reduced from 25 to 16 (SAPS Western Cape Report 2016/2017). Each cluster can account for three to six or seven police stations.

<sup>57</sup> Personal diary entry.

<sup>58</sup> Taken from the SAPS Basic and specialised training overview presented by the SAPS at the Marikana Commission of Inquiry: Report on matters of public, national and international concern arising out of the tragic incidents at the Lonmin mine in Marikana, in the North West Province (Farlam, 2015).

<sup>59</sup> To my knowledge, the TRT have never been accessed for participant observational studies.

Intelligence Unit and Special Task Force. These groups are also not accessible at a local level. There are between three and seven police stations in each cluster and the TRT responds to incidents across the cluster. The TRT represented an amalgamation of 30 officers from different stations within the cluster providing an opportunity to observe officers from different stations in one unit.

Deciding on whom to observe within these groups varied between the nominations by the station commander and my own selection. Relying on what Henry (2004:81) refers to as ‘an intuitive feel’ for the individual, I used my extended observation and reflection to feed into my decision-making in this regard. I was also concerned about bias that could result from being placed with a unit by the commander. I therefore tried to work with different units in addition to those the commander selected.

On many occasions the choice of which Vispol officers to observe boiled down to the practicality of available space in the patrol vehicle (the *bakkie*).<sup>60</sup> Nearing the end of my period with Vispol the broken *bakkie*<sup>61</sup> became a regular issue and one of the senior officers pointed out that the *bakkie* problems should not be seen as a deliberate ruse to leave me in the station and therefore away from the officers.<sup>62</sup> When I was unable to accompany officers on patrols, I conducted observations in and around the station or observed other uniform units, such as the Crime Prevention Unit.<sup>63</sup> This station time also offered me an opportunity to converse with and get to know the detectives which later eased my entry when I began working with them.

In the majority, police officers do not like to be interviewed. Perhaps the possibility of personal information being revealed or the sheer role reversal of being the interviewee as opposed to the interviewer was unnerving for many. I found that several officers believed that they had nothing ‘interesting’ to offer and had an apparent dislike of being documented in a formal capacity. Excuses were aplenty: phone calls had to be made or paperwork needed tending to. For me, the more an officer tried to avoid being interviewed, the more attractive

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<sup>60</sup> Many of the station vehicles consisted of two-seater pickup trucks (*bakkies*) which had no space for a third person other than in the prisoner space at the rear of the vehicle. This space was detached from the main cab compartment removing the ability to see or indeed converse with front seat police officers. This coupled with the fact that the space was used to transport prisoners made it a space which was both impractical and inappropriate for use in the study.

<sup>61</sup> *Bakkie* is a pick-up truck.

<sup>62</sup> Field Notes 0047.

<sup>63</sup> The Crime Prevention Unit (CPU) forms part of Vispol along with Community Service Centre (CSC) personnel, court Personnel, SAPS 13 personnel (Evidence Storage Unit) FLASH unit (Firearms Liquor and Second Hand Goods Control) Field Training Officers and cell guards (O’ Regan and Pikoli, 2014).

they appeared as an interviewee. Gentle persuasion, affirming that I wanted to hear their story regardless of their beliefs, and persistence in this approach were key factors in securing interviews.

### 3.5.1 Visible Policing (Vispol)

Vispol are the front-line uniform police who form the bulk of the station compliment. This was the first group that I joined for participant observation. Vispol includes Community Service Centre (CSC) personnel; Reliefs; Crime Prevention Units (CPUs); Court personnel; SAP 13 personnel; FLASH unit (Firearms Liquor and Second-hand Goods Control), field training officers and cell guards (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014). I conducted participant observation with all of the aforementioned groups. For ease the term Vispol is used throughout the discussion and primarily relates to all uniformed personnel.

Vispol work across four units named A, B, C and D on a four-day roster comprising of 12-hour shifts. The roster is four-days on duty, consisting of two day shifts (6am to 6pm) followed by two night shifts (6pm to 6am) and then a four-day rest period. Vispol consisted primarily of male officers with approximately one female to four males on each unit. The females rarely patrolled and spent most of their time working in the station. Participants from across different shifts were included to ensure that the possible sub-culture of one shift was not over-represented within the participants selected.

I started my research with Vispol for two reasons. Vispol is where all police officers begin their careers and so is a stepping stone to understanding how officers orientate themselves in policing. I also believed that in the initial phases of the research process it would give me a wider exposure and understanding of the environment and workings of the different units and officers themselves.

In the early stages of fieldwork, a senior commander determined who I was to accompany on patrols. He acted as the gatekeeper in the station, giving me access to certain units and car crews. By way of introduction at briefing parades he would simply say '*Come here and explain to them*'<sup>64</sup> and I would introduce myself and my reason for being there. This approach was a double-edged sword, as Ericson notes (1982) being seen as someone who has been granted formal entry can heighten suspicion among lower ranking members. I took this

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<sup>64</sup> Field Notes 0005.

opportunity however to try to mitigate these concerns by describing my own policing background and the reason for my research.

Deciding on when to move to another police unit was a matter of timing. After 14 weeks with Vispol, I reached a point of saturation regarding conversations and observations. I also was cognisant that my role had started to become more ‘participant’ than observer. On one of my last days working with Vispol one of the officers said in a matter of fact tone to me, ‘Hey G, can you help us and take fingerprints? We have 17 for a target today...we only have 7.’<sup>65</sup> Refusing to assist would have shattered my status as an insider, but I also realised that I was now perhaps being seen more as a resource than observer. Taking fingerprints was not going to impinge on my ability to observe impartially and I obliged but also decided the time was right to move on to other units.

### 3.5.2 Detective Unit

My working method with the detectives was the same as with Vispol. I followed their shifts, arriving for 7am briefings and was assigned by a senior commander to work with different groups of detectives.<sup>66</sup> In this station detectives are grouped together according to the types of crimes they investigate. I worked alongside the homicides, inquests and tracing teams.<sup>67</sup> We regularly met with officers from other cluster- teams such as the trio crime investigative unit.<sup>68</sup> I moved easily between the different teams of detectives as I not only knew individual members from my time with Vispol, but had also developed a rapport with one of the senior detective commanders prior to my arrival with the unit.

The detective unit predominantly comprised of male officers with only a couple of females in the whole unit. My observational periods followed the detectives’ working hours, beginning at 7am until approximately 4pm, although tracing operations were primarily conducted during the night time.<sup>69</sup> Detectives were rostered to work over weekends on a standby basis. This limited my ability to observe them at weekends as they would be called in from home. One officer who I was meant to be working with while on stand-by one weekend apologised

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<sup>65</sup> Field Notes 0057.

<sup>66</sup> I was initially placed with the inquest unit by the senior commander. From this unit I then worked with the two other main investigating units in order to get a sense of what detectives did on a daily basis.

<sup>67</sup> The names of each unit reflected their specific duties. The homicide unit investigated murder cases. The Inquest unit dealt with unnatural murders such as suicides and fatal road traffic collisions. The tracing unit was a tactical unit deployed to arrest suspects who were wanted for a crime or arrest warrants.

<sup>68</sup> The Trio crime unit investigated what is referred to as crimes which regularly occur during one incident, such as carjacking, house robbery and business robbery.

<sup>69</sup> A tracing operation is when the police actively seek out suspects wanted for questioning or on a warrant. It is a proactive detective unit in comparison to the homicide unit who react to incidents.

for not contacting me when he was called, *'I'm sorry it was 3am when I got the call (about the murder) and I didn't want to wake you I also didn't think it was safe for you to be driving into a township on your own at that time'*.<sup>70</sup> I was disappointed but also had to be realistic in my expectations. The same detective had offered to collect me from home and then bring me to the scene. Doing so would have added another 40 minutes onto his shift. Although I was keen to observe, I didn't want to become a burden and for that reputation to precede me when I tried to work with other officers.

### 3.5.3 Tactical Response Team (TRT)

The Tactical Response Team<sup>71</sup> (TRT) was a small team consisting of approximately 30 men. The commanding officer of the team rotated my presence between the two working units. He was initially quite sceptical of my presence and would only let me work with them on proof of the indemnity forms and paperwork I had forwarded to the SAPS head office. Owing to the smaller numbers, participant observation was easily conducted with the whole team. When one half of the team worked, the other rested. Shift patterns varied according to operational requirements in the cluster and averaged from four to 13 hours. If a visiting dignitary was in the location or a conflict was predicted, the TRT working hours would be adjusted accordingly. One shift per week incorporated a physical training day. The training and intensity of these days ranged from playing football to running up and down Table Mountain in their bullet proof vests. I observed several of these sessions but there was never an invitation to participate. I was able to travel on all regular operations with TRT as, unlike Vispol, their vehicles had adequate space and were always functional.

### 3.6 Negotiating Access

Seasoned researchers with the police have long argued for a 'get out and do it' approach in ethnographic research (Marks, 2004; Punch, 1986; Van Maanen, 1995). However, to 'get out and do it' researchers must first be able to 'get in to do it'. Issues of access with police access can involve a double-door system of entry. This first door is a formal one, requiring an

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<sup>70</sup> Field Notes 0094.

<sup>71</sup> It bears mentioning that TRT units have a chequered past. Originally formed in 2009 they were trained as a rapid response team to deal with serious incidents such as cash in transit and armed robberies - skills that were believed to be outside the capabilities of Vispol and detective units. In February 2011 the TRT units were withdrawn from visible service, after it surfaced in the media that a man was shot at point blank range by the TRT (Botiveau, 2014). The TRT reappeared, however, in 2012 at a miners' strike in Marikina where 34 striking miners and two police officers were murdered. The TRT have once again become recognised for their often forceful and violent approach in dealing with the public.

invitation into the organisation as a whole. The second is a lower-level individual door where a gatekeeper must provide entry into the occupational or street level.

These invitations have conditions attached, where the first reflect the administrative concerns of the larger formal organisation about the research and its possible findings. These are as much about potential damage control as they are access. This part of the access process is about permission and access is negotiated and secured on paper. These applications can take a long time to process, which can prove difficult for police researchers in South Africa as senior officials often have short careers and the change in management can either halt research in progress (Hornberger, 2007) or indeed make access more difficult (Marks, 2011).

While gatekeepers can facilitate the ability to conduct the research, they can also set restrictions for the research (Bayley, 1996; Neuman, 2006). My first formal gatekeeper was the then-Provincial Commissioner of the Western Cape Province. Access via the administrative process was expedited by initially being able to present my research proposal directly to the Provincial Commissioner of the SAPS before proceeding to the administrative clearance process. My request for research access benefitted from fortuitous timing in that police murders were receiving heightened media attention at the time. I received verbal approval at that initial meeting, which also assisted my subsequent formal application for access.

Access to certain groups for a researcher is not merely a matter of physical presence or absence (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989:55). In policing, being given access into the daily lives of individual officers and groups is a much more complex affair involving tests of allegiance to gain the trust and acceptance of members within. My history as a 'real cop' eased acceptance issues for many officers as did the fact that I had a bullet-proof vest. New uniformed units that I was introduced to immediately wanted to know if I had a vest. My affirmative response was always met with approving nods from officers. Having experience as a police officer also altered the 'tests' I faced as compared other ethnographers. Marks (2004) believed she became accepted and gained entry into the police group by showing her ability to urinate in an outhouse toilet. One of the 'tests' I had to pass to gain acceptance involved being asked to check a plastic bag in a communal toilet for the suspected remains of a dead baby. I did and fortunately it turned out to only be a faeces-laden bag.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Field Note 0031.

Groups can also show acceptance through the nomination of a nickname. This can strengthen links to a group or conversely create isolation. Many officers had nicknames, for example, one officer was known as ‘the enforcer’<sup>73</sup> because he was known as being heavy-handed in his enforcement of the law. He took satisfaction in this title. Being openly referred to by your nickname, and accepting the name without insult, generally signifies acceptance into the group. During the research I was given several nicknames by the different groups I worked with. ‘Irish’ and ‘G’ were assigned by Vispol, ‘Hard-drive’ and ‘Pinky’ by the detectives and the TRT units called me ‘Perky’.<sup>74</sup> Accepting all of these names in a good-humoured manner assisted in my acceptance within the different groups.

Being accepted or rejected by the participants is a recognised challenge in ethnographical studies (Herbert, 2000). There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to address the difficulty of gaining access to individuals and groups, and I tried to get individual and, then, by extension group acceptance. As officers became more used to my presence, I felt less of an outsider. After being at the station for two weeks one officer told me, ‘*I was on a course for a week and when I came back I heard that a lady was here and they didn't know what language you were speaking, they thought it was English, (Laughing)*’.<sup>75</sup> Within this short time, the officer in question was comfortable enough to tell me what was being said *about me to me*.

Just like nicknames, rejection can also take many different forms, for example, non-engagement with the researcher or indeed the ‘Coventry approach’ where nothing is said in the presence of the researcher. Although not common, I did experience rejection. For example, one morning in the CSC I wrote in my field notes that ‘*I feel about as welcome as a fart in a spacesuit*’.<sup>76</sup> In reality, not every unit felt as welcoming as the next, and the difference between acceptance and rejection appeared to depend on the nature of the unit itself.

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<sup>73</sup> Field Notes 0095.

<sup>74</sup> Irish was an obvious reference to my Nationality and G was a shortened version of my first name. ‘Hardrive’ was a nickname given to me by a detective who teased me about my ability to recall information. The ‘Pinky’ nickname arose after a conversation about white people in which I was included. I jokingly commented that I wasn’t actually white skinned that I was more a pink skinned colour. Much to the mirth of the other officers present, I was immediately given the nickname of ‘Pinky’ as my ‘isiXhosa’ name by one of the detectives present. The TRT called me ‘Perky’ as an adaption of my surname.

<sup>75</sup> Field Notes 0016.

<sup>76</sup> Field Note 0050.

### 3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection spanned from September 2014 through May 2016. Data in the form of written text, photographs and audio recordings (with consent) were collected throughout the research process. The primary sources of data were participant observations and semi-structured interviews. These various sources of data offer different vantage points from which to understand subsequent categories of the data (Pandit, 1996).

Van Maanen argues that the techniques used to collect ethnographic information are still quite 'primitive' (2011:24). Manning (2014) concurs that data collection techniques employed by ethnographers is still developing. This is observed in countless police ethnographic accounts, where researchers relay stories of making scribbled notes in toilets away from the police gaze while trying to remember the richness of the words spoken (Holdaway, 1983; Loftus 2009; Rowe, 2007; Van Maanen, 1989; Walford, 2009). I believed that making notes later out of the sight of officers might cause a loss of the richness of conversations and the trust of members. Thus, I chose a method that would let me take notes in plain sight without suspicions being aroused.

Instead of using a handwritten notebook I decided to use my mobile phone as this device is so ubiquitous in South African society. Mobile phones are an everyday commodity and more so in the police where station phones are issued to each vehicle. As such, using my mobile phone to record data is the equivalent of hiding in plain sight.<sup>77</sup> This also allowed my field notes to be backed-up immediately on a remote, secure storage server. This turned out to be the right decision, as after returning home one morning tired after a 12 hour shift, I managed to wash my fieldwork clothes with my spare old-style notebook inside of them. Luckily, I had no notes made in it. On-duty officers continually use their own private phones and so when I was taking notes it appeared as if I was simply texting. I therefore did not need to either physically remove myself from the environment to record notes, nor was a notebook present which might have changed the essence or tone of the conversation considerably.

The ease with which I was able to make notes in this manner, however, did raise some suspicion with one officer, who said that he never saw me writing anything down and asked me, '*Are you writing notes or what?*' Even though I was collecting information as I went

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<sup>77</sup> The recording of data was written and not audio. Any audio recording such as interviews was only conducted with the prior consent of the interviewee.

along the fact that the police couldn't see me do so aroused suspicion. He simply responded, 'ah ok' when I explained to him that I was using my phone to make notes.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.8 Data Analysis

The difficulty of data analysis lies in how to summarily display an understanding of the day-to-day activities observed from the masses of field notes collected (Becker, 2000, 2017) and create a text which engages the readers in the subject matter (Denzin, 2001). Van Maanen (2011) suggests that the term 'text work' underscores what this writing process entails, where these activities must then be converted into a comprehensive text that captures not only the words spoken but the context in which they were made.

There are no off-the-shelf rules for the analysis of data from multiple sources, and so such analysis must be custom built (Miles and Huberman, 1994) so as to see beyond the acts of the police to find their meaning. Inspired by the grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), a thematic analysis was adopted in this research. Often referred to as a 'lite' grounded theory, this approach was selected because it provided a flexible research tool to gain rich, detailed accounts of complex data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This sort of thematic analysis also does not require excessive technological expertise and so is a useful tool for a foundational method in qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

#### 3.8.1 Phases of Data Analysis

The first step in data analysis involved organising the data. An electronic diary stored daily and weekly field notes and reflections. Evernote software was used, which automatically noted the date and time of entry, making a chronological compilation easier. Notes were reread at the end of each day (where possible) and extended reflections were made on a weekly basis. Nvivo 10 software was also used as an organisational tool for storing and managing data.

#### 3.8.2 Stages of Thematic Analysis

There are six phases of thematic analysis used as a guide. The first stage involved familiarising myself with the data gathered. Notes were reread several times to give a sense and feel for the unedited story as it presented itself. The second and third read-through then involved noting phrases, words and key concepts which were discovered in the data. The next

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<sup>78</sup> Field Notes 0022.

step was coding the data. This involved the organisation of the data into meaningful groups of information.

Information groups could be phrases used or actions observed. Data was flagged by using manually created code tags in Nvivo (nodes). This allowed for a more purposeful analysis of officer opinions and actions. Braun and Clarke's (2006) advice that in the initial stages many thick descriptive codes should be created to ensure the context of the data is not lost in the coding process. This initial coding process yielded a long list of codes which were sorted and mapped for potential themes. A mind map was used to help visualise how different codes and themes related to each other.

The fourth phase entailed the refinement of the codes and analysis. Themes can be abstract, fuzzy and without much clear delineation (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). This phase therefore involved careful re-reading of the data to determine if a coherent pattern existed. After individual themes were identified, the entire data set was reread to determine where the themes sat in the overall pattern of the data. This stage was revisited a couple of times until the data was adequately represented.

This fifth phase of analysis focused on mining the essence and substance of the themes and moving beyond merely presenting and paraphrasing the extracts of the data. The defining part of this phase involved assigning an appropriate name to each theme, which then served to give a sense of what the theme was and how it contributed to the overall discussion.

The final phase in this analysis was the production of the report. It is a presentation of what was seen, heard and read in order to make sense of the data. It is in this phase where the analysis moves from organisation to meaning (Wolcott, 2009). The report becomes the basis of the findings of the research. Themes were continually revisited in the rereading of the data extracts. This continuous oscillation between rereading the data and the themes encouraged both an inductive (bottom up) and deductive (top down) process of reasoning throughout.

### **3.8.3 Rigour in the Research**

The integrity and competence of a study is an indication of its rigour (Kirk and Miller, 1986). Providing a detailed step-by-step process of the data-gathering techniques used in the research combined with detailing the different phases of analysis used in this research is a method of demonstrating the trustworthiness (rigour) of how the research derived meaning from the data.

Data is not coded in an epistemological vacuum and Sipe and Ghiso (2004:482-3) rightfully point out that the subjectiveness and personality of the researcher cannot be ignored. This is 'primarily an interpretive act' (Saldana, 2013:4) and has limitations, which are recognised in this research. It is not just a matter of what the data says, it's a matter of what the researcher and the data say (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). This is to say I could not ignore what Loader and Walker (2007) refer to as the cultural baggage of my background and experience as a police officer. Understanding how this baggage influences the meaning taken from the data was part of my overall reflexive process. In agreement with Webster (2008) reflexivity is not an introspective self-reflective process but more of a 'principle of practice' that I deployed throughout the research process.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations: From the Inside Out

Conducting research with and on the police often involves observing individuals outside of the police organisation at their most vulnerable. These vulnerabilities may be created by crimes suffered or, in some cases, caused by police activities. Although these individuals are not the focus of the enquiry, how the police treat and interact with them is part of the focus. Ethical concerns<sup>79</sup> then arise about their treatment and the actions of the officers concerned. If the actions of the police are conducted under a legal authority and are actioned as such, no issue arises. However, if the actions of the police are suspicious and illegal, the researcher is placed in an awkward position. In this position the researcher must consider their actions in how they might impact their access and ability to conduct research as well as the ability and access of other to do the same in the future.

My experience as a police officer offered me some reference points to the inner workings of the structure of the formal police organisation and as such offered me the status of an insider to many officers. As if confirming my position one officer said, '*Isn't it the same in your police- all the paper?*'.<sup>80</sup> As a police officer I was familiar with many aspects of the administrative processes involved in the role. Although close interaction is fundamental and integral to the research a balance had to be maintained between the insider-outsider statuses.

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<sup>79</sup> Prior to commencing fieldwork, ethics clearance was sanctioned by the University of Cape Town Research Ethics Committee (Appendix 11). The research also adhered to the South African Police Service research procedure guidelines which consisted of an indemnity form, conditions and an undertaking agreement. See Appendices 13-15. These two processes are more than mere administrative procedures as they offer guidance in dealing with human participants in an ethnographically framed research study.

<sup>80</sup> Field Note 0029.

Findings were written up in the words of the officers themselves to avoid any misinterpretations.

During the course of the research I experienced ethical quandaries. On one occasion a search had been conducted at a dwelling and one could argue that the officers had used excessive force. Afterwards the owner came to the station to make a complaint about the way it was carried out. I was in the station at the time and he pointed at me saying, '*that one there- she was there- Whitey – on the search*'.<sup>81</sup> To confirm or deny the man's complaint or even my presence could have been interpreted as my informing on the officers I had been working with. It also could have jeopardised my access to that and other groups of officers in future. I took the researcher survival option and left the room at quick pace neither confirming nor denying my presence or what I witnessed and hoped to erase the whiteness of my presence in the process.

Many believe that while this might be an acceptable course of action for a researcher, police officers who are silent of known wrongdoing are as guilty of the offenders (Faull, 2013). Questions arise as to whether the same approach should apply to the police researcher? In such instances do researchers have guilty knowledge and dirty hands? (Fetterman, 1989). Throughout the research incidents of verbal and physical abuse by the police were commonplace. Whether to 'blow the whistle' on such behaviour is an ongoing debate (Holdaway 1983; Marks 2004; Reiner 2000; Westmarland 2001). Although ethnographers recognise the ethical concerns involved none have crossed over the thin line of exposure. To do so would not only jeopardise the research process but any future behaviours of the police would be guarded as a result. As previously discussed, gaining access to the individual groups in police organisations is already a difficult and delicate process. Violating the group's trust could shut the access door for any who opt for the whistle-blowing route.

Tolerating the transgression of the police during my research was a pragmatic choice as well. In attempting to understand the risks and dangers faced by police it was necessary for me to witness their normal behaviours and actions. In studying police in West Africa, Beek and Gopfert (2012) assert that to understand the violence you have to witness it. Any attempts to curb behaviour may have an adverse effect on the research itself. The actions of the police, through verbal or physical abuse, may be contributory factors to the subsequent attacks on

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<sup>81</sup> Field Note 0046.

them. While I did not encourage such behaviours, I believe that any interference with them would have had a limiting effect on the exploration and validity of the data gathered.

Other ethical considerations speak more to the subjects' knowledge of the research itself. This research was overtly conducted and officers were always informed of the researchers own personal and professional background as well as the purpose of the research. This was for two reasons. First, I believed that the officers may be more willing to speak with me if they were aware of what the research was about. Second, I believed that if officers knew my own professional experience that it could negate any concerns they would have about me being in their presence. It was only towards the end of the participant observational period that I realised how effective this approach had been. Sometime after I had introduced myself to the first TRT unit, one of the officers approached me and offered, '*You need to say exactly what you said to us today when you work with the other TRT group. Captain X is there and he is a good guy, but you know what we are like in the TRT- we would not say a lot, but because you told us what you were doing, no- it's good.*'<sup>82</sup> Although it was at the end of the fieldwork it confirmed that the approach I took throughout the fieldwork appeared to be the right one.

Even though I have professional police experience I was under no illusion that, like any researcher, my presence could have real safety consequences for officers that I worked with as well as myself. This was another ethical consideration. I experienced this within the first week of fieldwork when patrolling with three officers. We happened upon a security vehicle which was being smashed by a large gang of men. Unaware if there was anyone in the vehicle, the three officers, firearms ready, jumped from their vehicle and began shooting towards the large crowd. At the same time, I went to accompany them and quickly realised that I had no firearm or any method of protecting myself should the crowd have turned on the police. One of the officers had a similar thought as he was halfway between me and the crowd. He began shouting at me to '*stay with the car!, stay with car!*'.<sup>83</sup> I remember standing at the car door, a couple of feet away from shacks, and thinking that this location was possibly less safe than the open space with them and the crowd. This example underlines the difficulty facing researchers in terms of considering the safety not only of themselves but of the participants involved.

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<sup>82</sup> Field Notes 0090.

<sup>83</sup> Field Notes 0017.

### 3.9.1 On being a Female Researcher

While the actions of a researcher are within their control, physical attributes are not always so and they may also impact safety as well as access. As the only white woman in a car, shouts of ‘*Umhlungu*’ (meaning ‘white person’ in IsiXhosa) from people in the street were common. I naturally stood out both due to the colour of my skin and gender in what is an African male dominated group. On a couple of occasions, I was unable to accompany officers on covert drug operations because of this. My field notes indicate that even by my 30th day of fieldwork, as we drove around the township one of the officers said, ‘*Mos, (laughing) people are asking who you are*’.<sup>84</sup> I was instantly recognisable as the white outsider woman when working with the Vispol officers and thus attracted attention to them as well as myself.

Just as examinations of female police officers underscores the masculinity of the police role, so too has the introduction of a female researcher in the SAPS (Marks, 2005; Hornberger, 2011; Wardrop, 2009). Female police officers are often considered as becoming masculinised in the role of policing as are some female researchers. I would agree that to ‘walk the walk’ as a police officer and researcher of the police a level of masculinisation must occur. While female researchers may understand and be more or less comfortable with this, our subjects do sometimes stumble with gender and policing. In introducing me to an oncoming unit a senior manager commented, ‘*this lady is here for research...and she is to go out with you (the police present). She is also a police officer*’. It was then as if he had just heard what he had said and felt the need to clarify, ‘*so, she is not a lady, she is a police officer so there are no ladies, just officers. Although please be careful about her safety when you are out there I would like the same number of people coming back*’.<sup>85</sup>

Throughout my fieldwork there were ongoing comments regarding the fact I was female. My sex was cited by other officers in many circumstances, in some cases it was a statement that they didn’t want me with them, ‘*this lady’s your problem today*’<sup>86</sup> or in another case as an excuse for the officer when he walked away from his commander who the asked him ‘*where the fuck are you going?*’ The officer responded jovially: ‘*Now captain I don’t want to load my gun in front of the lady. I do not want to scare her*’<sup>87</sup>. Gender is deeply embedded in police culture (Chan, Doran, and Marel, 2010; Fletcher, 1996; Martin, 1980, 1990, 1994, 1996; Westmarland, 2017) and I believe that my gender may have evoked similar responses even if

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<sup>84</sup> Field Notes 0035.

<sup>85</sup> Field Notes 0009.

<sup>86</sup> Field Notes 0004.

<sup>87</sup> Field Notes 0006.

I were not a police officer myself. While it was clear to me my professional experience reduced the influence of my gender, it was still something which appeared to resonate in research observations.

### 3.9.2 On being a Foreign Police Officer

Prior to commencing fieldwork with the SAPS, I was reminded of how my position as a police officer influenced my own and others' perceptions of me. Before being given access to work with the police I had to sign indemnity forms which I happened to read out-loud to a fellow PhD student. She exclaimed, *'Oh my, are you not afraid?'* And then rhetorically stated, *'Of course you're not afraid; you're a cop!'* I stared at her with a look of amusement and asked, *'Are cops not allowed to be afraid?'* She replied, *'I have no idea why I said that? Wow!'*<sup>88</sup> My friend realised that the idea of fear not being part of an officer's uniform was a bias she had. Whether that officer be myself or any other police officer in the world, being afraid was not something she had previously considered as possible for a cop. These sorts of biases exist in both the civilian and police mind and I was aware, throughout the research, that being a police officer placed me in a unique position.

Undeniably, being a police officer greased the doors of accessibility. My professional background appeared to grant me more access than otherwise would have been permitted. For example, a fellow researcher, who had also conducted ethnographic research with the SAPS, told me that he had not been sanctioned to work with certain groups of police as it had been deemed *'too dangerous'*.<sup>89</sup> I, on the other hand, was granted permission to work not only with Vispol and the detectives, but also the TRT who are more routinely involved in overtly dangerous situations than Vispol. As a fellow police officer there was an unspoken acceptance that I was more experienced to deal with dangerous situations than my fellow researchers.

Once working with the different units and also while being given access to the HAWKS office and dockets, there was an unspoken belief amongst the officers that I had sufficient training based on my policing background. While this was true in terms of handguns, semi-automatic weapons, investigative, and general policing training, I did not have automatic weapons or rifle training. Nor had I been trained to drive the same vehicles the SAPS used. I

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<sup>88</sup> Personal Diary notes

<sup>89</sup> Personal Diary notes

had police experience and I used this to gauge and moderate my involvement in many different situations during my research.

SAPS officers also made assumptions about my abilities. One night, for example, while on a patrol one of the officers asked me to drive the van while he and another officer searched for a couple of guys who had been seen wandering on the road and between the shacks. I obliged him and drove slowly as they walked parallel to the van. When he returned to the vehicle he said, *'I know you can drive. See how I don't bother asking about your licence. I know you can drive!!'*<sup>90</sup> While I can drive, I had never driven a van of that size before. Driving the van was a low-risk endeavour and I was only asked to do so because the officer presumed I had the skills needed because I was a police officer myself. The reason I did take the wheel was to maintain that insider position as having refused would have potentially diminished my status with the officers.

Being acknowledged as a foreign police officer had other distinct advantages. In the methodology chapter I referred to the 'unscripted events' (page 58-59) which often were as a result of my professional background. In addition to invitations to participate in police courses such as combat training, self-defence, and field training, I was also included in weekly management meetings. Police officers were eager to hear how an officer from a different country perceived how policing was done in their own country. Just as I was drawing comparisons, so to were the officers in the township. During many of the management meetings my opinion was sought and, while I was happy to engage in discussions, I had to ensure that it was clear I was not representing another police service. I was there as a researcher and reminded officers of that when I spoke at these meetings.

People lived and officers worked in what many from more developed countries would consider harsh conditions. The officers were eager to show me where they worked and let me see and experience those conditions first hand. This experience caused me to reflect frequently on how much easier the policing conditions were in Ireland. Even though I have worked in some of the most economically disadvantaged communities in Ireland, they seemed luxurious in comparison to the conditions of the townships and the police stations situated within those spaces. This became a reference point for me when reflecting on my notes. During those reflections I also had to ensure that the comparative element of the research did not crowd out the situationally-specific observations being made.

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<sup>90</sup> Field Notes 0046

My police-specific identity did create some challenges during the research process. In particular, I found that when examining the dockets, I could not help but view them with a trained investigator's eye. However, rather than trying to fight the police versus academic identity, I embraced it. I read through the dockets as a detective identifying gaps I perceived in the investigation. I then read them again and extracted the raw data that I needed as a researcher. This approach took me twice as long as it might have for another researcher, but it enabled me to see the dockets as archives and then present them in that form.

It was by chance that I was also given the dockets to examine at the end of the fieldwork and on reflection, it was good that it turned out this way. Reading about the circumstances of the murders; the randomness in which many officers were killed was unnerving. While reading the dockets would not have put me off conducting observations with the different units, I am not sure I would have been as at ease had I read the dockets before going into the field.

While being a police officer gave me greater access I was also conscious that I might have an implicit bias towards the detective unit. Much of my own career has been spent as a detective and I knew that I had to guard against inadvertently championing that unit's work. Being cognisant of this potential bias allowed me to continually question *my* understanding of the actions and decisions of the detectives that I observed. I reflect on this in the notes I made as a way of countering and testing such a bias.

Having the status as a foreign police officer unlocked many conversations with officers at all ranks. Being Irish also appeared to be an advantage in opening discussions. Many of the Vispol officers were soccer and American professional wrestling fans. Much to the amusement of some officers I had the same distinct red curly hair as Seamus, an Irish professional wrestler. Many officers also supported Manchester United where another famous Irishman, Roy Keane, was well known. Although I am not an avid sports fan, having worked in a police organisation where men dominate prepared me to hold my own in these conversations.

Although I have reflected on being a female researcher (section 3.9.1), being a female officer was also noted in my observations. As Martin (1979) notes, many female officers are still recognised in their role as women first and officers second. In South Africa, and indeed elsewhere, women are still largely expected to want to have children. Throughout the fieldwork my decision of not having children was a source of amazement to both male and female officers. I frequently answered questions about what I refer to in my notes as 'fertility

and ability'. Many officers found it difficult to accept my decision not to have children. Although this is not completely out of synch with thinking in the Northern hemisphere, it was not as readily accepted in South Africa.

During the research there were many occasions where I thought that the police station reflected male-female social norms in South Africa. Throughout the research female officers remained in the station (the home) while the male officers went to work (outside). The positionality of female officers was something which surfaced throughout the research and was linked to the culture of officers concerned. These cultural biases, the shared values and beliefs of the community (and officers themselves), also had a significant influence in how women police were often perceived. One female officer explained to me that '*you see our people (her own emphasis), it's just that you don't understand isiXhosa. They undermine women. If you are coming to arrest them, they say no! I cannot be arrested by you or sometimes no, just shut up; I don't talk to a woman. I'm only talking to a man*'.<sup>91</sup> African culture remains very patriarchal and this appears to strongly influence community perceptions vis-à-vis female police officers. As a female police officer I was cognisant of how many female officers regarded their roles and how I might be perceived in not always adhering to it.

The reality of the challenging living conditions of many officers was often brought into sharp focus through conversations. One afternoon I was chatting with an officer about how cold it was outside and the fact that I had hung washing out which now wouldn't dry. She commented that I was lucky to be able to hang washing out in the first place because where she lived her washing would be stolen from the washing line.<sup>92</sup> The differences between the living standards of police officials in South Africa and Ireland was probably one of the challenges I struggled with the most. In the station, female officers often asked me to bring in and give them any clothes that I did not want. Male officers also frequently asked me to give them my car when I was leaving. I struggled with a mixed sense of embarrassment and guilt about how many police officials were struggling to get by while I was affluent enough to be here simply observing them.

The advantages and disadvantages of being a foreign, female police officer conducting research in a South African township added a layer of complexity to my findings. The

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<sup>91</sup> Interview B

<sup>92</sup> Field Notes 0080

tensions I experienced cannot be presented as a clean capstone on top of my observations. However, I feel that by being cognisant of the challenges and issues that I faced enabled me to be reflective in a way which enriched my research.

### 3.9.3 Protecting Identities

Another consideration for researchers is the anonymity of those they observe and study. Throughout the research names and identities of individual officers, locations and place names were changed through the allocation of pseudonyms to ensure this anonymity.<sup>93</sup> A similar approach was used to ensure the anonymity of the public who featured in many police actions observed. No direct quotes are identifiable to specific individual police officers. Through this approach, the observations of the police officers in dealing with such persons are not linkable to individual citizens. While the citizen interactions are featured in participant observational studies, the focus is on how the officers behaved and acted. However, it is accepted that one of the limitations in reading these findings may be that many officers may be able to identify themselves through recollection of events or conversations held. This chapter has captured key decisions relating to the process of research and the methodological decisions which have shaped the terms of reference for a study which explores the intersections between the objective and subjective dimensions embedded in danger, death and police work.

Having explained the methods employed in conducting this research, the next chapter presents the research findings, as gleaned from the police investigation files of murdered police officers.

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<sup>93</sup> Random letters from the alphabet were assigned against interview participants. Field notes are indicated by where they were noted in my own journaling records. Vispol members are grouped together without demarking the working group or unit to which they are attached. Similarly, the working detective groups are not specified.

## Chapter 4. Records of Danger and Death

### 4.1 Introduction

The limited research, in South Africa that has been conducted on police murders focuses on descriptive data sets. While this can describe the *who, what, where, when and how* it does not explain why these murders happen at the rate they do. In order to gain this understanding additional data beyond simple metrics is required. The descriptive data provides a frame whereas archival material such as dockets and SAPS annual reports can reveal a deeper understanding of the way danger is perceived and acted upon by the organisational and occupational cultures. To explore both quantitative and qualitative aspects of dockets the following research question asks: **What do the official records of police murders reveal about the organisational and occupational perceptions of and responses to danger ?**<sup>94</sup>

The South African police has at its core a central archive of which the police investigation file (docket) is the primary unit.<sup>95</sup> SAPS Annual Reports serve as an archive of the previous year's dockets and include data on the number of members who died as well as other organisational information. The docket is not merely a collection of each case's paperwork but bears record of policing as work, as daily experiences, a record of failures and successes. Docket analysis can contribute to a better understanding of some of the dangers police face (Bruce, 2002), and provide a statistical picture as well as information about the daily routines and practices of the officers.

Police dockets are a form of archive that document not only a specific event, i.e. the murder of a police officer, but also detail the circumstances surrounding each event. The archive is a term employed by Foucault that he uses to refer to 'the general system of the formation and transformation of statements' which exists at a given period within a particular society (1972:130). Foucault describes archives as 'the system of discursivity'. Archaeology, as a way of doing historical analysis of systems of thought or discourse, seeks to describe the archive. With this in place, the genealogical analysis will seek to understand how these structures and relationships manifest in the lived reality of policing, and what effects they

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<sup>94</sup> In South Africa 'murder' is legislated under Schedule 6 Section 50(6), 58 and 60 (11) and (11a) Criminal Law Amendment Act 105 of 1997 when -(a) it was planned or premeditated (b) the victim was-(1) a law enforcement officer performing his or her functions as such, whether on duty or not, or a law enforcement officer who was killed by virtue of his or her holding such a position: or (2) a person who was given or was likely to give material evidence with reference to any offence referred to in schedule 1.

<sup>95</sup> A 'docket' is an official document in which a record is kept of a reported crime and the investigation conducted into such a crime (Docket Analysis Learner Manual, 2002:2).

have in the creation of, and the performance by, police officers. Through this understanding this chapter therefore aims to understand what SAPS dockets and annual reports, as the official records of members who were murdered between 2002 and 2014, reveal about police perceptions and responses to danger.

## 4.2 Annual Police Reports

The SAPS Annual Reports are part of the organisation's formal response to their mandate. These reports set out operational, strategic and tactical plans, and explain these relative to crime figures. The Annual Reports also discuss SAPS's use of financial and human resources, including reporting on the murder of police members. They are, therefore, another type of organisational archive that provides information on how the organisation responds to police murders.

Although little has been done to date with these reports other than to tally up the numbers of deceased officers, how these numbers are presented are of importance. Accurate numbers not only help the police to understand the murder of their own officers, but there are wider requirements for such data. Indeed, during this research a high court judge requested details about murdered officers to assist in determining a prison sentence against an offender convicted for a police murder.<sup>96</sup>

The SAPS Annual Reports list officers who died on-duty on a 'Roll of Honour'. Rolls of honour have a semiotic significance both within and outside the organisation. They designate the person as a police officer, and commemorate them as someone who died while in service. The Roll lists police who have been murdered or died accidentally on-duty. The most notable change in the Roll was the removal of the names of officers who were killed while off-duty after 2003 (Minnaar, 2011).<sup>97</sup> Members who are murdered off-duty or who die by suicide are

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<sup>96</sup> Personal E mail communication (April 19<sup>th</sup> 2015). Assistance was sought by SAPS from this researcher to cross reference the information they had relative to mine regarding police murders for sentencing purposes of an offender who was convicted of murdering a police officer.

