

A phenomenological analysis of the subjective meaning of being part
of the police services at a police station in the Uthungulu district.

by

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Declaration

I, Guillaume Walters- du Plooy, declare that the thesis for the degree M.A. (Clinical Psychology) at the University of Zululand, hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this, or any other university, that this is my own work in design and execution. Material extracted from other sources contained herein have been duly acknowledged and permission has been obtained where necessary.

.....
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Date

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to all the men and women in the SAPS who work hard to protect and serve our country against its criminal elements. Your perseverance and courage in the light of such an overwhelming task is not merely commendable, but inspirational.

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Abstract

The study considers the historical and present socio-political and crime situation within the South African context. With the subsequent changes after the establishment of a new democracy, people's perceptions and views have shifted. The social conception that once was, has changed vastly. The author focused on the current state of crime and those who are entrusted to fight it. The investigation attempts to establish how police officers are experiencing their current employment situation, and to possibly relate it to historical phenomena and relevant literature.

The police officers' world, is one of unique experiences, which the average lay person would not necessarily have to deal with. Police officers are also influenced by many factors which make up our social, cultural, and environmental aspects. But one has to consider that their point of reference may be different to ours. Their conception of experience may exist at a different level. It is this "experience of their experiences" which is the focal point of the investigation. Are there any significant phenomena and issues surrounding their lives which citizens never even think about? And if so, to what extent do these phenomena influence their personal lives?

This study attempted to shed light on these and other issues surrounding police officers and their experiences and reasoning. The study addressed itself to gaining insight into police officers' life-worlds by utilizing a phenomenological research design with the use of unstructured type interviews. Ten research participants were interviewed in an attempt to gain an understanding of what it means to be part of the South African Police Services (SAPS). The research was demarcated to a police station in the Uthungulu District in the Northern KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa.

The data gathered was broken down into separate parts and analyzed based on meaning discriminations. These meaning discriminations were then to be clustered into common categories and themes, which the author used to develop the textual descriptions of the experiences of the participants. The study concluded with a general description of the

experience of being a police officer for all ten participants. Overall, this research provided possible insights into the life-worlds of police officers in the SAPS, and contributes to the general understanding of the subjective meaning attributed to this employment.

Chapter One

Introduction

"The government's policies designed to combat crime are effective. It is the execution of those policies by the police and the courts that need improving."

Former South African President Thabo Mbeki

(Carmichael, 2007)

1.1 Introduction

Some of our fellow South Africans have opted for emigration to "greener pastures", stressing that a high crime level and personal unsafety were some of the major contributing factors to their decisions. As evident in Mr. Mbeki's quotation above, even the former president insists that the government's policies designed to combat crime are in place, but the *execution* of those policies by the police and the courts need improving (Carmichael, 2007). It is noteworthy that the president might not have been fully confident in those who were entrusted to deliver justice in the country he was leading.

The crime level in South Africa remains one of the key challenges facing the country and this is a major focus point for the public at large. Areas of criticism include the high crime rates, as well as the police services and their perceived lack of ability to combat crime. Based on Interpol figures, South Africa has high but manageable levels of property crime but an extraordinarily high level of violent crime. According to the Nedbank Institute for Security Studies, a Crime Index report released in 2001 revealed it is South Africa's high level of violent crime that sets the country apart from other countries. This finding is supported by the Crime Information Analysis Centre (CIAC) of South Africa indicating that since 1994, recorded violent crime rate has been escalating faster than any other crime category. It is primarily violent crimes that fuel people's fears (Nedbank ISS Crime Index, 2001).

In South Africa today, the average police officer is faced with extreme stressors in his or her

employment. According to a report released by the South African Police Services (SAPS) in December 2007, 32.5% of all crimes in South Africa are rated as serious and violent in nature, aimed towards a person or victim (South African Police Services, 2007). This figure also includes acts of violent crime against police officers whilst on duty. There is a possibility that any person having had the opportunity to speak to a police officer, has heard some distressing narratives concerning crime in South Africa, the stress involved in conducting police work, and even how the procedures and structures within the South African Police Services may sometimes work against them in conducting their work.

The famous philosopher and historian Edmund Husserl (as cited by Spinelli, 1989), is of the opinion that we, as individuals, do not just experience the world as a *real* state, but that the world we experience is an *interpreted* world. It is shaped both by built-in biological variants and by the experience-based psychological beliefs and biases that we continuously generate through new experiences as we develop. This implies that individuals add their own subjective interpretation to their objective experiences based on multiple factors. It is as if each individual would experience the world through their own *schema*, analyzing and interpreting each experience through these schemas. These *schemas* are very important when considering the research. It is this method of subjective interpretation or “viewpoint of the world” that is of interest to the researcher.

In some Hollywood documentaries, one can see how police officers describe their profession with passion, intensity and emotion. Realistically one would not easily consider this type of career as the ideal, based upon the various dangers associated with it – especially in South Africa with reference to violent crimes. Why would a person then consider this field as a career option? Given all the reasons not to join the SAPS, what would make one commit to having such a life-threatening job? For some, it might be an innate passion, but for others, it might just be an opportunity to be employed. This last statement does not seem implausible when one considers that by September 2007, figures indicated that South Africa had an unemployment rate of approximately 23% (Statistics South Africa, 2007).

1.2 Statement of the problem

South Africa is classified by some individuals as having one of the highest crime rates in the world (Altbeker, 2005). Whether or not this is a fact has been the topic of many debates. However, when one considers crime in South Africa, police officers are the people who have to address this and try and make the country a safer place. One cannot help wondering how the current state of affairs, affect their lives as individuals. Even though police officers have been trained to do their job, they remain human – people with individual feelings, thoughts, as well as their own personalities. One has to question how a police officer in the SAPS interprets the experiences of his or her employment and how its influencing factors impact on him or her. Their job of protecting the community is a difficult and complex one. When examining the SAPS under a psychological microscope, the questions arise pertaining to what it means for them to be part of the system of fighting crime, what police officers think and feel and how they cope with stress of their difficult line of work. There seems to be a lack of understanding from the public at large concerning police officers and their professional circumstances, experiences and feelings.

1.3 Motivation for the study

Sheptycki (1994) argues the existence of a continuing need for research by academics into the ways and means of policing by use of social scientific methods. The researcher wishes to understand what impact the experiences which accompany this type of employment have on a person. Someone unfamiliar with law enforcement may consider the crime statistics and draw incorrect conclusions from them. But do lay people consider the viewpoints of those on the opposite side of the spectrum? Are they even aware of all the variables involved in fighting crime in South Africa?

1.4 Aim of the study

The main aim of this research was to describe and gain insight into police officers' feelings, experiences, and understandings of what it means to be a law enforcement official in South Africa today. The focus was on how the participants interpreted the phenomena that they

are exposed to on a daily basis, and how these phenomena affect their professional and personal lives.

The goal was on obtaining deeper insight into their life-worlds. The researcher hoped to bridge the gap between the misinformed and the informed; between the lay person and the police officer. In gaining insight into their lives, and finding out the impact the experiences accompanying their employment have on them, it paves the way for deeper understanding of their situation and position in attempting to fight crime.

1.5 Value of the study

The information from this study might be utilized in many ways when considering policy development and the practical application thereof, creating better crime prevention strategies, preventing mental health problems in members of the SAPS, as well as broadening horizons on a topic which may be under-researched in South Africa.

The researcher hopes that the findings of this study might influence the general public's thinking to an extent where they may be more informed when considering the situation in which police officers work and try to fight crime, in addition to coping with everyday life.