<sup>97</sup> Under the guidelines for completing the SAPS 591 (Notification of attacks on and Unrelated Deaths of Police members) it is indicated that police officials (including police reservists) are on duty "From the time a police member leaves his or her place of residence en route to his or her official place of work (police station, unit of branch) in order to perform duties as determined in section 206 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No 108 of 1996)." Members must be booked on duty in the Attendance register (Z8) and the diary for commissioned officers (or other relevant report, for example, for shift workers). Off duty is defined as the time "he or she arrives at his or her place of residence within a reasonable time after his or her tour of duty has expired; on rest days, annual vacation or sick leave, including week-ends in the case of members who are not shift workers; [and] on public holidays." In practice, though, there is ambiguity in how the SAPS members themselves define and understand being on or off-duty. Bruce (2010) reflects '*I have asked a number of police officers about the basis for this rule. Many of them have some idea that it is provided for in standing orders but none have as yet been able to clarify in which Standing Order it is covered*' (2010: 42). My own observations

not included, which is the norm for many police services.<sup>98</sup> Being excluded from the Roll has as much symbolic significance as being included. Those who are killed while off-duty could be said to have been symbolically discounted as police officers. In this sense it might also be said to insinuate to remaining members that their lives only matter to the organisation when they are on-duty.

In the 2013/2014<sup>99</sup> report the SAPS chose to add motor vehicle deaths to the Roll of Honour. Although officers who died in motor vehicles would have been included under the previous description, the fact that SAPS opted to present the data in this way may indicate that the organisation is recognising such deaths as a focus point or issue to be addressed. This may suggest that the formal organisation is moving towards a more nuanced understanding of member deaths on-duty, but it is curious that off-duty murders are not also enumerated in the same way.

While more detail in the reports is welcomed, inaccuracies exist in the reports regarding the number of officers who died. In the body of the 2013/2014 report the Minister of the Department of the Police stated that ‘77 members were killed in the year under review’ (Nhleko in SAPS, 2013:9) this was true and included both on and off-duty deaths. In the same report the Deputy Minister stated that ‘during 2013/2014, 68 members were killed while on-duty’ (Soty in SAPS, 2013:13). The Roll of Honour matched the Deputy Minister’s number (SAPS 2013:33). While this discrepancy may only create a small amount of confusion, what is surprising is that both the deputy and the Roll conflicted with the body of the text, which showed that 29 members died on-duty and 48 died off-duty, making the total 77 as indicated by the Minister. A discrepancy of 39 deaths brings into question the accuracy and the organisational culture’s reporting mechanisms. As a further example, while outside of the data collection for this research, the 2015 Annual Report completely omitted the Roll of Honour for the Western Cape from the published report (SAPS, 2015).

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were similarly that officers are uncertain as to how being on/off duty is actually defined. This is relevant because, although being ‘on duty’ is when the officer is engaged in actual duties (including getting to and from work), dockets show that members are recorded as being off duty prior to arriving at the station. In collecting my own data from the dockets, the definitions provided by the regulations were used as a guide in determining whether members were considered to be either on or off duty at the time of their murder.

<sup>98</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that a recent complaint has been lodged to the Ontario (Canada) Human rights Commission relating to such exclusion. The claim is from the wife of a police officer who had 22 years of police service and subsequently died by suicide. The claim argues that excluding those who died by suicide is discriminatory and stigmatises officers who suffered from mental illness (CBC News, 2016). It is possible that the outcome of this ruling may impact memorialisation of police on Honour Rolls going forward.

<sup>99</sup> Also in subsequent SAPS reports 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Although the Roll of Honour is primarily symbolic, it represents more than just sentiment. The organisation’s inability to accurately record such information appears to be acknowledged amongst its own members. One officer told me a story of an officer who had been listed as deceased on the Roll of Honour but was in fact alive and healthy.<sup>100</sup> Whether this is folklore or not underlines the lack of confidence that members have in the ability of the organisation to accurately reflect who amongst them has been killed. Below is a list of names which were on the SAPS Roll of Honours<sup>101</sup> but were not included on the list provided by the SAPS WCOD for this research.

Report Year	Personal Number	Rank	Name	Date of Death
2012/2013	633551-9	Warrant Officer	Ross	31/1/2013
2011/2012	0436140-7	Warrant officer	Coetzee CJ	16/10/2011
2010/2011	0534659-2	Sergeant	Fortuin	12/1/2011
2010/2011	0528977-7	Warrant officer	Abrahams	12/1/2011
2009/2010	0448938-1	Inspector	Scott AS	22/9/2009
2006/2007	545328-3	Constable	Joseph EJ	18/2/2006
2005/2006	7007198-5	Reserve Constable	De Beer J	21/4/2005

**Figure 2: List of Names Missing from WCOD Listing**

In a Foucauldian sense the analysis of text includes not only what is included but also what is left out of that text. The lack of accuracy in the reports is concerning as this is a public representation of the formal organisational response to, and understanding of, the murder of its own members. Mistakes can happen in large organisations, but as an archive of the organisational culture these frequent errors might be seen to suggest that member deaths are not a priority concern for the SAPS.

### 4.3 Docket Structure

A ‘docket’<sup>102</sup> is an official document in which a record is kept of a reported crime and the investigation conducted into such a crime (Docket Analysis Learner Manual, 2002:2). Its purpose is to store the paper evidence of a criminal investigation, and act as an administrative guide in both the investigation and management of the case. When investigations are complete, police dockets become the case files that contain all the recorded information about a case including basic facts and demographic information, victim and witness statements, the

<sup>100</sup> Field Notes 0072.

<sup>101</sup> This Roll of Honour list refers to the Western Cape Province only.

<sup>102</sup> In other jurisdictions dockets are also referred to as police investigation files.

police officers' activities in dealing with the case and its progress through the criminal justice system (South African Law Commission, 2001:92).

A docket is first opened by a SAPS officer when a crime is detected or complaint reported. Usually a brief written statement created by the opening officer forms the basis of the docket. Details of the docket are entered into the Crime Administrative System (CAS) and a unique identifying number is assigned.<sup>103</sup> Witness statements, complaint reports and other supporting documents from the docket are scanned and saved on an electronic documenting system so as to prevent their loss or theft (Omar, 2009). This is not yet implemented nationwide and is in the process of being rolled out.

The docket is divided into three sections. Section A details the crime category and captures all the associated details such as day, date, time and place of the incident. Section B records known information about the complainant/victim and the offender. Section C is the investigative diary where the actions taken by officers and supervisory comments by senior personnel regarding the investigation are recorded. The docket also contains a SAPS checklist (called the SAPS 6) where various personnel verify that actions have been taken in the investigation (Arend, 2015).<sup>104</sup> Notably in this research, none of the dockets examined had all of these sections fully completed by the relevant personnel, highlighting critical gaps in the investigations themselves.

SAPS detectives are taught how to compile and manage dockets in their 12-week foundational Resolving of Crime course (ROC). Three full days during this course are allocated to docket administration (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014). In addition to this course there is also an extensive range of Standing Orders that govern docket management.<sup>105</sup>

The dockets of murdered police officers are created and archived in the same manner as any other crime docket. The only procedural difference is that an additional electronic form (SAPS 591) must be completed within 12 hours of the murder, whether on- or off-duty, of an officer. This form is forwarded to the Provincial Commissioner and the Division of Visible

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<sup>103</sup> These CAS numbers are chronologically generated and indicate what number crime it is in the station for that specific year. For example Dublin CAS 234/2017 indicates that for a particular police station (Dublin) this would be the 234th crime recorded at that station in 2017.

<sup>104</sup> The checklist refers to the CSC, commander (Section A), the computer operator (Section B), the station system coordinator (Section C and Section G), detective commanders (Section D and Section E) and the SAP 6 clerk (Section F). Actions may also be entered into the investigative diary section of the docket (Section C).

<sup>105</sup> Standing Order (General) 321 Docket Management – Case Docket (SAPS 3M), Standing Order 326 on the Filing of Dockets, Standing Order (General) 324 on the Checking of Case Dockets and Standing Order (General) 325 on the Closing of Dockets (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014:69).

Policing commander in charge of police safety. These forms, if completed and submitted, provide an executive summary of the related docket for senior management.<sup>106</sup>

In the research station, dockets were stored in rooms that were bursting with archived dockets. Shopping trolleys were used to cart dockets that couldn't fit on the shelves and seemed a solution to moving large quantities of documents. However, the question of *where* the trolleys came from is of interest. The trolleys are owned by a shopping centre and no doubt are not on loan to the police station for filing purposes. The dockets are an archive of crime and yet are stored in trolleys that are technically stolen. In addition to the trolleys and bursting rooms, two shipping containers at the side of the station were also needed to store the volume of dockets from this station.



**Figure 3: Shopping Trolleys to Store Dockets (Perkins, 2015)**

#### **4.4 SAPS Docket Analyses**

In 2008, as a response to increased police murders, in its annual report the SAPS noted that '*an analysis of attacks on police officials in the past*' (2008:92) showed that attacks on police officials occurred while engaging in police activities, such as pursuing criminals when on-duty, but most officers were killed off-duty. This was the first indication that SAPS used docket analysis to understand police murders. The report however contains no further description of how this analysis was conducted.

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<sup>106</sup> A request to access these forms was made to the Provincial office on the 2th October 2015 but sanction was not given and access was subsequently made dependent on a further formal application being made to the national police headquarters. It was unfortunately outside the time scope of this research to reapply for access but it would have been interesting to determine how many forms were actually completed and submitted relative to the number of actual occurrences.

By 2011, despite a slight decrease in the numbers of on-duty police murders, the issue was supposedly receiving growing attention from SAPS.<sup>107</sup> Faull (2010) suggests that this was a tactic to deflect attention away from police abuse of force, which had attracted negative media coverage following the deaths through police actions of Andries Tatane<sup>108</sup> and Mido Macia<sup>109</sup>. Regardless of motivations, the analysis brought a more detailed approach to understanding the circumstances under which police came under attack. A further analysis later in 2011 into trends around police killings was also conducted. This data was aimed at implementing effective and appropriate preventative measures as part of an overall safety plan initiated by the then Minister of Safety (SAPS, 2011/2012:81).

These studies unfortunately contain no details on the methodology utilised, which raises questions about the information they present. The annual report lists the numbers of police murdered from 2006-2013 in its discussion, but there is no indication that a docket analysis relates to this specific period. The report also states that *'the circumstances and conditions under which members were killed on-duty were reconstructed to identify contributing factors and causes'*, (SAPS, 2012:91), but provides no information on how this was done, or what the findings were. This raises questions as to the accuracy and validity of the study.

The 2012 SAPS annual report stated that another docket analysis was undertaken in 2012/2013 of *'all members who had died on and off-duty [...] to determine trends and tendencies'* (SAPS, 2012/2013:91). Again, the devil is in the detail: there is no information on the year(s) which were analysed and no published report on what these findings revealed. These studies create the impression that SAPS undertake ongoing 'analysis' into the murder of police members, but the lack of information about these efforts raise concerns about their credibility.

In a 2015 parliamentary hearing<sup>110</sup> into attacks on and injuries of police, the SAPS stated that most of the officers who were killed were aged between 30 to 40 years old and averaged three to six years of service. They were attached to Visible Policing, were first responders at

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<sup>107</sup> SAPS annual reports stated that in 2008, 109 members were murdered on duty, in 2009 there were 109, 2010, 94 and in 2011 there were 92.

<sup>108</sup> In 2011, Andries Tatane was protesting about service delivery in the Free State Province in South Africa. During the course of the protest he was beaten to death by seven police officers who were subsequently charged and convicted of his murder (Cornish, 2011).

<sup>109</sup> Mr Mido Macia was arrested by the SAPS in 2013, during which he was handcuffed and dragged behind a moving police vehicle. The incident was recorded by an onlooker and the images were replayed around the world. He died of his wounds in police custody (Sapa, 2013).

<sup>110</sup> Briefing to the Portfolio Committee for Police by the SAPS on 28 August 2015 entitled, 'Measures implemented to ensure safety of SAPS members and address unnatural deaths' (SAPS, 2015).

complaints or crime scenes, and were murdered by a third party. The hearing was also told that more members had been killed off-duty than on-duty, most often as a victim of crime but the highest rate of officer's deaths was due to motor vehicle accidents. In cases where the member was murdered, injuries to the head, face and neck areas dominated and the majority died from being shot. The race of the officers murdered was not given.<sup>111</sup> While it is not clear how the SAPS collated these findings, based on the difficulties of locating docket for my research, it is more likely these numbers were generated through reviews of the SAPS 591<sup>112</sup> and not docket analysis per se. The 591 form is electronic and was created in 2012 to record attacks and injuries on SAPS members.

#### 4.5 Data Sources

Apart from the difficulties of docket access described in Chapter 3, extracting data from collected dockets was difficult due to the poor data collection standards that the SAPS maintain. This research examined 47 dockets that were provided by the SAPS. Those dockets were a subset of the 118 officers who died or were killed between 2002 and 2014 in the Western Cape. The data set was compiled from four separate, yet often overlapping sources: SAPS annual reports, a list of deaths from the WCOD, the Hawks' information matrix, and online media sources.

The SAPS only began recording off-duty murders of police officers as police murders in 2009. Prior to this these murders were categorised as ordinary civilian murders. As a result, seven years of dockets were not identifiable and are therefore not accounted for in this data set. Any accessible information on off-duty deaths post 2009, however, is included.

The Hawks created their information matrix as a basic overview of police murders for internal rather than statistical use.<sup>113</sup> The matrix contains information about police dockets, CAS numbers, date of the murder, crime scene<sup>114</sup> information, details about the deceased<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> This form (SAPS 591: Notification of attacks on and Unnatural Deaths of Police Members: On and Off Duty refers) is a comprehensive electronic form which details many of the factors that this research examined; General Information (Section A of the form) details of the victim (Section B of the form) Circumstances of the Incident (Section C of the form) and Details of the attackers (Section D of the Form). Although access to these forms was requested as part of the overall research it was ignored and email requests indicated that a new application would have to be made to access such records. It appears this electronic form came into circulation on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2014 as part of Head Office Circular (4/12/2)(SAPS National Police Safety Plan, 2015/16).

<sup>113</sup> A copy of the matrix was given to the researcher for cross reference purposes but was requested by the Hawks that it not be shared publicly due to the fact that some cases were still under investigation. Even with this matrix I was told to exercise caution as the facts were normally revised before any external reports were compiled from it. It was primarily used by the Hawks as a quick reference guide.

<sup>114</sup> This gives an overview of the location, for example, shebeen, house etc.

and possible suspect(s), the name of the investigating officer, and the status of the investigation.<sup>116</sup> The matrix provided invaluable basic information about murders for this research when the actual dockets could not be located. The matrix also provided information for 16 additional deaths where dockets were not available.<sup>117</sup> The Hawks were also able to provide basic information on dockets which had been identified during data collection as murders of officers either on or off-duty, but where the CAS number and/or details of the case were missing. In this way, supplementary information was provided on 52 cases (approximately half of the cases in this ‘unknown’ category), including data on the incident location, name of the deceased, rank and manner of death (e.g. shot or stabbed, etc.).<sup>118</sup>

Two dockets could not be located in police archives. It is unknown whether these dockets had been negligently or purposefully misplaced. Missing dockets continued to be an issue of concern both in this research and within the criminal justice system (Arend, 2015; Omar, 2009; O’ Regan and Pikoli, 2014). Even among the accessible dockets the contents varied significantly and made data collection difficult. Although the operational language of the SAPS is English, reports and statements were written in Afrikaans and IsiXhosa. Additionally, poor handwriting and grammar further hampered data collection.<sup>119</sup>

Data was collated into the final set based on docket contents. Victim details were most often collected from post mortem reports in the dockets, but these reports were not present in all dockets. This may have been due to judges requesting the reports for the court file. Unless the investigating officer has made duplicate copies, no record remains in the SAPS docket. The investigating officer might also not have received a copy of the post mortem from the mortuary. This means that the docket’s incompleteness may result from external administrative factors, rather than from an investigating officer’s omission. Despite the best efforts of sourcing information, the final data set contains a lot of omitted information. This limits not only the analyses that can be undertaken, but also comparisons that can be made with data from other jurisdictions.

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<sup>115</sup> This includes information on rank, the name of the deceased, where they were stationed and duty status (on or off duty and what unit they were attached to for example, Vispol, detective or TRT).

<sup>116</sup> This provides information on the progress of the investigation, for example, about prosecution.

<sup>117</sup> These are not to be confused with missing dockets. Dockets are ‘not available’ when they are with the investigators, either before court or when they are in active investigation.

<sup>118</sup> Available information was cross referenced with dockets to ensure that there was no duplication.

<sup>119</sup> This was more notable in older pre-2009 dockets.

#### 4.5.1 The Data Set

Figure 4 below summarizes the sources from which the data was collected, as well as the way in which these deaths were classified.

Source	On-duty Murder	MVC <sup>120</sup> On-duty	Off-duty Murder	Natural Causes / Unknown	Cause of death unknown	Total
Physical Docket Analysed	25	11	9	2		47
Hawks Matrix Information	3		9		4	16
Single Page Report	2	1				3
Hawks Additional Information	15	24	8	5 <sup>121</sup>		52
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>118</b>

**Figure 4: Overview of Records and Dockets Accessed**

Out of the 66 records which were made available, three dockets had been transferred to IPID for investigation, and were therefore not available for review.<sup>122</sup> Information, in lieu of dockets, on three deaths was supplied by means of single page reports that provided basic information about the incident itself such as date of occurrence and whether there was a court outcome.

Finalising the data set required a detailed examination of the circumstances surrounding each death, which resulted in some refinements to the category of police members killed. For example, in two cases the death was recorded as natural causes. Figure 4 therefore shows that of the 66 records of death that were available for examination, 45 cases (43.5 percent) solely related to the murder of police officers (both on and off-duty). Of these, 25 cases related to on-duty murders and nine related to off-duty murders (17 percent of the sample). Burger (2013) reported that nationally, 60 percent of police murders occurred off-duty. In the

<sup>120</sup> MVC is an acronym for a motor vehicle collision. Internationally it is also referred to as a road traffic accident (RTA) or more correctly as a road traffic collision (RTC).

<sup>121</sup> Included in this five are one officer who fell off a horse, one drowned and three where the cause of death was unknown.

<sup>122</sup> It is unknown if these IPID transfers related to on- or off-duty incidents.

Western Cape it was also found that over 60 percent of police murders were also off-duty occurrences (Bruce, 2016). The dockets from 11 road traffic collisions were also examined, as these victims were classified as on-duty deaths. Twenty-seven of these cases (57 percent of the sample) were considered closed.<sup>123</sup> This includes cases that resulted in a conviction or acquittal, were closed as *nolle prosequi*<sup>124</sup> or that were not solved and archived.

## 4.6 The 'Who, What, Where, When and How' of Police Murders

### 4.6.1 Rank

Over the last 20 years the SAPS have oscillated between civilianising and militarising their ranking system with rank name changes in both 2010 and 2016.<sup>125</sup> Regardless of the name change, the officers most frequently murdered have remained constant: the constables. This research comports with Minnaar's (2003) study of the murder of SAPS officers from 1996 until 2002 that showed that constables and sergeants accounted for the majority of murders.<sup>126</sup> As police who are first at the scene and are at the front line of the service, it should come as little surprise that constables are killed most frequently, although, as is discussed later, officers believe that this is not the main reason why they are being murdered. Lower rank is a proxy for working on the street and those officers who are at the frontline appear to face more immediate danger. However, it is interesting to note that constables are also murdered more frequently than other officers when they are off-duty. This suggests that other issues might be of concern aside from being a first responder.

At a station level, warrant officers and sergeants are responsible for ensuring that daily operations align with the performance management of the station. The evidence from this study suggests that most warrant officers (previously known as Inspectors) murdered are acting in an operational, as opposed to an administrative capacity. One possible explanation

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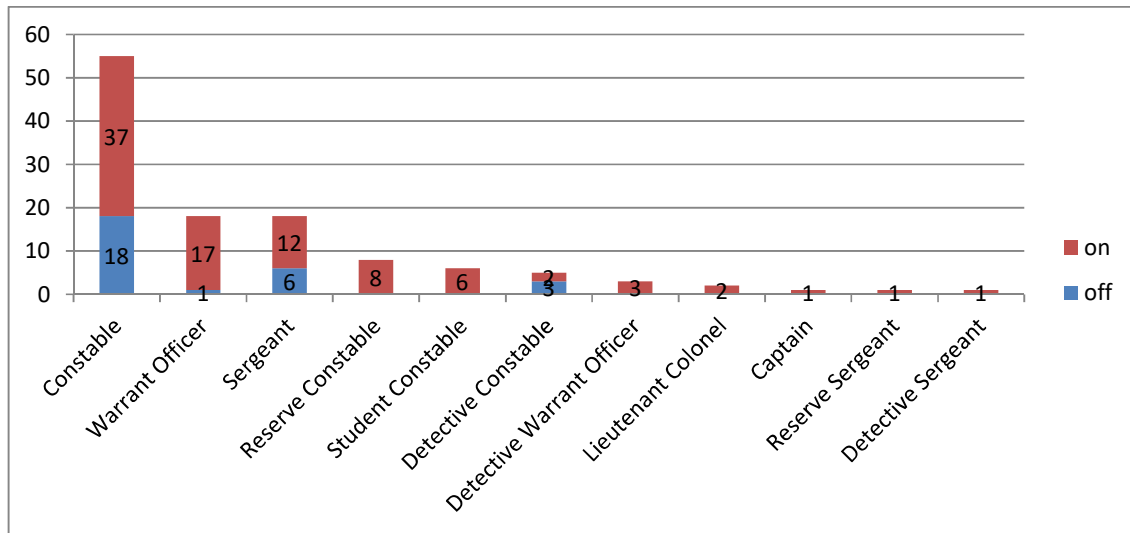
<sup>123</sup> In police terminology, dockets can be considered as either open or closed. 'Open' means that they considered as live investigations. In these cases they are being actively investigated, used in prosecution or inquest courts. 'Closed' dockets indicate that they have been archived as a result of the case being brought to a conclusion (court or inquest completion) or they have not been solved and have little hope of advancing the investigation.

<sup>124</sup> A *nolle prosequi* is a Latin term, which translates as 'unwilling to pursue'. It occurs when the prosecutor formally abandons the action.

<sup>125</sup> These changes realigned the civilian-named ranks along a more military sounding nomenclature suggesting a desire to return to a more Apartheid policing style (Hornberger, 2013; Steinberg, 2014). The SAPS believed that through such changes the organisation could instil and reinforce stronger command and control structures (Burger, 2012). Appendix 17 provides an overview of the ranks within the ranking system and how they were renamed across 1995 to 2010 and from 2010 onwards. Old and new nomenclatures are grouped and explained accordingly.

<sup>126</sup> In Minnaar's study as a group, constables, sergeants and inspectors accounted for 80 percent of all police murders. The actual breakdown of constable and sergeant is not provided in the report but both are noted as being approximately 35 percent each of the total number of officers killed (Minnaar, 2003:4).

for this is that warrant officers appear to have been given a more direct, hands-on form of management compared to their previous largely administrative role. This explanation is also supported by the fact that similar numbers of warrant officers (n=7) were killed in motor vehicle collisions (MVCs) compared to sergeants (n=6). Docket analysis showed that the majority of these warrant officers were functioning in an operational capacity at the time of their death.<sup>127</sup> This matches findings from the US, which suggest that officers are as likely to be killed in MVC's as through any other means. In 2014, for example, as many US police officers died in road traffic collisions as were shot dead (Vick, 2015).



**Figure 5: Police Murders by Rank in the Western Cape Province (2002-2014)**

Senior managers are not murdered at the same rate, either on or off-duty as lower ranking members (Figure 5). This is likely explained by the fact that these officers are not on the front line of policing and therefore do not face the same exposure as the lower ranking constables. Senior managers are therefore essentially kept out of harm's way and as a result make up fewer of those murdered. It is interesting to note that senior managers also are less likely to be murdered when they are off-duty.

Detectives are also murdered significantly less than their uniformed colleagues.

Approximately 6 percent of the total officers murdered were detectives (5 constables, 1 sergeant and 1 warrant officer). This would indicate that units such as the detectives, although

<sup>127</sup> It is accepted that while a report may indicate that the officer was carrying out a specific task he or she may have been doing something else such as personal business in the vehicle and the formal report only reflects what the officer should have been doing.

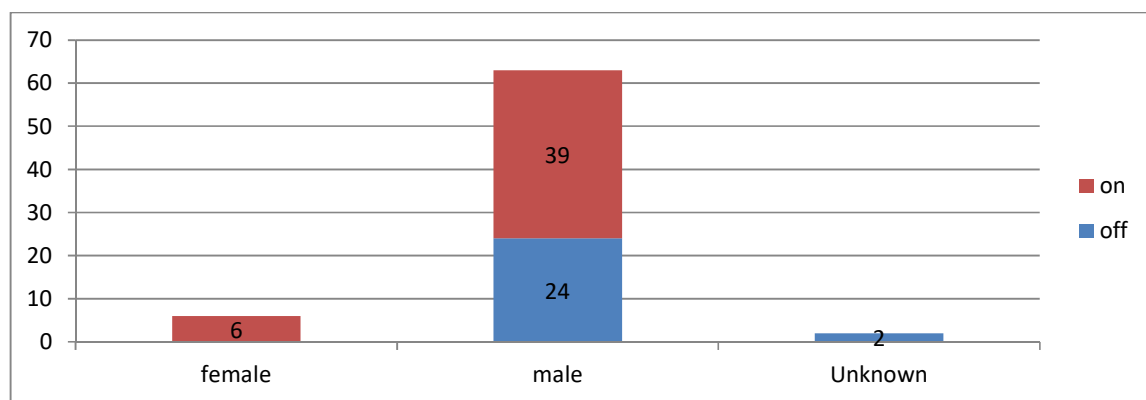
they have a similar level of contact with the public, are somehow mediating danger differently than other frontline colleagues.

#### 4.6.2 Age

The average age of officers murdered in the Western Cape could not be determined due to missing information in the dockets. In many cases the deceased's age was not recorded in the docket, but was noted in the post mortem report. The length of each officer's service was also frequently missing from the docket. Such missing information reflects what was found in previous docket analysis (ICD, 2009). SAPS reported to Parliament in 2015 that nationwide, officers between the ages of 30-40 years with an average of three to six years' service were murdered most frequently (SAPS, 2015). This is roughly half of the average service of officers murdered in the US (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2014), and suggests that members with little operational experience are being killed more frequently.

#### 4.6.3 Gender

Figure 6 below shows that male officers are killed in larger numbers (n=39) than female officers (n=6) while on-duty.<sup>128</sup> This is not necessarily surprising given the ratio of male to female officers in the SAPS, where approximately 35 percent of the SAPS workforce is female (SAPS, 2014).<sup>129</sup> In addition to this, a daily, albeit informal, practice appears to be in place in most stations where female officers worked inside the station and were not routinely on outside operational duties. Observational and interview data showed that this arrangement was both by request of the officers themselves, and due to manager decisions.



**Figure 6: Gender of Officers Murdered in the Western Cape Province (2002-2014)**

<sup>128</sup> In two cases the gender of the officer is unknown as the basic information was only made available through additional information provided by the Hawks.

<sup>129</sup> This includes all staff, commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers and Public Service Act employees.

The number of male versus female off-duty murders could not be compared because no women were recorded as being murdered off-duty. This statistic contrasts sharply to what is known via media accounts of murdered female officers. Over the last four years there have been numerous media accounts of fatal interpersonal violence incidents where female officers in the Western Cape were murdered while off-duty. This is not a recent phenomenon. In 2009, these occurrences were so frequent that the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) conducted a study on femicide in the SAPS (ICD, 2009). Indeed, during the course of my research I attended a memorial service for a female constable who was murdered on her way home from work. According to the official SAPS definition she was still on-duty when she was murdered.<sup>130</sup> However, information pertaining to the incident was not included in any dockets, matrix or additional information subsequently supplied by the SAPS.<sup>131</sup>

The exclusion of female officer deaths either in the docket sample or on the Roll of Honour raises questions about how incidents of femicide are viewed by the formal organisation. The absence of these 'domestic dockets' could possibly be explained by the fact that any incidents involving officers are forwarded to IPID for investigation, particularly when the offenders are also police officers.<sup>132</sup> However, it is notable that a recent presentation to parliament about the murder of police officers by the SAPS made no reference to these off-duty murders. This might lead some to assume these murders are systematically excluded from consideration as police murders.

In studies conducted in the US, Kachurik, Ruiz and Staub (2013) and Gibb Ruiz and Klapper-Lehamn (2014) explored whether the officers' personal social investments (presence of children or spouse) had any bearing on the likelihood of being killed. Focusing on officers who lost their lives between 2005 and 2007, Kachurik and colleagues (2013) found that officers with greater social investment were less likely to be feloniously killed than single officers. Gibbs and colleagues (2014) found that marriage, but not the number of children an officer has, was significantly associated with officer homicide. In this research owing to the

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<sup>130</sup> Interestingly she is also not noted as being listed on the Roll of Honour even though she would have qualified as being regarded on-duty at the time of her murder. This may be because the Western Cape Province list of deceased personnel was omitted completely from National the roll of honour in 2015/2016 (SAPS 2015/2016). However, when other female officers' names who have been murdered are checked against the roll of honour, their names also do not appear.

<sup>131</sup> Even though her murder was outside the time frame which was being examined, other officers who had been murdered on duty outside this period and who had died in road traffic collisions had been supplied.

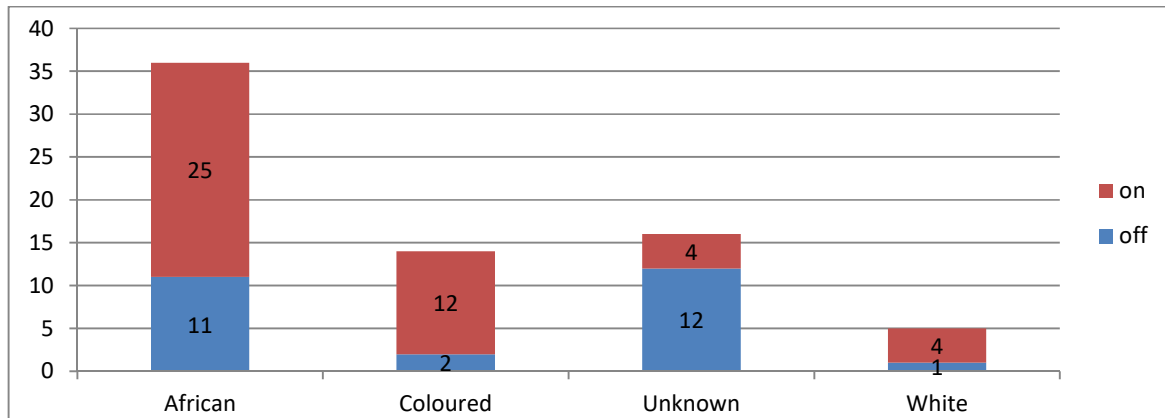
<sup>132</sup> Contact was made with IPID in order to identify possible dockets however no response was received. An initial email request was sent 19th November 2015 with subsequent follow up emails in January 2016 when the matter was further referred within IPID. Two subsequent emails requesting if the matter had been progressed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2016 were not responded to.

lack of information in the dockets about the officer or his family, a similar examination could not be conducted.

#### 4.6.4 Race

Although America may be culturally removed from South Africa, the findings of studies that examined the effects of race on the murders of police officers offer a useful backdrop to consider the South African cases. In the US, Black officers were found to be more likely to both work in and live in high crime areas than their White counterparts (Fyfe, 1981; Geller and Karales, 1981). Police officers were found to be more likely to be murdered in economically disadvantaged areas that also had a larger population of Black Americans aged between 25 to 34 years (Kaminski, 2008). In an examination of all felony police murders in the United States from 1978 to 1980, it was also found that out of the 287 officers killed, Black officers who were off-duty were three times more likely to be killed as compared to their White counterparts (Konstantin, 1984). Konstantin determined this higher rate of murder to be because of their patterns of residence. Black officers were also more likely to be killed on-duty than their White colleagues. Due to the lack of information in the dockets available for my research, the race of murdered off-duty officers is incomplete. Out of the 118 officer murder cases reviewed, 31 did not record the race of the officer victim. From what data was available (Figure 7), however, more Black Africans were murdered on- and off-duty than any other race.

These findings resonate in a South African context where, 26 years after the cessation of Apartheid, communities are rarely racially mixed, particularly in the townships. Black officers live in largely black populated areas, which continue to be socially and economically marginalised. These townships are also the places where officers are murdered most frequently in both on- and off-duty capacities. Black officers account for approximately 74 percent of the SAPS workforce nationally (SAPS, 2014) but make up only 36 percent of the service in the Western Cape (SAPS Western Cape, 2016/2017). As such it is interesting that although Black officers make up a lower proportion of the Western Cape force they are still 2.6 times more likely to be killed when compared to their Coloured peers, according to my research.

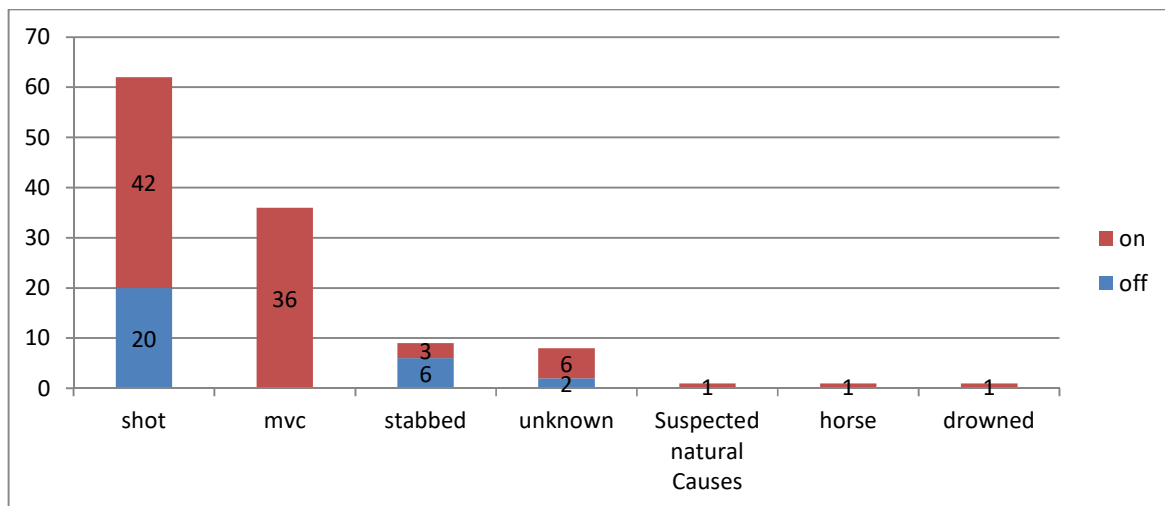


**Figure 7: Race of Officers Murdered in the Western Cape Province (2002-2014)**

#### 4.7 Narrowing the Focus: Murders of Police Officials

The formal organisation counts any death on-duty in the tally of police deaths, including, for example, motor vehicle collisions. This skews an accurate understanding of how many officers are murdered, as opposed to those who have died while on-duty. For example, in the 2010/11 SAPS report, a member who fell off a horse and died was included in the final tally of members killed on-duty.

Figure 8 below provides an overview of the recorded cause of death of all members (on- and off-duty) in the Western Cape Province from 2002 to 2014. Motor vehicle collisions are included here to demonstrate the extent of their occurrence. The graph also shows whether the officer was on-duty (depicted in red) or off-duty (depicted in blue) at the time of the incident.

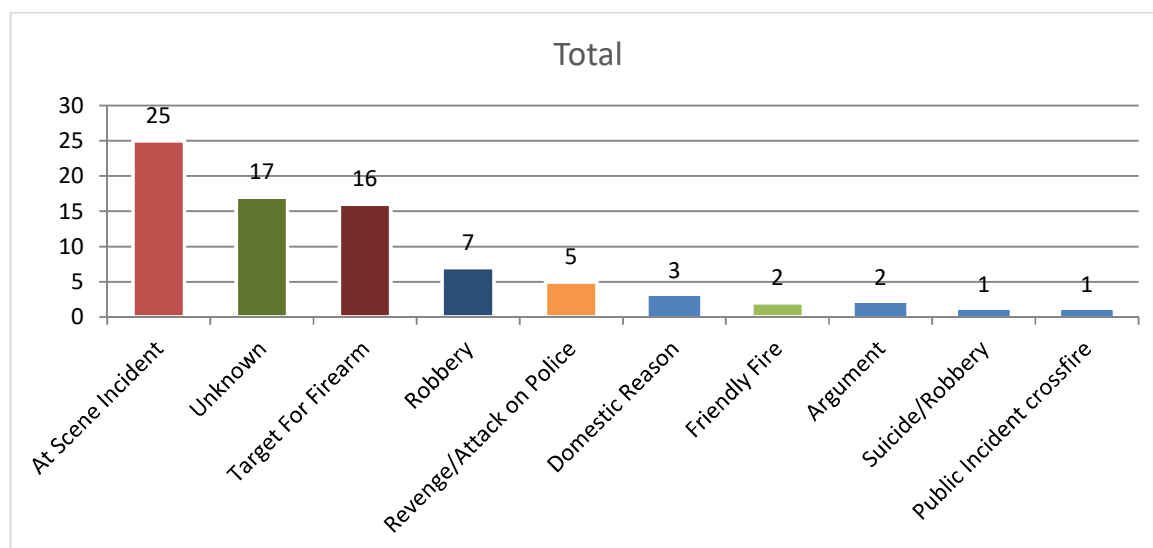


**Figure 8: Cause of Death of Police in the Western Cape Province (2002-2014)**

Clearly, officers who were killed in motor vehicle collisions, who drowned, died of natural causes, or because of a fall off a horse were not victims of police murder. This research focuses on the 71 cases where the officer is listed as having been stabbed or shot to death, as well as the 8 cases where the cause of death was unknown. The eight unknowns are included because it is likely these deaths did not occur due to an MVC or natural causes.

To further an understanding of these cases, an effort was made to define and classify the circumstances of each murder. For example, when the officer was killed during an arrest the reason was noted as an ‘at scene incident’, just as it might have been in the docket. Cases were grouped during analysis under a set of motives or circumstances based on the information available. ‘Target for firearm’ indicates that the officer was identified as a police officer and subsequently killed for his service weapon. ‘Friendly fire’ describes a situation where officers were accidentally murdered by their own colleagues in responding to an incident. ‘Unknown’ reflects that while basic information on the incident was accessible, the possible reason for death could not be discerned.

Figure 9 shows the results of these analyses. Of the 79 incidents identified where members were either shot, stabbed or killed under unknown circumstances, 31 percent were killed at scene incidents, 20 percent were deliberately targeted for their firearms, nine percent were murdered during a robbery, 6 percent were revenge attacks on police, 4 percent were interpersonal violence (domestic reasons) and 2.5 percent were accidentally killed by their colleagues.



**Figure 9: Reason of Death of Police in the Western Cape Province (2002-2014)**

The findings of this research comport with existing research relating to the circumstance in which police are murdered both in South Africa and the United States. The most recent information available, since 2003, on the circumstances of officer murders in South Africa showed that most members are killed on-duty when responding to complaints or performing typical policing functions (Magobotiti, 2017). Similarly, a 1990 FBI study of officers killed and assaulted in the US, found that 40 percent of officers slain between 1981 and 1990 were involved in arrest or ‘crime in progress situations’ when they were murdered, including while responding to disturbance calls, investigating suspicious circumstances, at road traffic stops and during the handling of prisoners. In a more recent examination of police officers murdered in 17 American states, the category where officers were murdered most frequently was ambush where they were assaulted in attempting to arrest individuals (Blair *et al*, 2016). Similar to other research conducted in the United States (Boylen and Little, 1990; Bristow, 1963; Edwards, 1995; Fridell and Pate, 1995, 1997, 2001; Lester, 1984; UCR, 1992) SAPS officers are most likely to be killed by firearms.

Officers in Minnaar’s (2003) study in South Africa believed they were being killed off-duty for their firearms, but still wanted to be able to bring them home with them. In the present study, three officers were attacked at home and subsequently killed. In all cases their weapon was taken. It was not recorded whether the officers were wearing their uniform at the time and were thus identifiable as police officers. On-duty cases accounted for 16 officer deaths where the officers were targeted for their firearms. In terms of perceptions and experiences of danger it is interesting that while officers believe they are being targeted for their firearms they still wish to bring them home at night.

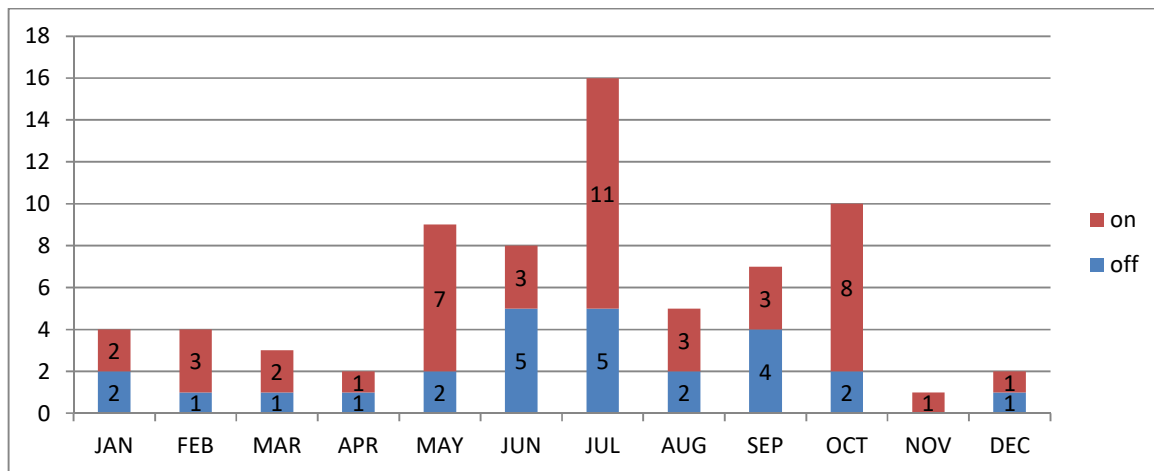
## **4.8 When Do Police Murders Occur?**

### **4.8.1 Month**

The effect of weather on criminal and aggressive behaviour has been a subject of interest to many (Brunsdon, Corcoran, Higgs, and Ware, 2009; Cohn, 1990; Horrocks and Menclova, 2011; Ranson, 2012, 2014). Higher temperatures have been linked to higher levels of general criminal activity in both the United Kingdom and in the United States (Brunsdon Corcoran, Higgs and Ware, 2009; Bushman, Morgan, and Anderson, 2005, Cohn, 1990). Globally, however, the murder of police officers does not seem to align with these thermal observations. The FBI, for example, found that more officers were murdered in November, a cool month in America, than any other month (FBI, 2016).

In South Africa the SAPS do not release murder data relative to the seasons in which they occur. However, an analysis by the Institute of Security studies in South Africa of the monthly national crime data for the five years from April 2006 to March 2011 reveals that murder and serious assault increase by as much as 50 percent during December each year, which would be high temperatures in South Africa (Lancaster, 2014). In analysing general murders over the 2011 /2012 period the Western Cape Government indicated a ‘seasonal effect’, where the lowest number of murders being recorded occurred during the months of January and February and then building up to the peak season during the latter quarter of the calendar year. In contrast Figure 10 shows, that in the Western Cape the months with the *least* amount of police murders were the months November, December (Southern Hemisphere summer), and April. In the Western Cape, more ‘on and off-duty’ murders occur in the winter month of July than any. This data would suggest that like the US the cooler months are more dangerous for officers.

One of the possible explanations in South Africa for lower rates of police murders in summer months may relate to the annual leave restrictions of the police. This is enforced to cope with the volume of people who avail of summer holidays (school, personnel and holidaymakers) which generates more people and traffic on the roads. Greater police numbers may also then reduce the possibility of them being attacked.

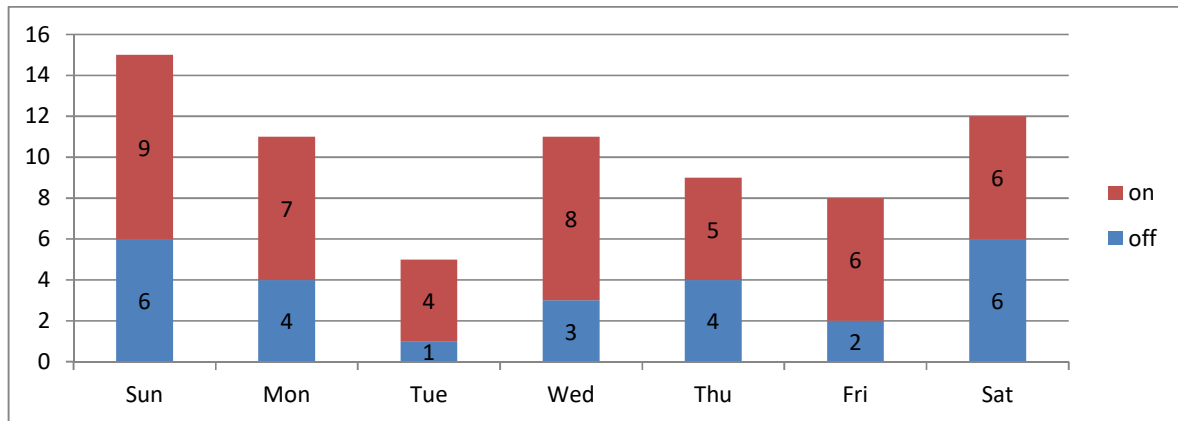


**Figure 10: On and Off-duty Murders by Month (2002-2014)**

#### 4.8.2 Day

In a study based on 1103 police murders in the US, fewer murders occurred on Sundays (Vaughn and Kappeler, 1986). In the last three years in the United States it was found that

more officers were murdered on Wednesday (2016 & 2015) and on a Saturday (2014) than any other day of the week (FBI, 2014, 2015,2016). My research highlighted a slight peak in police murders occurring on Sundays and Wednesdays but not enough to account for any patterns or trends or indications that this is not by chance. It may be worth noting that in the 1999 MDC study on attacks on SAPS officers found that attacks were more likely to occur on a Friday and Saturday. Unfortunately, the most recent presentation of the SAPS to the Portfolio Committee on Police in August 2015 provided no information to indicate whether this had changed or what days or months had the highest rate of police murders nationally.



**Figure 11: Officers Murdered (Shot and Stabbed) in the Western Cape Province (2002-2014)**

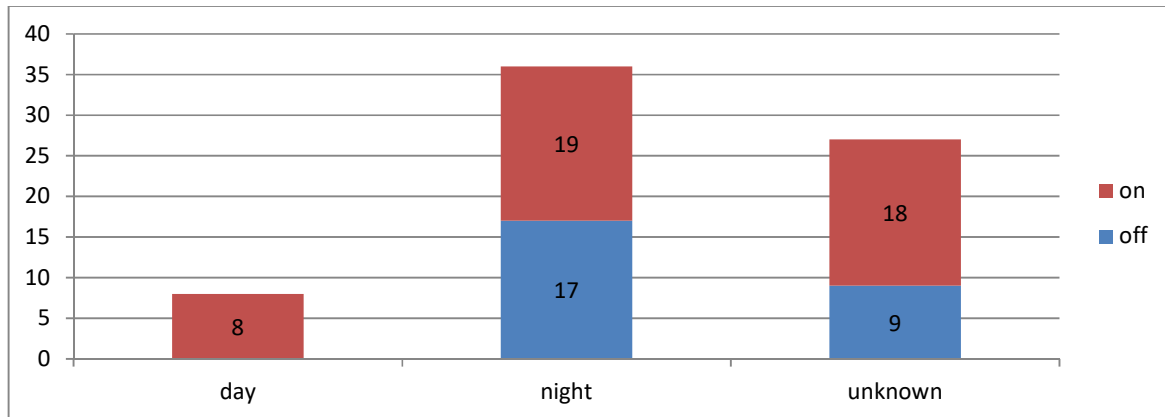
#### 4.8.3 Time<sup>133</sup>

Fridell and Pates' (1997) examination of 1,986 police murders in the United States between 1972 and 1993 indicated that just over 70 percent of officers were murdered between the hours of 3pm and 3am. FBI reports (1990; 1992) found that six out of ten murders occurred during night time hours where 38 percent of the killing of officers (during the period 1981 to 1990) occurred between 6pm and midnight with a further 23 percent occurring between midnight and 6am. In another study of 17 US states between 2002 and 2013, 35.9 percent of police murders occurred between 4pm to 12am (Blair *et al*, 2016). Poor visibility during dusk or night hours was suggested as a contributory factor as officers may have been unable to react quickly enough to situations due to restricted visibility.

In this research, the time of the occurrence was grouped into either day duty (6am to 6pm) or night duty (6pm to 6am).<sup>134</sup> Results showed that there was a higher occurrence of night time

<sup>133</sup> In 27 records of murders there was no available information with regard to the actual time of the murder.

police murders versus day time (19 versus 8). All off-duty murders were noted as occurring at night. The 1999 MDC examination of police murders found that attacks on officers were also more likely to occur during the evening between 8pm and 11.59pm. These findings align with an examination of general murders in the Western Cape in 2011/2012 where for the most part, during the early hours of the morning, and late evening (DOCS, 2012).



**Figure 12: Time of Murder of Police in the Western Cape Province (2002-2014)**

From the dockets examined it became apparent that although a quantitative analysis of murder dockets yields some insight into the murders of SAPS officers, it does little to identify any significant trends or patterns which could account for the murders. Analysis is also hampered by the lack of standardised data in the dockets.

In summary, what docket analysis did suggest was that in the Western Cape male constables and warrant officers are the ranks murdered most frequently when on-duty. More Black Africans are killed both on- and off-duty than any other race even though they are not the most populous racial grouping in the SAPS in the Western Cape. More officers are killed during night duty than day and most murders occur in township locations. Members who are murdered on-duty are most likely to be shot. ‘At scene’ incidents are the major reason for death although being targeted for a firearm is also quite prevalent. Most deaths result from an injury to the head (26 percent) followed by a chest injury (13 percent).<sup>135</sup> More officers are murdered in July (both on and off-duty) than any other month. Of the 45 officers shot, in 48 percent of cases it was not recorded whether the officer was wearing their bullet resistant

<sup>134</sup> These are the shifts as worked by the Vispol units. Although they are not shifts that the detectives and TRT adhere to they were used for ease of grouping data.

<sup>135</sup> In 31 percent of the sample the injury location was not noted.

vest. It is known that in 28 percent of cases the vest was absent and only 15 percent could be confirmed as having had the vest when they were killed.

Of all the statistical information gleaned from the dockets the wearing of the bullet resistant vests is of note. The vests are of interest because they are both a response from the organisation to the perceived danger and represent part of the police uniform to the officers. This will be discussed further in the findings chapter on police engagement with material artefacts, Chapter 6.

#### **4.9 Off-Duty Murders**

Off-duty police murders are difficult to explore as researchers rarely observe officers at home. However, examining the dockets offers an opportunity to glimpse at what the police do when they are off-duty. These investigations then reflect on the social context and physical surroundings and own security when they were attacked off-duty. Moonlighting,<sup>136</sup> domestic situations and the drinking habits of officers all come vividly to life in the pages of these investigations. Reading about members carrying official firearms in an off-duty capacity underlines the reality of what it means to be a police officer in South Africa.

In this docket analysis (2002-2014), from a rank perspective, one warrant officer was noted as being murdered off-duty compared with 18 constables who were murdered off-duty. The warrant officer was murdered after someone broke into his unoccupied car and removed his wallet, mobile phone and service pistol. In the process of looking for the suspect alone, he effectively put himself 'on-duty' and was shot and killed by a second person who was with the suspect. This occurred in a residential (non-township) neighbourhood.

Of interest is that six of the 18 off-duty constable murders occurred during the robbery of the officer concerned. All of these robberies occurred in township locations where the officer was either living or visiting at the time. Three of the 18 cases related to domestic situations where an argument ensued and the officer was murdered. Two of the murders were regarded as revenge attacks because the individuals were police officers and eight are for unknown reasons. Similarly, with the rank of sergeant, three of six off-duty sergeants were targeted in their homes in township locations and murdered for their firearms. As such where the officer resides appears to have some relevance in their murder.

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<sup>136</sup> Moonlighting refers to an unauthorised second job once off-duty by an officer.

Four police reservists (constable rank) were murdered on-duty, but none were murdered off-duty. In an examination of reservists in Johannesburg, Forster-Towne (2013:32) suggested that Black reservists joined for an opportunity to start a career or gain access to permanent employment, whereas, Whites who enrolled as reservists view policing as a leisure activity. Consideration should be given as to why it is that police reservists don't get killed when off-duty.

From a racial profile perspective, the only White officer murdered off-duty was killed while working at a second job, i.e. moonlighting. During the murder his firearm was stolen from him. Two Coloured officers were noted as being murdered off-duty. In the first instance the officer was in uniform on the way home and he appeared to have been targeted for his firearm. In this case the murder should have been counted as an on-duty death and demonstrates the inconsistency in data collection within the SAPS. In the second incident the officer had his car broken into and in the process of finding the suspect with his firearm, he was shot. This contrasts with the off-duty murders of 11 Black officers. Of these, two officers appeared to be targeted as known police officers and their firearms were stolen. Another two officers died because of street robberies (they were the victims), three others resulted from arguments in taverns, three were as a result of domestic situations and one was a road traffic collision.

One of the component reports of the MDC published in 2003 found that alcohol factored in 1.5 percent of murders of police. This does not seem to incorporate murders which were relationship based and could have included alcohol (Minnaar, 2003). In my research however, alcohol comparisons for police murder were not possible owing to the lack of laboratory reports in the murder dockets. In three off-duty incidents, three officers were either noted as being in or leaving the vicinity of a tavern or *shebeen*, so it would suggest that in these cases alcohol use may have been a factor.

#### **4.10 Dockets: Archives of Police Culture?**

So far docket analysis has provided a partial descriptive data set about police murders in the Western Cape Province. While having some utility this research also aims to supplement such numerical exercises with an examination of the dockets from the perspective of those who handle them daily – police officers. If the dockets are merely perceived as receptacles of statistical information there would be little insight into police murders at all, particularly when the amount of missing data is factored into the equation. The numerical data lacked the

explanatory power to give voice to the acts themselves. Adopting an anthropological lens allows one to determine what the dockets can reveal in addition to any trends of the pre-determined variables. As archives of police culture these dockets depict the lived realities of on and off-duty members and can be seen as a filing cabinet from which the customs of the police officers emerge.

Dockets offer an additional perspective to interviews or participant observation. Dockets reveal the daily situations many officers may find themselves in. The realities of police lives are depicted in these investigations where murders are brought to life through witness statements, police reports and crime scene photographs recreating the circumstances both prior to and during the murder itself. A second insight into police practice is also provided which stems from the actions taken in the actual investigative processes of such incidents through the compilation of the dockets. In essence, dockets were analysed as sources which reveal not only what the police do, but how they do it.

In examining the dockets, it is apparent that some investigating officers appeared to continually fulfil just enough investigative strands to 'tick the investigations done box', i.e. make it appear as if all avenues of enquiry had been exhausted and their job was therefore complete. However, on closer examination of such cases, there were obvious investigative gaps. For example, when an officer was murdered in a residential area, no door-to-door enquires were conducted to determine if the people there had any information or witnessed anything which could assist in the investigation. In more recently investigated cases no telephonic traces of the officer's phones were undertaken. This was prevalent in both urban and township police murders and may not be completely surprising owing to the cost and time involved in such processes. It appears that such enquires are only undertaken in cases that garner media attention.

In examining the dockets, the story of police murders was seen somewhat in reverse as compared to how they were discussed during fieldwork. With participant observation and interviews, one works from an outside subjective position of the incident where individuals share their experiences of the incident. However, with docket examination a more factual account is provided. How these two data gathering approaches relate to each other is of interest and speaks to the aspects of the police subculture. In one instance, an officer shared his continual upset at Christmas time because, *'a criminal jumped over traffic lights killing two police officers at the spot. It happened on Christmas day, Christmas will never have a*

*meaning, I can't celebrate it without my comrades.*<sup>137</sup> The dangers that the officers face on-duty are seen to impact their own personal lives.

The initial telling of this officer's account is of a situation where it appears that his colleagues were targeted as police officers. The reality of the situation, as revealed in the docket, was somewhat different. The police car was unfortunately hit by a drunk driver, not a hardened criminal per se. It was a traffic collision as opposed to a targeted attack on the police. The crime scene photographs in the docket depict that it was a horrific incident and the officer did not necessarily embellish the horror he recalled. Any of the officers who came across the scene would have undoubtedly been traumatised by the images they were presented with. However, the cause of the deaths of the officers differed in his telling compared to the reading of the docket.

Just as these dockets indicate how police live, they also convey what is left behind in the aftermath of a police murder. Crime scene photographs give life to the harsh realities of policing in South Africa. Photographs are in a Foucauldian sense an aspect of the archive, they are not just a recording but rather constitute an event (Ketelaar, 2001). Discarded soda bottles and half eaten lunches in the patrol vans offer a glimpse into their daily routines. The crime scene photographs of the locations where members are murdered reflect the physical closeness of many of the township communities that they police. In one docket background images depict the movement of local community members who were not brought to a standstill at the sight of a dead body, let alone a dead police officer. Such glimpses help contextualise how murder has become a normalised part of township life for many.

One of the most disturbing photographs in the dockets which were examined was a docket from a post mortem of a female police officer who had been apparently targeted for her firearm. The image depicted was a nonviable (approximate) 12-week-old foetus recovered from the womb of the murdered officer. Such images serve to remind that the police are victims in the same way others are. The only difference here however was the danger that the woman faced was because she was identifiable as a police officer and happened to be carrying a firearm. She was buying her lunch, while in uniform and was shot at point blank range in the head and her firearm subsequently stolen. Two plain clothes colleagues who were present escaped unscathed. What was of note however was that this photograph was actually stored in the wrong docket about the wrong police officer. Cross referencing online

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<sup>137</sup> Field Notes Ref 0097.

sources revealed that another officer who was murdered in an ambush attack while in uniform on-duty was the actual victim and the mother of the unborn child.

#### 4.11 Conclusion

The dockets of murdered police are historical archives which reflect the diversity of the policing landscape in South Africa. As archives these dockets tell a story of death but in addition relay a story of the investigator who recorded the information and the organisation that stores it. In a Foucauldian sense this all constitutes the genealogy of the record itself which provides more knowledge about the murder of the police than the mere statistics they relate to. The South African Law Commission asserts that case docket analysis can provide some useful information about the nature of violent crime, as well as the responses of the criminal justice system to it (2001:92). As potential sources of information into understanding aspects of the culture in policing their value cannot be underestimated. Van Graan and Van der Watt (2014:1) acknowledge that case docket analysis is information driven and a viable and effective crime information product that has the potential to narrow the focus of criminal investigation. However, this research suggests that the actual potential value of docket analysis has yet to be fully realised by the SAPS.

Owing to the lack of accurate information in the dockets themselves it is difficult to determine any conclusive patterns or trends relating to the murder of the police.<sup>138</sup> The collective data from the dockets themselves was sometimes inaccurate and often incomplete. Members who are listed on the Roll of Honour were not necessarily included in the records kept. Deaths due to motor vehicle collisions are recorded with more accuracy than victims of domestic violence. Indeed, an officer who died as a result of falling off his horse was assigned a place on the Roll of Honour over his colleagues who appeared to have been targeted for their firearms when they were murdered off-duty. By including those officers who died as a result of a motor vehicle collision or indeed accidentally, the formal organisation might be inadvertently obscuring the actual number of officers who are murdered on-duty.

Police officials and politicians alike frequently describe the murders of South African police officers as attempts to '*undermine the legitimate authority of the State*'<sup>139</sup> or as '*acts of*

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<sup>138</sup> These dockets related only to the Western Cape Province area in South Africa.

<sup>139</sup> Statement made by Pastor at Memorial Service of Detective Constable Lindekile Patrick Sidake shot dead outside his house in Philippi on Monday 18th April 2016.

*treason*'.<sup>140</sup> Police officers feel strongly about the killing of their colleagues and call for the reinstatement of capital punishment for convicted 'cop killers'.<sup>141</sup> Just as a methodology chapter should offer a roadmap for a researcher so too should a police murder docket offer a roadmap for a police investigation. As such the investigation of the murder of a police officer should be considered as a gold standard for all murder investigations, and the docket an example of the best police practices and investigations particularly considering the call for harsher punishments. This research highlighted that this was not the case, and data analysis further highlighted the messy incomplete approach often taken in many investigations.

What this does suggest however is the consistency that the SAPS have in how they appear to approach the majority of criminal investigations. In this sense police murders are managed in the same way any other crime is handled where the lack of accurate information hampers a true understanding of the factors involved. This issue has continually inhibited homicide research in South Africa (Altbeker, 2005; Berg and Schärf, 2004; Du Plessis and Louw, 2005; Kriegler and Shaw, 2016; Norman, Matzopoulous, Groenewald, and Bradshaw, 2007). It appears that for the SAPS accurate collection and recording of information remains a challenge even when it relates to the murder of its own police officers. In this research when the WCOD provided a list of officers murdered in the Province during the research period, it failed to compare and tally these names and numbers against the SAPS annual reports (and Rolls of Honour therein). There were noted inconsistencies where names that were included in the Roll of Honours list (thus indicating that they died on-duty) were not included in the WCOD list.

When examining off-duty police murders the officers' race and the location come to the fore where the majority of those murdered off-duty are male Africans in township locations. However, when these dockets are analysed only two out of 11 murders appeared to be as a direct result of the victims being identified as police officers. Thus, the majority of these murders speak to the contextualisation of the violence in South Africa where the victim's role as a police officer appears to be an unlikely factor. In addition, off-duty information and the provision of statistics dockets can also highlight how police go about the daily routine of policing. In this sense dockets can be seen as microcosms of police culture. Dockets act as

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<sup>140</sup> Statement made by union representative at Memorial Service of two on duty officers, Sergeant Ngcawuzele and Constable KhaKa, on 9th July murdered on 30th June 2014 in Nyanga.

<sup>141</sup> Statement made by a members of the South African Policing Union (SAPU) at Memorial Service of Sergeant Thuani DImini on the 24 October 2014 murdered on 16th Oct 2014 in Ingelethu West.

storyboards for the associated variables and can contribute to discussions on police perceptions and experiences of danger and death.

## Chapter 5. Memorialisation

### 5.1 Introduction

Death-related practises connect understanding how people give meaning to life and police memorialisation connects the death of an officer to the life of the organisation. Police funerals and memorials present an opportunity to examine both the formal (organisational) and informal (occupational) culture of the police as it relates to the danger they face. This chapter looks at how police deaths are commemorated by the organisation. Different modalities of commemoration are identified and then described in some detail.

As well as being commemorative, funerals and memorial services, in a Foucauldian sense, can also be considered as an additional archive of police murders. In addition to death certificates and headstones these services may also be considered as records of events through which the relationship between danger and death can be examined. An analysis of the form which these ceremonies take, the rites and symbols invoked and what is said and by whom at these services provide a view onto critical aspects of police culture. Closer scrutiny reveals not just one narrative but multiple and at times competing narratives. Funerals and memorials are symbolic spaces within which collectively shared sentiments about danger are reaffirmed. This section examines how the danger of police work becomes encoded and symbolised through material and symbolic rituals in order to answer the question: **How are the dangers of police work symbolised and encoded through the process of memorialisation?**

### 5.2 Theorising Police Funerals, Memorial Services and Monuments

#### 5.2.1 Rites and Rituals

Before examining the nature of police funerals and memorials it is worth considering them as forms of ritual. Catherine Bell, a theorist of religion, indicates that rituals should not be considered as separate entities relative to the actions that occur in and around them. She suggests that a ritual should 'be analysed and understood in its real context which is the full spectrum of ways of acting within any given culture' (1997:81). Building on Bell's idea of the ritual as cultural performance, police funerals and memorial services can be considered as rituals located on a spectrum between a life passage rite and a political rite. As such the ritual is associated with the power of the police organisation.

In the case of funerals, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim (1961) observed that collective gatherings functioned to strengthen the bonds of social solidarity amongst those present. To this Peter Manning (1977, 2015) added that the display of solidarity represents a kind of miniature re-enactment and representation of the drama of policing itself. Funerals tell us about the nature of the police organisation and its activities. These events are highly regulated affairs. A detailed set of rules prescribe what should be worn (dress uniforms), as well as the actual movements (processional parades) of those present. Adherences to these rules and regulations are part of the ritual as defined by the formal organisation. In modifying Durkheim's understanding of such rituals, Gluckman, a South African anthropologist (1962) observed that ritual 'is the symbolic enactment of social relations themselves' (1962:26). The presentation of police at these funerals is reflective of how the larger police organisation wishes to present itself publicly. In moving the Durkheimian notion of ritual away from the idea of a purely religious rite, rituals became recognised as forms of social action.

In examining political rites, the anthropologist Geertz (1980) suggested that rituals do more than convey messages or act as vessels *for* culture. According to him (1980) a ritual or funeral, 'this thing itself', is simply power. Bell (1992) later added that ritual *is* power. Bell argues that rituals create a space where patterns of domination and subordination are carried out by those present. In this context police funerals define power in a two-dimensional way. First, they use symbols and actions to depict a type of order and to project the coherence of the group. Second, the rituals demonstrate the legitimacy of values by the establishment of the iconicity and order maintained by the organisation hosting the ritual.

### 5.2.2 Symbols

The significance of symbols in rituals cannot be underestimated. For Crank (2004:334) rituals are not so much conveyors of beliefs as they are carriers and potent invigorators of cultural symbols. Manning (2015) advises that these cultural symbols should be examined in the social context in which they occur. Symbols such as police uniforms, banners and flags at police funerals all act as codes to which a meaning becomes attached. According to Manning (2015) the coding of order, the regulation of space, movement, sound, dress and other props all underscore the message that the police are an organized and powerful body. This symbolisation is the power of the organization on display for the public. These services also serve as reminders to the police about the power of the organisation of which they are part.

In recognising the importance of such events, Manning (1977, 2015) draws attention to the symbolic elements in these services. As well as commemorating the deceased, he underlines how these processions and gatherings are demonstrations of a type of power held by the formal police organisation. The sheer number and presence of large groups of police officers demonstrates strength in numbers. Such demonstrations are not restricted to just the presence of the police. Manning (2015) highlights how horses and dogs are regularly used by the police in these processions. Horses, he argued, are powerful symbols in police funeral processions where their presence is associated with their role as sacrificial beasts in combat. This all further aids in a dramatisation of the formal authority of the police role. The shout of the marshal at processional officers also adds to the public police performance on display. Through such imagery the police being 'at war' with criminals is maintained.

The descriptions of funerals that Manning and others present speak to funerals in developed democracies. In these mostly global North police services, the honour bestowed on the deceased officer is often proportionate to the number of officers who attend the funeral. Large turnouts symbolically represent an outward show of force by the organisation, while reinforcing an inward sense of solidarity to the officers present. In the face of danger and death, the police organisation is seen to stand unified. In both America and Ireland for example, the funerals of officers have been known to draw thousands of police attendees (Barker, 1999; Firestone, 1994; Henry, 2004; Radió Teleifis Éireann [RTE], 2013). Vast numbers of uniformed officers standing and marching together is an arresting image. Such imagery coupled with the attendance of senior government officials naturally attracts much media attention. Police funerals thus present opportunities for celebrating power, both the power of the state and of the police.



**Figure 13: Police Turnout, Irish Police Officer Funeral 2013 (RTE, 2013)**

The drama of police funerals is also reinforced by the presence of politicians (Crank, 2004; Hall, 2011; Henry, 2004; Manning, 1977, 2015). In addition to being self-serving, the speeches made by politicians at police funerals can also be regarded as performances aimed at triggering certain actions in the social or political sphere (Margry and Sánchez- Carretero, 2007). The funeral becomes a medium through which suggestions are filtered into the public collective consciousness about how to deal with many public concerns. Funerals allow the state to endorse the public role of the police. Officers who are murdered on-duty are eulogised for giving their life on behalf of the state and its people.

In an examination of police murders during the political troubles in Northern Ireland, Mulchay (2000) observed that funerals provide occasions for invoking solidarity and commitment amongst the police themselves. As well as dramatising the police role and the dangers embedded within, police funerals are also seen as a way of constructing and maintaining collective police identity. Indeed, police funerals can also be used to embed themes of sacrifice, bravery and commitment within the organisational memory of the police.

The limited amount of academic enquiry into police funerals may stem from the rarity at which police murders occur particularly in developed democracies. What has been examined at police funerals however has largely focused on the cultural symbolism of these events and how they relate to the subcultures within the larger police organisation. In his examination of sites of contestation of Apartheid, Baines (2009:330) argues that every war is fought twice; militarily and then discursively. Drawing on the Foucauldian toolbox of discursive examination in this 'war' on crime, this discussion broadens the terms of examination by exploring also the significance of what is *said* at these services, being as relevant in

understanding police culture as the symbolic elements involved. In addition to this, Foucault's characterisation of modern power as a functional relationship compliments the approach taken in understanding how danger becomes represented in such ceremonies.

### 5.3 Memorialisation: Physical Monuments

Monuments are one of the three different categories making up memorials. Egbo (2008) for example, distinguishes between physical monuments, collective ceremonies (such as funerals and memorial services) and spontaneous memorials. Memorial monuments can turn the death of an individual into a meaningful sacrifice. The message that the monument displays can have different yet complimentary interpretations. For Zittoun (2004), monuments, as memorial sites, have four primary functions in society.<sup>142</sup> Monuments remind communities that the state remembers those who died in service to its citizens. They also act as a type of meeting place, a site where representatives of the state, surviving police officers and the public can interact. In the third instance they act as sites of mourning for those who died. Lastly, monuments also constitute sites of learning where the circumstances that caused the names to be inscribed can be reflected upon.

The erection of a monument is a way of remembering a particular historical consciousness at a specific point in time as well as shaping the collective memory going forward (Marschall, 2009). As such monuments are useful devices through which to interpret how the danger of the police role becomes symbolised through police deaths. The placement of these physical memorials is never by chance and has symbolic significance beyond aesthetics. The place becomes as important as the people named. From a Foucauldian perspective, the question of space and its use is central in explanations of power. According to Riou (1977) quoted by Crampton and Elden (2007:37), 'space is the place where history inscribes itself'. Many police memorials are often situated in prominent positions near government buildings to signal the associative connection between the police and the state.

The location and aesthetics of police monuments have an important significance regarding the message they wish to convey. Police monuments bear a striking resemblance to war memorials and often take the form of a wall of remembrance where the names, rank, and date of death of officers are recorded. The inscription of names reinforces the idea, much like

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<sup>142</sup> The terms 'memorial' and 'monument' differ in that the monument usually project celebratory sentiments and memorials are a way of preserving and remembering as an accompaniment to memorialisation (Gough, 2002). In this section police monuments are recognised as a form of memorialisation which incorporates both functions.

gravestones, that individuals will be remembered for an eternity as the information is literally set in stone. Listing names in this manner is also a way of individualising those murdered. The inclusion of the police rank of the individual then links that individual to the larger police organisation.

While police memorial monuments are erected around the world, they have not, as Palmer (2013) so aptly notes, been the subject of much academic enquiry. Indeed, in South Africa there has been much examination of monuments and memory (Baines, 2009; Coombes, 2003; Marschall, 2004, 2009, 2010). In Marschall's (2009) examination of memorials and monuments in South Africa, police memorials and monuments are neglected. In the discussion to follow we turn to a consideration of the memorialisation of the police by the police institution.

### **5.3.1 SAPS National Police Monument**

Given its colonial history it comes as little surprise that South Africa adopted many of the memorial practices followed by police departments in Western jurisdictions. This approach included the placement of a national police monument in the line of sight of the country's seat of government (Dippenaar, 1998:645). The national police monument was constructed in 1983 during the period of 'high' Apartheid and consists of seven large pillars capped with an adjoining arch. It resembles a cell gate that seeks to protect the names of deceased members inscribed on the granite walls behind. The motto of the SAPS, 'Servamus et Servimus' (Latin for 'To Protect and to Serve') is in large lettering on the opposite side of deceased names. The roll of honour, honouring those officers who died in the line of duty during a period of counter-insurgent policing both on the borders and inside the country, is written in both Afrikaans and English. In addition to being an archive of those killed, the way in which the names are inscribed reflects another aspect of this record where English and Afrikaans denote the demographics of the larger organisation during this period.



**Figure 14: National SAPS Monument in Pretoria (SAPS, 2017)**

In his 'History of the South African Police' Dippenaar (1988) observed that at the time of its erection there was political criticism of the site's location as it signalled too close a link between the police and the Apartheid state. The police force however thought the site was eminently suitable and that it was 'an honour' and a privilege to have a memorial in the gardens of the Union Buildings.

Since the end of Apartheid the monument has continued to be the primary police monument in the country. The only scholarly commentary on the monument is provided by Julia Hornberger (2011). She notes that the monument has two competing narratives. One narrative 'constructs a police specific history of continuity; whereas the other 'embeds the murder of police officers in a historical context' (2011:21). Hornberger observes that the memorial wall acts as an archive of police murders where the murder is noted and placed in social context by reference to the officer's race beside his/her name and date of death.

### **5.3.2 SAPS Western Cape Police Monument**

The Western Cape SAPS memorial monument is not as prominently located as its national counterpart. Directions to the monument itself are not signposted and it is located in Pinelands, a suburb of Cape Town, remote from government buildings and not visible from the public road. It is located at the back of the SAPS sports grounds and is beside the police dog training centre in a corner, out of sight. Much like Hornberger's (2011) observations on the national SAPS monument, the Western Cape monument has its back turned to the public it serves. Indeed, many police officers spoken to during the research were not even aware of its existence.

The Western Cape monument was erected in 2004, over 20 years after the national monument to commemorate those officers ‘who paid the highest price for their country’ (Ramatlakane, 2004). It is constructed from polished black granite, shaped like that of a tombstone, as if to reinforce the fact that the monument is, essentially, about death. Lin (2000) suggests that reflective materials used in memorials can be purposeful and allows for the monument to act like a mirror where the reader sees their reflection in the inscribed names of the dead. The stones include the deceased officers’ personal number, rank, surname, initials and date of death engraved in white letters. Unlike the national memorial which was constructed in a different historical epoch, the race of the officer is now omitted. For individuals with a detailed knowledge of South African surnames the racial designation of the deceased member remains fairly obvious. As the years on the headstones progress from 1994 to 2014, the typical Afrikaans surnames become replaced with more IsiXhosa surnames. As an archive of police murders, such names changes reflect demographic changes of the larger police organisation that occurred during this period.

On the first headstone, which lists those officers who died on-duty between 1994 and 2005, there is no clear order in how names are listed. There is no apparent chronology according to their date of death, alphabetised by name, in order of rank or any other discernible logic.



Figure 15: Western Cape SAPS Memorial (Perkins, 2015)

The haphazard way the names are listed during this period is perhaps reflective of an organisation that was experiencing change and fluidity at the time. After all, the transformation of the SAP to the SAPS was a complicated affair (Brogden and Shearing,

1993; Shaw, 2002). The administrative and operational difficulties experienced along the way may be a contextual backdrop for the haphazard record of police murders.

The names listed after 2005, however, are ordered by date. Monuments reflect who and what should be remembered (Doss, 2012; Sumartojo, 2012). What is omitted from these memorial stones can reveal as much about the organisation as what is included. The SAPS does not list officers who die by suicide or who are murdered off-duty. As Hornberger (2011) observes, just as the National memorial reflects the past, it also suggests a history of the future. Such chronology in these memorials could be seen to reflect a new sense of emerging order within the larger police organisation. In addition to the already engraved stones were blank stones which await future names of officers who will die in the line of duty.



**Figure 16: Blank Head Stone Western Cape Memorial (Perkins, 2015)**

Annual remembrance days for murdered officers held at these locations serves as a way in which the state and the formal police organisation can remind the public, and the police, of the sacrifices made by those murdered. At the 2016 celebrations, the Acting National Commissioner commented that the commemoration day is one of the ‘most important in the SAPS calendar and is held in spring, bringing with it warmth and the symbolic renewal of life’ (SAPS, 2016). The importance of their deaths becomes marked by being calendared. Every September, the South African Police Service holds a national commemoration day to honour those officers who have lost their lives while on-duty.

## **5.4 The Ceremonies: Funerals, Memorials and Spontaneous Memorials**

### **5.4.1 South African Funerals**

Prior to examining police funeral and memorial services it is important to preface the social context of funerals themselves in South Africa. In Africa, funeral services are not the sombre affairs as seen in many westernised democracies. In most communities, African funerals are very much a communal event, which extends beyond the privacy of the immediate family (Baars, 2010; Jindra and Noret, 2011). Funerals are often the largest and most expensive of social events where vast amounts of money are spent in securing venues and preparing food. As explained early, funerals as a type of ritual cannot be separated from the cultural contexts in which they occur. So, while police funerals and memorials take direction from official regulations, they are shaped and influenced by the communities' cultural practices.

### **5.4.2 History of SAPS Funerals and Memorials**

The SAPS funeral is a regulated and formal affair which, on paper at least, draws strong symbolic comparisons to police funerals held in the North. They are directed and controlled by the South African Police Service National Instructions 24/1998 (Official Funerals) and a step-by-step guidebook, namely, 'Guide to Official Funerals in the South African Police Service' (2012). Both the instructions and the guide describe and direct the form and process of funerals. Memorial services are also covered in these instructions but as SAPS headquarters does not fund such services the adherence to the standard is much lower.

The SAPS guidebook for police funerals is derived from the police Human Resource department and dictates how the funeral should be conducted. It details the responsibilities of all individuals who are directly involved in the funeral, such as for example, the chaplain, coffin bearers etc. No details are left to chance. Procedures before and after the ceremony, from the religious venue to the place of burial are explained in precise detail. Police actions are controlled in this space, for example, 'The entire procession will march in slow march, while the band plays 'the Dead March'... They will stop playing after about three hundred (300m) paces' (SAPS Funeral Guide, 2012:10). Pall bearers, police marching bands and police mourners are all marshalled according to exact instructions in this guide book.

One critical difference between funerals and memorials is that the body of the deceased is not present at the memorial service. Memorials are a type of local remembrance service, organised by the station where the deceased worked. Memorials are additional ceremonies, as

opposed to replacement ceremonies, to the formal funeral and having a memorial service does not preclude a formal funeral service subsequently being held. The holding of an official police funeral is at the discretion of the deceased's family members. Memorials are often held when the funeral occurs in another province and police colleagues may not be able to attend as a result and are also normally held prior to the formal burial of the deceased.

Although many Black police officers have been recruited into the SAPS from urban townships, those townships are frequently not where the officers were born or raised. In South Africa the changing patterns of mobility and migration have resulted in large numbers of individuals moving from the rural Eastern Cape Province to cities to find work (De Witte, 2003; Lee, 2012). According to recent research on death and loss in South Africa, when migrants die there is a desire that the body of the deceased be buried near the family home as a final resting place (Lee and Vaughan, 2012:163). For this reason, memorial services are often held so that colleagues and friends of the deceased may pay their respects as they otherwise would not be able to travel the large distances to these homesteads.

## 5.5 The SAPS Funeral

Official police funerals are held, with the deceased family's consent, for all serving members of the South African Police Service who die while on-duty. Much like their name inclusion on memorial stones according to the regulatory framework officers who die by suicide are not permitted to have an official funeral.<sup>143</sup> The formal police funeral attended during my research was a very sombre affair and was held in a Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>144</sup> The church car park was full of cars but the number of people present seemed small at approximately 150. Sections of the church car park had been reserved with traffic cones for very important people (VIP) guests. These VIP's were noted as 'dignitaries' in the order of service and consisted of the Deputy Minister of Police, the Acting National Provincial Police Commissioner, the acting national head of the Hawks unit, and the Western Cape head of the Hawks unit. As the VIPs arrived they were escorted into these reserved spaces and then ushered by senior police management into the church. Interestingly, no parking space was reserved for the family of the deceased.