1.6 Résumé

This chapter has introduced the study by outlining the statement of the problem, the main aim of the research, the motivation for the study as well as the value of the study. An illustration of the problems within the field of law enforcement has also been included. In the following chapter the author will present the literature that has informed the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter Two

Literature review

"More than any other thing, the South African Police Services needs a partnership with the people. It must always be remembered that policing is a community activity. The police will never have sufficient resources, while criminals will always have more."

Former National Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi

(Singh, 2004, p. 95)

2.1 Introduction

Comparing his own experience in a small rural community against larger urban areas, Constable Kevin Fowler of Lancashire states that:

"... the difficulties facing the individual policeman produce much more of a problem and strain on his family than that facing a large body of policemen in the larger conurbations where law enforcement is a little less of a personal family involvement" (Whitaker, 1979, p. 237).

Crime within South Africa is a prominent and perplexing phenomenon. It affects people from all races and all status levels, and has far-reaching consequences into victims' lives. Police officers are those entrusted with keeping peace. The above-mentioned quote serves the purpose of illustrating that the life of police officers may be a conglomeration of complexities not known to many of us. It suggests the existence of variables and aspects in police officers' lives that we do not know about. Police officers are in more regular contact with extreme situations than is the case in other populations. Exposures to these phenomena have the potential to reshape their experiences and thinking in different ways. It is the opinion of the researcher that only when one understands the various aspects and variables within police officers' lives, that one may begin to gain insight into and understanding of their experiences. However, limited research has been conducted on the perceptions and experiences of police officers within the South African context.

A research project would not be comprehensive without the consideration of current and past literature. This chapter highlights literature concerning the SAPS and in South Africa that is relevant to the topic of this study. An attempt is made to gain new insights, which is to inform the discussion of results. Only research that was judged by the researcher as relevant to the topic itself will be considered.

In order to gain insight into police officers and their experiences, it is necessary to start with a description of the South African Police Services and a brief history of the organization itself. This will be followed by examining the current stance of crime and law enforcement within South Africa. A focus into the life-worlds of individuals within a policing career will follow, as well as a consideration of the psychological phenomena of the experiences of police officers. To end off, the researcher will consider the therapeutic aspects of utilizing the phenomenological method in research.

2.2 The South African Police Services (SAPS) as an organization

The South African Police Services (SAPS) as we know it today was established on 27 January 1995. It was formed from the remnants of the South African Police Force (SAPF) after the apartheid era. They are the representatives of the State responsible for maintaining law and order, and are entrusted with the safety and security of this country's inhabitants (Steyn, 2005). In order to understand the SAPS as whole, a brief background of the specific circumstances prevailing South Africa in or about 1994 pertaining to policing will be provided, and then continues to highlight elements of interest pertaining to SAPS members themselves.

2.3 The development of the SAPS

In the 1970's and 1980's, the police force in the apartheid state was primarily focused on oppressing the political resistance spreading through the country. The apartheid state was aimed towards benefitting White minority groups. The police's efforts were aimed mostly at black townships, and policing actions were characterized by violent interactions between the police and community members. The imprints of those violent interactions may still be alive in the memory of many South Africans today, which may have resulted in a lack of trust in the

police from the community they aim to serve.

A good example of a politically motivated incident of police brutality is the 1960 Sharpsville massacre. On 21 March 1960, the police opened fire at an anti-government demonstration. A total of 67 Black demonstrators were killed and more than 180 injured. This example depicts the manner in which human rights were infringed upon by the police (Spence, 2007 as cited in Dintwe & Montesh, 2008, p.164).

After true democratic change in 1994, the new government imposed a moratorium on police recruitment from 1994 until 1997. The motivation driving this moratorium was the development of a new human resource plan for the SAPS as an organization. This included policy and strategy on recruitment, training and promotions, as well as the successful implementation of these elements. In May 1997, the moratorium on the recruitment of new candidates was lifted, followed by an announcement in June 1998 that the SAPS would enroll new candidates (Marais, 2003).

In 2002 Parliament approved an increase in SAPS staffing - setting the goal to employ a total of 150 000 full-time employees by 2007 (Steyn, 2005). Section 64A of the South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995, as well as the South African Police Services Amendment Bill 39 of 1998 made provision for the establishment of municipal or metro police services by respective metropolitan counsels. These services were aimed at crime prevention, enforcing road traffic regulations, as well as policing other municipal by-laws and regulations (Marais, 2003, p. 139).

2.4 The Crime situation in South Africa

The emphasis of crime and its influence in South Africa is highlighted by Louw (1997):

"One of the dominant features in South Africa's transformation from a racially divided apartheid regime to a democratically elected government has been, and continues to be, crime and violence" (Louw, 1997 in Pienaar and Swanepoel, 2004, p. 17)

Many individuals have typified South Africa as the most violent society in the world. According

to Pelser and De Kock (2000) as cited in Marais (2003, p.139) it seems the violence and crime which characterized South Africa before the first democratic elections in 1994, have since changed in character from serving a political agenda to one of unbridled violence and crime preying on the seeming absence of social control mechanisms.

Official statistics for the year ended March 2006 showed an average reported daily crime rate of around 50 murders, 150 rapes, and 35 car hijackings for South Africa (Carmicheal, 2007). The researcher attempts to highlight the extent of the problem of crime in South Africa in Table 2A:

TYPE	1994/5	1997/8	2005/2006*
Murder	26 832 (66.7 per 100 000)	24 588 (56,9 per 100 000)	(48 per 100 000)
Attempted murder	27 300 (67.8 per 100 000)	28 148 (65.1 per 100 000)	(43.9 per 100 000)
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	84 900 (210.8 per 100 000)	69 693 (161.2 per 100 000)	(255.3 per 100 000)
Rape and Attempted rape	42 429 (105.3 per 100 000)	52 160 (120.6 per 100 000)	(117.1 per 100 000)

Table 2A: Crime statistics for some serious crimes in three respective years. Adapted from SAPS, 1998 and Steenkamp (2007) as cited in De Vries (2008).

**Due to criticism and other reasons, the South African Government decided to release crime statistics only on a yearly basis and only in terms of percentages per 100 000 of the population. The SAPS also revisits their own crime statistics over time, indicated above with reference to the incidences per hundred thousand of the population. In 1994 South Africa had a population of ± 39 million people and in 2007 a population of ± 44 million people. It is estimated that the population will only be ± 54 million in the year 2020 due to the impact that AIDS have on the population.*

Since democratic elections came to pass in 1994, there has been a concerted effort to address the wrongs and imbalances created by the previous apartheid government. This effort saw a greater focus being placed in the reporting of crime incidents in the media and scientific research. The ordinary South African was left with the impression that the transition into democracy may have coincided with an increase in criminal activity (Singh, 2005). As the true extent of crime became clearer through the years, it has become apparent that the SAPS can not deal adequately with this phenomenon. Dixon and Johns (2004) as cited in Singh (2005, p.44) are of the opinion that the "pains of transformation" have left South Africa with police that are inadequately trained and which appears to be disabled.

In the last decade South Africa has seen numerous trends of crime emerge – farm attacks, hijackings, violent rape (male and female), gang violence, corruption – to name a few. According to the Human Science Research Counsel (HSRC), communities' perceptions of a feeling of safety have declined significantly since 1994. In 2000, merely 44% of respondents felt safe or very safe while 45% felt unsafe or very unsafe (as cited in Marais, 2003, p. 142). These trends in crime undermine our already weak and vulnerable economy; contribute to individuals' decision to emigrate to other countries; negatively impact our tourism industry as well as breaking down the positive fabrics of our society as a whole and fostering a culture of negativity and cynicism.