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<sup>143</sup> Section 1(1) (b) of the National Instruction 24/1998 Official Funerals states that 'if there are reasons to believe that a member died as a result of suicide or while committing an offence, an official funeral will not be provided'. It is of note here that suicide is held in the same regard as a criminal act.

<sup>144</sup> In 2011, an analysis was conducted of the distribution of the religions represented within the nine provinces of South Africa and across the four race groups denoted in the SAPS. The Christian denominations best represented in the study were the Dutch Reformed (12.7 percent), Methodist (6.0 percent), Roman Catholic (5.8 percent) and Anglican (5.0 percent) (Joubert and Grobler, 2013).

Approximately 12 uniformed officers were marched in front of the church by a sergeant who marshalled them via commands. In accordance with guidebook regulations, all officers wore white gloves. The gloves somewhat smartened up the appearance of their well-worn uniforms. The majority of the uniforms looked like they needed to be replaced or steam cleaned to create some crispness in the wrinkled appearance. As they stood to attention, a constable rubbed his shoe off the back of his trousers in a quick attempt to polish it. While his colleagues' shoes were clean, they were not polished with any great shine either. Once everyone was in place the coffin was escorted outside to the main road where the police funeral cortege began. They marched to the commands given by the sergeant, their arms and steps not quite in sync. When the cortege reached the front of the church the coffin was carried into the building by the dead officer's colleagues. For the formal organisation, while the ceremony is *about* the police role, its power and authority, it is not necessarily *for* the officer. In addition to these visible indicators, inside the church during the service there are also verbal clues that allow us to discern, by using Foucault's approach, the way the police encoded their view of danger.



**Figure 17: Traffic Cones Reserving Dignitary Parking (Perkins, 2015)**

### **5.5.1 Order of Events and Narratives**

The ceremony began with opening prayers. A pamphlet detailed who was present at the service and who was to speak to the congregation. Apart from the addition of police speakers, the order of service appeared to be that of a standard funeral. One staple of the police funeral is the hymn 'Amazing Grace'. Amazing Grace is considered as a 'doable song', in which the majority of the congregation can join in without much difficulty (Ramshaw, 2008, 2010). The song's message is, 'Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come, tis grace

hath brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home'.<sup>145</sup> Songs are part of the funeral record and this song from a genealogical perspective can also locate danger as central to the police role. In this case the congregation use the hymn to allude to the fact police officers have to work through danger as part of their police role. Danger becomes encoded in not just what is said but also in what is sung at these services.

Throughout the speeches the deceased officer was portrayed as a physical embodiment of the 'good' in society. As police are perceived as representatives of the state, an attack on an officer is regarded as an attack on the state itself. In this sense, danger becomes an external threat to the police organisation and its members. This notion becomes embedded by both the religious narrative and in the discussion of the career path of the officer. Any courses that the officer undertook are listed to underscore how his self-improvement was done to help the community at large.

This imagery becomes juxtaposed against those who killed him as being the 'evil' in society, in an effort to distinguish the good work of the police versus the evil (criminal) actions they face. '*The ultimate sacrifice*' made by the officer and those serving members who remain is continually referenced. In a Foucauldian (1982) sense this idea of sacrifice orientates the power of the police in the salvation of the community. The power of the police becomes continually embedded through such statements. This sacrifice always relates to being killed 'in the line of duty'. The connotations of the 'duty' of the officer underscore the idea of responsibility and obligation that is involved in such work. Hall (2011) infers that the dead encourages respect. This respect coupled with the idea that the officer represented the 'good' of society elevates the crime of a police murder and the danger officers face even further. The deceased was eulogised as '*an exceptional detective who dedicated all his life to protect and serve the nation*'. Such statements solidified a sense of solidarity amongst those officers present as seen by their silent nods. Such statements also served to juxtapose the law-abiding 'us' (the police) and the lawless 'them' (the criminals).

In addition to commemorating the dead and reinforcing the power of the organisation, speakers also use the opportunity to make critical political statements. Police funerals are recognised as platforms to highlight many public concerns (Mulchay, 2000). In South Africa the issue of corruption in particular figured prominently at all of the memorial services. As a result, the process of memorialisation of the police becomes embedded with the problems of

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<sup>145</sup> Appendix 18 details the lyrics of 'Amazing Grace'. In these services only the first four verses are ever sung.

corruption in policing, which is relayed by media to the wider public. Such statements suggest that danger that the police face emanates from within the organisation itself too.

These speeches support Mulchay's findings that police funerals are often used to garner public support in the face of scandal and misdeeds, which call for greater police accountability (2000:75). Indeed, during his eulogy, the head of the Hawks, the deceased officer's boss, stated '*we will continue rooting out corrupt officials and name and shame them*'. It is worth stating that the deceased was not known to be involved in any corrupt activities. By confessing to the existence of corruption in the police there is an acknowledgement that this issue may be part responsible for officers being killed in the first place. What such narratives also succeed in doing is indicating that danger is something that lurks inside the organisation itself. Through such narratives, danger becomes almost omnipresent in the police.

In accordance with police guidelines, after the speech and service were done, the uniform cap of the deceased was placed on top of the flag-draped coffin as it was wheeled from the church. Marked police cars escorted the hearse to the graveyard. Road junctions were blocked off intermittently by the preceding police cars, reinforcing their power and authority allowing the procession to flow through without interruption. At the graveyard the procession regrouped and the police band marched behind the procession to the graveside.



**Figure 18: Warrant Officer Holz - Cap and Coffin (Perkins, 2015)**

The state flag was folded in ceremonial fashion over the coffin reinforcing the intimate links to the state. The flag was then given to the Minister who subsequently gave it to the widow of the deceased. Family and dignitaries were invited to pay their respects at the coffin prior to it

being lowered into the ground. The ‘Last Post’ was played on a bugle to a silent crowd.<sup>146</sup> It was a dignified affair with no vocal displays of sorrow compared to those at the memorial services attended.



**Figure 19: The Police Band Following the Procession (Perkins, 2015)**

## 5.6 SAPS Memorial Services

Although memorial services are not as formalised as police funerals they are regulated by the same national instruction, which indicates that, ‘a memorial service involving no expenses for the state may be held for members in cases where the funeral takes place in another province to show respect for the deceased. The service may, with the approval of the provincial commissioner concerned, be held in a church or a workplace’.<sup>147</sup> Unlike police funerals the cost of the memorial is then borne by the deceased member’s station as opposed to the national police budget. These services also tend to attract less organisational attention and so could be said to have less involvement from the formal organisation as a whole.

At police memorials there are also statements made which are more forthright than those at funerals and show how the police relate to their role and their relationship with the communities that they police. The statements are multi-layered and trace how the organisational and occupational cultures respond to danger in their daily routines. As with police funerals however, there has been little examination of the narratives at these services and how they come to shape police perceptions of danger.

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<sup>146</sup> In an examination of the history of the ‘The Last Post’ bugle call, Turner (2015) underlines how for decades the sole use of the call was to signal that the British army camp was secure for the night and closed till morning, in effect it signalled the end of a working day in the British army (1790). It was not until the 1850s when it was used to play over graves of soldiers who died in foreign lands that it became a sound synonymous with the end of life.

<sup>147</sup> Section 1(c) of the National Instruction for Official Police Funerals refers.

As stated previously, these services are in fact a step removed from a funeral. Memorials are normally held within a month after the actual murder and as such, one could expect less visible grief and perhaps more considered responses to the murder. However, many of the statements made at these services are emotionally charged. So even while these scripts may be somewhat prepared in advance they do not lend themselves to reserved statements. It is here that the slippage in responses to danger at funerals and memorial services, between the organisational and occupational cultures become visible. In memorials services both the unity and disarray in the organisation is made visible.

Similar to police funerals, memorial services are poorly attended by the police themselves. Even when officers are off-duty and could have attended, they often do not. During the research, a sergeant who had worked in the station previously had been killed in a road traffic collision. The day after the service, at the uniform briefing parade, the unit commander angrily questioned the lack of his unit's attendance at the memorial. He demanded of them, '*Why did you not go to the Sergeant's funeral? You worked with him?*' The question hung in the air with feet being awkwardly shuffled and mumbled responses of '*we had to sleep.*'<sup>148</sup> The fact that the service was located directly beside their place of work made the absence of the police all the more apparent. The lack of attendance by its own members at a police funeral questions how tight the social fabric of the police organisation is. Such poor attendance also dilutes the formal organisations' attempts to present themselves as a united power through the solidarity of its members.

### **5.6.1 Order of Events and Narratives**

A photograph of the deceased was often hung up outside the memorial venue as a type of marker for where the service was to be held. During two of the services attended a small group of members from the processional parade were also present. The procession consisted of a short marching demonstration of approximately 100 metres in front of the church. They halted at the front door of the church and stood to attention, acting as a guard of honour for individuals walking into the church. The symbolic reference of the police as a controlling organisation was somewhat lost owing to one or two officers openly blowing bubble gum as they marched. Again, the overall lack of uniformed members in attendance also contradicted the solidarity message of the formal organisation. At a service for two officers who had been murdered on-duty, the mounted horse unit was also in attendance. The introduction of the

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<sup>148</sup> Field Notes 0031.

horses as an extra-official part of a memorial service sponsored by the station, seemed to underscore the fact that this was no ‘ordinary memorial’ as two members had been murdered in one incident.



**Figure 20: A Small Funeral Procession at Memorial Service (Perkins, 2014)**

Each memorial service had a police officer appointed as a Program Director who acted as master of ceremonies throughout the service. His purpose was to direct the order of service and call speakers to eulogise. During one memorial service the program director, a young constable, made reference to the fact that he did not volunteer to be the director but was doing so at the request of senior management.<sup>149</sup> His statements and indeed the lack lustre effort of the honour guard marching to the door indicated that neither he nor the guard wanted to be or even felt a responsibility to be there.

Even though police officers may not attend the services en masse, the formal organisation still seeks to remind those who do attend that danger is always present. The police banners, displayed on the stage or altar, carried slogans such as ‘If you do the crime you will do the time’, and ‘Be responsible. Do not buy illegal and/or stolen firearms’. Banners that displayed the hotline confidential phone numbers were also regularly placed in prominent positions. These artefacts in the archaeology of the police service communicated to those present the dangers the police encountered as part of their role. They also re-enforced the ‘us versus them’ as the banners appear to instruct the reader as if the reader him or herself were thinking about committing a crime.

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<sup>149</sup> Memorial Service of Sergeant Xolisa Theophilus Mlindwa murdered off-duty on 30th June 2014.

Similar to the police funerals, a pamphlet indicated who was going to speak and what songs where to be sung. The quality and presentation of the pamphlets at these services differed and appeared to be based on the station's available budget. Some pamphlets were professional looking, formatted documents, while others were poorly formatted black and white photocopies that looked like the cartridge had run out of ink half way through the printing process.



**Figure 21: SAPS Banner at Memorial Service (Perkins, 2014)**

The memorial service format is similar to the police funeral. Roles and responsibilities are neatly assigned but their presentations however are not necessarily scripted.

During one service a senior commander eulogised, *'He has died with his boots on. He has set an example to all of us. He has not hesitated when he was called upon. We can be proud of him and be sure his achievements did not go unnoticed'*.<sup>150</sup> Similar to narratives at the police funeral, by symbolising the danger that the officer faced his death is described as a noble deed. The sacrifice of the officer becomes intricately linked to his willingness to engage with such danger. During these services, senior officers regularly situated the police role in authoritative positions to the community they served. In one service the senior commander likened the police role to 'medicine' and the criminals the 'cancer'. In depicting the 'us and them' dichotomy he stated:

*'We as South African Police Officers are part of this community and with law abiding citizens we are one body, criminals remind me of cancer cells in a*

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<sup>150</sup> Memorial Service of Detective Constable Mthetheli Gunya murdered in Nyanga, Cape Town on 17th October 2014.

*body... We are the medicine; we are going into the body of the community of which we are part of. We look to find and eliminate bad cells; we need to do so without affecting the healthy cells'.<sup>151</sup>*

However, in an attempt to strengthen the organisational mandate, the slippage between the organisational desires and the occupational reality is often revealed. The formal organisational representative, usually in the form of a station commander, uses the eulogy as a platform to reinforce police norms and warn against lapses in the organisation. A senior commander commented about the police always needing to be, '*operationally ready where officers should grasp any opportunity. We should stay fit and know what to do so when we are in situations where there should be no hesitations.*' The SAPS has long been plagued by public comments about police officers being overweight, unfit and thus unable to perform effectively (Carter, 2005; Fokazi, 2015). However, much like mentions of corruption in policing at funeral services, the danger the police perceive is seen as being part-created by their own actions or, as ascribed to here, inactions.

Following the managers, a colleague normally spoke. During these eulogies the members often oscillated between being recognised as members of the community and members of the police service. One officer stated, '*We are also human beings, we've got children, we've got family we have got everything that you have but you are stealing the lives from us, the police who must protect you! Who must save you?'*<sup>152</sup> The life of his peer wasn't merely *taken*, it was *stolen*. Even though the officer attempts to strengthen the links of police to the community, his statements have an almost opposite effect. By saying to the community present that they are stealing the lives of police officers he reinforces the 'us' and 'them' divide.

This 'us and them' division however does not just speak about the police and the community. Through further statements at memorials we can see the conflict of the organisational and occupational view of the SAPS as a singular brotherhood. As one officer stated to his senior managers present, '*I must say to my police commanders, you can have your blue uniform during the daytime, but come 4 o'clock I am part of the community'*<sup>153</sup> Statements like these were common throughout the commemoration services and the approving nods and claps

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<sup>151</sup> Memorial Service of Sergeant Thuani DImini murdered in Ingelethu West, Cape Town on 16th October 2014.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

which followed them supported this. The slippage between the two cultures is exposed by the proximity of these alternative views at these memorial services.

Another constable speaking about a deceased officer stated that, '*he is a fallen hero and a man of utter courage, who was killed tragically*'.<sup>154</sup> While it is natural that the deceased is spoken of in heroic terms, the reality of the sentiments expressed often clouds the actual truth. A couple of weeks after this service was held there was internal speculation, and subsequent confirmation that the deceased officer was accidentally killed by one of his own colleagues who misfired his gun. Indeed, this is not the first time that an officer died in these circumstances.<sup>155</sup> The authoritative role desired by the police becomes marred by their own actions. Much like the talk about corruption and unfit police, the danger that the police perceive then becomes seen as something which they themselves actively contribute to through incompetence. Although the discourse at the memorial service supports the occupational perception of danger, the reality is more nuanced.

A speaker from the police union is also a central feature of the police memorial service. When a representative from the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) walks towards the stage/altar his movement is always preceded by the same song. This song, more akin to a chant, like many of the 'impromptu' songs that are sung at memorial services, is never included on the written program. This song, sung in IsiXhosa, is called 'Asijiki', which translates as 'The March'. This was one of many songs sung which were never listed on the pamphlet. The regularity of these off-script performances, however, made them somewhat scripted.<sup>156</sup>

The difference between both the songs and in their delivery highlights the juxtaposition between the formal and informal organisation. As the union representative walks towards the altar, a chorus sung against a beaten drum that translates as '*It is bad, it is bad! We go forward. Even how things are, being beaten, being arrested, being shot at...we go forward, it is bad, it is bad!*' is always sung.<sup>157</sup> During the singing, women and men Toyi-Toyi<sup>158</sup> up and

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<sup>154</sup> Memorial service of Detective Constable Mthetheli Gunya murdered in Nyanga on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

<sup>155</sup> During the examination of the murder dockets there were two known cases where officers were accidentally murdered by their own colleagues. This was just for the Western Cape Province so one must query the extent to which such accidental discharges occur across the country and to what extent they contribute to the on-duty murder of police officers.

<sup>156</sup> After attending eight memorial services I knew at what point in the service when specific songs would be sung.

<sup>157</sup> One of the singing group always brought a type of hand held make-shift drum with them. This drum was a small hand-sized pillow, wrapped completely in duct tape. A small taped handle allowed it to be held in one hand and beaten by the other free hand. In the isiXhosa language the pillow is called the 'uMpampampa'. This

down the aisles during the service. This song used to be sung during the Apartheid era and was directed at the forceful and often illegal actions of the then SAP police. It was somewhat ironic that the police themselves were now singing it. The articulation of quiet sacrifice in *Amazing Grace* contrasts with the violent danger and anger described by 'The March'. In this way danger becomes further encoded in the historic apartheid references.

This anger is often linked to the history of the police and South Africa itself. The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) was established in 1989 on the eve of South Africa's political transition. At the time it mobilised Black members of the police and the prison services who were adversely affected by the Apartheid system of racial differentiation in society at large as well as within the police organisation. It remains the largest police union in South Africa (Marks, 2000). As Marks (2000) observes POPCRU was established to protest the working conditions of the Black officers more generally and to protest their use by the government in upholding Apartheid legislation more specifically. Although it has evolved as a trade union, its establishment during Apartheid in opposition to police management under Apartheid still seems to resonate with Black officers as a means through which their own relationship with the formal organisation can be questioned. As such, when union representatives speak at the memorial service they are vessels through which Black officers publicly question the approaches of the formal organisation and with it, the state. This is in a Foucauldian sense the 'history of the present' of danger being articulated through discourse and songs at these services.

The other police union, South African Policing Unit (SAPU) on the other hand was established in 1993. It has an all-encompassing membership within the policing cluster, which includes the South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Correctional Services (DCS), Metro Police Departments and Traffic Departments (SAPU, 2017). SAPU is regarded as more conservative than its POPCRU counterpart and its membership has grown to include increasing numbers of Black and White officers (Marks, 2000).

Throughout the service POPCRU representatives continually address the congregations as '*comrades*'. This military term was used throughout the Apartheid struggle to reinforce the

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name originates from the sound made when it is struck, 'mpa-mpa-mpa', to keep the rhythm of the tune being sung. This group consisted of about eight women and when they stood, so too did the rest of the people present. They became a familiar sight at all of the memorials attended. A couple of those within the group were female police officers from the deceased's station, notably they were not in uniform. In IsiXhosa this is *Siyaya, siyaya, kubi, kubi kubi! Noma Kunjani, besishaya, besibopha, besidubula, siyaya, siyaya siyaya*'. Appendix 19 details the full verse sung.

<sup>158</sup> Toyi-Toyi is a form of dance often used in protests where individuals move in a step-like unison.

idea that the communities were unified in their fight against the injustices perpetrated by the Apartheid state. The continued uses of such phrases serve as a reminder that the police remain ‘at war’ albeit it a war of a different kind. The historic idea of danger casts a long shadow. The union representative continually references the Apartheid era where communities rallied together against the actions of the state. In his speech, often to thunderous applause, he calls for a return to the ‘*time of Apartheid when people were afraid of the police*’. The abuses of the Apartheid police on the people of the audience, which instilled this fear were (always) notably omitted from the speech. The speech attempts to reposition the police in a powerful position where their actions of violence are unquestioned and indeed supported by the community and the state. On the one hand the trade union discourse remains trapped in an anti-state rhetoric reminiscent of a former political era and yet there is at the same time a glorification of the coercive force which police had been allowed to use. It is through discourse such as this that danger can be seen to become embedded in the occupational culture.

The POPCRU representative also continually likened the murder of police officers to that of ‘high treason’ and called for a return of the death penalty for all police murderers. At the memorial being considered here, he argued that police murderers should be ‘*considered guilty until proven innocent*’. *We must deal with the criminals the way a bundu deals with a bu. In the Western Cape in the last financial year, more than 30 officers have been killed in the line of duty. We need to be ruthless [his emphasis] in dealing with these people*.<sup>159</sup> The rapturous applause which met his comments left no doubt that the majority of those present supported this view.

As previously stated, although historically perceived as a more conservative union than POPCRU, the SAPU representative parroted a similar sentiment with regard to how the murder of the police should be addressed. At one memorial service a SAPU member stated, ‘*there needs to be a change in mind-set, it needs a change in laws, we need to be ruthless in dealing with these people*’.<sup>160</sup> Apart from the notion of the police being ‘ruthless’, the reference to ‘these people’ reinforces the ‘us’ versus ‘them’. This, in turn, reinforces the sense of danger the police face.

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<sup>159</sup> Memorial Service on 30th June 2014 of two (on-duty) officers murdered in Nyanga, Cape Town on 9th July namely Sergeant Ngcawuzele and Constable KhaKa. In speaking of ‘a bundu dealing with a bu’ he is making reference to the vigilante approach.

<sup>160</sup> Mr. Manuel of SAPU speaking at the Memorial Service of Sergeant Thuani DImini on the 24 October 2014 murdered on 16th Oct 2014 in Lingelethu West.

Union representatives regularly referred to using violence to address the dangers perceived. The analogy of the ‘war on crime’ continually infuses danger in the police role. In a less sombre moment at one of the services there was a shout from an individual in the congregation for a ‘*shoot to kill*’ approach in dealing with criminals. The speaker on the platform cautioned the audience by saying, ‘*No, we must not shoot to kill*’. In response to this someone else in the congregation then retorted, ‘*Ok then, shoot to cripple*’ which was met with a ripple of laughter and applause across the room.<sup>161</sup> Such comments often underscored the real sentiments felt by many police present. From a Foucauldian perspective these ‘serious speech acts’ frame how danger becomes understood and subsequently responded to by the organisational and occupational culture. This is to say that the occupational culture is calling for a violent response to the dangers faced whereas the formal organisation prescribes a more curative approach.

At the memorial, following the union representative, a representative from the local Community Police Forum (CPF) is invited to speak on behalf of the local community. Unlike the union presence this is normally a shorter and less emotively charged speech. However, official inclusion of a member of the CPF provides a voice to a structure which is integral to the policy efforts around community-based policing in South Africa. So, while the CPF representative stuck to what would be considered a standard, conservative memorial script their presence shows that the wider organisation has the power to bring the community into such services. Following the CPF eulogy a short sermon is then offered by a SAPS chaplain who is another representative of the formal organisation.

Chaplains, like the union representatives, took more of an action-oriented role than a philosophical one. During one memorial service, a chaplain bellowed from the pulpit at the few officers present, ‘*You have guns! You have been trained how to use those guns! Do not be afraid to use those guns when you need to!*’<sup>162</sup> Much like the responses of the officers to the union representative these comments were also met with much support from those present. The chaplains partook in a ‘war on crime’ discourse where the use of coercive force on the part of the police is legitimised.

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<sup>161</sup> Memorial Service of Detective Constable Mthetheli Gunya murdered in Nyanga on 17th October 2014.

<sup>162</sup> Excerpt from sermon by Lt Col Pastor Jacobs, Nyanga Cluster Chaplain, at memorial service for Constable Monwabisi Khaka and Sergeant Sibongile Ngcawuzele shot on duty while recovering a stolen vehicle 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014. It was interesting that this speech was nearly identical to a speech made in 2008 by the then Deputy Minister of the Police who instructed police at an anti-crime summit, ‘*You have been given guns, now use them. I want no warning shots, you have one shot and it must be a kill shot*’ (Hosken, 2008).

This particular chaplain was not alone in supporting the use of violence. At another memorial service, another chaplain explained from the pulpit to a senior officer how the police would face criminals. He stated:

*'We have two options, to flee or to fight, and we are not going to flee, we are going to fight (His emphasis). I'm sorry General, but sometimes it will not be pretty, but whatever we are doing, we are not against the police'.<sup>163</sup>*

This discourse acted like a rallying cry for the 'war against crime' of which the police are being told they are a part. His mention of 'whatever we are doing, we are not against the police' acted to dilute the union representative rhetoric about the lack of perceived support from the formal organisation. However, the consistent themes of the chaplain and union speeches about the use of violence reinforce the sense of danger and desired responses as perceived by the police. The chaplains' view their own rhetoric as one of a moral right as opposed to one of political expediency.

Owing to the inclusion of these additional songs, a service which normally should have taken about 45 minutes often extended to well beyond three hours. Members of the congregation regularly got up and left and came back throughout the service. Following the conclusion of the service, family members of the deceased and dignitaries were invited to the police station, or to a private room for refreshments. On more than one occasion police present were reminded not to attend as there were only enough refreshments for those specifically invited. Much like the poorly presented pamphlets, such statements served as a reminder of the reality of the under-resourcing which most stations suffer.

## **5.7 Spontaneous Memorials and Monuments**

'Spontaneous' memorials and monuments are so named because they are created in an ad hoc fashion. Spontaneous monuments are often recognised by the placement of flowers, plush toys and cards at locations where people have been murdered. Such displays have become an internationally recognised way in which individuals and communities express their grief (Egbo, 2008; Santino, 2006). Even though the research site has one of the highest rates of murders and police murders in South Africa, spontaneous monuments were never observed in any location in the township and perhaps speaks to the normalisation of such occurrences.

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<sup>163</sup> Excerpt from sermon by Pastor at memorial service of Memorial Service of two on-duty officers, Sergeant Ngcawuzele and Constable KhaKa, on 9th July who were murdered on 30th June 2014 in Nyanga.

One memorial that was observed and could be considered as spontaneous was a night-time vigil that was held at individual police stations across Cape Town. These were spontaneous in the sense that they were organised at extremely short notice, they were not governed by any organisational or state regulation and members of the local Community Police Forums (CPF) took the lead and formed the majority of those present.<sup>164</sup>



**Figure 22: Vigil Outside Research Station (Perkins, 2015)**

However, three specific police stations were not acting in a ‘spontaneous’ way per se; they were directed by the Provincial Office to hold these candle-lit vigils possibly as a result of them having the highest rates of police murders in the Western Cape Province. The notification was given on the morning that the vigil was due to be held. It was short notice and the officers openly expressed no interest in having to come back to the station after their shift had ended. Members of the station were also requested to attend, but few did.

Although this gathering was meant to be perceived as spontaneous, as an emotive response from a community angered at the killing of its officers, they were staged by the formal organisation and as such were controlled. CPF members were given premade signs to carry during the vigil by senior police officials. The signs reflected the message that the senior official wanted conveyed such as, ‘Stop police killings, the police are human too’ and ‘Remember our Fallen Heroes’. The community members did not make these signs. The signs arrived from elsewhere and were held aloft as if they were representing the actual sentiment of the community.

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<sup>164</sup> A vigil was announced one morning for that same evening at a 7am briefing of the detectives. Up until that point no one had heard of it occurring.

Prior to the gathering of the community and the potential media, the front of the police station stage was swept by officers and props of candles and posters were handed out to those present by the senior officers. The police station car park was cleared to make space for dignitaries who were meant to attend but who subsequently failed to show up.



**Figure 23: Community Forum Members at Vigil (Perkins, 2015)**

This event appeared to be non-scripted. On the spot decisions were made about who would address those present. The service commenced with prayers from the chaplain. Such was the spontaneity of the vigil that there was no sound system. The drone of the township in the background, cars beeping, a football game being played, and loud dance music made it impossible to hear what was being said. The station commander spoke about how the communities' assistance was needed to stop police murders. A local choir that consisted of 10 youths sang and a bugler from the army was brought in to play the 'Last Post'. When I asked why he was there he responded that he was asked to attend as the 'police band was busy'.<sup>165</sup> There were perhaps 50 people present, of which about 10 were police officers who were working at the station at the time.

In addition to the 10 officers from the station senior officers has brought in two armoured personnel carriers (Casspirs)<sup>166</sup> that were staffed by six officers each. During the vigil the

<sup>165</sup> Field Notes 0085. I spoke with the bugler and asked him about his presence at the vigil, he said he had been drafted in as the police band was 'busy' he didn't know with what. There were however two other 'spontaneous memorials' being held on the same evening in different parts of the city.

<sup>166</sup> The name 'Casspir' is an anagram of the abbreviations of the customer, the South African Police (SAP), and the design authority, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR - Applied Chemistry Unit) (Nortje and Leimecke, 2014). These armoured trucks were built for riot control situations and had ballistic and mine protection capabilities and projected the imagery of the police as a much-militarised force.

officers assigned to the Casspurs just sat in them rather than participating in the vigil. When I enquired why the Casspurs were present, a police captain commented that it was really to demonstrate ‘a show of force’ to the community. The SAPS had substituted hardware for the members that they knew would not attend.

It subsequently emerged that the demonstration of force had little impact on the crime in the area. The following day it transpired that a car had been stolen beside the station during the vigil. At a management meeting a senior officer scolded the station commander stating, ‘*your skollies are arrogant, they stole the car outside the station while we were busy praying.*’<sup>167</sup> The ‘arrogance’ of the criminals was another way of saying that they had no respect for the police there.



**Figure 24: Preparing for Vigil and a Casspir (Perkins, 2015)**

While this spontaneous memorial does not speak directly to how police encode danger it does bear witness to how normalised danger and death are in the South African context. Like the limited attendance by police officers at funeral and memorial services the lack of attendance here, including that of the dignitaries, insinuates a familiarity with death.

## 5.8 Conclusion

The attendance of politicians, media, marching processions and the use of police banners at memorial services all seek to support the authoritative and powerful role of the police. The idea of the police being continually ‘at war’ and in constant danger becomes embedded in the police culture through the continued use of such imagery and statements. Memorialisation offers more insight however than just the dramaturgical nature of the police role. Using a Foucauldian approach this research suggests that in addition to the symbolic significance of

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<sup>167</sup> Field Notes 0085 and 0088.

these services, they also highlight how danger becomes inscribed and encoded as part of a larger archive about policing.

At these services the difficulties of routine policing are laid bare. The dead member signifies the realities of the danger inherent in the police role. Indeed, the circumstances which have led to the member's death, much like the docket, also underline the mundaneness of the situations in which many officers are murdered. Members were murdered while sitting waiting on a tow truck in the middle of the day or trying to arrest a suspect. The poorly produced pamphlets and lack of large processions at many services also serve as a reminder of a wholly under-resourced police service in which they operate.

From an external (public) and internal (police) perspective the solidarity, strength and sacrifice of the police role is strengthened by much of the stagecraft at these services. However, the solidarity that the formal organisation wishes to portray is often betrayed by what is said and what is excluded at these services. Such omissions, be it songs on a pamphlet or names on a memorial stone speak to a hidden narrative in the police organisation. When the narratives at these services are studied, that solidarity theme begins to unravel further. At these services, similar yet competing narratives emerge between the organisational and occupational cultures. Instead of solidifying the police mandate, what is said at these services often creates cleavages from within.

In these narratives the desire of the police mandate is often juxtaposed with the occupational belief of how they can then be achieved. While representatives from the formal organisation speak to issues of solidarity and accountability, members from the occupational culture express less of a united front. For the occupational culture, when their shift ends, so does engagement with their role. Danger then appears to emerge from the gap between these two positionalities. In widening this gap, the occupational culture becomes further cleaved when the police gaze is turned inwards.

The presentation of the good (police) versus evil (criminals) at these services becomes further splintered by the realisation that the 'good police' are not always good. Corruption continually lurks amongst the ranks and danger is then seen as something which does not just manifest as an external threat but often stems from within the organisation itself. Police colleagues become regarded as another source of danger that officers face. Such depictions describe an organisation which is not only unfit to serve but cannot innately trust its own members. Collectively these services and monuments remind us of the many manifestations

of danger and in turn the differences in how both the organisational and occupational respond to them.

## Chapter 6. Material Artefacts

### 6.1 Introduction

The material artefacts of policing, firearms, bullet proof vests and vehicles, have received little examination as core components of police culture. To date, these artefacts have largely been regarded as instruments that facilitate the police culture rather than actively shape it. These objects form part of the police identity kit and understanding how Vispol, detectives and TRT engage with them offers insight into the occupational behaviour across these three groups. By concentrating on police engagement with these objects a complex, and at times contradictory, account of how the police perceive and experience danger emerges. These artefacts are used as interpretive devices in order to address the research question, **what do police interactions with the material artefacts of policing reveal about their perceptions and experiences of danger?**

The police identity kit can be directly linked to Bourdieu's concepts of the field, habitus and capital. From an organisational perspective these artefacts can all be considered as a form of capital in the field of policing. From an occupational perspective this equipment can also be regarded as 'objectified' forms of cultural capital. As Bourdieu (1986) suggests, objects in the objectified state are defined only in the relationship with capital in its embodied form. The embodied state reinforces the notion that investment of the physical body is an integral part of this capital, for example, one cannot capitalise on having a firearm without physically investing in the training required to use it.

Manifestations of objectified cultural capital are, as Bourdieu (1986:15) says, 'a two-faced reality, a commodity and a symbolic object. Their specifically cultural value and their commercial value remain relatively independent, although the economic sanction may come to reinforce their cultural consecration'. Regardless of the specificity of the type of capital, the artefacts of the police identity kit represent symbolic elements of power (Bourdieu, 2008: 21). What is of interest here is how officer interactions with and use of these artefacts highlights their perception and experience of danger.

### 6.2 The Police Identity Kit

Erving Goffman observes that individuals, in order to exert some control over the public image they portray, make use of an 'identity kit' (1961:19-21) consisting of paraphernalia or totems. Identity kits act as visible cultural capital that telegraph who the person is and what

they do. In policing, the formation and sustainment of this identity kit forms a significant part of organisational and occupational police culture. Identity kits have two main parts, one of which is actions and the other material or physical items.

This chapter will focus on the material aspects of the identity kit namely, firearms, BRVs and the vehicles used by the police and chapter seven will further explore the behaviour of the police engaging in risky behavior. These items make it clear to observers that the user or wearer is a member of the police. The uniform and other accoutrements also combine to outwardly indicate this officer's status within his own role, as say a patrolman or member of a specialised unit (Scharf and Binder, 1983). Members of the TRT, for example, carry rifles and are dressed in a combat-style uniform. These specific parts of the identity kit serve to differentiate the role and indicate that the officer has been trained to a higher or different skill level than his colleagues. The police identity kit is part of the occupational identity of the police and can also be seen as cultural capital.

Firearms, BRVS and vehicles are protection artefacts in policing and the need for them denotes the dangerousness inherent in police work. As such they act as useful devices through which to explore police perceptions and experiences of danger and death. As well as offering protection, this equipment signifies toughness, which is itself linked to the police identity as authority. The police firearm is a powerful totem of the authority as it signifies the ability to make use of force (Crank, 2004). Holdaway (1983) suggests that these objects, firearms as well as cars and truncheons, are a way in which an officer can transform the space around him into an area that is under his authority and control. Even if these objects are not actually in use, their sheer presence enhances the police sense of authority and identity. This connection to identity and authority, how officers interact with this form of capital, makes examining the ways police engage with this equipment and how it shapes practices of relevance in exploring police perceptions of danger.

### **6.2.1 Firearms**

Much like the wearing of a police uniform, firearms are part of the police officer 'identity equipment' (Scharf and Binder, 1983). In policing, firearms are often considered as a tool of the trade. Perhaps in a play on the word 'firearm' Rubenstein suggests that the police officer learns 'to use weapons as an extension of himself' (1973:290). In his understanding, firearms are an extension of the officer's person as well as his psychology of survival. In South Africa,

as in other jurisdictions, firearms have been intricately linked to what the police do and how they do it.

In South Africa, the use of firearms by the SAPS has featured prominently in debates, both past and present, about the use of lethal force by police (Bruce, 2002; 2003, 2010, 2011; Osse and Cano, 2017; Mistry, Minnaar, Redpath, and Dhlamini, 2001). While academic research into this area generally focuses on minimising the use of force, little of it looks at how danger determines whether or not such force is used. My research is concerned with how the police perceive and experience danger and the way in which this is made more visible through the interaction with firearms, be it lethal or otherwise.

In 1926 firearms became part of the South African police uniform and were originally intended to be used only for the policemen's defence (Brewer, 1994).<sup>168</sup> SAPS General Order 251 currently states that, 'a member required to perform duties in a neighbourhood or in circumstances perilous to life, he shall be adequately armed for self-preservation or the protection of life and property'. For most SAPS, carrying a firearm contributes to the overall fetish of the police uniform (Hirtenfelder, 2015). The standard weapon issued to operational SAPS officers is a 9mm Z88/Beretta pistol. Officers also carry pepper spray and have access to the R5 assault rifle for operations (Faull, 2011). During my research, firearms were cited by officers as a primary reason for why they were being killed. One officer reflected: '*The criminals know we have [firearms] so they will immediately target you if they know you are carrying a firearm.*'<sup>169</sup> This is to say that officers believed that criminals killed member of the SAPS not out of vengeance but simply to take their firearm. The belief that officers were being killed in order to obtain their firearm was a common perception held amongst officers in the research station. One officer once asked me to accompany her to a food stall that was a couple of hundred feet from the station. She openly admitted to being afraid of being attacked for her firearm while there. This belief, however, is not supported by the data analysed in the docket section of this research about police murders in the Western Cape.

The dockets analysed covered the 12-years between 2002 and 2014, and showed that only 20 percent of all police murders in the Western Cape were for the purpose of obtaining the officer's firearm. Even though the officer's firearm may have been taken during many of the

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<sup>168</sup> Brewer notes that while this was the formal comment made by then then Commissioner, Colonel Truter, he failed to qualify the remark in that this use was with the exception of dealing with Black community members. Of note is that it was not until 1972 that Black officers were allowed to carry firearms (1994:91).

<sup>169</sup> Interview G.

other 80 percent of incidents, the weapon does not seem to have been the primary motivation for the killing. While most police murders are not motivated by the presence of their firearms, the way officers' view, use or interact with firearms does offer some insight into how they perceive and experience danger.

Despite the misconception that having a firearm made them a target, the officers observed during this research also started that they would not police without them. One day I explained that in Ireland uniformed police do not carry guns. Other conversations in the police van stopped because of my comment. As if responding for the group the officer asked with astonishment, '*You don't carry guns? So how do you police?*'.<sup>170</sup> Not having a firearm was unfathomable to those present. Indeed, one officer offered, '*Without a firearm we will die like flies, I'm telling you*'.<sup>171</sup> Another officer showed how he carried a second pistol loose in his combat trouser leg, '*just in case*'.<sup>172</sup> This is the complex, if not paradoxical, relationship between the SAPS and firearms. For the police, firearms were both a source of safety and of danger.



**Figure 25: SAPS Official Firearms (Perkins, 2015)**

Bourdieu identifies some features of these dispositions that are germane for understanding how the police relate to the use of their firearm. As is seen in the above discussion, understandings about the police use and engagement with a firearm is largely dependent on the field in which the habitus operates. For example, a South African police officer would find it difficult to police if placed in Ireland where firearms are not the norm for uniformed officers. It should also be noted that the role of the police will also reflect on the level of engagement that the police have with the firearm. Vispol and TRT may be on patrol duties

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<sup>170</sup> Field Notes 0098.

<sup>171</sup> Interview S.

<sup>172</sup> Field Notes 0001.

more than detectives and this could be seen to alter or allow more interaction with firearms. What is of interest here, though, is how in isolating and examining an officer's action in reaching for, and in some cases firing, a weapon makes visible their perception of danger.

Having a weapon and being competent to use that weapon exposes the police to another type of danger. During the research I regularly attended weekly Cluster Crime Combating Forum (CCCCF) meetings. These are local managerial meetings where crime statistics and the general management of the cluster are discussed. During one meeting it transpired that 46 percent of police officers in the cluster were deemed incompetent to carry a firearm.<sup>173</sup> This meant that nearly half of the officers in the area had either failed the qualification to carry a firearm or failed to attend testing.<sup>174</sup> From an organisational perspective the reality of removing these officers from operational duties was unrealistic. One senior officer in attendance commented, *'if these members (those who had not taken or had failed certification) were taken away, there would be no one left in the cluster'*. Thus, officers were allowed to continue to carry their service weapons even though they are seen as unqualified in their use. Through such practices the organisational culture creates an environment where incompetence becomes tolerated through sheer necessity. The solution to the problem was to try and ensure that as many members as possible in the cluster underwent refresher training. However, removing these officers from service would leave the area completely devoid of resources and they were already overstretched as it was.

Of note is that the refresher courses are held during daytime, often in 30° C heat, and owing to the cost involved, officers are only allowed and required to shoot once a year provided they pass the shooting test at the end. Officers must qualify in both the hand pistol and the rifle on the same day. On completion of the shoot I overheard many utterances of 'shit' when officers saw the mark on their sheet and realised they had failed to qualify.