The problem of crime and its influence on the criminal justice system is also emphasized when considering the general decline in conviction rates since the early 1990's. Conviction rates have declined from 362 000 in 1992/3, to 218 400 in 1995/6. By the end of the first quarter in 1999, 154 506 were detained in prisons, of whom 97 296 were sentenced and 52 210 were unsentenced (Van Zyl Smit, 1999 as cited in Gouws, 2004, p. 78). The unsentenced prison population more than doubled between 1996 – 1999. This has led to problems of major overcrowding in South African prisons (Gouws, 2004).

From the above-mentioned literature, the researcher has illustrated some of the extent of crime in South Africa and the influences it has upon its inhabitants. Crime is major hindrance in

promoting democratic and economic development and prosperity.

2.5 The Police Service versus The Police Force

A challenge confronting the government was the need to change the stigma of the SAPS from a militaristic weapon of force and oppression to an instrument of protection and community value. The interim Constitution of 1993 and the Police Service Act 68 of 1995 both prioritize the establishment of police-community partnerships (Singh, 2004, p. 88). The constitution of the Republic of South Africa prescribes community oriented policing (COP) as the style of policing to be adopted by the SAPS as the method to improve police-community relations and general service delivery (Steyn, 2005).

According to Johan Burger (2005) as cited in Steyn (2005, p. 82), reasons why community policing was introduced into South Africa can be clustered into three categories:

- i. Community oriented policing as a new corporate strategy of the police.
- ii. Community oriented policing as an instrument for change.
- iii. *Community oriented policing as a method of proactive policing.*

COP is the philosophy that guides police management styles and operational strategies. It emphasizes establishing police-community partnerships and problem solving approaches responsive to the needs of the specific community it serves. It is based on the premise that the objectives of the SAPS may only be achieved through the collaborative effort of the SAPS with other government institutions, organizations and structures of society, as well as individual citizens. (Steyn, 2005).

Whitaker (1979) states that the theory of “democratic policing” acts as...

“... the balance between the rights and needs of the citizen as an individual, and his responsibilities as a member of the community” (p. 289).

Community policing is not a new concept. This concept, or variants thereof, has already been implemented in countries such as the USA, Canada, and Britain (Morrison & Prinsloo, 2001).

The researcher views the driving force of COP to be an emphasis on the cooperation of the SAPS and the community as *equal* partners to identify and solve problems, whilst improving the overall quality of life in communities in general.

According to Van der Westhuizen (2000) as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004, p. 18), the transition from a Police Force with the emphasis on authoritarian decision-making, to a Police Service where emphasis is placed on community policing and participatory decision-making, is one of the most important challenges facing the SAPS. The transition from traditional policing to community policing is faced with many barriers. These include the use of extreme force by members of the SAPS, a lack of accountability to local communities, as well as bureaucracy and inequalities with respect to resources which characterized the previous regime (Morrison & Prinsloo, 2001).

2.6 Public perceptions of the SAPS

2.6.1 Forming an opinion

In forming opinions concerning a phenomenon, one may utilize different sources of information. One may become opinionated through information from readings, hear-say, or direct exposure to an experience itself. Ainsworth (1995) highlights that one's perception of the SAPS may be formed by the classical stereotypes, perhaps based on television programs and the mass media. For many others, their perception of the SAPS may be affected by one short encounter with a police officer. This encounter may be the catalyst to fostering a poor image of the SAPS as a whole.

2.6.2 The importance of positive regard

The flow of information between the public and the SAPS is crucial pertaining to crime and the reporting thereof. Where the public support the SAPS, this flow is maintained. On the other hand, when this flow of information discontinues, the success rate of policing tends to decline.

Kinsley, Lea, and Young (1986) claim that if a policing system aims to be an effective one, it

must be geared toward maximizing the *voluntary* input of the public, as well as keeping police coercion to the absolute minimum. This implies that success would come about as a direct consequence from the public providing information to the SAPS. They suggest that the public serve an invaluable contribution to the effectiveness of the SAPS in achieving their goals. In the event of little or no information forthcoming, the SAPS may be forced to act upon their own “hunches” and generalizations (Kinsley, Lea, & Young, 1986, p. 37). The researcher regards this as potentially dangerous in the event of possible wrongful searching and imposition of innocent people, which may leave them frustrated and angry. Anger with, and alienation from the SAPS is a likely result.

2.6.3 Negative perceptions

According to Masuku (2001) as cited in Marais (2003, p. 143), perceptions of the SAPS as inefficient and corrupt are increasing. Masuku (2001) questions the effectiveness and efficiency of the SAPS in combating crime. This results in a negative public perception of the SAPS, as well as influencing citizens' willingness to assist them in achieving their goals.

Singh (2004) reports that many South Africans, both Black and White, continue to regard the SAPS with hostility and suspicion. In response to community policing forums, many individuals focused on the SAPS's inadequate responses, continued lack of trust between them and the SAPS, politicization of the forums, community representativeness not approved by the local community, as well as a power struggle within the community policing forums as some of their main grievances. As a result, many communities began taking their own initiatives against crime. These included the establishment of local committees, where members of the public volunteered to patrol their own streets at night. Singh (2005) also reports on a focus group interview with 26 youths from eight Black townships concerning their perception of the SAPS. The sentiment was repeated that whilst the state encouraged community members not to take the law into their own hands and to report criminals to the SAPS, “most often nothing was done by the police” Singh (2005, p. 46) when such reports were indeed made. Communities are frustrated by the slow and tedious, even corrupt processes of the criminal justice system.

Even the SAPS admits that it has its own shortcomings in attempting to combat crime. The South African Police Service Annual Report 2002/2003 notes as follows: "Because of a fear of crime and feelings of insecurity, some people may lose confidence in the official structures of law enforcement" (South African Police Service, 2004 as cited in Singh, 2005, p. 47).

Research conducted by Gouws (2004) highlights the grievances of South African citizens. It was found that there existed a willingness in all racial groups in South Africa to give the SAPS and the Defence Force *more* power in order to combat crime. They agree to this even if it means sacrificing their own individual freedom (i.e. their human rights). Gouws (2004) mentions that there might be a tendency to view criminals as having more rights than victims, based upon the ease at which bail is granted and prisoners are freed from incarceration due to the overcrowding of prisons.

It is evident from the above-mentioned research reports that a predominant negative perception is held regarding the SAPS from the community perspective. The researcher suggests that this has detrimental consequences, including fostering a communication barrier. This creates a rift between the SAPS and the community they attempt to serve.

2.7 Life in a Policing career

2.7.1 Why choose a Police career?

Considering the status of crime in South Africa and the nature of police work, the researcher regards it important to understand possible rationales why individuals would consider employment in the police sector.

Yarmey (1990) suggests that the new police recruit has a sense of social responsibility combined with a desire to be a person of action or adventure. In spite of the administrative requirements that comprise most of police officer's daily activities, the ever-present potential for danger and excitement provides stimulation. Police work may have the potential to satisfy police officers' needs for action and adventure. The possibility of making a "good arrest" motivates police officers and adds meaning to their self-image as society's protectors. Van Maanen (1973) as cited in Yarmey (1990, p. 47) confirms this with his statement that the

desire for action and adventure is a powerful motivating factor to becoming a police officer.

In the USA, Allen, Matarazzo, Saslow, and Wiens (1964). as cited in Yarmey (1990, p. 47) conducted interviews with male police applicants. Their research revealed that men chose this work because they wanted to help juveniles and to work with people in trouble. Lefkowitz (1973, 1974, 1975, 1977) as cited in Yarmey (1990, p. 47) offers other alternative reasons for individuals joining the police. He identifies the predominant motivation to becoming a police officer as the need for job security. Minority group members choose police work primarily because they wish to maintain law and order.