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<sup>173</sup> Field Notes 0021.

<sup>174</sup> Officers must attend a firearms refreshers course once per year.



**Figure 26: Targets on the Ground at Firing Range (Perkins, 2015)**

From an organisational perspective, arming the police is a way in which to both control and respond to the danger to which they and the community are exposed. The failure rate of the SAPS members and the circumstances in which this occurs adds another layer of complexity in relation to understanding how adequately danger can actually be responded to by the police. The complexity of this relationship is now further explored when the engagement of the police with these objects is examined across three different police units.

#### **6.2.1.1 *Vispol***

During observations with Vispol the firearm acted as a gauge for the danger perceived by officers. Counter to what one would perhaps expect, the firing of a weapon did not denote the highest perception of danger by officers. Instead, the firing of a weapon surfaced as more of a functional tool than an indicator of danger. While I will discuss the firing of weapons later, it is first worth looking at how, when officers did perceive danger, their hands went to the firearm. As that perceived danger escalated they would draw the weapon but not necessarily aim or fire it. In this way the interaction with the material artefact of the firearm could be seen as an indicator of officers' perception of danger.

One night when driving through an area where two officers had previously been shot dead, we saw some men huddled over the bonnet of a car. On seeing the men, the two officers with me automatically drew their weapons as we approached. The men turned out to be fixing the car engine. In explaining why they drew their guns one of the officers said, '*You always have*

*to be alert, always*'.<sup>175</sup> While it is not uncommon for officers in other jurisdictions to approach situations with caution and even a hand on a sidearm, actually drawing the weapon is usually reserved for truly dangerous situations. The reaction of the officers here to the perceived danger the men represented appeared to be a 'natural' reaction or rather one that was not trained but learned. By this measure the drawing of a weapon might be said to represent a common response to danger within the occupational culture.

Although officers drew their firearms when they perceived danger, during observations, the actual firing of weapons only occurred when the officers were not experiencing danger themselves. This happened on three occasions during the fieldwork. These firings could be considered warning shots but as they were not intended to avert a threat to the officer the legality of them is ambiguous.

The first firing was observed during a taxi-related riot. Officers fired in an effort to disperse a large crowd that were vandalising a car. The second incident took place when an officer fired across the road at two men struggling over a mobile phone. One was attempting to rob the other and the officer was dealing with a woman in a separate incident at the time. In the third incident an officer fired a shot to stop a fleeing individual who the officer suspected of having drugs. In the first two incidents the shots had the desired effect of stopping the vandalising of the car and the mugging. In the third incident the suspect continued to flee and escaped. So, while Vispol did fire their weapons, the way they interacted with their firearms when they did *not* discharge them, gave more of a view into when they perceived a danger to themselves. Actually firing the weapon, on the other hand, appeared to be more of a way to facilitate an outcome where the officer was not displaying any perception of danger.

It might be said that these examples of officers discharging their firearms represent situations where the officer was expediting the work they were doing. What is interesting is that when a member of the SAPS does fire their weapon, allows a weapon to be fired or orders the firing of a weapon, a full factual report must be filled out in accordance with SAPS Standing Order 251 (Bruce and O Malley, 2001). To my knowledge the officers in the research did not file any reports regarding the discharge of their firearms. When asking an officer about this he explained, '*I only write a report about shooting if I kill someone, or hit them with a bullet.*' On asking how he got around the issue of missing ammunition, he simply replied, '*We have*

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<sup>175</sup> Field Notes 0048.

*sparcs. I have my own at home which are mine and I can replace them*<sup>176</sup>. His statement of ‘we’ meant that replacing fired rounds was a common practice and also suggested that the use of the firearm in this manner was also common.

Examining the firearm in this way serves two purposes. In terms of actual use, or in other words the discharge of a firearm, it is perceived by the SAPS as a policing tool, a form of communication. The replacement of spent rounds and the fact that officers do not produce reports when they do fire their weapon, suggests that any statistical efforts to examine firearm use might be hampered. However, police perception and responses to danger can be seen in how officers handle their firearms when they are *not* fired. What also became apparent during observations was that each unit interacted differently with the material artefact of the firearm.

### **6.2.1.2 Detectives**

Unlike Vispol, detectives did not fire their weapons during observations. Like Vispol, though, detectives did exhibit a similar reflex to reach for their weapons in situations where they perceived danger, albeit less frequently. This was seen when we happened upon a man beating his girlfriend and both officers thought he was reaching for a gun. The difference between detectives and Vispol here was that the detectives approached with their firearms holstered and only drew them when danger appeared imminent or was perceived in an acute manner. Also, following the nanoseconds that it took to realise that the suspect did not have a gun, the detectives holstered their weapons unfired. In contrast to Vispol, the detectives interacted with the material condition of the firearm in a manner that would be recognisable to most modern, westernised police services.

The detective’s interaction in terms of carrying the weapon did however reveal a broad perception of danger in the township space. One detective commented that since being assigned to *Baile* he now always carried his firearm. This could be regarded as an example of the field, in which he now policed, conditioning his habitus. In his previous station, which was not in a township, he only carried the weapon when engaged in active search and arrest operations. This alteration in the detective’s normal behaviour exposes a belief that the field in which he operates is inherently dangerous. So, while this detective’s interaction with his firearm was not to draw it as the Vispol officers did, the fact that he felt compelled to carry it with him at all times did express a perception of danger being ever present in the space or field.

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<sup>176</sup> Field Notes 0021.

Danger and its connection to respect surfaced in many conversations where officers described the lack of public respect for their role making that role inherently dangerous. Officer comments also indicated that they felt having a firearm provide them with respect. In this sense the firearm was a form of capital. This did not resonate though with the detectives and showed a difference between the various occupational cultures. During the course of observations, one detective said, *'you shouldn't have to wear a firearm to make people respect you'*.<sup>177</sup> In asking him to expand on this he explained that respect should come from speaking with the person and earning their respect through the work done. In this sense the detectives' identity kit was weighted more in favour of their cultural disposition than the material aspects of their identity kit. This is not to suggest that the detectives were reluctant to use their firearms. As one detective expressed *'I will not die with a firearm in my holster'*.<sup>178</sup> The difference that was noted between Vispol and detectives was that the detectives, as a whole, had a much more measured approach with regard to the actual use of the firearm.

How respect is gained aside, during observation detectives never left the station without their firearm. This suggests that detectives perceive danger in the same township setting as their Vispol colleagues. The main difference was that detectives did not generally approach situations with a weapon in hand. This suggests that even in the same field the two different units perceive and experience danger differently.

### **6.2.1.3 TRT**

As with the detectives, the TRT were also not observed discharging their weapons during fieldwork. Unlike Vispol or the detectives, the TRT carried a small armoury with them, side arms, rifles, stun grenades and shotguns. This is unsurprising as the weapons and equipment issued to members of the SAPS varies depending on the specialisation of the police unit in question (Gotiom, 2014). Unlike the other units, the TRT verbalised more eagerness to use their firearms, yet did not fire them, during observations. On one occasion a TRT member expressed his dismay at a situation diffusing before he could fire his weapon. He said, *'I really wanted to fire my gun I'm disappointed. (Laughs- loudly) I wanted to show them smoke!'*.<sup>179</sup> Such statements serve to reinforce the cultural identity of this group.

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<sup>177</sup> Interview B.

<sup>178</sup> Interview P.

<sup>179</sup> Field Notes 0109.



**Figure 27: A Shotgun and Ammunition in TRT Van (Perkins, 2015)**

Talk in the TRT van often revolved around their armoury. YouTube videos of ‘instructor zero’, an ex-Italian Special Forces operator who trains military and police personnel in the use of firearms, were often shared amongst the group. When they were not engaged in conversation about the use of force they were watching it for entertainment.

The TRT carried a number of weapons that give them an appearance of a deadly force. However, in conversations with them the reduction in the strength of their ammunition was something they noted as a frustration. This frustration did not appear to be linked to a perception of danger but it did strike me as an indication of the group feeling that the organisational culture was attempting to diminish the TRT’s authority or power. The reality was that less-than-lethal ammunitions and weapons are becoming more common in policing as governments and police services react to accidental killings and police misuse of force. While the transition to rubber bullets, pepper spray and other types of arms can be seen as a step towards demilitarisation of the police, the officers observed during research saw the changes more as a reduction of their power.

*‘Look at what they give us.’ Said one TRT officer as he pointed at the shotguns on the seats between us, ‘they, [the shotgun bullets], they don’t even hurt! We even have white bullets!’ At this stage one of the other officers present chipped in, ‘they are like boomerangs (the white bullets). In the wind they come back to you. Boomerang bullets!’ With this everyone in the van began to laugh hard at the idea of boomerang bullets. He completed the scene setting by saying: ‘You end up shooting yourself!’ As if to prove a point, one of the officers dug a white bullet out of his kit bag and cut the cartridge to reveal two blue pellets which were a light plastic. He continued to open it to reveal the inner*

*contents. 'Here see' he offered the plastic to me, 'there is hardly any gun powder. They are useless.'*<sup>180</sup>

Although the conversation was jovial it was clear that the jokes covered the deeper message of reduced potency in the group. This organisational response, be it to criticism of SAPS action or to the global trend, had the effect of reducing the officers' perception of their ability to operate in the field that they and their colleagues agreed was dangerous.

These firearms, while still a functional police tool for the TRT, did not act as a gauge for their perception of danger in the same way firearm interaction did for Vispol. Regardless of the ammunition type, the firearms the TRT carried still acted as part of their unique identity kit. The weapons identified each officer as a member of the TRT and it was this membership that appeared to reduce the danger perceived. This membership was no doubt reinforced by the reputation of the TRT nationally as a group that has used and is willing to use deadly force.<sup>181</sup> When I asked the unit about their firearms and whether they felt more protected as a result an officer responded, *'So it's not the firepower we have, it's because of our numbers...because we travel together and there are more of us.'*<sup>182</sup> Although the officers were exposed to the same amount of danger, if not more than their Vispol and detective counterparts, they perceived less danger as a group and this appeared to stem from the operational strength and internal solidarity of the unit.

As a lens through which to observe how police view themselves and the danger perceived, the firearm is an interesting device. While it is part of the police identity kit, both in a cultural and material sense, the interaction with and use, or lack of use, of the weapon is what is revealing regarding police perceptions of danger. Each unit interacts differently with this artefact and in doing so this highlights the differences in their perceptions and experience of danger.

### **6.2.2 Bullet Resistant Vests**

The provision of Bullet Resistant Vests (BRVs)<sup>183</sup> can be seen as a formal response by the police organisation to danger. Like the firearms, BRVs are an integral part of the police

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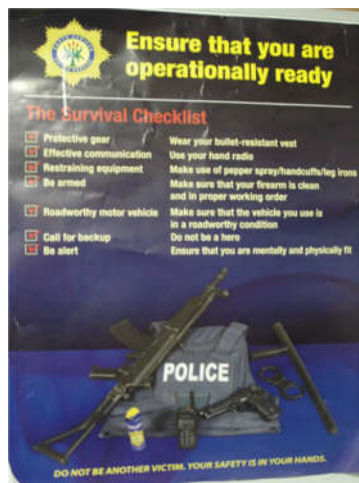
<sup>180</sup> Field Notes 0111.

<sup>181</sup> One of the most notable mentions of the TRT was their involvement in the 2012 shooting dead of 34 protesting miners at Marikana (Farlam, 2015).

<sup>182</sup> Field Notes 0108.

<sup>183</sup> Up until the 2010/2011 report, the SAPS used the term bullet proof vests (BPVs). In subsequent reports they began using the term 'bullet resistant vest' (BRVs). No reason was given for the change of description although the term bullet resistant vest is a more accurate term to describe the vests the functions of the best.

identity kit. They are signifiers of the perceived danger of police work. Symbolically, it is a garment that carries a love-hate relationship for the SAPS. Wearing one protects an officer from bullets but it is also cumbersome and uncomfortable. To date, the majority of literature on BRVs is of descriptive data sets relating to the examination of instructions regarding their use and the likelihood of injury or death as a result (FBI, 1994; Fridell *et al*, 2009; Pennington, 2007; Plani, Bowley and Goosen, 2003). There has been limited examination of how police understand this piece of their identity kit although a recent study in the US examined how police were negatively perceived by the public when wearing the vests (Simpson, 2018).<sup>184</sup>



**Figure 28: Safety Poster (Perkins, 2015)**

As attacks on South African police became more deadly during the 1980's and 1990's there was an expanded use of BRVS by the police service. Although there are circulars recommending that officers wear the vests,<sup>185</sup> there is no National Instruction requiring officers to wear them. In attempts to increase the wearing of vests by officers, the government introduced a R200,000 'death'<sup>186</sup> grant, in April of 2003. This grant would be paid to the family of any officer killed in the line of duty, provided they were wearing their

<sup>184</sup> As part of a larger project, (Police Officer Perception Project) Simpson (2018) found that police officers would be perceived as more aggressive and less approachable when wearing the vests.

<sup>185</sup> The wearing of vests is regulated by the following National Circulars, Number 3/34/1 (Protection of Members: Instructions for the wearing of Bullet resistant vests and the carrying of official firearms by all members of the South African Police service) and 17/1/10 (Uniform: Wearing of the Bullet Resistant Vest with Office wear by female members in the CSC).

<sup>186</sup> This grant should not be confused with the danger allowance officers receive which is referred to as 'danger money' which is paid to all officers who are paid for risks to his or her life in the course of carrying out specified duties or training. This grant refers to a post mortem receipt only.

vest at the time of death.<sup>187</sup> Of note is that this grant is not a benefit but is discretionary at the exclusive prerogative of the National Commissioner (Polity, 2017).

The SAPS standard issue BRV weighs 13kgs and the model is 17 years old (SAPS Circular, 2001).<sup>188</sup> In 2015 the SAPS informed the Portfolio Committee on Policing that the current BRV met with all the ballistic requirements to protect members against potential threats despite its age. While international standards recommend newer vests, they do not discredit the use of older vests as long as they meet the requirements (Mukasey, Sedgwick, and Hagy, 2008).<sup>189</sup> In practical terms of wearability the current vest is the equivalent of carrying a small child around with you for 10 hours a day, notwithstanding the weight of the other equipment. During the course of the fieldwork, I attempted to wear a SAPS vest for a day to understand the practicalities involved. Such was my discomfort that I soon reverted to my own modern, lightweight Kevlar vest which weighs a third of the SAPS BRV.

#### 6.2.2.1 Vispol

Constables in Vispol are murdered more frequently than any other officers.<sup>190</sup> While it might be then expected that an officer would say that they wear a BRV for safety reasons, discussions with officers revealed different motives. The wearing of the vest appeared to be predominantly fiscally driven. In discussing BRV's with Vispol officers, they regularly said they only wore the vest as insurance for their families. As one officer explained, '*It is important to wear it because when you are killed and not wearing it on-duty your family get no money, it's worth R200, 000*'.<sup>191</sup> The use of the phrase 'when you are killed' was interesting in that the word choice indicates a fatalistic view. It was not a question of wearing the BRV to prevent death. This officer seemed to assume he would most likely be killed on duty. As such he appeared more concerned with insuring that the grant would be paid to his family than in preventing death. While it could be suggested that this explanation was a façade alluding to a toughness or was just a result of English not being a first language, it was a common thread in conversations with other officers as well.

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<sup>187</sup> Policy No. 5 of 2016: Policy on Death Grant for Employees of the SAPS.

<sup>188</sup> A recent report in the South African *Sunday Times* indicated that newer vests, half the weight of those currently in operation have been ordered (Govender, 2017).

<sup>189</sup> BRVs are rated according to the internationally accepted standard, NIJ0101.04. The NIJ refers to the US National Institute of Justice.

<sup>190</sup> Uniformed constables are the officers killed most frequently. Nationwide and docket analysis (see Chapter 4) bears out this trend in the Western Cape.

<sup>191</sup> Field Notes 007.

A story by a female officer highlighted how the fiscal element was more deeply engrained than the idea of safety or protection. She recalled an incident where two police officers had been shot. On arrival she found one officer lying on the roadside. She explained:

*He was shot in the head, it was full of blood and I was so shocked, I started crying...but he couldn't speak, he just said he needs help. ...this guy said to me I must take his bullet resistant off because he couldn't breathe. I said, no I can't take it off before the people came and see that he was wearing a bullet resistant. He said can you lift my head up so that I can breathe? I did and he started to vomit. I was crying... he passed away.<sup>192</sup>*

The officer was still visibly traumatised in the retelling of the story. At the scene her main concern though was to make sure 'the people', i.e. the state, saw her dying colleague had been wearing his BRV so that his family would receive the grant. Throughout the fieldwork Vispol officers rarely spoke about wearing BRV's for their own safety. This could have been a taken-for-granted assumption in their explanation. However, when they did speak about wearing it, it was in terms of being *made to* wear it by their supervisors or *having to* wear it to ensure that their families would benefit in case of their deaths. Their interaction and understanding about wearing the vest could be said to show how their experience of danger is so common that they see protective equipment as a proxy for life insurance rather than safety equipment to preserve life. This interaction and discourse with the material artefact of the BRV could also be said to indicate how common the experience of danger is as part of the Vispol habitus as well as the field.

#### **6.2.2.2 Detectives**

In contrast to Vispol officers, the interaction of the detectives with BRVs differed significantly. Detectives did not wear BRV's even though it might disqualify their families from receiving the grant in the event of the detective's death. When they had to go on searches and when preparing for other operations where they expected higher levels of danger they wore the vest. However, when conducting standard operations in the field, be it interviewing witnesses or driving around like their Vispol colleagues, the vests were never worn.

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<sup>192</sup> Interview S.

When I asked detectives about their reasons for not wearing the vest they offered two. The first reason, and most common answer, had to do with physical comfort. As one detective explained, ' *I don't like wearing a bullet proof vest because it's uncomfortable on my stomach*'.<sup>193</sup> For most detectives the vest was a source of irritation and discomfort. While he accepted that his family would not receive the grant in the event of his death, he still chose not to wear it. The second reason cited for not wearing BRV's was a lack of necessity.

Many detectives expressed the belief that they did not need to wear a vest because they were in less danger than their Vispol counterparts. Detectives believed that their cultural capital (knowledge, skills and experience) directly influenced their social capital (goodwill and camaraderie) amongst the community and as a result they were exposed to less danger. The way detectives interact with the community is explored more in the next chapter but, put simply, detectives believe that the respect the community have for their role is the main reason they do not need to wear vests on a day-to-day basis the way Vispol do. This would seem to indicate that they perceive less danger to themselves in the field than Vispol.

Detectives do get murdered albeit not at the same rate as their Vispol counterparts and they do experience or perceive danger as seen by their desire and willingness to carry firearms.<sup>194</sup> Just before this fieldwork commenced a detective from the *Baile* cluster was murdered when he was assisting in the arrest of a suspect. Even with this murder the local detectives continued the practice of not wearing the BRV's. While the organisation reinforces need for all members to wear a BRV, the local detective habitus does not. This again would point to a lower experience of danger than other SAPS groups.

The detectives perceived less danger in the same environment where Vispol operated, as expressed by their not wearing BRV's. Indeed, the data supports this supposition in that far fewer numbers of detectives were killed compared to Vispol members. While one might make a counter argument that detectives are killed less because they are indoors more, this argument becomes somewhat diluted when the actual work of the detectives is examined. Detectives engage with suspects and witnesses on a regular basis and move around the township just as Vispol do. It could also be argued that detectives are not identifiable targets

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<sup>193</sup> Interview B.

<sup>194</sup> There were only two incidents noted in the docket analysis of this research where detectives were shot dead while on-duty. In the first incident the detective was killed by accidental crossfire resulting in a chest injury. In the second incident the officer became involved in a scuffle with a fleeing suspect and was shot in the head. It is unlikely that, at least in the latter incident, a BRV would have changed the outcome.

as they are not in uniform. However, the formality of their shirt and tie and their vehicles makes them as recognisable as Vispol in the township environment. What this research suggests is that examining why detectives do not wear vests speaks to how they perceive danger. These perceptions appear to be more contingent on the social and cultural capital which they have acquired.

### **6.2.2.3 Tactical Response Team**

Unlike the detectives, but like Vispol, the TRT consistently wear BRV's. However, the basis of their wearing the vests, like that of their firearms, appears to be based more on the fetish of the identity kit than their perception of danger. This fetish, made visible through the wearing of BRVs and other hardware, could be said to communicate the TRT's view of themselves as a force to be reckoned with rather than their perception of danger. The additional skills and training required to be a TRT member, a form of cultural capital, reinforces their cohesion and solidarity of the group. When they enter the field, the presence of their BRV, along with other material artefacts of the identity kit, indicate to observers that they belong to this team.

While the BRV is more part of their identity construction than an indicator of danger, the TRT interaction with BRVs in the field shows that they perceive less danger than their Vispol colleagues. Perhaps more accurately, the situations in which the TRT remove their vests show that they view it as less of a danger indicator, reducer or insurance policy than their counter parts. There were two incidents during participant observation where TRT members removed their BRVs in what might be considered dangerous situations. While they were with many heavily armed colleagues the potential for danger was still elevated.

*The first incident observed occurred while having lunch. We overheard police sirens in the vicinity. Lunch was immediately abandoned and, without any indication of what we were driving towards, the driver took off following the wailing police siren. En route, the radio controller said that an officer had been stabbed. While driving towards the now known location, a barefoot man came into our view running on the opposite side of the road. He was carrying something small and dark in his hand that looked like a weapon. He was running at a break neck speed and we realised this must be the suspect fleeing. The driver made a screeching U-turn in the middle of the road and came to a stop near the shacks of an informal settlement into which the suspect had disappeared. Exiting the van, I watched a TRT officer remove his vest as he*

*tried to gather speed in pursuit of the suspect running into the dense area of the shacks. I remember thinking it was like watching a tortoise evolve into a hare, the shell was off and he had the freedom of movement. The suspect was quickly caught and arrested by the unvested officer. The suspect had one empty eye socket and was carrying a pair of black slippers that we had mistaken for a weapon. The one-eyed slipper man, who had in fact stabbed an officer, had been arrested but only after the pursuing TRT member had removed his BRV to capture the man.<sup>195</sup>*

In the second incident the TRT were conducting a drug raid in a flat complex.

*After breaching a wooden front door, officers were then faced with an iron gate. The alleged suspects stood behind this gate cowering in corners of the room refusing to unlock the gate. Officers crow-barred back two of the railings and an officer quickly removed his vest to squeeze in through the gap. From our position outside we could not see around the corners of the flat and I remember thinking the officer had no idea about what he was actually climbing into.<sup>196</sup>*

It was possible that the suspects both visible and not visible may have been armed. In both this and the previous incident the interaction of the TRT officers with their vests, or rather their removal of them, indicates that they did not perceive a high level of danger to themselves during these events.

The TRT interact with the BRV as part of their identity kit and the removal of the vest may suggest that they perceive lower levels of danger than Vispol. Why this appears to be, much like the detectives' decision not to wear the vests, appears to be closely related to the perception of danger that each group has of the field. Inversely to the interaction of detectives with BRVs, TRT members remove their vests when they are going into situations that could be regarded as dangerous but wear them in day-to-day field operations. This could be said to indicate that the TRT experience and perceive less danger, like detectives, in the same field as Vispol.

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<sup>195</sup> Field Notes 0103.

<sup>196</sup> Field Notes 0106.

BRVs are a material reminder of the dangers that the police face. The wearing of the vest appears to be an organisational mandate, although not an official requirement, yet how the occupational culture on the ground interprets such wearing reveals differing experiences and perceptions of danger in the same field. The wearing, or non-wearing, of them contributes to each unit's identity and communicates varying views of danger in the field. As a material artefact these vests allow for a view in to how each subculture perceives danger in the field. These perceptions are different for each group and in the case of Vispol the experience of danger seems to one that a BRV does not mitigate.

### 6.2.3 Police Vehicles

Like BRV's the police vehicle, in its many forms, is seen as an essential part of policing. Globally, academics comment on how stories of police pursuits are often the most regaled in the police canteen (Altbeker, 2005; Brown, 2008; Loftus, 2009; Marks, 2005; Reiner, 2000; Van Hulst, 2013). Indeed, much of the ethnographic experiences of danger in policing have emanated from car stories. Manning (1977) noted the uniqueness of the car space in its many functions, which ranges from a detention centre to a space for undercover operations. The vehicle has also been seen as a way from which to get out from under the watchful gaze of supervisors (Holdaway, 1983; Hornberger, 2011). So beyond being an object through which the thrill of police work is enacted, the police vehicle is also a medium through which officers engage with danger and it is a space where much of the occupational police culture can be readily observed.

In South Africa, and indeed globally, motor vehicle collisions are a significant cause of deaths in many police services' (Blair *et al*, 2016). In South Africa this is unsurprising considering that the general death rate from traffic collisions is double the global average (Matzopoulos, 2004; 2007).<sup>197</sup> Approximately one quarter of all injury-related deaths in South Africa occur as the result of road traffic accidents. This discussion, however, is focused on the perception and experience of danger outside of accidental causes such as road traffic collisions. Nonetheless, even with recognition of the importance of vehicles within policing they remain a much understudied topic in the examination of police culture.

The SAPS organisation cites that the vehicles are 'second in serving value only to the human capital of the organisation' (SAPS, 2014:99). In the SAPS annual reports these resources are

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<sup>197</sup> South Africa's death rate from road traffic collisions is 43 per 100,000 people in the population (Kaminer and Eagle, 2010:22).

enumerated and described in detail. In 2014 the SAPS had 56,530 transport assets (SAPS, 2014). Out of the nine provinces, the Western Cape has the third largest allocation with 6,750 vehicles. The SAPS report states that an average of 4.51 personnel per vehicle is needed for effective policing in the country. The ratio in the Western Cape is 3.08 personnel per vehicle (SAPS, 2014:100). It should be noted though, that this is a raw number. It is calculated with the assumption that each vehicle and each SAPS member is fully operational. This is not always the case. The repair and maintenance of these vehicles provides ongoing challenges for the formal organisation. These issues are compounded where repairs have been delayed because of contractual issues leaving cars out of service (SAPS, 2014). Staff absenteeism is also a real issue but not one for discussion here. Instead, this section will focus on how officers use the vehicles and what that interaction might indicate about perceptions and experiences of danger.

The misuse of vehicles had created a strain between the organisational and occupational police culture. In 2006, owing to the continued misuse of state vehicles, i.e. members were using them in a personal capacity, the SAPS began equipping the majority of police vehicles with automatic vehicle locators (AVLS). These locators act as a type of black box for each vehicle and record both the vehicle's location as well as the engines actions. In this way commanders can decipher the activity of the police through the cars movements. This organisational gaze was no doubt compounded by the ever-increasing costs associated with the number of collisions and civil claims involving police vehicles. At the end of 2013 alone, R 175 million (14 million US dollars) was paid in civil claims against the police relating to vehicles (Rademeyer, 2013). This in addition to the global rising cost of petrol meant that the vehicles were a form of economic capital which the organisation had to carefully monitor.

One interesting thing about AVLS is that they are inadequate to locate vehicles in real time. If an officer was in a dangerous situation the AVL system could not be readily accessed like a global positioning system (GPS). An officer who used to work in the command and control room explained to me that the AVL's signal locations is so laborious that it would take an enormous amount of time to generate a report on a current location. He explained *'it's not to protect the members...they take too long to pinpoint where the member is if they need assistance and by then it's too late...they use them to monitor the police.'*<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Field Notes 0063.

During Apartheid, police vehicles were symbolic of the militarised style of policing. The most frequently used vehicle during this time of counter-insurgent policing was the Land Rover (Marks, 2005). The Land Rover brand is known for its strength and toughness and its ability to navigate harsh conditions, which was reflected in its slogan of ‘Above and Beyond’ (Land Rover, 2017). It was as if the policing methods then employed actually incorporated the vehicle’s ‘brand’. Another two types of police vehicles used during this time were Casspirs and Nyalas<sup>199</sup>. These armoured trucks were built for riot control situations and had ballistic and mine protection capabilities and projected the imagery of the police as a much-militarised force. As Marks (2005) argues, these vehicles came to symbolise the militarised, violent and ruthless approach of policing at the height of the Apartheid era.

Although the Nyalas and Casspirs are still in operation they are in the process of being refurbished or being replaced by newer models (SAPS, 2015/16). Changing police vehicles is an important aspect of the transformation of a police services as they are mobile reflections of the service. For example, when the political ceasefire occurred in Northern Ireland one of the first visible transformations was to the police vehicles. These were all painted white as if reflecting a ceasefire and desire for peace.<sup>200</sup> In the SAPS, most of Land Rover patrol vehicles were replaced with more ‘family friendly’ brands, such as Nissan and Toyota. The vehicles currently used are two and four seater pickup trucks (aka *bakkies*) with a separate enclosed cage at the rear for transporting prisoners. Saloon cars are used by most detectives and senior managers. The TRT have two transit vans which can seat up to 16 members. These vehicles have no reinforcements and are not armoured. This imparts the message that the police they transport are more approachable than the police cocooned in armoured vehicles during the era of the Land Rovers.

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<sup>199</sup> The Nyala, also known as the Nyala RG-12, is a 4X4 Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC). It was purposely built for riot control situations and has ballistic and mine protection capabilities. It is an indestructible vehicle having a height of 2700mm and 2500mm width (Nortje and Leimecke, 2014).

<sup>200</sup> Notably the vehicles were not replaced until much later and this had as much to do with cost viability as well as the practical realities that police were still being attacked and armoured vehicles were a necessity.



**Figure 29: Nyala - Public Order Vehicle (Perkins, 2015)**

The main way in which the police can maximise the service they provide in townships is through vehicles, as a beat patrols require between six and ten members.<sup>201</sup> As such the vehicle patrols are a practical solution to policing such areas. In the research station for example the area was divided into three sectors.

There is a fixed schedule for vehicle allocation.<sup>202</sup> In *Baile*, each sector was expected to have one patrol car assigned to it with two officers. Due to limited staff numbers, however, there were only enough personnel available to provide one car. So, while vehicle patrols are intended as a practical solution to policing such areas, the absenteeism and limited staff numbers reduces the ability of the police to actively patrol the space. In addition, the one car that is available must handle the load of three cars.

As well as their material significance, vehicles can be used as a medium for self- and organisational-representation (Hatton, 2007). As such the vehicle can be used as a form of communication. This communication can be overt in terms of sheer presence of the vehicle itself and the ‘cultural imagery’ associated with the vehicle. This imagery can, according to Dawson, (1994:49) be used as an analytical tool similar to discourse, since both share an emphasis on the production of meaning. Cultural imagery is used as a cultural apparatus to

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<sup>201</sup> Oral submission of Colonel Nel made to the Khayelitsha Commission on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 4612 – 4859 (O’ Regan and Pikoli, 2014).

<sup>202</sup> The allocation is based along the following SAPS organisational guidelines. A vehicle for the station commander; one vehicle for every eight administrative members in stations with fewer than 80 members, and one for every twelve administrative members for stations with more than 80 members; one vehicle for every two members actively performing investigations or other policing tasks; one vehicle for every four-to-six members performing crime prevention duties; and one vehicle for transporting prisoners (O’ Regan and Pikoli, 2014: 259).

depict how the officers construct their identity through the vehicles they use. In this way a sense of group identity becomes constructed. Much like the brand of vehicle used, how the vehicles are presented to the public, clean (in control) or dirty (disorder), speaks to the desired display of professionalism of the police service. Manning (2008) argues that these occupational performance rituals such as cleaning the car or filling out logbooks, serves to connect the police with each other. Through the examination of these behaviours one gets an understanding of how instrumental these vehicles are as a way to understand how the police perceive and respond to danger.

### 6.2.3.1 *Vispol*

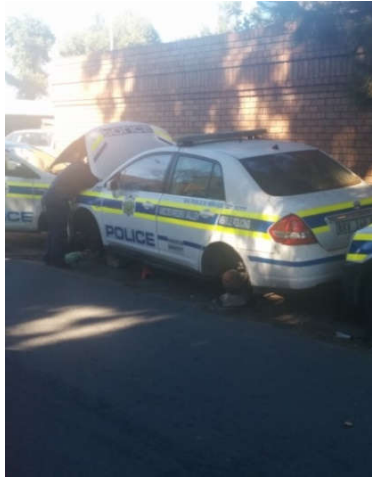
Being in such close quarters with the police in the vehicle brings the reality of policing and the officers' perceptions to life. At the beginning of fieldwork, before the officers became comfortable with my presence, this was no easy feat. With *Vispol* there was only one four-seater *bakkie* and being able to accompany the police was reliant on its availability. I was often told it was out of order only moments later to see it driving away with the officers inside. However, once the officers became comfortable with my presence, they often looked for me to go out with them to show me their policing world. However, owing to the township terrain it was often damaged and out of commission and a two-seater was used instead.

One officer explained, '*you don't drive here, you dodge. Bad road conditions, bad lighting, you dodge*'.<sup>203</sup> Indeed on two occasions we had to return to the station because of flat tyres. Car tyres were constantly being changed in and around the station where bricks were used in lieu of car jacks. A senior commander explained this to me saying, '*[Officers] steal the car jacks, I must keep everything locked up, everything!*'<sup>204</sup> Officers often complained about cars being damaged and the lack of available equipment to fix them. Nevertheless, officers did not take actions to reduce damage by driving more cautiously nor did they return borrowed equipment, like car jacks, or simply stop taking or borrowing it in the first place.

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<sup>203</sup> Interview G.

<sup>204</sup> Field Notes 0005.



**Figure 30: Bricks in lieu of Wheel Jacks (Perkins, 2015)**

Even when the cars were operational, driving them in the township was challenging.<sup>205</sup> One officer explained how he hated driving in bad weather conditions in the township. More often than not the vehicle was grounded at the station because of damage to a wheel caused by the terrain and/or poor driving by officers.

Non-existent road infrastructure combined with winter rains meant that the vehicles regularly get stuck in the terrain. *‘Almost every time, in winter, when we go down these roads in the informal settlements, it’s poor conditions, it’s bad. You get bogged down quickly there and you can come under threat from any part of those shacks there’.*<sup>206</sup> Docket analysis supported this in that the inability of the vehicles to manoeuvre quickly through these conditions was a contributory factor in at least two police murders. Officers were murdered in the vehicle as they were sandwiched between houses with nowhere to move. The vehicle, the very thing that was meant to provide freedom of movement, had the opposite effect.

During my field research, drivers showed little care for the vehicle in their driving practices. This compounded the problems of already driving in difficult terrain. Rather than avoiding potholes they often drove through them causing the damage described earlier. This is to say that local police maintenance of the vehicles did little to reduce exposure to danger by ensuring that vehicles were fit for purpose. Vispol officers did not complete log books or report damage so it could be repaired. This left vehicles out of service or in a state that hampered their ability to effectively move in the township space.

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<sup>205</sup> One night during fieldwork, at the request of one of the officers, I drove the *bakkie* for an hour. It felt like I was driving a tractor, heavy and cumbersome.

<sup>206</sup> Interview G.

Vispol, like all other units, have log books for each vehicle, which are intended to record issues with the vehicle and alert the organisation to the need for repairs. Vispol rarely filled these in. The only time I saw a log book being filled out was when a senior officer requested to see it. In turning the empty pages, the officer filling it in exclaimed: *'look this is meant to be filled in here to say what's wrong with the bakkie, its empty, no one bothers.'* Less than ten minutes later the front seat passenger was using a coat hanger in an attempt to support his broken seat in that *bakkie*. Noticeably, the log book did not indicate this broken seat even after the other officer had 'brought it up to date'.<sup>207</sup> Manning (2008:288) argues that 'this reading off from diverse documents (such as log books) is a reflexive construction of social order'. From the practices observed, it suggests that the social order in Vispol is one where no one wanted to be held accountable.

### 6.2.3.2 Detectives

Detectives drove their vehicles on the same roads and in the same conditions as Vispol. The noticeable difference was that detective vehicles were almost always operational and suffered visibly less damage from being driven than the Vispol vehicles. However, both units, when parking outside the station suffered similar incidents of vandalism to the vehicles. During the research, some detectives believed that police cars were purposefully targeted because criminals knew that their car batteries had to work, so stealing them was considered a worthwhile exercise. While this is conjecture, what it does allude to is how the police perceive themselves, and their place of work, as a target for criminal enterprises. The other variation between the units was that detective vehicles were assigned and maintained by an individual rather than being a shared resource.<sup>208</sup>

Also, in stark contrast to my observations with Vispol, the detectives spent as much time completing car logs as they did attending to dockets. Log books were completed daily and were continually reviewed or asked about by senior officials. One detective would rarely get out of the car before he had completed logging the details in the log book. It was as if the administrative process followed the detectives from doing dockets in the offices to log books in the car. The log books were used as records of accountability for the car and those detectives in charge of it. A further extension of the tension between the formal organisation and the detectives was in the use of automatic vehicles locators (AVLS) in state vehicles.

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<sup>207</sup> Field Notes 0048.

<sup>208</sup> It should be noted that this was potentially unique to the research site, moreover because they had reduced staff levels. Hornberger's (2011) research with detectives in Johannesburg found an opposite situation, where detective cars were a much constrained resource.

At one briefing parade, a senior manager set about disciplining a detective, telling him, *'You were meant to be in George when you were really in Graaff Reinet'*.<sup>209</sup> Graaff Reinet is an additional two hours away.

Through such stringent controls, the freedom of movement of the detectives was severely restricted. Any symbolic gains that the detectives had through the use of vehicles were negated by the overarching accountability measures. This inward gaze created an ongoing sense of mistrust between the detectives and the formal organisation. While such queries often appeared grounded, they did little to improve relationships between the detectives and the formal organisation. One detective explained, *'the first thing they ask if you are in an accident, why you were out of your area before they even see if you are ok. When we speak about automatic vehicle locators (AVL)- they use it to hinder you, not help you.'*<sup>210</sup> Such comments were reflective of a larger sense of discontent about the organisation.

### 6.2.3.3 TRT

The TRT vehicles consisted of two 12-passanger vans. They had side-opening doors that were often left open when driving, both because of the heat inside the van and for quick exits. Similar to the detectives the TRT did not share vehicles across groups. The unit also spent more time arguing about the appearance of their vehicles than either Vispol or detectives. At parade briefings, debates about the unit who had last cleaned the vehicle and whose turn it was now to clean it dominated each meeting. Particular attention was always given to the outside of the vehicle. A senior officer instructed members cleaning the van, *'you must not just use the brush. You must clean it with your hands'*.<sup>211</sup> Being in the TRT was very much about the fact that appearance matters and getting one's hands dirty was very much about the real as well as the metaphysical issues. The vehicles that they travelled in were kept glisteningly clean as an epitaph of a highly capable unit. This contrasted with the Vispol vehicles, which were often filthy and only ever cleaned when senior management directed officers to do so.

The TRT however did not believe that the vans they were provided with spoke to the importance of their role. The vans they were provided with did not speak to the cultural capital they perceived. As one officer argued, *'look at this van - we don't even have a proper*

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<sup>209</sup> Field Notes 0073.

<sup>210</sup> Field Notes 0080.

<sup>211</sup> Field Notes 0102.

*vehicle - like a BMW, we don't even have a proper van to us*'.<sup>212</sup> Much like their reduced ammunition, the TRT felt their role was valued through the equipment they had. A BMW would project the desired appearance, power and speed through which they as a unit would like to be portrayed.

In summary, the upkeep of the TRT vans presented as a symbolic way of depicting their control and readiness to face any danger. They are a unit that is highly trained and engaged in their work. This is manifest as respect for how they appear. They present themselves as a unified force to be reckoned with and that presentation requires that they look the part. That 'looking the part' includes not just their firearms and BRVs but also the vehicles they travel in.

In some ways vehicles, an expensive but essential resource, capture the malaise of the larger organisation. Paradoxically, some vehicles are closely monitored and supervised and become the medium through which the police themselves then become managed, while others simply remain another casualty of the township policing terrain. Their importance in the day-to day activities of policing was only properly recognised in 2012 when the vehicles needs assessment of each station was developed (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014).

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The value and importance that the police attach to these artefacts is apparent, as officers regard them as a core part of the equipment that is required in the police role. In addition to their functional features these artefacts also support the identity construction by the police. Having a firearm, wearing a bullet resistant vest and the use of vehicles are all signposts that the police are dressed and ready for danger. However, when these artefacts are considered as interpretive devices these objects also offer useful clues to assist in understanding how the police perceive and respond to danger.

In observing police engagement with these artefacts, the tension between the organisational and occupational cultures becomes delineated. Firearms and BRVS are given to members to protect and for protection. However, the police engagements with these artefacts were at times in contradiction to organisational desires. From an organisational perspective, firearms are only to be used as a last resort but members of Vispol often regarded and indeed used them as a functional tool of the trade. BRV's were often not worn because of comfort or they

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<sup>212</sup> Field Notes 0103.

were removed to facilitate being able to do get the job done. Examined collectively, it can be seen that the police have a paradoxical relationship with these objects that is at times both complex and contradictory.

How the police construct their identity can be observed through their engagement with these everyday objects. Just as firearms are regarded as an extension of the police themselves so too are the other artefacts. The way in which the vehicle is managed and presented speaks to this. The TRT want to be perceived as a unit which is both ordered and capable of creating order. A clean vehicle outwardly broadcasts this desire. What is of interest is the social and cultural capital that the different units express through their engagement with these objects. Detectives believe that their social capital, their social network, is of importance in the mediation of danger. While detectives have firearms, an objectified form of cultural capital, these are not central in how they negate potential dangers. In contrast to this Vispol regard their firearms, their cultural capital, as being central in the indication of their immediate experience or perception of danger.

Within the field of policing, this equipment also connotes a status amongst the police. The wearing of much of the equipment is part of the overall fetish of the police uniform where their social identity is partly constructed through such wearing. However, while having the vest is symbolic as being part of the larger police organisation, the ways in which officers actually wear, or as observed, do not wear the vest is representative of how the officers differentiate themselves. Detectives do not wear them as they do not believe that they, through their increased social capital, are exposed to the same levels of danger as their uniformed counterparts. Using the material artefacts of policing as interpretive devices relative to the danger perceived offers an alternative way in how to make these similarities and differences more visible.

## Chapter 7. Dispositions and Practices

### 7.1 Introduction

Thus far, the organisational and occupational perceptions and experiences of danger have been explored through the examination of dockets, memorials and the material artefacts of police work. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue, it is useful to also look at organisational as well as occupational behaviour. Organisational behaviour is difficult to look at directly, but how the organisation maintains structures and human resources can offer some insights. Occupational behaviours are easier to observe, but also encompass a great deal of routine actions. The totalities of both these areas are much too large to cover in this research alone. By narrowing the focusing on selected areas of each, though, I will attempt to provide greater insight into how the dispositions and practice of both the organisational and occupational cultures refract the experiences and perceptions of danger in the police habitus and field.

The first section of this chapter examines the formal organisational responses to danger in terms of the police station and the danger allowance. Following this, occupational action of avoidance and engagement with danger are examined to determine what they reveal regarding police experience and perceptions of danger. The third section delineates how the use of violence by the police can also shape the danger that the police perceive. This chapter seeks to address the question: **How do police dispositions and everyday practices shape, and become shaped by, perceptions and experiences of danger?** In addition to the organisation, this question will be explored across the three police units of Vispol, detectives and the TRT.

Chan (1966:116) argues that in order to understand the police habitus, it must first be ‘filled in’. In the examination of police perceptions and responses of danger this can be accomplished using Sarbin’s (1967) model. Sarbin emphasises the importance of understanding the larger role–relationship of the police in the conceptualisation of danger. As Sarbin (1967) explains, danger takes its meaning from the relationship between specific roles and the ability of those roles to effect change through the use of capital or what is also termed power. When power becomes destabilised, for example where there is a loss of capital, a strain is created in the role-relationship that can be seen as danger. The way in which the police maintain their power, or try to do so, is of importance when considering their

behaviour in the police-public role relationship. This is because the danger that the police experience or perceive is rooted in the role relationship.

## 7.2 Organisational Responses

Thus far *Baile* township has been described with reference to its social, political and demographic history. The levels of poverty and a burgeoning population describes, amongst other things, an inhospitable location for both residents and the police. This section narrows the focus to the police station and is not intended to provide an exhaustive account of *Baile* police station or the practices within it. Moreover, it is given to orientate an understanding of the field of policing and the less than ideal conditions of the station itself. In *Baile*, crime and perceptions of danger not only extend to the doorstep of the station where police cars are burglarised but also appear to permeate the police building.

### 7.2.1 Outside spaces: Exterior of Building and Parking

The poor working condition in many of the SAPS stations, particularly in township spaces, is old news (Gillespie, 2014; Van der Spuy, 2016; Van der Spuy and Armstrong, 2014). A recent report indicates that, despite this history, the formal organisation has done little to improve police conditions in township spaces. Substandard buildings with cramped storage, no holding cells or exhibit stores were some of the complaints heard about township police stations (Kynoch, 2016; O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014:223). As a result, there is likely little inspiration derived from the formal organisation's general up-keep in and around the station itself. This was reflected in the way officers and managers related to and described the space. As previously mentioned *Baile* and other townships were considered to be 'dumping grounds' by both the organisational and occupational cultures.

The challenges of policing in *Baile* could be seen at the station doorstep. During the fieldwork marked police vehicles were regularly parked up a side street, adjacent to the station instead of at the front. On the first day of fieldwork, the reasons for this parking arrangement became apparent. The side-street where cars were parked was observable from the station yard. Officers often stood in the yard to chat and smoke. Police used this entrance (rather than the front door) which meant that police cars were under constant surveillance. Standing in the yard, waiting to meet the station commander I watched as a car was dusted for fingerprints. Surprisingly, it was one of the detective cars. '*They were trying to steal the battery*' a detective explained, '*It's not the first time. It was parked outside the station*',

noting my surprise he laughed as he walked away.<sup>213</sup> During my research one of the detective cars was broken into four times outside of the station. The detectives never appeared surprised when this happened and accepted it with submissive shrugs.

An organisational response to such issues has been the installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) to monitor the front of the station. This tool, however, was not operative. This seemed to be something of a theme with the hardware in and around the station. While these items, like security cameras, were present they were often either not functional due to neglect or damage or were just not used.

It was not just the police that experienced crime at and around the police station. While working in the CSC. I watched as a man made an affidavit about a burglary at his home. While making his affidavit, the battery of his car, which had been parked in front of the station, was stolen. It was the middle of the day and the station environs offered no guarantee of protection from crime. Much like the detectives whose car had been broken into, the attending officer's reaction was not one of surprise. He appeared more annoyed about having to open another docket rather than by the incident having actually occurred.<sup>214</sup> Judging by the police reactions, whether it was a police car or not, a car being broken into directly outside the station, was a normal almost ordinary occurrence.

## **7.2.2 Inside Spaces: public area and beyond**

### **7.2.2.1 The Community Service Centre (CSC)**

Moving from the street into the station, the public enter the CSC. This is the front stage of the police station where the SAPS meet the community (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014:358). In the entrance hangs a memorial plaque commemorating the officers from the station killed. It serves as a reminder of danger and death albeit in an incomplete way. The information on it had not been updated in nearly a decade and the names of officers who had been more recently killed or died on duty were missing.

One could misinterpret this to mean that no officer had been killed from that station in over 10 years, but that is not the reality. *Baile* has one of the highest rates of police officers killed on and off-duty in the Western Cape. Hanging adjacent to the roll of honour was a large

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<sup>213</sup> Field Notes 0001.

<sup>214</sup> Field Notes 0031.

poster with blood splattered on it. This listed the Batho Pele principles<sup>215</sup> describing the guidelines for better public service delivery. It struck me as somewhat ironic that in the police station the posted public service principles were not just dirty but soiled with blood. On a daily basis, callers to the station stood next to and passed these hangings in queues that often extended out beyond the front door of the police station.



**Figure 31: Batho Pele Principles**

The extensive queue of people was served at an open counter that spanned the length of the CSC. Normally, no more than two Vispol officers stood calling people forward from the endless line in what can only be described as a lacklustre manner. There were two high stools for the officers, but like the CCTV, one of them was broken. On either side of this counter were two other perpendicular counters with four seats attached to the floor. The counters did have partitions but these were low and any attempt at privacy was impossible owing to the openness of the space and the noise.

Adjacent to the counter was an iron security gate that led into the back of the station. There was a second gate at the end of the hallway and both gates were always left unlocked and often ajar. This could be seen as odd given that the lack of physical security at the station was a frequent concern expressed by the majority of Vispol officers. The officers said they felt like, ‘sitting ducks’ and one spoke of an incident where she was physically attacked by an individual in the CSC space.

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<sup>215</sup> Batho Pele principles (‘Batho Pele’ is translated from Sotho meaning ‘People First’) was first introduced by the Mandela administration on 1st October 1997 in pursuit of the better delivery of goods and services to the public.

The officer explained how a woman had called to the station to make a complaint of assault. The officer recognised that the woman was also a suspect herself in an earlier complaint. On realising that she was about to be arrested the woman charged through the open security gate and attacked the officer. A companion of the woman joined in before both were arrested and the officer taken to hospital with minor scratches.<sup>216</sup> In the telling of this story the officer showed me exactly where it had occurred in the CSC. As she recalled the events it was ironic that even after this had happened to her, the security gate remained wide open.

This sort of contradiction was a common theme. Officers often identified issues that would seem within their grasp to address but they rarely did. In this example it is strange that despite at least one assault and an expressed sense of danger, officers did little to address security by locking these gates. Based on these observations it would appear that a feature of the police habitus was a level of inaction or resignation. The question then becomes whether the inaction is a result of how the occupational culture interprets the attention the organisation gives to their physical surroundings or is it the other way around?

The sense of danger was not lost on senior personnel. During a conversation with me a senior commander commented, *'I say it's a grace of God why [the station] is not attacked. I'm telling you I am safer when I am at home'*.<sup>217</sup> This commander felt exposed to danger when he was in the station and other officers frequently echoed this sentiment. Although the SAPS could not indicate how many officers had been killed at or in police stations between 2002 and 2014, media reports put the national number of police station attacks at 12 between 2011 and 2015 (Bornmna, 2015). While not a high number nationally, it does speak to the idea that the physical location of a police station does not act as any sort of sanctuary in South Africa. Official records, however, indicate that nationally six police officers had been killed in two attacks in the last decade (Kinnes, personal communication 21st February 2018).<sup>218</sup> For the police the relatively low numbers do not register as soundly as the occurrence itself and officers reiterate these occurrences as reasons why their stations are dangerous. Yet decreasing their exposure to danger through basic actions such as securing gates appeared to be simple actions that the occupational culture just never engaged in. Likewise, the organisational culture did not improve security by installing automatically locking gates or ensuring CCTV systems were functional.

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<sup>216</sup> Interview B.

<sup>217</sup> Interview G.

<sup>218</sup> Parliamentary Police Monitoring Group.

### 7.2.3 Danger money

One organisational response which all officers, irrespective of the station location, receive is colloquially referred to as ‘danger money’. First introduced in 1999, this allowance is paid to officers in recognition of the risks to life while carrying out specified duties or training.<sup>219</sup> It was replaced in 2001 by a service allowance when the state argued that the police were not tackling crime in order to secure the ‘danger’ payments. Then in 2007, as the number of police murders began to rise again, the use of the term ‘danger allowance’ resurfaced in the Public Service Coordinating Bargain Agreement.<sup>220</sup> The reframing and renaming of the allowance back to ‘danger allowance’ returned danger to the formal police discourse and could be said to be a response of the state to the danger officers were experiencing.

Operational police discourse about the allowance revolves around which officers received it and where they worked than the concept of danger itself. Front line officers regard some locations as more dangerous than others and this conflict in perceptions of danger between the formal and informal organisations creates a point of friction. One officer argued, ‘*a person in Mowbray – he’s never seen a dead person in his life! ... People who work at place like [Baile], they get nothing – it’s not fair*’.<sup>221</sup> The amount of money is actually the same and does not increase or decrease their exposure to danger. However, this and other officers believe that danger is intricately linked to space and so they should be paid more for dealing with more danger.

## 7.3 Occupational Responses

### 7.4 Avoidance of Danger

Avoidance is normally discussed as a psychological coping strategy employed by officers in their work (Boshoff, Strydom, and Botha, 2015; Pienaar and Rothmann, 2003; Pienaar, Rothmann, and Van De Vijver 2007; Wiese, Rothmann and Storm, 2003). Termed ‘avoidance coping’ this action describes a person’s decision to remove oneself from a perceived threat (Anshel and Brinthaup, 2014). The ‘removal’ in this sense is more of a psychological process and in many cases these actions are passive and subconsciously derived decisions which then influence police action. Indeed Waddington (1999:302) observes that if we wish to ‘explain (and not just condemn) police behaviour on the streets,

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<sup>219</sup> Danger allowance was first mentioned in the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargain Council Resolution 3 of 1999.

<sup>220</sup> Resolution 1/2007 refers.

<sup>221</sup> Interview W.

then we should look not only at what officers say in the canteen or privately to researchers, but also into the circumstances in which they act, or in some cases do not act'. Therefore, reviewing instances of avoidance can help to better understand it and other responses to the perception of danger.

This research is concerned with a type of avoidance that Hofstede (2001) describes as 'uncertainty avoidance,' which is best understood as an 'intolerance for uncertain or unknown situations'. Although much of Hofstede's work focuses on different societies' tolerances for uncertainty and ambiguity, uncertainty avoidance has also been found to impact police-civilian interactions (Giebels *et al*, 2017). What informs this intolerance amongst police is then of interest in understanding how the police perceive and experience danger.

There are a number of different types of avoidance. First there is the 'easing' (Cain, 1973) type of behaviour where officers would fill the time between 'real policing events' such as getting cups of teas (Holdaway, 1977). Punch (1979) describes a type of avoidance of work which is not considered as real police work and reflects more the social work aspect of the job. Herbert (1998: 355-36) describes how officers self-label those who engage in real police work as 'hardchargers' and those who avoid it as 'station queens'. Loftus (2009) more recently described a type of work avoidance, which Demareé (2017) defines as a 'ducking' approach, where police avoid engaging in having to deal with the public at all.

Throughout the research all of the above were visible. Officers regularly avoided what they considered to be messy calls such as escorting a mentally ill patient to the hospital or ones which could detain them for hours. Similarly, officers would not attend calls nearing the end of shift for fear of being delayed further. Lipsky (2010) underlines how officers abilities to make decisions on a case-by-case basis means that frontline officers are 'street-level bureaucrats', insofar as the choices they make when exercising discretion ultimately determines how citizens experience government policy and what calls they attend to. Avoidance can be seen to have many motivations. Easing or avoiding police work, as opposed to 'real police work', involves a knowledge of the situation and does not necessarily speak to experiences or perceptions of danger. While all incidents have an element of uncertainty, active avoidance of incidents that police believe may pose a danger to them or where their uncertainty of the incident creates a perception of danger is of interest to this discussion.

### 7.4.1 Vispol

Throughout the fieldwork, Vispol avoided attending overtly dangerous incidents. Bayley and Bittner (1984) argue that officers often try to minimise the unpleasant, sometimes deadly, physical contact of policing through simple avoidance. During my research it was common for a Vispol member to simply not go to incidents they perceived to be dangerous. These incidents generally involved a higher level of uncertainty of who was involved, how many suspects there were and if other police units would be able to provide backup or support. In fact, frequently the belief that there was a lack of back-up was a reason cited for the avoidance.

When I asked officers what incidents they purposefully avoided, acts of vigilantism were mentioned most frequently. Vigilante acts are a response by certain members of a community to perceived deviant acts by other individuals.<sup>222</sup> The spontaneity and the size of the crowds involved in these acts makes policing them difficult (Buur, 2006, 2008; Buur and Jensen, 2004; Cooper-Knock, 2014; Cooper-Knock and Owen, Haas, De Keijser and Bruinsma, 2014; 2015; Martin, 2010, 2012; Super, 2015). Acts of vigilantism are normally mob-based and as such attempting to intervene becomes dangerous for police who are often drastically outnumbered.

Throughout the fieldwork police often commented that in the township vigilantism was rife and that police were regularly attacked during these calls. One officer explained:

*The people there don't want you to intervene and they get violent and they start to throw us with stones and you have to move away and ask for back up because normally, its, there's a lot (emphasis) of people and only one van and two members, and they start to get violent and throw stones and that.*<sup>223</sup>

There is, however, a question of perception versus the reality of this account. When the officer was asked to expand about his own personal experiences attending such an event, he admitted that he could not actually recall ever attending one. Indeed, this officer's experience reflected that of most others in that many could relay stories about the inherent dangers of vigilantism, but when probed further few had actually been exposed, engaged or directly

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<sup>222</sup> Vigilante punishment ranges from lashes with a *sjambok* (a type of whip) to necklacing (tyre placed around the individual, filled with oil, and set alight) or execution at gunpoint. Spontaneous acts of vigilante violence appear to use any means at hand and range from stoning individuals to death (York, 2014) to the burning of individuals alive (Minnaar, 2001).

<sup>223</sup> Interview C.

intervened in a vigilante act. In a large number of vigilante cases, the victim was either dropped at the police station after the act or the police were made aware of the incident *after* it had occurred. In this way the police see the *outcome* of vigilante actions, which often result in disfigured, beaten or dead individuals. In many cases the danger they perceived appeared to reflect of the injuries sustained by the victims as opposed to an actual personal experience of danger.

Like vigilante acts officers also avoided events that could be described as service protests which can quickly escalate into riots. The poor infrastructural conditions in the township ensure that residents have plenty to protest about. While police avoided attending these calls they also created the impression that they were not avoiding them at all. This was observed one afternoon when working with Vispol. Our unit had been directed to a riot and another car was directed by dispatch to an armed robbery in progress at a shopping centre. The officers in the other car told control that they did not know where the shopping centre was located. One of the officers I was observing said, '*They are lying mos, they know where it is, mos. They are lying,*' and smiled. At the time of his comment we parked at the side of the road listening to the controller on the radio describe the robbery and riot we had been directed to. Although the officers in my car had said they were en route to the riot, we were in fact parked and listening to it instead of attending to it.<sup>224</sup> Both cars were actively avoiding these presumably dangerous situations.

On working with the same two officers again two weeks later I revisited the scenario above with them and asked why they did not attend. The passenger was frank in his response, '*we avoid trouble all we can because who will come? We have no back up. We are meant to be 6 [officers] in this area, 1 car per sector, we are 2 [officers]*'.<sup>225</sup> By this he meant that there were meant to be three cars and six officers in the area at all times. However, as described in the material artefacts section, the station was only able to field one car for the three sectors. The danger that was perceived and the avoidance that resulted appeared to be compounded by the lack of resources available. As Steinberg (2008) notes, often the central question in policing is one of numbers and the balance of the numbers can ultimately decide the outcome for the police in many circumstances. The outcome here was that the police chose to avoid what they perceived as a dangerous situation out of fear of being left without sufficient backup.

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<sup>224</sup> Field Notes 0041.

<sup>225</sup> Field Notes 0030.

Officer's perception of danger can be seen to be shaped more by the details surrounding the incident rather than through their actual attendance. Owing to the extent of violent crime that occurs in the township such absorption is easily done. For example, on one afternoon, 18 men, armed with R5 rifles stormed a local supermarket in the township and robbed it of R20,000 (\$1700). In South Africa this is considered a substantial amount of cash. On fleeing the scene, the men shot a security guard, seriously injuring him. In discussing the incident later with an officer, he explained how he was happy they didn't get to the shooting in time as '*we would have been shot at, it's scary*'.<sup>226</sup> In this sense the non-attendance of the police is not due to an unimagined danger but rather an understanding of what actually happens at such incidents.

#### 7.4.2 Detectives

Detectives were rarely observed engaging in dangerous incidents, more because in their roles they generally investigate incidents that are no longer active. As Bittner (1974) observes, detectives are not engaged in the 'emergency maintenance of social order'. This sees them at scenes after the danger has passed. This is not to say that they were never asked to attend dangerous incidents in progress, though. They were, it was just not observed during the research. Detectives were happy to share their reasons with me for avoiding such incidents during conversation though.

As with Vispol, detectives described avoiding attendance at incidents that they perceived as overtly dangerous. One detective explained how he would be reluctant to go to an armed robbery in progress. He stated, '*I'll hesitate to go, but I will go*'.<sup>227</sup> As seen in the above robbery example, such reluctance is not without foundation. He went on to say that he would first want to know the extent of the threat involved. He explained his delay as a strategic one so as not to appear to be refusing to go. He said he would wait for all the information to be known before going to the scene. However, the very nature of engaging with danger is the unpredictability of the situation, the unknown. So, while the detective indicated that he would go to the scene, in reality he was actually saying he would get there once the level of danger to himself has been significantly reduced. This is similar to the avoidance practice of Vispol, except that the detective is stating that he would actually arrive at the scene, albeit late. In this sense, with both Vispol and the detectives, avoidance takes more of a functional place in their policing roles.

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<sup>226</sup> Field Notes 0077.

<sup>227</sup> Interview B.

### 7.4.3 TRT

The TRT is a unit that is on the opposite end of the spectrum to Vispol and detectives; they rush towards danger. TRT can be considered as, 'edgeworkers', where they actively seek danger (Kidder, 2006; Lyng, 1990). This comes as little surprise because they were established as a reactive support unit and their job is to respond to dangerous incidents. Throughout my time working with them, the TRT rushed towards calls regardless of what information they had about the incident. They patrolled the sector waiting for any calls to incidents that could erupt into violence. As such there was a lot of driving around and sitting in the van, essentially waiting for danger. When there was a call or a chance at some engagement the TRT could not get there quickly enough.

One of the underlying messages of the edgework concept is that in flirting with danger, individuals can also find a sense of purpose (Lyng, 1990). This sense of purpose is often discovered when individuals 'push the edge'. Pushing the edge involves pushing the boundaries between safety and danger, where individuals can use their skills in challenging and ever-changing situations (Kidder, 2006). Enough examples of rushing into danger occurred during fieldwork with the TRT to suggest that, when they did attend, this was not a performance for the benefit of the researcher. Their disposition was one of active engagement and it was what their role demanded of them. Despite this, however, there were still individual members within the TRT that did not adhere to this reactive and engagement type of culture.

One afternoon in a conversation about the use of the TRT vehicles the subject of avoidance inadvertently materialised in the discussion. The captain was becoming continuously annoyed by the manner of 'hard driving' by some of the officers in the unit. This driving resulted in burned out clutches on the vans. He wanted the drivers in each unit to be rotated to prevent this ongoing problem. One officer said that the unit could not rotate the drivers because, *'There are people here who don't want to go to a shooting until after it's over. We don't want them (his emphasis) driving'*.<sup>228</sup> The officer was explaining that hard driving was a necessary part of the job. He and most of the team did not want those members who did not want to actively engage with potentially dangerous situations doing the driving. In avoidance of danger, these certain members adopted the strategies seen in Vispol; they drove slowly in

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<sup>228</sup> Field Notes 0111.

getting there. The fact that the group marginalised these individuals and did not want them to drive shows the group's overall lack of any propensity for avoidance.

Understanding avoidance in terms of all three units is not a straightforward issue and is bound by contradictory behaviours and actions amongst police personnel. The officers often 'talk the talk' about engaging in dangerous situations, but when examined closer they don't necessarily 'walk that talk'. In many cases, their perceptions of danger became shaped through non-attendance. Explanations about their avoidance of dangerous situations are both simple and complex. They wish to avoid injury or death and also wish to be seen to be actively doing their job. The harsh realities of township policing mean that the under-resourced police are faced with overwhelming numbers of dangerous incidents and not enough police to deal with those incidents. This creates a cycle where an incident is perceived as dangerous and the lack of police willing to attend appears to escalate the danger for officers who do attend.

## 7.5 Engaging with Potential Danger

In addition to examining what situations police avoid, examining what police engage in can also inform the discussion of how danger is perceived and experienced by the police. Although the actual number of violent confrontations was limited during the research, by using examples where the potential for actual danger was present, insights into police perceptions of danger can be further gleaned.

The previously mentioned vigilante acts have existed before and have survived the democratic transition. Even though police are not seen to regularly attend such incidents, acts of vigilantism<sup>229</sup> have long been recognised as being characteristically violent and are regarded as being physically hazardous (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014). The injuries sustained by victims during such attacks are substantial and are quite likely to be fatal. As such, examining when police do intervene in such acts offers an alternative viewpoint on how they respond when such danger is likely to be present. These acts are often highly volatile situations and so the potential dangers that police can be exposed to are great.

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<sup>229</sup> Haefele (2006) traces the origins of the word 'vigilante' to Spanish meaning 'watchman' or 'guard' but its Latin root extends from the concept of 'vigil' meaning to be awake or observant. In South Africa the term 'vigilantism' evokes many images and adopts many nomenclatures. Kangaroo court (Minnaar, 2001), Bundu court (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014), community justice (Kynoch, 2016) mob justice (Cooper- Knock, 2014) and policing formations (Buur and Jensen, 2004) have all been used to refer to vigilante acts.

During the research I was able to observe some officers engaging with acts of vigilantism. On one occasion, while working with Vispol, we witnessed and subsequently intervened in a vigilante act. These acts of vigilantism are not uncommon but they are underreported so it is difficult to understand the actual extent of the issue (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014; Super, 2010, 2015). Indeed, during my fieldwork, vigilante acts appeared to be regular occurrences gauging by the number of beaten individuals that were often just left at the police doorstep. These occurrences, however, were never reflected in calls to the station while they were happening.<sup>230</sup>

### 7.5.1 Vispol: They are going to kill that boy!

On the first of day of fieldwork I found myself standing with police officers who were redirecting traffic from a service delivery protest. As we stood at the car redirecting taxis away from rubble which had been placed in the middle of the road, the driver of our vehicle started shouting excitedly, '*they are going to kill that boy! They are going to kill that boy!*' Looking in his direction I turned to see a Black youth running at break neck speed across the road. He was being chased by a mob of about 15 angry men who were in the process of hurling bricks and stones at him as he tried to flee. It is perhaps worth describing this example in some detail to understand how some police do engage in such incidents and what this indicates about how officers perceive danger.

*Following the two police officers, I jumped into the car and we speed off after the group. The driver spun the police car in the direction of the mob, tyres burned and screeched in the process. I remember thinking to myself that I may not survive the first day of fieldwork at this rate. We drove after the angry mob into an area of dense shacks. Screeching to a halt, the two officers jumped out from the car, firearms drawn and ran after the mob that had filtered into the shacks. I followed behind.*

*The officers had literally gotten to the back of this area of shacks when the mob circled back out and past us again. The youth seemed to have temporarily escaped them and the mob was frantic in their search. As we stood at the vehicle and the mob appeared to swell in number and 20 men ran by me back out onto the road, rocks in hand, scanning the dwellings in the hope of finding*

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<sup>230</sup> This recording can be partially due to the performance measurement approach where vigilante acts are not a universal problem across all stations and as such less attention is paid to them. It was only in 2002 when the SAPS actually started recording acts of vigilantism on their data base systems.

*this boy. The police presence had no impact and they ran past the two officers as if they were invisible, their guns in their hands. The youth was nowhere to be seen. We got back into the car and circled the area a couple of times all the while the driver kept repeating, 'they are going to kill that boy!', they are going to kill that boy!'. Judging by the tone of the mob I was inclined to agree with him and thought that we may be killed in the process.*

*As we drove frantically around, a few older men stood on a street corner and looked at us while pointing gingerly towards a field. The driver raced the car into the open field and drove towards a large group which seemed to be growing, with people joining, including women and children. At the centre of this group was the youth who was being held by a couple of men as they walked. We pulled up into the centre of the group and I realised that we were the sole vehicle there. In the race to find the boy we had lost the second car which had been following us from the roadblock. We had no backup. The vehicle stopped in the centre of the group and in a matter of minutes the car was surrounded by over 100 people. The driver rolled down the window and spoke with the victim and the men who maintained a firm grip on him. I was amazed and didn't know if he was doing it on purpose, but the quiet tone of the officer's voice commanded a silence over the large group. People were eager to hear what was being said and those who were talking or making noise were shushed into silence by others.*

*The driver discovered that the youth had burgled the man's residence and amongst other things had stolen a pair of jeans. The youth had been wearing them but now stood in a pair of bloodied boxer shorts and the jeans were in the hand of the owner. The driver tried to reason with the jean-holding man. The officer said that this boy would be killed by the man's friends (the mob) and because the man was the one last seen with him, he would be arrested tomorrow if the youth died. The officer learnt that the man was working and suggested that being arrested for murder would probably cause him to lose his job. The youth was standing unsteadily on his feet, with blood streaming from his head and mouth. After what seemed like an eternity but was probably no more than five minutes the driver had managed to coerce the man to bring the bloodied youth with us and get his property back. As the driver spoke, the*

*crowd continued to swell. There were so many people present that sunlight was being blocked from the back windscreen and the car became weighted down as people leaned on the car to listen and see what was happening.*

*The blooded youth initially directed us to a shack claiming that the property was there, which was in fact a ruse. The shack was a drug den and the driver punched the two guys there who refused to admit to smoking drugs. This also served as a warning to the youth that the next house better be the correct address or he too may receive a punch. The driver underscored this by telling the youth that he would happily return him to the mob who was trailing the vehicle. It came as no surprise that the second house had the property. With the property returned, both victim and offender were left and we drove off.*

*When we returned to the station the driver said to me in a hushed but serious tone, 'Hey don't mention that to the Captain'.<sup>231</sup>*

I remember sitting in the car, feeling terrified and hoping that the crowd would not turn against the officer, as we were all in real danger if they did. This was, in my mind, an inherently dangerous situation for the police. The officer understood, in a Bourdieusian sense, the currency of the exchange being offered as the rules of the 'game' (the doxa). He levelled the playing field with the burgled victim by introducing the threat of losing his job alongside a more serious charge of murder. The officer understood the real-world value of having a job in the township environment. In understanding the rules of the game he was able to play them out to his advantage and allowed us as well as the victim to leave the scene unscathed any further.

In this situation the real danger for the police would have been in failing to understand the rules of the game and their roles as prescribed for them in the situation. In understanding the role-relationship with the community the officer could decrease the potential danger faced. In unpacking the police habitus, Sarbin's (1967) understanding of the role-relationship comes into consideration. The role that the officer adopted was one of negotiator as opposed to enforcer of the law. In adopting this role in this instance, the officer still controlled the situation and danger was avoided. Understanding the role-relationship with the community in this instance the officer was able to decrease the potential danger faced.

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<sup>231</sup> Field Notes 0001.

What this example also shows is that some police officers *can and do* engage in dangerous situations. It also shows a disconnect between how the police organisation would have expected the incident to be handled (the formal response) and how it actually was (the informal response). When the officer stated, ‘*hey don’t mention this to the captain*’ he highlighted the difference in how it was policed and how he thought the formal organisation believe it should have been policed. The formal approach would have expected arrests of both the man (for assaulting the youth) and the youth (for theft of the jeans). The formal negotiation space would have been the police station and the court. Instead, the officer played by the local rules of the game and negotiated an outcome outside of the formal space.

### 7.5.2 Detectives: Relationships and Trust

Much like Vispol officers, detectives often recounted vigilante acts as amongst the most dangerous incidents they have to deal with. Even though most detectives often only experience the aftermath of vigilante acts, the engagement of the community with the detectives around these incidents offers a useful lens in which to understand how they shaped their perceptions of danger. An experienced homicide detective explained:

*A community killing was the worst murder I've been to. It was a Monday, and the man was killed by the community, he was lying in the street and his head was open and all the community was standing around laughing, I said no man, this is wrong, and I went home after this. It's wrong how the people act.*<sup>232</sup>

This detective had dealt with hundreds of murders throughout his career yet this incident was grave enough that he still recalled the actual day that it had occurred. What jarred the detective the most appeared to be how the community acted after the incident, they stood around laughing and he could not make sense of this. This detective was not alone in his alienation of understanding these vigilante acts. Another detective explained:

*In my community, where I come from, I never see the thing that white people or coloured people coming in a group and if someone was caught stealing: they kill that person. I don’t know anything about that. I learned that thing, this thing, here.*<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Field Notes 0077.

<sup>233</sup> Interview G.

This officer draws the distinction about the influence of the field in trying to understand the behaviour of the communities. The relationship of the community with vigilantism has contributed or, perhaps, is indicative of the normalised violence in townships.

What concerned many detectives was the lack of cooperation in investigating these vigilante acts. One detective said, *'no-one wants to come forward; these [his spoken emphasis] people only come forward [if] the victim was a family member'*.<sup>234</sup> Indeed a commission of enquiry, which investigated similar acts in a township, found that the lack of cooperation by community members meant that it was as if these acts were being committed by 'ghosts'. No one appeared to be there when they happened and no one wanted to help after they happened (O' Regan and Pikoli, 2014). For the detectives this lack of cooperation and engagement demonstrates a complete distrust between the community and the larger police organisation.

For detectives, vigilante acts epitomised a disintegration of the police-public role-relationship. As one detective offered, *'We can't fight crime alone (his emphasis). Crime is a partnership between the police and the community. The police need all (his emphasis) the help they can get'*.<sup>235</sup> If this partnership is broken, or does not exist, the police become alienated from the community. It is within this space where police feel most at risk. As one detective explained:

*You must be trusted by the community. You must always, don't breach that trust. When you come away from the college as a police officer, the community have a trust to you, whether you wear that uniform or whether you drive that vehicle the community have a trust to you as a cop. If you don't break that trust, you won't go wrong.*<sup>236</sup>

For the detectives, trust was a central feature in keeping danger at bay. The community's lack of willingness to engage with them was indicative of the strain in this role-relationship. It was through these weakened links that danger was seen to subsequently emerge.

### 7.5.3 TRT: 'I Think it's Good'

As well as being a response unit, the TRT are often used as reinforcements within the police. One afternoon, when working with the TRT officers, we were redirected to a vigilante incident where urgent assistance was requested by command and control. A large crowd had

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<sup>234</sup> Interview P.

<sup>235</sup> Interview T.

<sup>236</sup> Interview X.

gathered and a couple of officers who were present feared that they would be harmed in attempting to remove the victims from the scene.

*When our van arrived at the scene a uniformed officer directed us towards a crowd of people that had formed a circle. It was as if an impromptu amphitheatre had been set up. The circle was at least seven people deep. The crowd consisted mainly of women and children. The children were mostly school age. Babies were carried in their mother's arms and watched the activities. The noise of women ulating, jeering and laughing echoed loudly in the space. These women pointed towards two young men at the centre of the gathering. The crowd whooped and clapped while laughing at the two young men. The two men looked barely in their late teens and were being protected by two metro police who had arrived earlier to assist. They stood with rifles across their chests scanning the baying crowd with their backs facing to the two youths in the middle. The youths were stripped naked from the waist down and had car tyres around their necks which they were struggling to get off. They were just about to be necklaced.<sup>237</sup> The officers were well outnumbered by the crowd of over 100 and looked somewhat relieved at our arrival.*

*The two victims were badly beaten and their eyes had started to swell shut. Blood ran down their faces from their skulls, sealing their eyes even further. They were so disorientated that, although they had some realisation that their genitals were exposed, they could not pull up their trousers because they were in shreds around their ankles. The TRT officers placed the youths in a police van to continuous jeers from the crowd. A uniform policeman was attempting to take their details as they sat in the back of the van. Although they sat upright, no words came. With a neutral tone one of the TRT said, 'they stole from the community', as if to explain the current circumstances that the two youths now found themselves in. The two youths were driven back to the station with the echoes of the crowds jeering as they were driven away.<sup>238</sup>*

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<sup>237</sup> Necklacing is a method of torture which involves placing a petrol filled tyre around the victim while they are still alive and then setting it alight burning the individual to death. It was a form of violence that was frequently used during the Apartheid era when individuals were accused of being state informers (Minnaar, 2001).

<sup>238</sup> Field Notes 0098.

The conversation about what we had just witnessed continued in the TRT van as we drove away and the baying crowd dispersed. Without prompt one officer commented, '*they (the two victims) will be dead. They will get released (from the police station) and the community, they will kill them. I've seen it before, where I live*'. It was said in a very matter of fact tone.

Another officer commented on this offering, '*I think it's good*'. I queried, '*How so?*' He responded, '*other skollies see it, it is good. It will make them stop before they commit crime. It will stop them.*' All officers in the van nodded in agreement as we drove away leaving the amphitheatre of violence behind us.

What was insightful about this instance was the conversation with the TRT on leaving the scene. It was apparent that most of the TRT had personal experience of such incidents. Some of them grew up and still lived in a similar township community and their response to the vigilante approach was one of an experienced 'understanding'. In the eyes of these police officers the spectacle served as a warning, a deterrent to others who might consider stealing. I got the sense that the officers in the van felt like their presence was somehow wasted; in their eyes, the two boys were going to be killed regardless. It was just a matter of when.

For the TRT, this act was not one that presented as an immediate danger to them. The danger appeared to be mediated by both their strength in numbers and more importantly from the discourse, their understanding of the incident itself. While Vispol shared a similar understanding in terms of how these incidents are dealt with by the community, their lack of strength in numbers negated their desire to even attempt to attend these incidents. What was of interest here was, like the incident described previously, the police arrested the victims and not the perpetrators of the act. Although realistically, identifying the perpetrators would have been an impossible task, it speaks to the role adopted by the police in this encounter.

Steinberg (2008) argues that policing only occurs with the consent of the community it polices. In accepting this it also becomes apparent that the role the police adopt often becomes prescribed through such consent. In adapting to this role, the police limit the danger to which they are then exposed.

## **7.6 Violence and Respect**

Violence and conflict were previously seen as indicators of social transformation in many developing countries like South Africa, however today's policy-makers and observers view violence as an indicator of danger, amongst other things (Jensen, 2008). In this sense the use of violence *by* the police is often assumed to be a reaction to the dangers, real or imagined,

that they perceive during the course of their work. As such examining the police use of violence can offer insight into what they may perceive as dangerous and why.

During the fieldwork the actual number of occurrences where violence was directed at the police was not a common occurrence. This is not to say that police are not attacked; the SAPS annual reports detail the number of officers who are incapacitated during their work (SAPS, 2014/15). However, it is unknown whether these injuries are as a result of attacks on the police or incurred during their day-to-day activities. During this research, violence directed at the police was not a regular occurrence and examining such violence may not necessarily serve as a useful indicator to determine the dangers as perceived and subsequently realised by the police.

Throughout the fieldwork, more often than not, when violence was present it was often initiated by the police themselves. When examining police violence, as described in the literature review, it is perhaps best understood as a form of coercive violence which occurs along a continuum ranging from what could be crudely regarded as 'routine' on one end to more 'spectacular' forms of use at the extreme end. While some might consider the descriptions used here as in some way spectacular, this term is best reserved for those incidents where the violence used had been fatal, as was seen in the handcuffing of and dragging behind a police van which resulted in his death of Mr Mido Macia (Sapa, 2013). The findings here describe more the type of coercive violence, which is on the routine to excessive end of the violence spectrum. These findings also have to be cautiously interpreted through the contextual eyes of South Africa where violence is an inherent part of the social fabric.

In explaining this further what is considered as unacceptable by communities in the global North may be acceptable in the global South (Beek and Gopfert, 2012). For example, in South Africa, physical punishment is not as taboo a parenting approach as elsewhere. In translating a commonly used phrase in Afrikaans one officer explained that '*You bend the tree while it's young*'.<sup>239</sup> Many officers' primary habitus was itself shaped by the disciplinary measures, mostly physical, they themselves received as children. As a result the secondary police habitus also becomes shaped through this history. Unlike those scholars heretofore, this research now considers what this violence means relative to the dangers perceived and how violence affects the position of police in the police- public role-relationship. As will be

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<sup>239</sup> Interview B. The Afrikaans phrase used was '*Buig die boompie solank as hy nog jonk is*'.

seen, an understanding about the use of violence in a South African context is not without ambiguity.