Mofomme (2001) regards the SAPS as an over bounded bureaucratic structure due to its emphasis on structure, discipline and control. Mofomme (2001) is of the opinion that people may join the SAPS in a state of dependence, thereby still needing a parental figure. Some individuals experience anxiety by the thought of functioning independently, making their own decisions, as well as taking responsibility for their own actions. This anxiety may be contained within an over bounded bureaucratic organizational structure where no situation or decision is dealt with without the use of rules and regulations dictating people's every action. This possibility becomes a reality when one considers the extent of the current HIV/AIDS status of South Africa and the prevalence of single- or no-parented families. Within these structures, many young teenagers are left without guidance and structure when moving into young adulthood.

2.7.2 Differences between law enforcement and other employment populations

The mere nature of policing and the responsibilities it entails leads the researcher to assume that there exist differences between this work and other fields of employment. Research by Griffin and O'Leary-Kelly (n.d.) in Brewer and Wilson (1995, p. 386) support this assumption by identifying the following important distinctions:

- i. Police officers' attitudes may be less stable in their work environment as compared to other settings. This relates to the potential dangers they face with each shift worked.

- ii. Relationships between police partners may be different from that which exists among co-workers in other environments. These attitudes towards co-workers may have different meanings for police officers due to the extreme phenomena they may be faced with. These phenomena and experiences form the basis for intense bonds.
- iii. Police officers work within two very different kinds of work environments. Within the organizational environment, an officer may have little discretion or autonomy based on the hierarchical and military-type structure that exists within police services. On the other hand, when police officers are away from the station on active duty, for example whilst on patrol, they have enormous discretion in how to perform their job and what actions they will take.
- iv. Police officers' experience of stress may be different to individuals' experience of occupational stress. Officers are exposed to extreme phenomena, and their mere presence may evoke negativity in citizens. Thus, their levels of tension are likely to exceed that experienced by most people in the workplace.

It is evident that clear distinctions may be made regarding employment in the police sector. The above-mentioned research identifies differences in officers' attitudes, relationship styles, work environments, as well as their exposure to work phenomena impacting on their personal stress levels when compared to other fields of employment. Police officers' professional environment is unique when considering the nature of the work and the impact it has on the individual.

2.7.3 High expectations versus low status

Norman Mailer in Whitaker (1979) states that...

"...when you get a good cop he is a work of art. He has got to be brave, to have high standards: it is the hardest kind of working-class life a man can have" (p. 247).

In many aspects, higher than normal standards are expected of police officers by the general public. Officers' behavior are expected to exist within the confines of the police philosophy, and

behavior will be carefully watched and criticized by members of his community (Whitaker, 1979).

Even though police officers are expected to have high standards, it seems that they may regard themselves as being of low status. Whitaker (1979) reports that British and American police are inclined to conceal their employment. They also claim it adversely affects their relationships with outside friendships. Some conceal the nature of their employment when they are off-duty because of the perceived low-status and the reaction that knowledge of their occupation produce in others. This is supported by the fact that 72% of officers prefer *not* to disclose their occupation to others when they are on holiday (Whitaker, 1979).

2.7.4 The police subculture

Robbins (1993) as cited in Mofomme (2001) defines culture as a system of shared meaning. It represents common perceptions that are held by members of a group or organization. The major source of an organizational culture is its founders. Thus, it is assumed that the culture of the SAPS, as a government institution, will largely be determined by the type of government in power.

In light of the current attempts to correct the mistakes of the past apartheid regime, as well as the implementation of a new and different community-orientated policing style, the researcher suggests that changing and modernizing the SAPS will be a difficult endeavor. Whitaker (1979) is of the opinion that there exists a built-in resistance to change or modernize ideas based upon the hierarchical organization structure in the police services: Older sergeants and constables *significantly influence the younger ranks' perceptions*. He suggests that the police service has developed many characteristics of a "secret society". It is defensive and introverted, but also a self-conscious masculine context.

Steyn (2008) concurs that the police service subculture may be a hindrance when considering the move to a community service-orientated style of policing. Police members are required to trust citizens, whilst at the same time viewing citizens as potential sources danger: A citizen

may lay charges of misconduct against a police officer, leading to disciplinary measures and potentially losing his or her job. This leads to inconsistency between officers' actions and beliefs based on officers' protecting themselves, whilst still having to serve and protect others.

Steyn (2008) states that the values of the police service subculture are derived from the hazards inherent to police work, and officers seek to minimize these hazards in order to protect themselves. Research seems to indicate that these values are based upon male-dominated thinking patterns. Bezuidenhout (2001, p. 142) is of the opinion that existence of a police subculture is an extension of the police organization that, since the days of its founding, has laid emphasis upon a "manly" nature of work and that it was an exclusive male organization. Stevens and Yach (1995) as cited in Morrison (2005, p. 22) concur with this viewpoint. They state that the culture of policing is characterized by an action-oriented, "macho" and aggressive stance with the atmosphere of a "boys' club", rather than that of a professional service provider.

Bezuidenhout (2001, p. 144) identifies the following contributing elements within the police subculture:

i. Specific language usage

Use of slang words, obscenities and swear words between colleagues.

ii. Experience

The amount of experience one has, and respecting those with more experience than oneself (i.e. higher ranking officers), is of importance within this subculture.

iii. Internal sanctions and comradeship

These are characteristics that are manifest only when an officer is accustomed to the police subculture. This includes knowing the basic premises and rules that prescribe the subculture.

iv. Social isolation and personality within the working environment

This element highlights the isolation between a police officer and members of the public. Police officers "psychologically" distance themselves from the

public and traumatic incidents, as well as colleagues perceived as not belonging within the subculture (for example females and individuals from different races).

2.7.5 Morale within the SAPS

In the previous section the researcher highlighted the existence of the police culture as a system of shared meaning. The individuals within this culture form special psychological bonds. These bonds are to be influenced by their experiences, and result in an overall *shared* subjective feeling. An operational definition of the police service morale is the overall shared subjective feeling from police officers within the SAPS.

When considering morale in the SAPS, Singh (2004) states that:

“Given the difficult working conditions, the poor remuneration, and perceived discrimination of officers, the morale within the police service is not entirely positive. This has resulted in high numbers of specialist investigators leaving the service for employment within the private sector”(p. 93).

This quotation highlights the existence of a poor morale within the SAPS. Not only does the standard police officer have to work long hours of unpaid overtime and take on a variety of duties ranging from riot control to petty bureaucratic tasks, but they are often disliked by a large proportion of the community they attempt to serve (Cawthra, 1993 as cited in Singh, 2004, p. 93). A research study conducted by Minnaar and Mistry (2006, p. 43) found that the officers interviewed generally perceived that they were being victimized in terms of the following:

- i. Criminals have more rights than officers do.
- ii. Police officers experience a lack of support from the SAPS.
- iii. Departmental and criminal trials “crucify” police officers.
- iv. The Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) and internal disciplinary structures are somehow conducting “witch-hunts” against them, specifically with

respect to “use of force” incidents when pertaining to suspects.

- v. *Police officers displayed a low morale and negative attitude towards a range of issues.*
- vi. *Police officers appeared to be overwhelmed by all the problems they experience: Structural organization problems, high crime rates, high level of violence encountered on a daily basis, as well as internal disciplinary procedures, which they felt unnecessarily interfered with their duties.*

The existence of a general poor morale within members of the SAPS is even more evident when considering that on average, 200 police officers are killed every year. This is the highest global rate for such deaths (Minnaar, 2000 as cited in Singh 2004, p. 94).

2.7.6 Distrusting their own managers

Police officers are required to enforce the law, yet they are also required to follow the proper procedural rules and regulations. Procedural violations in any organization may result in disciplinary action being instituted against both the employee and the organization.