The regularity at which ‘routine violence’, almost casual violence, is used by the SAPS has been well documented (Altbeker, 2005, 2007; Faull, 2013, 2016; Hornberger, 2011, 2016; Marks, 2005; Steinberg, 2008). The parameters of violence are best understood along a continuum, ranging from the legitimate use of force to extra-legal violence. While my research supports many previous examinations regarding the routine use of police violence it also considers the use of force on the more coercive end of the scale. This is not to state that either use is legal, but such violence has come to be deemed acceptable by many, police and public alike. In examining the more coercive approached used by the police, considerations about how danger becomes realised emerge.

Across all three units, what could be considered as the ‘routine’ use of violence was common place. Police officers routinely administered *klaps*<sup>240</sup> or kicks to ‘difficult’ individuals. This approach was regarded by the police as a compliance tool, which assisted them in their daily interactions. My findings align with the majority of scholars who depict the use of this lower-end-of-scale violence as a functional tool within their identity kits (Faull, 2012; Marks, 2005; Steinberg, 2008). The use of such violence has been suggested as a way the police both maintain and earn respect for the police role.

In their own explanations about their use of violence, officers were matter of fact regarding such approaches. As one officer explained, *‘If someone was to be rude, you just smack them so that she can be aware that you are a police officer and that you are not here to play games, because sometimes they will just lie.’*<sup>241</sup> In being rude the individual was regarded as being disobedient and the klap rectified the situation in favour of the police. Using violence in this way reinforced the notion that the police had a serious job to do, or as explained by the officer, this wasn’t a game. As Faull (2013:8) observed, many of SAPS regarded it as if it were a ‘confidential trick of the trade, the magic slap that brings respect’. For many officers, assaulting individuals in this way was a means of slapping some sense into them, while getting to the truth.

The use of such coercive violence is also a way to reinforce the authoritarian role of the police while reminding the individual of the power the position held. Insolent young men,

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<sup>240</sup> A *klap* is a slap.

<sup>241</sup> Interview B.

*shebeen*<sup>242</sup> owners and people in custody where all seen by officers as legitimate targets for ‘*klaps*’. This was routinely administered violence and was normalised across all ranks in its use. On one occasion I saw a senior officer ‘*klapping*’ a detective. He was late for a meeting and his tardiness had worn the commander’s patience.<sup>243</sup> Such use was thus not just restricted for public consumption.

As well as reinforcing their authoritative position, the police regarded the use of violence as functional in that it expedited the police role. One Vispol member explained, ‘*The thing is we do (his emphasis) beat people, we don’t have the time to go an open dockets [investigate]*’.<sup>244</sup> Violence was seen by officers as both a quick and a practical solution to many issues they dealt with in the community. This desire for quick and practical solutions might be unsurprising given the chronic lack of police resources. However, like all quick and dirty solutions, it has the desired effect in the short term but can result in long term problems.

These quick and dirty solutions are not only desirable from a police perspective but they are also, at times, desired by the community (Hornberger, 2013; Steinberg, 2012). During fieldwork one evening we were directed to what was called a domestic disturbance, a drunken husband who was refusing his wife entry into their shack.

*The Vispol officer kicked in the door of the shack and pepper sprayed the man in the face. As if by a means of explanation the officer said to the woman, ‘Now mama, there you go, sorted. He won’t be able to see you or annoy you until the morning’. The husband lay on the bed, clutching his face, howling in pain as we turned and left, she thanked us and closed the door. In driving away the officer spoke out loud as if reasoning his actions. ‘He’s the breadwinner and has a job and if he goes to court, man that’s when the real problems start, she will have nothing’.*<sup>245</sup>

Being thanked by the woman somehow reaffirmed to this officer that the actions he took was the correct course of action. In this example the officer was able to quickly solve the issue at hand and move onto the next call, while also satisfying the complainant. Reflecting on Hornberger (2013) and Steinberg’s (2012) writings, such slaps, or in this case pepper spray, may actually be desired by the community as a quick fix solution. Indeed, in the above

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<sup>242</sup> A shebeen is an illegal tavern.

<sup>243</sup> Field notes 0079.

<sup>244</sup> Field Notes 0050.

<sup>245</sup> Field Notes 0006.

example the woman was quite happy to get back into her own home. Officers expressed a belief that such actions reinforce the authoritarian position of the police role where they are merely doing what the public desires. Or perhaps more accurately the community expects that violence will be used. There is a limit, however, to that expectation.

The extent and frequency of the abuse of force by the SAPS is reflected in the civil claims made against the organisation. Dereymaeker (2015:31) notes that between 2007 and 2015, 86 percent of all payments made related to assaults, shooting incidents and other police actions (including unlawful arrests) by the police. She further notes that between the 2007/08 and 2014/15 financial years, claims made annually against the SAPS increased by 533 percent if the original Rand value is taken into account, or 313 percent if adjusted to the same Rand value (a more accurate figure). Fiscally this translates into R47,795,359. These payments have drastically increased over the last eight years. Interestingly, Dreymaeker (2015) found no correlation between claims and the increase in SAPS personnel, the number of arrests, the number of violent protests or the number of complaints made to the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID). She suggests that what this means is that such claims relate to unlawful police behaviour.

### 7.6.1 Vispol

While police largely regarded the use of violence as a means to get the job done, they never appeared to be concerned about the ramifications of such use, be it on themselves or the larger organisation. For Vispol, the use of violence was functional and overrode the larger organisational concerns. Violence was an act that helped shaped how they maintained the power of their role, as the following incident highlights:

*One evening when conducting a drugs raid I observed as the unit entered a shack. Inside there were six or seven men and three children under the age of ten. After breaching the door the men were made to kneel and the kids were placed in an adjacent room. One officer then began striking one of the suspects with a hammer repeatedly. Both the children and the other men heard and witnessed this as the man began to howl with each strike. The officer wanted information and to him this was the device he was using to extract it. The officers were unable to obtain drugs or information and as we moved outside the officer who had beaten the man noticed one of the others, obviously intoxicated, had passed out. The officer slapped the man several*

*times to wake him and then five minutes later noticed he had passed out again.  
At this point the officer chose to put his cigarette out on the man's cheek.*<sup>246</sup>

This man had failed to comply with the officer's directions and this violence was the officer's attempt to reassert his authority. In this incident, like many others during the fieldwork, the police officers were either oblivious to or did not care who witnessed their actions. The children who were present might now view the police role as one which was inherently violent. It has long been recognised that those who witness or personally experience police misconduct are significantly less likely to provide a positive evaluation of police (Frank, Smith, and Novak, 2005; Weitzer and Tuch, 2005). Whoever else witnessed the police behaviour, let alone experienced it, would have had little respect for the police actions, regardless of their possible reasons. As such, disrespect for the police might be created by the very actions police take to garner respect. This leads to the possibility that the police might be, in essence, creating conditions that cause them to be disrespected in the long term. That lack of respect, or imbalance in the role-relationship might also place them in a future position of danger.

Faull (2013) found during his ethnographic research with the SAPS that many officers showed disrespect for the government, management and individual officers with whom they work. He argued that many of the police officers were dangerously close to losing respect for themselves. This disrespect, I argue, extends not only to the individual but to the police role. The very action that Vispol take to define their role naturally undermines their efforts. In their attempt to get and garner respect for the work they do, Vispol regard violence as an action, a functional tool in the police role. Violence was resorted to when police perceived that they and the police role were somehow being disrespected. Using violence reasserted their powerful position. While such an approach may have a short term or immediate authoritative effect, when considered over a longer term such actions are seen to erode the respect that is required in order to maintain their powerful status.

In another incident, when working with Vispol one night, one of the *bakkies* outside a satellite police station had its windows smashed. Our vehicle, consisting of myself and two officers were summoned to assist in the arrest of the alleged offender. Vispol were not waiting on detectives to investigate and arrest in this case. On our arrival, there were already were three to four officers assessing the extent of the damage. The offender was a

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<sup>246</sup> Field Notes 0023.

complainant that had called in at the station and wasn't happy with the response that the police gave him. In leaving the station this man decided to express his frustration by smashing the windows on the police vehicle. The following field notes detail the police actions.

*In the process of finding and arresting this man, he was beaten by the officers to within an inch of his life with his own belt. He was dragged from his bed, wearing only a pair of jeans and kicked onto the floor. The belt that was on the jeans was pulled free by an officer and he began to whip the man. The force with which the police officer whipped this man sounded cracks that you wouldn't hear from a jockey's whip on a horse in a derby. The police officer danced with force, reigning down blow after blow as the others walked in a semi-circle waiting for the reaction from the man who was taking each blow as it came. The belt was being used to whip the man in a herded fashion towards the bakkie, shuffling along the ground with the force of each whip being cracked. He was then manhandled into the back. The officer took out a knife and cut the belt in two and then fed the pieces through the grill in the back window of the bakkie. He then happily announced to the whipped man, 'Here's your belt! You have two now!' All the police present laughed hard at the comment.<sup>247</sup>*

This man offered no resistance to his arrest. For the police present, the damage done to the police vehicle was not merely the actions of a dissatisfied or angry man. Nor was it just another criminal act. This police anger was more deeply seated than just an attack on the physical vehicle. Just like the man who had the cigarette put out on his cheek, the officers regarded their authority as being questioned. The damage to the van epitomised a lack of respect for the police and their role. The attack on the van was interpreted as an attack upon the police and their position. The use of violence was a way to stamp their authority and regain the powerful position they believe had been violated through the damage.

In both of these examples the organisational desire would have been for the arrest of the men, without beatings or violations of human rights. Hornberger (2011, 2013) suggests that the SAPS resort to the use of such violence due to a lack of a reference point positioning them in a middle-class human rights- orientated police role. She goes on to add that the use of

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<sup>247</sup> Field Notes 0023.

violence also provides respect from colleagues. My findings suggest that such use speaks moreover to the immediate maintenance of a powerful role than anything else. Faull's (2013; 2016) observations also suggest that the script in which the police use violence to earn respect is a script in which the SAPS are well rehearsed. This view and stance overrides the idea that respecting human rights can earn respect as well as understanding.

Whatever the underlying reasons for such violence, in looking at these actions relative to danger, what becomes apparent is that Vispol are attempting to continually orientate their role as one which is shaped by respect and authority. By doing so, they maintain their powerful position in the police-public role-relationship. In this way they are, during the immediacy of these instances, less exposed to danger. However, how these actions shape future understandings of their role and the danger they then become exposed is where such actions should be further considered.

### 7.6.2 Detectives

Detectives spend much of their time on paperwork but their operations could be considered as acutely dangerous, if not more so, than their Vispol counterparts. While Vispol will generally deal with daily calls such as thefts and petty crime, detectives execute arrests and seek to gain information from those who may not wish to give it. In this sense it could be considered that detectives are actually more exposed to danger in their operations than Vispol.

Despite this similar or increased level of danger, detectives exhibited a lower propensity to use coercive violence during their daily activities than Vispol. This is not to say that detectives did not use violent approaches in their work; they did. Their use of violence appeared to be more aligned with what would be considered as expeditious or acceptable use of force in policing. An example of this was seen when we were returning back to the office after taking a witness statement with the detectives.

*We happened across a man and woman fighting in the street. The man was punching the woman to the ground as the detectives stopped the car. The detectives believed he was reaching for a gun but it quickly became apparent that he did not have one. The two detectives tripped the man to the ground and punched him a couple of times. This stopped the initial assault on the woman and by this time a crowd of residents had gathered to watch. The detectives*

*helped the man up and the woman left screaming at the man. The man then apologised to the detectives and everyone went their separate ways.*<sup>248</sup>

The expected organisational response here might have been the arrest of this man for assaulting this woman. Instead the detectives and the woman were happy to consider the situation resolved with a few punches from the detectives. Moreover, even after the beating, the man then apologised to the detectives. It is possible that the reason for his apology could have been an attempt to soften the detectives' reaction and somehow prevent his own arrest or that he agreed with the resolution of the problem. In driving away from the scene one of the detectives commented as if to excuse what he had just done, '*he said she's my girlfriend! I don't care; you don't hit women, that is no excuse.*' Whatever the man's reason was for apologising or the woman's acceptance of the outcome, it seemed to validate the violent approach of the detectives (to themselves) as a necessary response.

As an observer what I noted was the measured, albeit violent approach of the detectives by comparison to Vispol actions in similar situations. On speaking with detectives about the use of violence they said that they believed that they intentionally practiced a less violent approach than Vispol. They went on to say that they felt this in turn gained them more respect from the community. This respect insulated them from the dangers to which Vispol were exposed. As expressed by one detective:

*Maybe the uniform guys, are more hands on, how can I say, more forceful (his emphasis). We are, how I can say, we try and work to keep the people at ease. Before [using violence], we talk to them. It's just human, you just speak to a person and they treat you with respect.*<sup>249</sup>

For the majority of the detectives, showing respect was a fundamental component in receiving it in return. Detectives recognised respect as an overarching concept for improving the positioning of their role within the community. This respect was a type of social and cultural capital that helped to create links and respect with the community. In doing so detectives appeared to maintain a power position in the role-relationship and, as a result, they experienced less danger.

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<sup>248</sup> Field Notes 0094.

<sup>249</sup> Interview P.

Detectives differed from Vispol in that they did not believe that respect was derived from the use of force. One detective for example described how he used conversation as the tool rather than violence in what could be considered a dangerous situation. This situation was similar to the incident described in the Vispol section where the man was pepper sprayed. The detective described it as follows:

*A lady went to get her belongings from her house and her husband didn't want to let her in to get them. We were called and I went into the house. I accompanied her into the house and, he grabbed her, I grabbed him on the arm and told him to remove his hand from her. The guy like picked me up, he was a huge guy. I told him, oh, ok, now let's talk. I don't know, actually to this day, I don't even know what I told him, but I engaged him to speak myself out of it. At the end of the day he was sitting on the couch speaking with me. You can speak to a person rather than resort to violence.<sup>250</sup>*

In conversations with most detectives they believed that they had developed a better relationship with the public due to this type of approach. The capital, or respect, they acquired was earned through talking with people not through violent means. As one detectives indicated, 'you must talk nice to people, that's how you get information and that's how that the community trusts you'.<sup>251</sup> The detectives saw this approach as the means to maintaining their powerful role and control of situations. There does also appear to be at least a tentative link between the numbers of detectives murdered in comparison to their Vispol counterparts. In this regard the detective approach appears to have better long-term consequences for the danger to which they are exposed.

### 7.6.3 TRT

Much like their Vispol and detective colleagues, members of the TRT were not averse to using violence when engaging with suspects. Notably and in contrast to Vispol approaches however, these *klaps* were rarely done in open public spaces. Any violence used was administered in a space that the TRT could explicitly control. For example, one afternoon a call came in on the radio about a shooting incident.

*The TRT unit attended the scene and shortly after our arrival two of the members' frog marched a man to our van. He was thrown into the van and we*

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<sup>250</sup> Interview B.

<sup>251</sup> Field Notes 0022.

*speed away from the area. This man had a knife taken from him and was left lying on the floor of the van. An officer used the broad side of the knife to slap the man on his back and legs. While he was being hit with the knife the officers questioned him about the shooting. It became apparent that he did not have any information and he was left on the side of the road miles from where he had been picked up.*<sup>252</sup>

I remember thinking that this coercive force was significantly less than that used by Vispol. This technique was used on more than one occasion when seeking information from suspects. In this sense, the use of coercive force also included an element of fear. This fear was no doubt generated through the fact that individuals did not know where they were being taken in the TRT vans or indeed what would happen to them. The slapping of the suspect in the van exhibited the TRT's control through the creation and indeed maintenance of fear. One of the TRT officers explained that during training the motto was, *'the substitute for respect is fear, and if people do not respect you they must fear you. This is what we are taught'*.<sup>253</sup> This comment was met with approving nods by all the other members present. As with Vispol and detectives, the TRT used violence as a tool in their policing duties rather than as a direct response to danger itself.

One afternoon we all sat in the TRT van watching people file randomly in and out of the station as we waited for one of the members inside. As individuals passed the van they looked at the police without much regard for their presence. As if thinking out loud, one officer offered:

*'People don't respect the police anymore' He expanded, 'before they were afraid of you. You could moer<sup>254</sup> them and they would know it. Now they complain; civil complaints too. They have tied our hands. No! They have cut them off. How can we police, when no one respects us?' As if to reinforce the loss of respect another officer commented on two youths we had stopped a week previously in an area where there was believed to have been a shooting. He recalled how the two youths, who had been arrested with guns previously, told the TRT members to leave so that the gangs could continue to shoot at*

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<sup>252</sup> Field Notes 0109.

<sup>253</sup> Field Notes 0107.

<sup>254</sup> 'Moer' is an Afrikaans word meaning to beat someone.

*each other. He went on to say 'if they respected us, they wouldn't do that - tell us to go – before, they knew we would moer them!'*<sup>255</sup>

Interestingly, rather than seeing this information as the fact that these two youths trusted them, they took it as an affront to their role. They perceived their role, the elite-unit, as being disrespected, i.e. a reduction in their role status through such requests. What is of note is how the police do not link the idea of danger and violence. The use of violence in each unit was seen as an act, aimed to redress the positioning of their role.

Throughout this research none of the units either described or used violence primarily as a direct response to danger. However, violence by the police does appear to be linked to how the police position their power status relative to the police role. Different methods were employed by the three units to manage this power status. For Vispol, violence was regarded as an action, a functional tool that aided and indeed elevated the police role. Detectives took a softer approach and attempted to earn respect through less violent means. TRT used coercive violence and fear as a means to earn respect. Respect and authority are a distinct form of capital and allow the police to maintain a position of power. When this position becomes destabilised the police perceive that danger is present. The contradiction lies in the very actions of the police, which more often than not create the conditions which cause disrespect.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

From these findings it becomes apparent that danger is not perceived and responded to in a universal manner by the police. The organisational culture struggles to provide mechanisms that allow officers to feel free from danger, yet it recognises that danger in the form of a 'danger allowance'. In examining the dispositions and practices of the occupational culture across three police units the contradictions and ambiguities in dealing with danger are laid bare. On one hand the police are seen to be actively avoiding danger and on the other hand they can be seen as the creators of the danger to which they subsequently become exposed. This leads to the question: how can the responses to danger be properly understood when such complexities are seen to exist?

Examining all the circumstances which motivate avoidance is not a linear process. However, in focusing on select incidents, which are recognised as being dangerous, some interesting observations arise. From the outset of this research Vispol and detectives avoided attending

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<sup>255</sup> Field Notes 0111.

overtly dangerous incidents. On the face of it, this could be considered as a normal and almost practical response. However, the job of the police *is* to attend such incidents. The inherent danger is uncertainty and the unknown. However, both Vispol and detectives were frank in their explanations and indeed in their behaviour in this regard. Whenever possible they circumvented putting themselves at risk. Operationally, this avoidance becomes a carefully managed performance where delay tactics are regularly employed to prevent an early arrival at a dangerous incident.

The lack of desire to go to dangerous incidents was not without valid reasoning. The victims of dangerous incidents, such as those of vigilante acts, serve as continual reminders to the police of what could happen to them were they to get on the wrong side of an angry mob. The danger from such incidents often becomes absorbed by the police and influences their own understanding of the danger in these events. This avoidance also results from the belief that there are not enough other officers to provide back-up and safety in numbers overall.

All three units had a similar understanding regarding the use of coercive force. On the routine end of the continuum it was a functional tool in the police arsenal. All three units were concerned with the maintenance of their power in the role-relationship with the public. How this was achieved, however differed across the three units. Understanding such differential engagements is also made more complex because the immediacy of this approach is desired by police and public alike. It is the suggestion here that the long-term consequences of such use of coercive force have yet to be properly realised in the larger sphere of the police organisation.

In conclusion of these findings one is lead to question, what, if anything, do police practices and actions reveal about police perceptions and responses to danger? By positioning this discussion through Bourdieu and Sarbin, the importance of the role-relationship between the police and the public comes to the fore. How the police position their powerful status in this relationship and the actions they engage in to do this can be seen as a contributing factor to the very danger that they seek to avoid.

## Chapter 8. Discussion

### 8.1 Introduction

During a eulogy at one of the memorial services a speaker cited Martin Luther King, Jnr., by saying: ‘Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter’.<sup>256</sup> In South Africa, the murder of police officers has become one of the silent problems where their murders have become an almost accepted occupational hazard of their work. My interest in the murder of police is, without doubt, rooted in my own chosen profession as a police officer. However, the rate and the circumstances in which South African police officers are murdered calls for more research into the phenomenon. This study attempts to address the dearth of information on the issue and argues that police murders should be considered beyond any acceptable occupational hazard. In addition to gaining insight into police murders the examination of police perceptions and responses to danger also offers insight into why the police may operate in the manner that they do.

This research set out to unpack how danger is perceived, experienced, and responded to by members of the South African Police Service. Organisational and occupational cultures were explored across three units in the same locality to better contextualise how police perceptions and responses regarding the murder of police officers affect and are affected by danger. Four separate questions were posed that examined the administrative, symbolic, material, and operational police practices relating to danger and death, namely:

- 1) What do the official records of police murders reveal about the organisational and occupational perceptions of and responses to danger?
- 2) How are the dangers of police work symbolised and encoded through the process of memorialisation?
- 3) What do police interactions with the material artefacts of policing reveal about their perceptions and experiences of danger?
- 4) How do police dispositions and everyday practices shape, and become shaped by, perceptions and experiences of danger?

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<sup>256</sup> Statement made by General Arno Lamoer, the then Western Cape Provincial Commissioner of SAPS, at memorial service of two on-duty officers, Sergeant Ngcawuzele and Constable KhaKa, on 9th July who were murdered on 30th June 2014 in Nyanga.

The literature examined for this research showed that danger has largely been regarded as a taken-for-granted element within the police culture. From this review it became clear that danger in policing remains under-conceptualised, under-researched and under-theorised. This thesis aims to make a contribution by examining danger and the death of police in a Southern locality from the inside out.

Despite its exploratory nature, this research gives insight into understanding how danger is both constituted and constitutive. While it is outside the scope of this research to examine every facet of danger, what this research does demonstrate is that danger has become embedded within police discourse and this discourse is often contradicted by many police actions. The organisational culture acknowledges the danger in policing but officers still feel isolated when staff and equipment are under-provisioned. The officers themselves perceive danger around them but do not always act in a manner that reduces their exposure.

The findings from the four substantive chapters are perhaps best understood as an 'ordinary day' in the life of police officials operating within township localities. The township where the research was conducted is a social space characterised by infrastructural underdevelopment, socio-economic deprivation, population density, high rates of interpersonal violent crime and high rates of police murder. While the majority of officer deaths occur when they are off-duty these deaths are not unusual in the context of the townships where most of them occur. Indeed, of the 18 off-duty deaths reviewed only 2 could be linked to the fact the victim was a police officer. What is of specific interest though is the level of on-duty deaths and how officers perceive and experience danger within their on-duty role.

To examine the danger perceived and experienced three theoretical perspectives guided the exploration. Each theorist's perspective used, Foucault, Bourdieu, and Sarbin, allowed for similar yet different refractions of danger to be highlighted that allows us to take into account the archival/discursive; the contextual (field, habitus, capital) and the relational aspects of danger.

A Foucauldian approach allowed for the identification of key 'slippages' through which it became possible to view the underlying assumptions informing an officer's understanding and articulation of the relationship between themselves and the community they police. Adapting a genealogical analysis also allowed for an examination of the 'micro-physics' of power as part of danger in the informal responses of the police. This assisted in establishing

what Foucault refers to as a 'history of the present' through police eyes. It was shown that danger has a history. In the case of SAPS, that history is strongly influenced by Apartheid policing practices which contributed to and continue to shape the adversarial relationship between the police and sections of the community.

The police experiences and perceptions of danger were further influenced by the field in which they occurred. As such, the use of Bourdieu's (1977) conceptual elements of field and habitus facilitated a deeper inspection of how the police engage with dangerous situations as seen through their use of equipment provided by the organisation. Responses to danger were also seen to be influenced by both their positions as police officers and as members of the community. The 'us-them' position embedded the relationship strain in the officers themselves. This manifests as apathy in controlling their own safety in spaces such as the police station and as a 9-to-5 view of the police role in the occupational culture. This view of policing being 'just a job' conflicted with the organisational desire for police solidarity and a view of policing as a vocation.

In unpacking the police habitus, Sarbin's (1967) model offered a useful starting point on how to think about danger from a uniquely police perspective. Danger can be regarded as a construct of a role-relationship. When this role is challenged danger emerges. In many cases the behaviour and actions of the police can be observed as a response to this challenge. Perceived disrespect of the police-public relationship was met with violence by the police in some instances and acceptance or normalisation of danger in others.

The use of these the three theorists' works allows danger to be located at the macro level in structural politics; at the meso level in the immediacy of the field; and at the micro level in different police units. However, in order to explore these different levels, the organisational and occupational responses are used as further vantage points into the discussion.

The most obvious finding to emerge from the research is that Vispol were seen to be the unit that statistically experienced danger in the form of death most frequently. This group also expressed a general belief that their role was little more than a job. They were the ones most frequently seen to handle material artefacts such as vehicles in a manner that could be described as careless and negligent. In areas where Vispol expressed experiences of danger such as in the CSC, they did not appear to take actions available to them to reduce that danger. For example, while they said the station was a place they felt exposed to danger they did not lock security gates to thwart any possible attacks.

Vispol were also the group that used violence most frequently in an effort to rebalance the role-relationship. This often took place without regard for the impact such acts might have on who witnessed such acts of violence. Vispol often used violence as a 'policing tool' and it might also be argued that this was in alignment with the community or their own primary habitus. The open question is, what is the impact on the police-public relationship when police do use or misuse such a tool?

The Detective Branch, however, did not exhibit or express the same view of violence. Detectives also viewed their role more as a vocation rather than a means to a pay cheque. Detectives also described respect as something that was earned through vocation rather than violence. Even though detectives operated in the same area, the same field, as Vispol, they were also found to be killed in fewer numbers than their Vispol counterparts. Detectives believed that their interactions and talking with the community is what earned them respect rather than the use of violence. In this sense detectives experienced less danger and described the respect they garnered as a protection from some forms of harm.

The TRT were the least statistically likely to be killed of the three groups. This group was also the one that exhibited a sense of esprit de corps that most closely matched the common perception of a police brotherhood. The TRT are classic edge workers who race toward danger rather than away from it. They also epitomise the militarisation of police services. They dress as warriors with combat uniforms, side arms, rifles and shotguns. They move as large teams and are all physically fit.

Just as the TRT image contrasts with both Vispol and detectives, so too is their view of issues of respect and violence. They expressed the belief that fear was the substitute for respect and while they did engage in violence it was done out of sight of the public and in a controlled space. It might be said that they used violence and fear as a way to support their reputation, or the mythology of the unit as ready and willing to engage with danger and that they were themselves dangerous.

The variations in the units, when taken as a whole, underscore the findings and show that there is not one single perception or experience of danger in the occupational culture of the SAPS. This suggests that there is no single reason why Vispol are murdered more frequently than their colleagues nor is there a single cause for the murders of SAPS officers in general.

Danger, by its very nature, is ambiguous. Identifying how it then becomes responded to by the police reflects the many paradoxes and tensions that exist between and across the organisational and occupational police cultures. While these findings support previous research about the ubiquity of perceived and real danger in police work they also offer another way of examining and understanding police perceptions of danger. How both the organisational and occupational cultures respond to danger is revealed in their administrative habits, their symbolic performances, their interaction with material artefacts and in their daily behaviours. From these viewpoints the contradictions, the juxtapositions, and the overlap regarding the potential and actuality of danger in South African policing becomes visible.

### **8.1.1 Contradictions**

Key understandings that emerged in this examination of danger relate to the contradiction and complexity of the issue of danger itself. With respect to the first and second research questions, i.e. what do records and memorialisation reveal about perceptions and experiences of danger, what this research emphasises is that danger should not be studied as an isolated concept in police studies. Danger has a history that impacts on the present and is influenced by the field in which it occurs. As a phenomenon that is both subjective and objective, danger is constructed both by and for the police. This research found that the police continually draw on past experiences in their contemporary constructions of the dangers they perceive.

In examining the official records of police murders the normalisation of danger becomes a noticeable theme. This normalisation allows for a toleration of disorganisation in both administrative and operational practices. On a more surface level, the general disorganisation of the dockets, be it in terms of misfiled post-mortem photographs, a lack of standard data points within the reports, or the storage and retrieval issues, could be taken as a passive expression of normalisation. The sheer number of murders, be they of police officers or of citizens, appears to be overwhelming both the formal and informal police organisations. The organisational culture struggled to identify and retrieve the dockets relating to police murders and detectives carry hundreds of dockets each. This docket overload makes the job of thorough and accurate investigations difficult.

On a deeper read of the dockets as archives of the history of police deaths and interactions with danger, the dockets also reveal contradictions between the organisational and occupational perceptions of danger. The organisation suffers from a possible blindness not only to the rich data contained in the dockets but in how it was collated. The dockets tell

them that their members are experiencing elevated levels of danger, but the lack of standard reporting and data collection makes accurate statistical analysis difficult if not impossible. This in turn might possibly prevent the organisation from better understanding trends or commonalities in the murders of officers.

The connective and contradictory discourse is further seen in the funeral and memorial services for those officers who are killed on duty. These services allude to danger being a source of division rather than a glue binding the organisational and occupational cultures. The organisational culture presents and embeds danger in the rhetoric by comparing the police to a medicine for the cancer of danger. In this discourse a subtext of militarisation is expressed as the power and authority of the police. The organisation links the danger to this power and concludes that the police are a cohesive group protecting the public from the ravages of criminals.

While the formal organisation wishes to be seen as a medicinal cure, in contrast, the occupational culture reverses this text as union representatives make overtly militaristic calls to wage war on criminals. This is provided with a subtext of pleading dejection as officers ask the community how the occupational culture of the police is meant to save them from criminals when the community itself allows those same criminals to kill officers. This alters the solidarity message of the organisational culture to an 'us versus them' view of the world for the occupational culture. This further isolates the occupational culture from both the organisation and the community.

That fractured solidarity message is also expressed by the occupational culture in the numbers of officers who attend, or more accurately, do not attend these services. It might be argued that fellow officers are reminded of their own mortality and so choose not to attend these memorial services as a form of mental preservation. Echoing the normalisation of danger as seen in the dockets, it could be equally argued that danger and death has become so frequent that the death of a colleague has been normalised to the extent that attendance of memorial services is not regarded as important. Either way, the notable lack of police attendance at these services dilutes the idea of the police brotherhood even further.

The contradictions and tension between the organisational and occupational experience of danger is also identifiable in the creation and placement of monuments to the dead. Where and how these monuments are constructed and communicated speaks to a further historical discourse that the formal organisation attempts to present. The fact that this memorial wall

exists shows that the organisational culture acknowledges the sacrifice of its members. The location could also be said to have been chosen to allow for quiet contemplation and remembrance. However, the same calculus could be used to determine that the organisation is trying to hide from the public eye the level and frequency of members being killed on duty. The wall is built to remember those murdered but is removed from the public view. It is also interesting that most of the officers asked about the memorial did not even know of its existence, let alone where to find it.

Although organisational leaders and politicians have called for and set a day of remembrance for fallen officers, there is an argument that could be made for an ‘out of sight, out of mind’ theme. This might also be considered as an example of the organisational culture going through the motions of memorialisation as symbolic theatre whilst communicating, perhaps inadvertently, a lack of investment in and understanding of the issue of officer murders.

So, while the murder of a police officer briefly unites the culture, fault lines become visible when comparing the discourse and rhetoric of the formal and informal organisation. The organisational culture expresses a view that danger is a monolithic safety issue and is perceived and experienced by all units in the same manner. This research, however, finds that perceptions of danger are not monolithic and even within the occupational culture there are notable differences. In the examination of the occupational responses to danger one is reminded of the heterogeneous nature of this collection of subcultures. These differences provide a glimpse of how danger is perceived and experienced differently based on the habitus that is created by the unit to which an officer belongs.

### **8.1.2 Juxtapositions**

While there are contradictions between the organisational and occupational perceptions of danger there are also juxtapositions where each share a partial view of danger. Vehicles are one of these areas, as they are seen as necessary components of policing. The agreement, though, diverges from there. Officers cite the state of vehicle maintenance and the types provided as evidence of organisational ignorance. Officers describe experiencing heightened perceptions of danger when operating cars on pot-holed, dirt roads in close proximity to the shacks of the township. They describe a fear of becoming bogged down on muddy roads and suffering an ambush from attackers.

The interaction with and discourse around vehicles in both the organisational and occupational culture also produces a causality dilemma in term of what came first. On the one

hand the occupational culture points to cars that are not suited to the terrain and an organisational culture that fails to replace or repair damaged vehicles. On the other side is the question of whether the repeated damage to vehicles has reduced the organisation's appetite to repair and replace vehicles.

In turn, this leads to the question of the experience and perception of danger through the proxy of vehicles. Officers express experiences of being exposed to danger in the township due to these damaged vehicles, but they still operate them in a manner that causes that damage. Thus, it could be said that the occupational culture is responding to a sense of danger by driving the vehicle 'hard' and at the same time creating or enhancing that danger through the action of hard driving. In turn the organisational culture perceives vehicles as tools that help protect police from danger, yet it does not exhibit a capacity to fully maintain them.

There are explanations and excuses on both sides of this discussion. Funds might very well prevent the organisation from replacing or quickly repairing vehicles. Officers may be prevented by the conditions of the township from operating vehicles in a manner that prevents damage. Wherever the cycle began, the interesting observation is that, once again, the organisational and occupational culture views are in conflict in terms of how the material artefacts impact police experiences and perceptions of danger.

Another organisational challenge in respect of preparing the occupational culture for danger can also be seen through the artefact of firearms. On the one hand the organisation provides firearms as a form of protection and as part of the identity kit that expresses authority and power. On the other hand, officers believe that they are being killed for their firearms. At the same time, officers stated they would not police without the very artefact that they believe make them an actual target.

Throughout the research officers indicated that their firearms were the items which put them most in danger. This view however does not match the data emanating from the dockets. Indeed, the dockets indicate that only a fifth of deaths occurred with the express purpose of obtaining the officer's firearm. In a similar manner to the organisational culture, the occupational culture's perception of police deaths is thus misaligned with the data. Better collection and assessment of data might assist in altering both the perceptions and experiences of danger as exhibited by both the organisational and occupational cultures.

The organisation also shows a response to danger in terms of ‘talking the talk’ by issuing reports that do not appear to have any methodological grounding and do not appear to result in any meaningful action. The organisation claims to be cooperating with government commissions of enquiry, such as the Khayelitsha Commission, but follow-on actions are limited. These efforts are laudable but they appear to lack output at least in terms of the occupational culture’s view of danger.

The organisation installed security cameras and gates in the station but as described in the findings the cameras were broken with no sign of impending repair and security gates were left open by the very people who purported to need security mechanisms. These might be considered as examples of both organisational and occupational apathy toward safety. Another view might be that the police habitus has simply absorbed the normality of danger to the point that it expresses a ‘what does it matter’ attitude emanating from both sides of the greater policing culture.

A key observation from the research in terms of the police station, though, was a recurring question of what came first. Did chronic underinvestment beget apathetic practice and did these combine to first increase officer perceptions of danger? Or, did apathetic practices resulting from a normalisation of danger within the primary habitus of officers move the organisational culture to choose to invest limited funds in other areas? Regardless, the juxtaposition of useless cameras and unlocked gates with both the organisational and occupational perception of danger shows how the complexity of danger can be contradictory and overlapping.

### **8.1.3 Overlap**

Despite these contradictions and odd nuances there are points where both the organisational and occupational cultures appear to be more or less overlapping in their perceptions of danger. Using both Bourdieu and Sarbin’s lenses, the third and fourth questions in this research sought to determine whether the material artefacts used and the behaviour of the police themselves influenced the danger perceived and experienced by the police. While Bourdieu’s approach assists in unpacking the conditions of policing, Sarbin allows for a closer examination of police behaviours. Consistent with findings from the first two questions, here the complex nature of understanding danger also resurfaced where the organisational and occupational responses to danger overlap or show similarities.

Both the organisational and occupational cultures view the policing of township spaces as an ‘impossible task’, as captured in the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry (2014). Poor infrastructure, a lack of funding and an ever-increasing population in overcrowded conditions lead to an agreement that policing in a South African township setting is more than a challenge. While acknowledging the chronic understaffing in many township stations, the organisation struggles to provide equipment and thus officers just make do with what they have. The organisation blindly follows outdated and ineffective rules resulting in further morale and absenteeism issues in the occupational culture. The organisation views danger in terms of both safety and this overlaps with the occupational perception of danger as an issue of survival.

As an organisational response to danger the bullet resistant vest is an obvious artefact. It can be said that the provision of BRV’s to officers is a way that the organisation acknowledges the danger they face and also equips them to engage with that danger. In the case of the SAPS organisation this response might also be seen as outdated. As mentioned in the findings chapter, the current SAPS issued BRV’s are over a decade old and are not just uncomfortable but also cumbersome as well. The organisation has indicated that studies are afoot to update the BRV’s but these studies have yet to result in any concrete movements to higher performance vests. Regardless of the age, the organisation’s message to officers is that BRV’s are part of their uniform and make the officer operationally ready to handle danger in the field.

While the officers of the occupational culture heed the call to wear their BRV’s, the interesting finding relating to their perception of danger is seen in why they wear them. Most observers would take it as read that an officer dons his or her BRV to protect their life. The conversation with officers in this research however, found that the police habitus has adjusted to contain a somewhat fatalistic view of policing in South Africa. As discussed, most officers, at least in Vispol, wore the BRV in order to ensure their families received a payment when the officer was killed. The ‘when you are killed’ statements from officers during discussions exposes their perception of danger as being unavoidable. Thus, the uneasy co-existence of the organisational view of the BRV as a sign of safety and the occupational view of the BRV as a guarantor of money, or a safety-net for their family, on their death becomes visible.

Police vehicles are another artefact that can be seen to refract a similar overlap. Both groups view vehicles as critical components in policing and, like firearms and BRV’s, they make up

part of the police identity kit. The organisation notes vehicles as important resources only surpassed in value by the people who make up the occupational culture. Likewise, the occupational culture view vehicles as means of operating in the challenging field they are tasked with policing.

The lack of investment in more appropriate vehicles or faster repairs by the organisation overlaps with the lack of care and facilitation of repairs shown by the occupational culture. While not a direct response to danger it is interesting that both the organisational and occupational cultures see vehicles as necessary components of policing, yet neither seems able or willing to properly maintain them. In turn this leads to perceptions within the occupational culture of higher possibilities of experiencing danger.

## **8.2 Conclusion**

There are, without doubt, several issues to be considered when looking at police perceptions and experiences of danger, including the impact of history on the present, the field, the police habitus, and the relationship of the police and the public. Indeed, this combination provides some support for the idea that a key to reducing the police deaths that flow from the realisation of danger requires varied and individual focuses. Looking at only the larger police organisation has not done justice to those officers who have lost their lives and it is equally unhelpful to presume there is but one occupational culture at play.

Danger has largely been regarded as a cohesive force binding police culture by academics, the media and practitioners. While this research showed that this is not without some limited merit, it also found that danger was not a simple concept. Danger created or exposed conflicting views between the organisational and occupational culture. It was also something that was experienced differently in the same space by different units. This means that danger itself is not a singular entity and therefore there is no one action that can be taken to reduce or prevent its existence. Police organisations as the overarching culture need to be aware of this fact. The actions or reactions surrounding danger by the organisational culture when not aligned with the occupational culture can lead to normalisation, or worse apathy, in the occupational culture.

Danger was also seen as something that is both created for the police and by their actions. The police role is one which is naturally imbued with a powerful and authoritative status. Violence as a policing tool represents the proverbial double-edged sword. While a community might expect it to be used to mete out swift justice, when police on the ground

use it to rebalance a relationship, levels of danger may be impacted. The use of force and violence when employed as a reaction to a perceived imbalance in that relationship may accentuate the danger officers face. In short, police action in response to perceived danger also creates future danger for the police.