Crank and Caldero (1991) as cited in Steyn (2005, p. 86) states that the most important group that officers protect themselves against is their own supervisors and commanders. Officers tend to have a powerful distrust in their own managers. Also, police officers tend to believe that the legal system is soft on crime, and some of them develop “street justice” skills which enable them to both punish offenders and avoid the courts. Steyn (2005) suggests that these strategies help them avoid the “red-tape” constraints with regards to their behavior. This cynical interpretation and position by police officers is generalized to many groups, such as the community, the media, the Justice System, top ranking police officials, amongst others (Steyn, 2005).

2.7.7 Gender discrimination

If one considers the classical consensus amongst most cultures, males are mostly viewed as the dominant figures of society. Males are predominantly considered the “head of the family”,

or ascribed the roles of “breadwinner” and “protector of the family”. Due to this way of thinking, females may possibly be viewed as unable to fulfill these roles.

The basis for gender discrimination in the police seems to pertain to the view that law enforcement is a dangerous profession, and that women would not be able to handle the various dangerous situations confronted with (Morrison, 2005). Brown (1996b) as cited in Morrison (2005, p. 21) mentions that female police officers fight a considerable opposition in overcoming the belief that they are not capable of carrying out the full range of police work in the same manner as male colleagues are able to. Women seem to face a variety of disadvantages, which stem from their status of being female. Miller (1999) as cited in Morrison (2005, p. 21) suggests that women who choose law enforcement as their career are seen as atypical in the archetypal world of policing. When considering the males’ point of view, Heidensohn (1998) as cited in Morrison (2005, p. 20) suggests that men do not want to accept women’s’ authority, and therefore women may experience opposition from their male counterparts.

Even when considering the public’s perspective, some officers are of the opinion that female police officers may not be treated with the same respect as their male colleagues (Bezuidenhout, 2001). From the above-mentioned examples, it is evident that women experience problems of discrimination and stereotyping within the SAPS.

2.8 Psychology and Policing

Academic interest in the police service has continued to grow. In the 1960’s and 1970’s it tended to be sociologists who conducted participant observation research within the police services. However, an ever increasing amount of research has been conducted by psychologists. In the 1980’s, there were signs that British Forces were acknowledging that value of the contributions of psychological research to their contexts (Ainsworth, 1995). The researcher now considers the literature on the psychological aspects and phenomena that exist when considering policing.

2.8.1 Police officers' Values

Yarmey (1990) concludes that the most successful police officers adopt or believe in middle-class goals such as ambition, the assumption of responsibility, the ability to work for the future, the postponement of gratification, and the respect for personal and other's property. They value a self-image that stresses feelings and thoughts of order, logic, rationality, control, and obedience. They prefer a rigid, formal, authoritative structure that sets limits, procedures, and expectations.

2.8.2 Police officers' Self-concept

Yarmey (1990, p. 44) highlights that even though police officers may regard themselves as "warriors" or "crime fighters" (Wambaugh, 1975, as cited in Yarmey, 1990, p. 44), they also perceive themselves as "helping" persons. Inspector Jennifer Hilton in Whitaker (1979) is of the opinion that there often exists considerable pressure on policemen to act toughly and instantaneously in stereotypes of masculine behavior. There also exists a profound cynicism in many police officers, which is somehow reconciled with a faith that society is worth saving.

Yarmey (1990) suggests that the self-concept of the average police officer has a conservative-type orientation. This includes a preference towards conservative politics, and a commitment to conformity of rules, regulations and the status quo (Butler & Cochrane, 1977 and Niederhoffer, 1967, as cited in Yarmey, 1990, p. 48). Furthermore, it is suggested that the self-concept and identity of officers is a process in itself that is shaped when embarking on their training at the police academy. It continually evolves throughout their career. A research project of Fagan and Ayers (1982) as cited in Yarmey (1990, p. 45) considers the conflicts and adaptations that confront police officers as they progress through their careers. The sample's results portray the following:

- i. Aged 22 - 28: 91% of the sample felt attracted to law enforcement because of the perceived job security. All who joined at this time initially enjoyed their work, although some struggled to handle the freedom and power that characterize their career choice. Many of the officers had difficulty in maintaining close emotional

relationships, with 36% being divorced, and many were totally absorbed in their work, heavy drinkers, as well as experiencing high levels of stress.

- ii. Aged 28 – 33: 78% of the subjects experienced this stage as stressful. At mean age 30, job-related crises focused on conflicts with departmental administration, denial of promotion, disillusionment with the operation of police work, and conflict with life in general.
- iii. Aged 33 – 40: Most subjects recaptured some of their earlier enthusiasm and motivation for police work. Promotion, further education, and additional responsibility facilitated positive changes. Some of the sample, however, had disintegration of their marriages and were excessive drinkers.
- iv. Aged 40 – 45: This period was not adequately studied due to the few officers in this age category. Results available suggest that unlike other professions, police officers do not struggle with identity crises. Questions such as: "Who am I?" and "Where am I going?" are not frequently thought about. Issues such as "identity searching" and "death awareness" are not of concern. Officers, who had received promotions, had positive attitudes towards the future and further career development. Those who were not promoted wished for retirement and generally complained about their work and supervisors.

In general, police officers show an increase in self-respect and self-esteem when they experience a sense of accomplishment. One of the more troubling aspects of police officers' self-concept, is their possible belief that citizens do not respect them, or give them little status or prestige. This feeling may even lead to defensiveness and a perceived misunderstanding by the public at large, concerning them as individuals (Yarmey 1990). This further supports the premise that even though police officers are expected to have high standards, they are being regarded as being of low status.

2.8.3 Police officers' Attitudes

Police work may be characterized as not only physically dangerous, but also psychologically dangerous. Lester (1979, 1987) as cited in Brewer and Wilson (1995, p. 377) suggests that the attitudes of police officers in the USA may be more negative than those of the average citizen.

After considering research on police officers' attitudes, Griffin and O'Leary-Kelly (n.d.) concluded that:

"...there seem to be relatively few meaningful conclusions that can be drawn regarding attitudes of police officers. Education, race, age and tenure, career orientation, locus of control, assault experience, marital status, numerous workplace characteristics, and the social context all seem to affect job satisfaction and, potentially, organizational commitment. However, the nature and patterns of these relationships are often contradictory. Likewise, the linkages between attitudes and key outcome variables such as stress and turnover are similarly confused and open to alternative explanation." (Griffin and O'Leary-Kelly, n.d., as cited in Brewer and Wilson, 1995, p. 384)

This statement suggests that studying attitudes of police officers may be a complex task. However, in research attempted by Steyn (2005), this complex task was simplified by dividing the research data into clusters. He identified differences in the attitudes of new recruits in the SAPS according to the following classifications:

i. Attitude differences by gender:

In general, females seemed to have a more positive opinion regarding policing. Although females were more inclined to have cynical attitudes with regards to police community relations, they had more positive opinions regarding salary increases, and were more supportive of the Justice System as compared to male participants. Males indicated stronger attitudes towards police morality, and felt that their spouses or partners did not really understand what being a police officer is all about. Females, however, did feel that their spouses or partners indeed understood them better in this regard, and they were of the opinion

that the shift work that officers have to adhere to, did not significantly influence their social lives.

Marais and Mostert (2008) also found differences in how males and females perceive their job. They suggest that males perceive their work activities as more demanding than women, and that men find it difficult to separate their work lives (demands and difficulties experienced at work) from their personal lives.

ii. Attitude differences by Ethnicity:

Black and Coloured participants preferred socializing with their work colleagues as opposed to socializing with people external to the police (including previous friends). White participants believed more strongly than Blacks, Indian, and Coloured participants that their spouses or partners did not understand what being a police officer was all about. The Indian participants, however, did feel that their spouses or partners understood them in this regard. Coloured and Indian participants believed more strongly that members of the police are at all times being critically observed by members of the community. The Indian participants were the group identified as believing most strongly that top ranking officials in the SAPS do not really know what happens on field-officer level.

iii. Attitude differences by SAPS family membership:

Participants with members of family in the SAPS agreed more that police officers are careful of how they behave in public. They agreed that police officers have to look out for each other, and that people would steal if they knew they would not get caught.

2.8.4 The overall effect of a career in the police

The researcher has already suggested the definite influence a career in the police services may have on the individual. Research on the SAPS consistently highlight a significant negative impact in officers lives, including increased rates of illness, post-traumatic stress, medical boarding, burnout, alcohol abuse and suicides, as well as decreased levels of job satisfaction and job performance as compared to norms for South Africa's general population (Nel and

Burgers 1998; Nel 1994; Pienaar 2002; Rothmann and Agathagelou 2000; Rothmann and Strijdom 2002 as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel, 2004, p. 17).

Otto (2002) as cited in Jorgensen and Rothman (2007, p. 73) states that police members may experience high levels of stress and trauma; and that exposure to crime takes a heavy toll on officers. Otto (2002) also reported that members of the SAPS suffer from severe post-traumatic stress, obsessive-compulsive disorder, major depression, panic attacks and suicidal ideation. The researcher focuses on the following as significant areas of concern in the lives of police officers: Stress, Suicide, Coping mechanisms, as well as Work Engagement.

2.8.4.1 Stress

It is assumed that police work entails a certain amount of risk and difficulty. Due to the violent nature of police work, experiencing stress and coping with stress may become a difficult task that place heavy burdens on many police officers.

Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004) are of the opinion that police officers are being subjected to inordinate levels of stress. According to a study conducted by the South African Police Services in 2001 regarding the effects of trauma, it was found that 44% of its members in Gauteng were at risk of qualifying for a psychiatric diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (South African Police Services, 2001b as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel, 2004, p. 20).

Kurke (1995) as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004, p. 18) divides the stress related to police work into three categories:

i. Organizational stressors

Work-related conditions such as shift work and lack of supervisory support. Violanti (1997) as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004, p. 18) proposed authoritarian structure, lack of participation in decisions, lack of administrative support, a punishment-centered philosophy and unfair discipline as factors contributing to organizational stress in police work.

ii. Operational stressors

Includes the life-threatening nature of police work – being shot at and shooting others, working in a disaster situation and other critical incidents.

iii. Situational components

Unique to specific situations such as when dealing with extremely violent individuals.

It was of interest for the researcher to learn that the organizational structure of the SAPS causes stress to police officers. Even more surprising, was to learn that the organizational structure was *the* most stressful contributing factor to police officers when considering their experiences of stress (Pienaar and Swanepoel, 2004). These stressors include officers' lack to handle specific tasks, inadequate quality of equipment, members not carrying their fair share of work-load, poor motivation from other fellow officers, as well as inadequate salaries and staff shortages. This was corroborated by the research of Rothmann, Storm and Wiese (2003) as cited in Jorgensen and Rothmann (2007, p. 74), which found that excessive paperwork, staff shortages, an insufficient justice system, other officers not doing their job, as well as inadequate or the poor quality of equipment were perceived as severe stressors.

Minnaar and Mistry (2006, p. 43) identified other stressors in police officers partaking in their research study:

- i. Poor working conditions.
- ii. Lack of equipment and resources.
- iii. Shortages of vehicles.
- iv. Poor salaries.
- v. Police officers' perceptions regarding the rights of criminals as being more than police members and the public.
- vi. Lack of proper debriefing and post-trauma counseling.
- vii. Inadequate counseling services.
- viii. Work overload and too many cases to investigate.
- ix. Unsuitable refresher training.

- x. Perceptions that criminals have become more violent.
- xi. Promotions being delayed through cases being opened against SAPS members.
- xii. The slow process of disciplinary hearings and criminal cases (extensive delays before finalization).

The effects of these stressful phenomena are far-reaching. Symptoms as a result of these phenomena include deteriorating work performance, negative psychological states resulting in depression, anger and burnout, as well as psychosomatic or physical conditions (Burke, 1998 as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel, 2004, p. 19).

2.8.4.2 Suicide

Rossouw (1999, 2000) as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004, p. 19) identified other factors besides the stressful working environment that may ultimately lead to incidences of suicide in the SAPS. These included relationship problems, financial problems, alcohol abuse, health problems, and disciplinary cases against police officers. Several reports in the media were identified that have highlighted the significant presence of suicides of police members in Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004). A report by Jorgensen and Rothman (2007) also identifies significant suicide rates of SAPS members in the North-West Province.

International research has indicated an elevated rate of incidences of suicide with individuals in law enforcement as compared to general populations (Berg, Ekeberg and Hem 2001; Janik and Kravits 1994; Marshall, Petralia, Vena and Violanti 1996; Violanti 1997 as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel, 2004, p. 18). Whitaker (1979) also mentions that at one point, the suicide rate within the New York Police Department was 50% above that of the rest of the city's inhabitants.

Reported reasons for these suicides ranged from job stress, work-related causes, constant exposure to violent and traumatic scenes, and a lack of social support. (Cornelius, 2006; Jordaan 2005, Sa Joe 2003 as cited in Jorgensen and Rothmann, 2007, p. 74). Janik and

Kravitz (1994) as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004, p. 20) also argue that suicidal behavior is stimulated by occupational stress. Best, Fagan, Metzler and Lieberman (1997); Brown, Cooper and Kirkcaldy (1996); Lennings (1997) as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004, p. 20) all found that routine occupational stressors are more stressful to police officers than their regular exposure to dangerous and critical incidences. The only other phenomenon experienced as equally stressful for police officers, was the release of criminals (i.e. the unfairness of the justice system). This happens when criminals are released on the basis of technicalities when procedures are neglected.

2.8.4.3 Coping with their work environment

From within psychological perspectives, we acknowledge the existence of coping mechanisms to reduce stress and successfully navigate difficult situations. In the previous sections, the researcher highlighted the significant presence of difficult phenomena in the form of stressors that may ultimately result in suicide. The researcher attempts to identify and understand police officers' coping mechanisms.

According to Lennings (1997) as cited in Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004, p. 20), some police officers appear to lack appropriate problem identification and decision-making skills. This suggests that some police officers may have poor coping responses. In general, the internal coping mechanisms police officers employ are aimed at minimizing stress and anxiety created by their working environment, as well as to guide both attitudes and behaviors (Steyn, 2008). Steyn (2008, p. 41) cites the following coping mechanisms which are transmitted through the socialization process across occupational generations:

- i. Suspiciousness

Aimed at reducing or controlling the uncertainty associated with the dangerous occupational environment.

- ii. Maintaining the "edge"

Regarding the ability of officers to display their authority that officers believe may minimize the potential danger in a situation.

iii. “Lay-low” or “Cover-your-ass”

This is a consequence of police supervisors’ focus on rule violations. It discourages officers to draw attention to themselves, avoiding situations of risk that may later be second-guessed.

iv. The “crime fighter” image

This is seen as the “ideal image” of what officers should strive for (i.e. the cultural ideal), which emphasizes a strict law-enforcement orientation.

When considering coping mechanisms offered by external sources, such as counseling and debriefing offered to SAPS members, Minnaar and Mistry (2006) found that many of their research participants did not have a favorable impression of the counseling services offered by social workers. Respondents emphasized that social workers employed by the SAPS did not understand the environment in which police officers worked and the situations they had to cope with. Research participants stated that they relied more upon one another - the so-called “buddy system”, as well as their unit commanders for support. Other coping mechanisms identified were engaging in hobbies and social activities. The participants were adamant that persons who counseled them should have a police background (Minnaar and Mistry, 2006).