Recognising that police perceptions and responses to danger are varied, plural, heterogeneous and part of the relationship with the community has relevance in both understanding contemporary police practices and in the development of future policies. If the formal organisation continues to react to, and academics continue to view, danger as a monolithic entity, then officers on the ground will continue to suffer high rates of casualty.

Likewise, if researchers and the media continue to view danger as an excuse as opposed to an explanation for police behaviour, change will not occur. Many officers fail to realise that their actions could be contributing to the dangers that they perceive and experience. Researchers, and other groups, must be cognisant of this in order to help make this particular challenge visible to the organisational culture as well as the occupational. Further, it is necessary to understand and tailor responses for the varying cultures both within the police, at all levels, and for those they serve.

This thesis argues that when it comes to danger, occupational and organisational responses should be explored on a continuum. On one end there are contradictions and juxtapositions between the responses of the different police cultures. On the other end there is an ambiguous but overlapping view and experience of danger. Recognising the gaps and overlap between the organisational and within the occupational response to danger should be one of the first steps in the development of future policies and practices to the danger faced by police.

The contribution of this research lies in its recognition of danger as multifaceted construct that is both objective and subjective. The substantive exploration of perceptions, experiences and responses to danger are exposed through an investigation of police murder docket, funerals and memorials as well as select material artefacts and some routine police responses. The utilisation of an eclectic conceptual framework allows for danger to be recognised as historically entrenched, discursively narrated, embedded in place and space, and as a relational matter. The substantive finding of this work is that the distinction between organisational and occupational cultures is of critical relevance in understanding how danger is understood and acted upon.

Globally, danger has long been considered a central feature in police work. Danger however has remained largely under-researched and under-analysed. With this lacuna in mind, the thesis set out to examine the synergies, tensions and contradictions between the organisational and occupational police culture through the lenses of danger and death. Understanding police actions requires one to first understand what it is that the police believe they are responding to. By using the theoretical prism adopted in this study in any location, be it within or outside South Africa, the many facets of danger that the police perceive may be revealed and investigated further.

The findings highlight that danger influences not only *what* it is that the police do but also *why* they may do what they do. This research argues that danger is not a monolithic entity. On the contrary, danger is understood differently by police managers compared to operational police personnel. Even amongst operational personnel there are variations in how danger is understood. These different understandings underscore how danger is often misunderstood and misinterpreted by both the police and academics alike.

In South Africa danger and death have long cast a shadow. In disadvantaged communities such as *Baile* the past is very much the present. Whilst living and working conditions have improved to some extent, the larger structural inequities still define township life. Examining policing from an inside-out perspective allows one to step into these shadows and explore how political, cultural and economic factors coalesce in townships and shaped how danger is perceived and subsequently responded to by the police.

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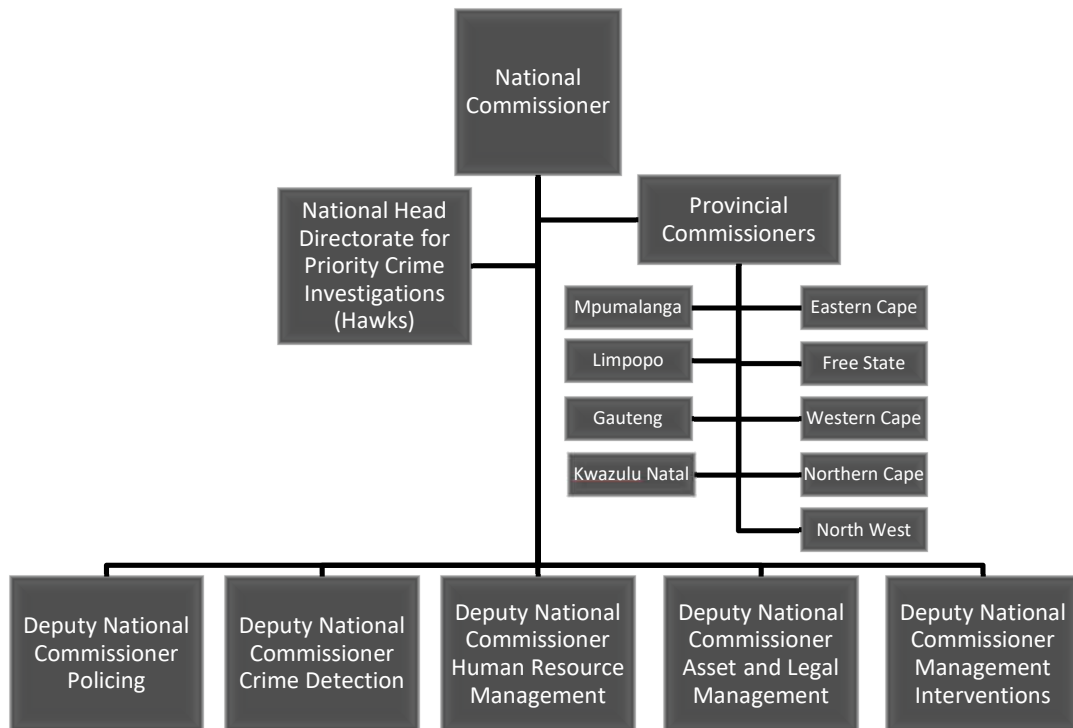
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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. SAPS Organisational Structure



## Appendix 2. Hours worked

Month 2015	Week	Day	Duty	Day	Night	Hours
<b>March</b>	<b>Week 1</b>	Thursday	Vispol	6am-430pm		10.5
		Friday	Vispol		12pm-8pm	8
		Monday	Vispol	730am-230pm		7
<b>April</b>		Thursday	Vispol	730am-6pm		10.5
		Friday	Vispol		6pm-2am	8
		Saturday	Vispol		4pm-12am	8
		Sunday	Vispol	12pm-8pm		8
	<b>Week 2</b>	Monday	Vispol	6am-2pm		7
		Wednesday	Vispol	330pm-10pm		7
		Thursday	Vispol	10am-830pm		10.5
		Friday	Vispol		4pm-3am	11
	<b>Week 3</b>	Monday	Vispol	10am-7pm		9
		Tuesday	Vispol	12pm-2pm		2
		Wednesday	Vispol	330pm-10pm		7
		Thursday	Vispol	10am-9pm		11
		Friday	Vispol		4pm-4am	12
		Saturday	Vispol		4pm-4am	12
	<b>Week 4</b>	Tuesday	Vispol	5am-2pm		9
		Thursday	Vispol	10am-7pm		9
		Friday	Vispol		4pm-12am	8
	<b>Week 5</b>	Tuesday	Vispol	10am-10pm		12
		Thursday	Vispol	10am-10pm		12
<b>May</b>		Friday	Vispol		4pm-4am	12
		Saturday	Vispol		4pm-4am	12
		Sunday	Vispol	12pm-8pm		8
	<b>Week 6</b>	Tuesday	Vispol	10am-7pm		9
		Wednesday	Vispol	5am-9am		4
		Friday	Vispol	11am-3pm		4
	<b>Week 7</b>	Monday	Vispol	6am-6pm		12
		Tuesday	Vispol	6am-6pm		12
		Thursday	Vispol		6pm-6am	12
		Friday	Vispol		6pm-6am	12

<b>Week 8</b>	Monday	Vispol	6am-6pm		12
	Tuesday	Vispol	12pm - 3pm		3
	Wednesday	Vispol		6pm to 3am	9
	Friday	Vispol	6am-5pm		11
	Sunday	Vispol		6pm-3am	9
<b>Week 9</b>	Thursday	Vispol	6am-6pm		12
	Friday	Vispol	6am-4pm		10
<b>June</b>	Saturday	Vispol		6pm-4am	8
<b>week 10</b>	Monday	Teacher Trainer Course	8am - 3pm		7
	Tuesday	Teacher Trainer Course	8am - 3pm		7
	Wednesday	Teacher Trainer Course	8am - 3pm		7
<b>Week 11</b>	Monday	Vispol	6am - 6pm		12
	Tuesday	Vispol	6am - 2am		8
	Wednesday	Vispol	10am - 330pm	6pm - 430am	18
	Thursday	Vispol	330pm - 6pm	6pm-430am	15
<b>Week 12</b>	Wednesday	Vispol	10am - 4pm		6
	Thursday	Vispol	6am - 3pm		9
	Friday	Vispol	6am-4pm		10
	Sat	Vispol		6pm-1am	7
	Sunday	Vispol	12 pm - 3pm		3
<b>Week 13</b>	Monday	Vispol	11am-4pm		5
	Tuesday	Vispol	11am-2pm		3
	Wednesday	Self Defence Course	8am-3pm		7
	Thursday	Self Defence Course	8am-3pm		7
	Friday	Self Defence Course	8am-3pm		7
<b>Week 14</b>	Monday	Vispol		6pm-3am	10
	Tuesday	Vispol		6pm-2am	8
<b>July</b>	Thursday	Vispol	6am- 8pm		14
<b>Week 15</b>	Monday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8
	Tuesday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8

	Wednesday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8
	Thursday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8
	Friday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8
<b>Week 16</b>	Monday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8
	Tuesday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8
	Wednesday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8
	Thursday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am -3pm		8
	Friday	Close Quarter Combat Course	8am-11am		2
<b>Week 17</b>	Tuesday	Detectives	830am-330pm		7
	Wednesday	Detectives	7am-330pm		8.5
	Thursday	Detectives	7am-330pm		8.5
	Friday	Detectives	7am-12pm		5
<b>Week 18</b>	Monday	Detectives	7am - 4pm		9
	Wednesday	Detectives	7am - 3pm		8
	Thursday	Detectives	7am - 2pm		7
<b>August</b>	Monday	Detectives	7am - 4pm		9
<b>Week 19</b>	Tuesday	Detectives	7am- 3pm		8
	Wednesday	Detectives	7am - 3pm		8
	Thursday	Detectives	7am - 5pm		10
	Friday	Detectives	7am - 4pm		9
<b>Week 20</b>	Tuesday	Detectives	7am- 1pm		6
	Wednesday	Detectives	7am 4pm		8
	Thursday	Detectives	7am-2pm		7
<b>Week 21</b>	Monday	Detectives	7am-9am		2
	Monday	Detectives	7am - 1pm		6
	Tuesday	Detectives	7am-3pm		8
	Wednesday	Detectives	12pm-2pm		2
<b>Week 22</b>	Saturday	Detectives	4pm-10pm		6
<b>September</b>	Saturday	Detectives	11am-2pm		3
	Thursday	Detectives	830am- 2pm		5.5
	Friday	Detectives	1030am-230pm		4
<b>Week 23</b>	Monday	Detectives	9am - 5pm		8

<b>October</b>	Thursday	TRT	9am-10pm		13
<b>Week 24</b>	Wednesday	TRT	9am-7pm		10
	Thursday	TRT	830am-730pm		11
<b>Week 25</b>	Monday	TRT	10am-11am		1
<b>Week 26</b>	Wednesday	TRT	10am-930pm		11.5
	Friday	TRT	2pm-6pm		4
<b>November</b>	Sunday	TRT	12am - 930pm		9.5
	Wednesday	TRT	8am-3pm		7
	Thursday	TRT	6am-2pm		8
	Friday	TRT	2pm-130am		11.5
<b>Week 27</b>	Tuesday	TRT	11am-2pm		3
	Wednesday	TRT	10am-6pm		8
	Sunday	TRT	12am-9pm		9
<b>Week 28</b>	Monday	TRT	10am-6pm		8
	Wednesday	TRT	10am-930pm		11.5
<b>Week 29</b>	Monday	TRT	10am-6pm		8

**Total Hours**

**910**

### Appendix 3. Interview Schedule

Number	Sex	Rank	Unit	Race	Age
1	Male	Colonel	Vispol	Black	55
2	Female	Civilian	Vispol	White	32
3	Female	Constable	Vispol	Black	33
4	Male	Sergeant	Vispol	Black	34
5	Female	Constable	Vispol	Black	41
5	Female	Constable	Vispol	Black	36
6	Male	Constable	Vispol	White	44
7	Male	Captain	Vispol	Black	47
8	Male	Colonel	Vispol	White	47
9	Male	Captain	Field Training	White	51
9	Male	Captain	Physical Training	White	53
10	Female	Social Worker	EHW	Indian	41
11	Male	Brigadier	Vispol	White	56
12	Male	Constable	Vispol	Coloured	30
13	Female	Sergeant	Vispol	Black	38
14	Male	Constable	Vispol	Black	30
14	Male	Sergeant	Vispol	Black	44
15	Male	Warrant Officer	Detective	Coloured	42
16	Male	Constable	Detective	Black	31
17	Male	Warrant Officer	Detective	Coloured	43
18	Male	Warrant Officer	Detective	Coloured	41
19	Male	Constable	Detective	Coloured	32
	denotes more than one interviewee in interview				
Vispol	CSC, CPU and DPO officers				

## Appendix 4. Sample Interview Schedule

**‘Lest we forget’**

### **Trends in and Organisational Responses to the Murder of Police Officials in the Western Cape Province, South Africa (2002-2014)<sup>257</sup>**

#### **VISPOL/Detectives**

##### **Introduction**

Tell me about you and your career to date (Biographical outline and policing experience)

Did you always want to become a police officer? Why/Why not?

Describe a typical working day/week for you (opportunity to probe examples for later questions)

Have you been involved in many incidents where you have had been subject to harm- describe?

Have you ever been shot at? Have you ever fired your gun?

Have you been exposed in many incidents where you have had to use force- describe?

##### **Danger**

What does danger as a police officer mean to you? How do you define/explain it?

What do you see as the biggest threat to your safety in your day to day activities?

Do you have much experience in dealing with dangerous incidents/people?

Can you explain which was the worst one for you and why?

Describe an incident in which you felt uncomfortable about your, or indeed your colleagues own safety? How did you negotiate the situation?

How comfortable do you feel about your own security when you leave work?

Do you take any special precautions- if so what?

##### **Occupational Risk**

In policing situation what makes you feel unprepared?

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<sup>257</sup> This was the original working title of the research project.

How well prepared were you to deal with the above incidents? (Opportunity to probe training, past and current).

What does risk mean to you when you are working/off duty? (Probe any differences or similarities and query how they identify with being on /off duty)

When we talk of victims in the police – what comes to mind? What do you think of when the police are described as victims?

Have you ever been a victim? How did this influence your thinking/actions thereafter?

### **Police Morale**

What annoys you about being a police officer/doing police work?

Do you think this (above answer) affects more than you?

How would you describe the general atmosphere within the unit / station as a result?

What are the working relationships of members?

If something serious happens on the unit- for example member killed- is there somewhere or something that the unit does? How did this develop?

What has your experience as a police officer taught you to date?

What do you enjoy about working as a police officer?

What does job security mean to you?

### **Environment**

What did you know about the area you work in before you were stationed here/ how did you form that opinion? (Training college/colleagues/News/Word of mouth etc.)?

When you began working in X did your opinions change (regarding the area)? If so how?

What locations do you enjoy working in/Why?

Do you ever feel fearful when working? In any area in particular? Why?

### **Managers/Trainers**

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges officers have in relation to dealing with the risks and dangers that they face when they work? When they are off duty?

Do officers differ in their approach in dealing with incidents? If so how?

What do you perceive as the biggest risk for police today?

What do you perceive as the biggest danger for police today?

What recommendations would you suggest to improve officer awareness of the inherent risks in policing?

What impact do Standing Orders have on your thoughts about danger? National Instructions have on police practice?

### **Conclusion**

Are there any questions that you would like to ask me about what we have just talked about?

Are there other questions that you think I should be asking as part of this interview to others perhaps?

Is there anything that you would like me to clarify regarding the confidentiality or anonymity of this process?

## Appendix 5. Information Sheet

**‘Lest we forget’**

### **Trends in and Organisational Responses to the Murder of Police Officials in the Western Cape Province, South Africa (2002-2014)**

This research aims to explore the connections between risk, danger, police culture and the policing environment to determine how these factors influence the formal and informal responses of South Africa police officers, and the wider South African Police Service, to the murders of their colleagues. These connections will be mapped against statistical information relating to police murders in the Western Cape Province over the last twelve years. Through this combined qualitative and quantitative data-gathering approach an understanding of the challenges faced by individual officers and the organisation in the execution of routine police duties will be explored. All data and information will be treated in the strictest of confidence where anonymity and confidentiality are maintained. The findings hope to provide greater clarity for the development of future strategic or tactical initiatives to reduce or prevent the murder of police officials in South Africa.

## Appendix 6. Consent Form (Verbal)

**‘Lest we forget’**

### **Trends in and Organisational Responses to the Murder of Police Officials in the Western Cape Province, South Africa (2002-2014)**

Hello, my name is Gráinne Perkins from the Centre of Criminology at the University of Cape Town and I am doing research for my doctoral degree on the murder of police officers in the Western Cape Province. This research is not being sponsored by any organisation and is being undertaken as a result of my interest in the topic. While I will be looking at the ‘who, what where and when’ aspect of these murders for the period 2002 until 2014, I am very interested to gain an insight into how officers perceive and talk about the dangers and risks that they may face in their daily activities.

As such, I would like to talk to you about your experiences as a police officer.

Please understand that you do not have to talk to me, your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to talk to me, there will be no negative consequence and you are free to end the conversation at any time. If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable with the questions or discussion you are free to end the conversation. However, I would be grateful if you would assist me by allowing me to talk to you. Please understand that there is no reimbursement for participation.

As this may take approximately an hour, I would like to take some notes to remind me of what we discuss and I would also like to record the conversation for accuracy. However, everything you say will be treated anonymously and held in the strictest of confidence.

Nothing you may say may be used to identify you or indeed incriminate you and any data that is recorded will only be used anonymously for research purposes. Can I clarify anything about this for you?

## Appendix 7. Written Consent Form

**‘Lest we forget’**

### **Trends in and Organisational Responses to the Murder of Police Officials in the Western Cape Province, South Africa (2002-2014)**

I hereby grant permission to Gráinne Perkins from the Centre of Criminology, University of Cape Town, to use information and interviews that I have provided for research purposes.

- o I have been informed of the purpose of the research and I understand that:
- o My participation is voluntary and I am under no obligation to take part in this project
- o I understand that I have the right to stop the interview and withdraw from the research at any stage
- o My identity will not be revealed in any subsequent reports or publications
- o The contents of my information is purely for the purposes of an academic enquiry and should not be used for any other purpose without my permission
- o I will not receive a payment or reward for participating
- o I will be treated with respect and my privacy and dignity will be protected
- o The interview should take no more than one hour of my time

I have read and understood the information sheet and the statements above.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2014

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant signature

‘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, Mrs Lamize Viljoen, at 021 650 3080 or at lamize.viljoen@uct.ac.za. Alternatively, you may write to the Law Faculty Research Ethics Committee Administrator, Room 6.28 Kramer Law Building, Law Faculty, UCT, Private Bag, Rondebosch 7701.’

## Appendix 8. List of Memorial Services Attended

Number	Date of Memorial Service	Type of Service	Details	Location of Death
1	09-07-14	Memorial	Sergeant Sibongile Ngcawuzele and Constable Monwabisi KhaKa murdered on 30th June 2014	Nyanga
2	23-10-14	Memorial	Detective Constable Mthetheli Gunya on 17th October 2014	Nyanga
3	24-10-14	Memorial	Sergeant Thuani Dlmini murdered on 16th October 2014	Ingelethu West
4	24-07-14	Memorial	Sergeant Xolisa Theophilus Mlindwa murdered on 30th June 2014	Gugelethu
5	08-05-15	Memorial	Detective Sergeant Phumzile S Ntshokoma killed in Road traffic collision on 2nd of May 2015	Nyanga
6	10-06-15	Memorial	Constable Ninkululeko Majuba murdered on the 25th of May 2015	Kraaifontein
7	07-08-15	Funeral	Warrant Officer Johannes Burger Holz murdered on 28th July 2015	N2 (Motorway)
8	10-11-15	Memorial	Constable Nkosiphendule Makeleni murdered on the 27th October 2015	Khayelitsha
9	22-04-16	Memorial	Detective Constable Lindekile Patrick Sidake murdered on Monday 18th April 2016	Phillipi

## Appendix 9. Letter to Police Stations

Appendix  
Letter to Police Station



### Department of Public Law

**Wilfred and Jules Kramer Law Building**  
**Middle Campus**  
**Private Bag X3**  
**RONDEBOSCH, 7701 South Africa**  
**Tel: +27 21 650 2988 Fax: +27 21 650 3790**  
**E-mail: [Elrena.VanDerSpuy@uct.ac.za](mailto:Elrena.VanDerSpuy@uct.ac.za)**  
**Internet: <http://www.publiclaw.uct.ac.za/>**

24<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Dear (Insert Station Commanders Name) of (Name) Police Station,

I am a detective police sergeant from Ireland with 15 years' service and I am currently conducting research into the murder of South African Police Officers for my doctoral degree with the University of Cape Town.

Allow me to provide some background:

- My research proposal was approved by SAPS National Office in late 2013.
- An additional memorandum of understanding was also created between the Centre of Criminology at UCT and provincial head office of SAPS in 2014 to ensure ongoing dialogue between the two organisations going forward.
- Lengthy discussions, emails and face to face meetings were held with senior managers within SAPS that involved both the Western Cape provincial commissioner's office and the organisational development unit in relation to the acceptance of this project.

As part of this research, access was authorised by the SAPS Provincial Office (Western Cape) to work in selected stations (primarily where officers are exposed to high levels of danger and risk on a daily basis) and to access data on murdered officers. My observational studies are underway and I have been working daily with SAPS for 5 months and will continue to do so for a further 7 month period. These observations allow me to give context to the data **which I aim to collect from investigative docketts and the National Office relating to the murder of police officers during the period 2002-2014.**

This letter is intended to provide an introduction to and overview of my research aims. I am now at a point where I would like to begin collecting data relating to the murders of officers (both on and off duty) in the Western Cape Province. In order to do this, I am gathering information from the investigative docketts of the deceased member which is currently on file at your station. The purpose of this letter is to seek your permission to and assistance in accessing these docketts.

As a police officer who has experience in murder investigations I am acutely aware of the sensitivities of accessing such files and would like to ensure you, and other members, that the data collected will be disaggregated and that no personal information will be released identifying individual members. For operational reasons I fully understand that no open docketts still under investigation will be accessed.

I appreciate your cooperation in this research and look forward to meeting you in person. If there are any queries relating to this please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (details provided) Should you wish to speak with my supervisor, Professor Elrena Van Der Spuy, in this matter she too may be contacted at (details provided).

Yours sincerely,

Gráinne Perkins and Professor Elrena van der Spuy

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"Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."

## Appendix 10. Research Instrument used

The research instrument was divided into three categories in order to capture the maximum amount of information available about each police murder. The categories were 1) The Event, 2) The Victim Officer and 3) The Offender.

1. <b><u>The Event</u></b>	
Date:	Day, Date, Time and place
Duty:	On-Duty/Off-Duty
Unit Attachment:	Vispol, Detectives, TRT, Flying Squad, Other
Duty Type:	Station Duty, Patrols, Arrests, Escort, Tracing Operations, Traffic Collision, Travelling to/From Work, Other
Office Initiated:	Yes/No, Other/Details
Officer Armed:	Yes/No
Officer Uniform:	Yes/No
Location:	City, Peri-Urban, Township (Formal/Informal), Rural
Space:	Police Station (Inside /Outside), House, Residential Street, Business Premise, Hostel, Shops, Motorway, Road, Alleyway, Field, Tavern, Shebeen, Vehicle, Other
Transport:	Police Car (marked/unmarked), Private Car, On Foot, Other
Modus Operandi (MO):	Shot, Stabbed, Motor Vehicle Collision (MVC), Unknown, Natural Causes, Other
Type of Firearms Used:	Police Weapon, Other (Type Calibre, ex. Smith & Wesson, 38 Calibre)
Motive:	Murder, Ambushed for Gun, Evade Arrest/Police, Robbery, Motor Vehicle Collision, Personal Argument/Violence, Domestic Relationship, Accidentally Killed (Friendly Fire), Burglary, Revenge Attack, Suicide, Unknown, Other
Distance between	Less than 5 Metres, Equal to 5 metres, Greater than 5

Victim/Offender:	metres
Handcuffs used:	Yes/No, Other
Number of Suspected Offenders:	
Investigative Outcome:	Arrest, Charge, Convicted, Sentence, Open, Other
Number of Offenders Charged:	

<b>2. <u>The Victim</u></b>	
Source of Information:	Roll of Honour, WCOD, HAWKS, Media, Other
Date:	Date of Occurrence/Date of death
Time:	Day of Occurrence, Time
Rank	
Detective:	Yes/No
Full name	
Age	Age, Date of Birth, Age at Event, Age Recorded in File
Sex:	Male/Female, Unknown
Height, Weight and Build	
Race:	Black, Coloured, Indian or White, Other, Unknown
Relationship Status:	Single, Married, Partner, Divorced, Other, Unknown
Dependents:	Children (ages), Relations, Unknown, Other
Duty Type:	
Clothes:	Uniform, Civilian, Other, Unknown
Hours of Duty before Attack	
Years of Service	
Training Courses Attended by the Officer:	
Number of Other Officers Present During the Attack:	
Wearing a Bullet Resistant Vest:	Yes/No, Unknown, Other
Wearing a Holster:	Yes, No, Unknown, Other
Officer Armed:	Yes, No, Unknown, Other

Injury Location:	Head, Torso (specify location), Limbs
Officer Fired Own Weapon:	Yes, No, Unknown, Other
Warning Shots Fired:	Yes, No, Unknown, Other
Shots Fired by Suspect:	Yes, No, Unknown, other
Shots Fired by Other Officers at Scene:	Yes/No, Unknown, Other
Officers Weapon Stolen:	Yes, No, Unknown
Officer Murdered with Own Weapon:	Yes, No (specify), Unknown, Other
Weapon Stolen:	Before, After, During attack
Handcuffs Used:	Yes, No, Unknown
Duty:	On/Off Duty, Coming from/to duty
Cause of Death:	Shot, Stabbed, Violence, Other
Motive:	Murder, Ambushed for Gun, Evade Arrest/Police, Robbery, Motor Vehicle Collision, Personal Violence, Domestic Relationship, Accidentally Killed (Friendly Fire), Unknown, Other
Use of Intoxicants by Officer:	Yes (specify) , No, Unknown
Criminal Associations of Officer:	Known, Unknown, Other

<b>3. <u>The Offender</u></b>	
Sex:	Male/Female, Unknown
Height, Weight and Build:	
Race:	Black, Coloured, Indian or White, Other, Unknown
Language Spoken:	
Relationship Status:	Single, Married, Partner, Divorced, Other, Unknown
Dependents:	Children (ages), Parents, Relations, Unknown, Other
Employment:	Yes (List), No, Unknown
Education:	Yes (List Grade Achieved), No, Unknown
Indication of Poverty/Abuse:	Yes, No
Victim of Previous Police Violence:	Yes (Specify), No, Other
Use of Any Controlled Substances:	Yes (Specify), No, Unknown
Use of Alcohol:	Yes (Specify extent), No, Other
Victim Known to Offender Previously:	Yes/No, Other
Gang Affiliation:	Known (List), Unknown
Transport Used:	Private Vehicle, Taxi, On Foot, Unknown, Other
Investigative Outcome:	Arrest, Bail Granted, Charge, Convicted, Sentence, Open, Other
Convictions from Event: (list)	
Date of Arrest and Date of Sentence:	
Total Imprisonment with All Charges:	
Previous Charges, Convictions	(Specify Crime Class, For Example, Theft, Murder etc.)

## Appendix 11. Ethics Approval



### Faculty of Law

#### Research Ethics Committee

Private Bag X3 Rondebosch, 7701 South Africa  
Room 6.28 Kramer Building, Middle Campus  
Tel: +27 021 650 3080 Fax: +27 021 650 5660  
E-mail: [lamize.viljoen@uct.ac.za](mailto:lamize.viljoen@uct.ac.za)  
Internet: [www.law.uct.ac.za](http://www.law.uct.ac.za)

01 December 2014

**Ms Gráinne Perkins (PRKGRA007)**  
c/o Centre of Criminology  
Department of Public Law  
Faculty of Law, University of Cape Town

Email: [prkgra007@myuct.ac.za](mailto:prkgra007@myuct.ac.za) or [grainneperkins@gmail.com](mailto:grainneperkins@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 071-1827119

Dear Ms Perkins

**Re: Clearance Process for L31-2014: "Lest we forget". Trends in and Organisational Responses to the Murder of Police Officials in the Western Cape Province, South Africa (2002-2014)"**

Thank you for your application. The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee very much appreciates the considerable effort put into your documentation as well as attending the review thereof.

This study has been carefully considered and there are no ethical issues apparent.

Ethics clearance is granted with effect from 01 December 2014 for 12 months *subject to renewal for another 12 months*. Please note that any material changes to the proposal will need to be cleared as an amendment.

With best wishes,

  
**Dr Shane Godfrey**  
Chairperson of REC

cc: *Dr Kelley Mault (Department of Public Law, UCT)*  
*Prof Elrena Van Der Spuy (Department of Public Law, UCT)*

## Appendix 12. SAPS Indemnity



### INDEMNITY

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TRENDS IN AND ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE MURDER OF POLICE OFFICIALS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE: PHD: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: RESEARCHER: MS G PERKINS

I, Signed by candidate a registered PHD student at University of Cape Town, hereby confirm that, for the purpose of conducting interviews with the officials, I will be accessing the relevant police premises at own risk,

and

I hereby indemnify the service or any member against any claim for bodily injury, loss of life and the loss or damage of property which may occur as a result of me being on the premises for the purpose of conducting the research.

Signed by candidate

RESEARCHER: MS G PERKINS  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DATE: 3/2/15

Prof. Ev. Det. Smit  
Witness (Supervisor/Promoter)

Name Prof. Ev. Det. Smit

Date 3/2/15

## Appendix 13. SAPS Conditions



### CONDITIONS

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TRENDS IN AND ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE MURDER OF POLICE OFFICIALS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE:PHD: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: RESEARCHER: MS G PERKINS**

I, , a registered PHD student at University of Cape Town, hereby confirm that, I will conduct the research by interviewing the mentioned members in the South African Police Service, Western Cape, subject to the following conditions, that;

- (1). I will respect the privacy of the members and will not divulge any information received from the members of the Service and that such information will at all times be treated as strictly confidential;
- (2). In the light of the fact that the researcher proposes to analyse the trends in murders of police officials, it should be noted that the information gathered by the researcher during both formal and informal conversations with members at identified stations and from case dockets are to be utilised for statistical purposes only.
- (3). No detailed and /specific reference is to be made to any member of the Service, case dockets of any other information which may hamper any pending investigation or compromise the ethos of the SAPS.

I will sign an undertaking in regard to the unauthorised disclosure of information;

- (3). I will sign an indemnity, indemnifying the Service against any injuries, loss of life or property or damage property while on the premises of the Police Station;
- (4). I will conduct the research without any costs to the Service;
- (5). I will make the necessary arrangements with members who are to be interviewed;
- (6). I will not let the conducting of the interviews with the senior officers cause any disruption to the duties of the officers of the Service or hamper service delivery;
- (7). I will use my own transport for the purpose of the research;
- (8). I will sign the necessary indemnity if there is a need to travel with state transport to a certain point;
- (9). I will provide my own stationery for the purpose of conducting the interview;
- (10). I will only make tape recordings of the interview with the permission of the officers;
- (11). I will only conduct an interview with the officers and will not collect any documents or information in another format other than that which comes from the interview;
- (12). I will conduct the research alone but will supply the full identification and purpose of any person who might be accompanying me on the day of the visit to the station;
- (13). I will at the completion of the research, donate a copy of the research to the Service

## Appendix 14. SAPS Undertaking



### UNDERTAKING

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TRENDS IN AND ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE MURDER OF POLICE OFFICIALS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE: PHD: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: RESEARCHER: MS G PERKINS

I, Signed by candidate....., a registered PHD student at University of Cape Town, hereby confirm that, I'm fully aware of the contents of section 70 of the South African Police Act, at 68 of 1995.

NB (The information to be obtained will only be used for academic purpose)

Signed by candidate.....  
RESEARCHER: MS G PERKINS  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DATE...3/2/15.....

Prof. S. van der Spuy  
.....  
Witness (Supervisor/Promoter)

Name Prof. S. van der Spuy.....

Date 3/2/15.....

## Appendix 15. SAPS Research in the Service

### NATIONAL INSTRUCTION 1/2006

#### RESEARCH IN THE SERVICE

##### 1. Background

The purpose of this instruction is to regulate requests to conduct research in the Service by persons from outside the Service or by employees who wish to conduct the research for private purposes (such as for the purposes of their studies).

##### 2. Definitions

In this Instruction, unless the context otherwise indicates, —

- (a) "*line manager*" means the employee who is responsible for the matter in respect of which it is requested to conduct the research;
- (b) "*publish*" means any form of communication, other than communication to the Service;
- (c) "*researcher*" means the person who applies for access to a record or information in the possession or under the control of the Service for the purpose of conducting research;
- (d) "*research goals*" means what the researcher aims to establish by conducting the research;
- (e) "*research instrument*" means an instrument of data collection consisting of a series of questions relating to the research project that will be put to persons in order to gather information for the purposes of the research project;
- (f) "*research procedure*" refers to the kind of research tools and procedures that will be used to conduct the research;
- (g) "*research proposal*" means an outline of the research that the researcher plans to conduct and the objectives of the research; and
- (h) "*the Act*" refers to the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000).

##### 3. Applications to conduct research in the Service

An application to conduct research in the Service must contain at least —

- (a) the full names and surname of the *researcher*;

## Appendix 16. Funerals and Memorials Attended

### Funerals and Memorials attended

During the course of this research nine services were attended. These services were both formal (funeral) and informal (memorials). The events leading to the deaths of these officers varied. They included a road traffic collision, a domestic violence incident and a 'normal' working police day. Of the nine, two officers were murdered before going on-duty, five were on-duty, one was leaving duty and two were murdered off-duty.<sup>258</sup>

### Going On-duty

**Detective Constable Lindekile Patrick Sidake** was shot dead outside his home on the 18th of April 2016. He left his house, located in a large township, at 6am to drive to work at the Grassy Park police station in another suburb a short distance away. He was targeted in his driveway as he got into his car and shot in the head. Two suspects were seen fleeing the scene. His official firearm was stolen during the incident. No arrests were made.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2015, at approximately 5 am, **Warrant Officer Petrus Johannes Burger Holz** was driving to work to begin his shift. On his way between Somerset West, a suburb of Cape Town, and Khayelitsha, a township, he was forced to pull to the side of the highway. His tyres had been damaged by objects that had been deliberately placed on the road. When he pulled off the road he was then subjected to a car hijacking and was stabbed to death at the side of the road. Four suspects were arrested of whom one was subsequently convicted of murder.

### On-duty

On the 30th June 2014 at 1pm, **Sergeant Sibongile Ngcawuzele and Constable Monwabisi KhaKa** of Nyanga Police Station were sitting in a police *bakkie*, guarding a recovered stolen vehicle. As they sat and waited for a tow truck to remove the vehicle, they were approached by two youths who engaged them in conversation on both sides of their vehicle. While the youths spoke to the officers, another two youths appeared, shot the officers in the head and all four subsequently fled with the deceased officers' firearms. Four youths were subsequently arrested. One of these youths became a state witness and the other three were charged with murder.

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<sup>258</sup> Ten officers died but nine services were attended as one memorial service was held for two officers who had been murdered during the same incident.

On the 16th October 2014, **Sergeant Thulani Dlamini** of Lingelethu West station was with a group of detectives seeking to arrest a man who was wanted for various robberies. They went to the suspect's home, in a township and during the course of the arrest Sergeant Dlamini was shot dead. Upon investigation it was found that Dlamini was accidentally shot by his colleague during a scuffle with the suspect.

On 17th October 2014, **Detective Constable Mthetheli Gunya**, of the Nyanga cluster detective unit assisted a colleague in the arrest of an individual who was wanted for robbery. On locating the suspect in a township, Detective Constable Gunya took hold of this person who then struggled to escape. Another individual, who was in the company of the arrestee, shot Detective Constable Gunya dead. During the struggle one suspect was also shot and injured by another police officer who was present. This arrested suspect subsequently gave the name of the shooter, but his whereabouts are still unknown.

On the 27th of October 2015, at 8pm, **Constable Nkosiphendule Makeleni** was shot dead as he sat in his personal vehicle in Khayelitsha, a township. He was sitting in his vehicle on the grounds of a primary school. He was dressed in his uniform and had signed on-duty one hour before he was murdered. His personal firearm was taken during the incident. One month later, two suspects, who were found in possession of his firearm, were arrested.

### **Leaving Duty**

**Constable Ninkululeko Majuba** of Kraaifontein police station had completed her shift on the 25th of May 2015. As she was returning home she was attacked by her then partner, himself a serving police officer who suspected her of having an affair with another police officer. He shot her dead with his own official firearm. He left the scene and went to his brother's house where he subsequently took his own life by shooting himself.

### **Off-duty**

On the 30th June 2014, the body of **Sergeant Xolisa Theophilus Mlindwa** of Gugulethu police station was discovered in a car park. He had been shot several times. His body was partially clothed and it appeared that he had been engaging in a sexual act with another individual when he was murdered. His personal firearm was stolen during the course of the attack. It is believed that he was the target of a random robbery. Five individuals were subsequently arrested of which one was charged with possession of the deceased's firearm. Further charges were pending DNA analysis taken from the scene.

On the 2nd of May 2015, **Detective Sergeant Phumzile Ntshokoma** of Nynaga police station was killed in a road traffic collision. This was the only circumstance in which the officer was not murdered. He was off-duty at the time of the incident.

Of all the murders, only Warrant Officer Holz was from the Cape Town area and as such a police funeral was held. All other officers were originally from the Eastern Cape and memorial services were held in Cape Town for them before their bodies were transported home for burial. All of these murders, bar Holz's, occurred in township locations. Of the eight memorial services attended I was aware of only one family requesting a formal funeral at the homestead.

## Appendix 17. Rank Structures



# NEW RANK STRUCTURE South African Police Service



### Senior Management - Commissioned Officers

<u>PRE-2010 RANK</u>	<u>NEW RANK</u>	<u>FORM OF ADDRESS</u>
National Commissioner	General (Gen)	General
Deputy National Commissioner	Lieutenant General (Lt Gen)	General
Divisional/ Provincial Commissioner	Lieutenant General (Lt Gen)	General
Assistant Commissioner	Major General (Maj Gen)	General
Director	Brigadier (Brig)	Brigadier

### Commissioned Officers

Senior Superintendent	Colonel (Col)	Colonel
Superintendent	Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)	Colonel
	Major (Maj)	Major
Captain	Captain (Capt)	Captain
	Lieutenant (Lt)	Lieutenant

### Non - Commissioned Officers

<u>CURRENT RANK</u>	Inspector	Sergeant	Constable
<u>NEW RANK</u>	Warrant Officer (WO)	Sergeant (Sgt)	Constable (Const)
<u>FORM OF ADDRESS</u>	Warrant	Sergeant	Constable

## Appendix 18. Amazing Grace

The hymn ‘Amazing Grace’ is a Christian song originally published in 1779, with words written by the English poet and Anglican clergyman John Newton (1725–1807).

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.
3. **Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.**
4. The Lord has promised good to me,  
His Word my hope secures;  
He will my Shield and Portion be,  
As long as life endures.
5. Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.
6. The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, who called me here below,  
Will be forever mine.
7. When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we'd first begun.

## Appendix 19. Asijiki/The March

The composer of this song is unknown although the song is considered as a 'Freedom song' sung during the Apartheid era. The translation was facilitated by Mrs Thandi Goxo, IsiXhosa language teacher at the University of Cape Town.

### IsiXhosa

Siyaya, siyaya  
Siyaya noba kubi  
Emabhulwini siyaya,  
Siyaya noba kubi,  
Noba besidubula  
Siyaya...

### English

We will go, we will  
We will, even in dreariness  
To the Boers, we will go  
We will, even in misery,  
Even when they shoot us.  
We will go...