2.8.4.4 Engaged police officers

Despite the above-mentioned phenomena and demanding work environments, it is expected that not *every single* police officer finds his or her work environment negative. Some individuals find it to be inspiring and productive. Psychological research has started to acknowledge the importance of shifting its focus from identifying the outcomes of burnout, towards paying attention to its opposite: Engagement (Maslach 2003; Bakker and Schaufeli, 2004 as cited in Jorgensen and Rothman, 2007, p. 74).

Work Engagement is defined by Bakker and Schaufeli (2004) as:

A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and duty absorption (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2004 as cited in Jorgensen and Rothman, 2007, p. 75).

Research by Jorgensen and Rothman (2007) indicates that some SAPS employees do not show signs of burnout, despite exposure to demanding work environments for long hours. These “engaged” officers find pleasure in working hard and being confronted with their job's demands. Jorgensen and Rothman (2007) found that Engagement is positively related to growth opportunities and organizational support. They suggested that job resources contributed to *wellness* at work (low burnout and high work engagement). Thus, members having adequate resources at their disposal experience support from the organization and are, therefore, more committed to the SAPS. Jackson, Rothman and Van de Vijver (2006) as cited in Jorgensen and Rothman (2007, p. 81) recorded similar findings. It was found that job resources contributed to high work engagement and low burnout, whilst a lack thereof seems to contribute to burnout amongst SAPS members.

Marais and Mostert (2008) focused on other spheres of police officers' lives. They regard the interaction between work and home to be the most important spheres in the lives of employed individuals. Research conducted by Den Ouden, Montgomery, Peeters and Schaufeli (2003); Cronje, Mostert and Pienaar (2006) as cited in Marais and Mostert (2008, p. 71) found that if a positive interaction between work and home environments exists, police officers had high levels of work engagement and life satisfaction.

2.9 Corruption in the police

Smit (1999) defines corruption as the following:

“Illegal conduct or misconduct involving the use of occupational power for personal, group or organizational gain” (Smit, 1999, as cited in Prinsloo, n.d., p. 64).

In 1999, criminal charges were brought against 5 726 police members. 1 014 (17.7%) Cases were withdrawn due to lack of evidence, or because vital witnesses could not be found at the time of going to trial (Grobler & Joubert, 2004). In a statement, the National Commissioner is reported as having said:

“We have 127 000 policemen with the responsibility of providing policing for 43 million people. The high number of police officers being killed on duty had led to

policemen taking out many life insurance policies. This led to a situation in which certain policemen take home R46 after deductions. If such a policeman is then offered a bribe, he will have to be a pope to reject the offer” (Sowetan, July 13, 2000, as cited in Singh, 2004, p. 91).

The above-mentioned statement serves the purpose of suggesting the possibility of the presence of corruption in the SAPS. Examples of police corruption include the theft and sale of case dockets, the sale of confidential information and investigations, extortion, blackmailing members of public, as well as not arresting offenders in exchange for rewards. Prinsloo (n.d.) mentions the negative consequences of corruption, which include a general mistrust between community members and the SAPS, threatening economic growth, causing police inefficiency, as well as strengthening the link between organized crime and corrupt officials.

In attempting to understand possible reasons for the existence of corruption, Whitaker (1979) claims that *authority* can have a dangerous effect on some individuals; being entrusted with certain powers on a leash. They may come to think that these powers hold them free from any responsibility by intrinsic or even divine right, and start to confuse the public interest with their own dignity and prerogatives. The responsibility and powers given to officers are enormous, and it is surprising that not more are corrupt.

Strong efforts are being implemented in an attempt to eradicate corruption within the SAPS. There exist no fewer than ten official independent bodies in South Africa investigating and combating incidences of corruption in some form or manner (Prinsloo, n.d.). There also exist non-governmental structures combating corruption and commercial crime (Smit, 1999, as cited in Prinsloo, n.d., p. 65).

2.10 Independent Complaint Directorate (ICD): The official “watchdog” policing the SAPS

A further attempt to correct the wrongs of the past and to increase credibility of the SAPS has been the provision for the establishment of the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) by

the Police Service Act. This Directorate serves as the main monitoring body (independent from police structures), responsible for the receiving and investigation of complaints and possible misconduct by police officials (Singh, 2004). South Africa is not the first country to implement the establishment of such a monitoring body. International equivalents of the ICD include the Independent Complaints Commission of the United Kingdom, the Police Ombudsman of Australia, the Independent Police Complaints Council of Hong Kong, as well as the Independent Police Complaints Authority of New Zealand (Dintwe and Montesh, 2008).

The establishment of a monitoring body seems justified. Reports by the ICD claim an increase in deaths of suspects whilst in police custody as a result of police action for the periods April 2003 and March 2004, as compared to the same periods for the previous year. Police misconduct and serious criminal offences by police officers also increased within the same periods (Singh, 2004).

Other reports claim that police torture is rife in South Africa. This statement is supported after the findings released by the Wits Law Clinic regarding police torture. The findings revealed that in nearly all cases reviewed, the police stood accused of employing the "tried and trusted" apartheid-era methods of torture. (Mail and Guardian, November 10, 2000, as cited in Singh, 2004, p. 90).

According to Walker (2005) as cited in Dintwe and Montesh (2008, p. 163), use of excessive force, unjustified shootings, race discrimination, as well as a general lack of accountability for officer conduct have been serious problems since the early 19th century. However, Dintwe and Montesh (2008, p. 173) suggest that in South Africa's democracy, the "hunters" have become the "hunted". It would seem that in attempting to eliminate bad elements in the SAPS, it focuses on highlighting the wrong-doings of the crime fighters, in stead of increasing efforts to fight crime itself. This pertains to the emphasis of eliminating the practices and policies from the previous non-democratic regime.

It would seem that the ICD is not without its problems. Dintwe and Montesh (2008, p. 172)

identify the following problems and limitations to the ICD:

i. Independence

The ICD reports to the Minister of Safety and Security, which does not support its independence.

ii. Limited policing powers

A waiting period of at least nine months is expected before an arrest can be effected. This is seen as a serious injustice with regard to the proper functioning of the ICD. The South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995, as well as the SAPS Amendment Act 83 of 1998, does not make provision for the ICD to implement findings and recommendations. This results in the ICD being regarded as a “toothless dog”, which inhibits the ICD’s attempts to root out poor service delivery.

iii. Limited mandate or jurisdiction

Law enforcement agencies exist that carry firearms in the execution of their duties, but are excluded from the assigned jurisdictions of the ICD.

iv. Accessibility to the public

The ICD has nine offices throughout the country. The geographical location of so few offices makes it difficult for ordinary citizens to access their services, especially in rural areas.

Whitaker (1979) explains that in a world where police officers experience increasing pressure for visible results; policemen may feel beleaguered and endangered – as is the example in France – where officers united and became more defensive and hostile towards the public. Their stance was felt and the sentiment returned by the public, causing a revolving door syndrome where secrecy and violence from the police, increased reciprocity on the part of the public. Minnaar and Mistry (2006) report similar attitudes in the USA regarding organizational structures and departmental policies as a source of stress. Officers in the USA feel anxious about the increasing threat of criminal prosecution and even imprisonment for using a level of force that they feel was legitimate in a given situation. As a consequence, officers second guess themselves on what actions to take, which endangers their lives in high risk situations.

These reports correlate with, and emphasize the negative perceptions police officers have concerning the monitoring of their actions and the stress imposed by organizational structures upon SAPS members as mentioned previously.

2.11 Phenomenology and the link to psychology

Through their existence, people constantly change their social constructions. In everyday life, we as individuals are constantly influencing others' beliefs and thinking through interpersonal encounters. One's encounters with others may influence one's perceptions and behaviors.

Edwards (2001) states that:

... in its fundamental form, phenomenology is interventionist. From an epistemological/ontological perspective, research, psychotherapy and the learning and teaching situation is a matter of coming into (intervening in) another(s) world of knowledge/being (p. 2)

The phenomenological method used in this study is based firmly upon the method of dialogue. The dialogue between the researcher and the respondents was to form the basis of their relationship. Phenomenological research requires sensitivity, subjectivity and objectivity from the researcher due to the close relationship formed between the researcher and the respondent, as well as the sensitivity and intensity of the phenomenon under study (Holloway and Wheeler 1995; Janhonen, Koivisto, Latvala and Väisänen, 2001 as cited in Janhonen, Koivisto and Väisänen, 2002, p. 264). Thus, the researcher understands that an interviewer for phenomenological research must be able to create a relationship of trust so that subjects will disclose their personal information and experiences.

Halling and Leifer (1991) identify the two elements within dialogue: Structure and Freedom. It is the structure that provides the basis for the conversation, and it is the freedom that fosters the spirit of exploration and discovery. If these two elements are both present and supported, a foundation of trust and cohesiveness may emerge that allows for deep expansive dialogue from participants. In so doing, a research participant moves into a position of vulnerability

where they may open up and extend themselves and their feelings. This move resembles some of the basic elements of psychotherapy, although the direction of the dialogue always moves back to the phenomenon itself and the experience thereof.

It is from within these premises that the researcher suggests a link between psychology and utilizing the phenomenological method. Although this form of intervention focuses on the topic under investigation, it is assumed that the respondents gain some form of therapeutic benefit by sharing their experiences.

The idea of phenomenology as a form of intervention is not new. Van den Berg (1980) as cited in Edwards (2001, p. 3) had previously implied that phenomenology is psychotherapeutic in its potential to bring about change. The researcher regards the interviews conducted as having the potential to generate new insights for the participants through the interview dialogue, which may ultimately lead to behavioral change.

2.12 Résumé

In this chapter the researcher has reviewed the literature that is relevant to the objectives of study, which is to inform the discussion of results. Various aspects within policing and its structures were considered in an attempt to create insight into the SAPS and its members. Recent research on policing and the SAPS presented an illustration on the history and current stance of law enforcement in South Africa, and the current crime situation and its perceived effects. The researcher also highlighted aspects of life in a policing career, psychology and policing, corruption in the police, the ICD, as well as the possible link between the phenomenological method and psychology.

In the following chapter the methodology followed during fieldwork practice and data gathering will be presented. The chapter will also outline and describe the method of data collection and how it was analyzed so as to achieve the research goals.

Chapter Three

Research design and Methodology

"The 'forces' that move human beings, as human beings rather than simply as human bodies...are 'meaningful stuff'. They are internal ideas, feelings, and motives."

Jack Douglas

(Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 6)

3.1 Introduction

Research methodologies are plans utilized in the pursuit of seeking answers and gaining new knowledge. These methodologies lay out previous developed paths, which, if followed by researchers, are supposed to lead to valid knowledge. These paths are drawn on maps based on assumptions about the nature of human understanding. An alternative methodology was used: that of a qualitative design following the phenomenological paradigm.

This chapter documents the design and methodology followed during fieldwork practice. It provides a discussion on the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology, its assumptions concerning the nature of human understanding and its applicability to this study. The chapter does not offer an elaborate philosophical discussion of phenomenology, but will only outline these assumptions insofar as it pertains to a method of conducting research. The chapter also outlines and describes the method of data collection and how it was analyzed so as to achieve the research goals.

3.2 Understanding Phenomenology

The word "phenomenology" consists of two components: *phenomenon* and *logos*. The philosopher Martin Heidegger defines the basic meaning of *phenomenon* as "that which shows itself in itself". *Logos* is defined as: "to let something be seen from itself". Synthesizing the two together, phenomenology may be seen as: "to let that which shows itself in itself be seen from itself" (King, 1964, p. 153).

As Spiegelberg (1971) comments, there exists a notorious difficulty in attempting to state simply what phenomenology actually is. Even after having established itself as a philosophical entity in the late 1900's, it has developed and reinterpreted its own meaning constantly to such an extent that it is almost impossible to rely on a standard definition on the construct.

Lester (1999) attempts to provide a broad definition of the concept of phenomenology as following:

"Phenomenology is a philosophy concerned with the study of experiences from the perspective of the individual person, identifying assumptions and the usual ways of perceiving and interpreting. Phenomenological approaches are based on personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such, these methods are powerful tools for understanding subjective experiences, gaining insight into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of general assumptions and conventional wisdom. Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at uncovering the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions" (p. 11).

Edmund Husserl (1962) was of the opinion that phenomenology's focus was on the descriptive study of consciousness, or, since it is the nature of our consciousness to contain objects, a study of consciousness-of-objects. For phenomenology, the individual and his subjective experiences are the focus.

From a psychological perspective, we would consider the above mentioned definitions to focus on the person's *subjective experiences*. We as researchers cannot directly observe others' subjective experiences of consciousness, whether they be emotional, cognitive or otherwise. For the researcher, phenomenology is the focus and study of these processes of consciousness.

3.3 The philosophy of Phenomenology

3.3.1 Tracing the development of Phenomenology

Phenomenology as a philosophical entity is based upon the thoughts of its acknowledged founder Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), as well as subsequent researchers of the phenomenological movement. Other significant contributors to this movement include Franz Brentano, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Spiegelberg, 1976). Tracing the development of phenomenology begins at a consideration of its forefather: Existentialism.

Existential philosophy emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth century as a reaction to traditional philosophies such as rationalism and empiricism. The founding name synonymous with existentialism is that of the Danish thinker Søren Kierkegaard (1813 – 1855) (Grimsley, 1960). The main theme of existentialists is their argument against “the reduction of man to an abstraction” (Grimsley, 1960, p. 14). For Kierkegaard, it was imperative that philosophy address itself to the existence of the individual and attempt to understand the fundamental themes with which human beings struggle with in their lives (Halling, 1995). The researcher understands existentialism as positing that individuals create their own meaning and essences in their existences. It postulates the absence of any transcendent force, which means that individuals are free, and therefore, ultimately responsible for their own existence.

Phenomenological roots lie within existential thought. It was not founded: It grew (May, 1958 as cited in Halling, 1995, p. 7). Phenomenology is seen as a tool of existentialism, an extension of some sorts, and developed from its assumptions. Although it cannot be traced to a single authoritative source (Halling, 1995), the German philosopher Edmund Husserl is credited as the primary proponent of phenomenology. Husserl was the student of Franz Brentano whose descriptive psychology seemed to offer a solid base for a scientific based philosophy (Spiegelberg, 1975).

For Husserl, philosophy’s aim meant the rigorous and unbiased study of things as *they appear*, so as to come to new understandings of human consciousness and its relationship to the objects in experience (Halling & Valle, 1989). Among others, Brentano’s concept of

“intentionality” was of particular interest to Husserl. This concept refers to consciousness’s constant existing relationship to some object of consciousness, whether imagined, perceived, or thought of (Halling, 1995). It focuses on the underlying connection between subject and object and remains a central concept in phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1982). For Husserl, human intentions are directed toward objects in a particular way. (Halling, 1995). He was of the opinion that our acts and thoughts, which are based upon these intentionalities, were of great importance in attempting to study and understand consciousness (Spiegelberg, 1975).

Husserl insisted on returning “to the things themselves” through the clearing away of assumptions and preconceptions about experience. This clearing away, or “*Epoche*”, promotes an attitude of “openness towards phenomena” for the researcher. Husserl conceived the procedure of “phenomenological reduction”, which is similar in meaning to “*Epoche*”:

It refers to the procedure a researcher engages in so as to bracket one’s everyday beliefs in the existence of realities independent of us (Halling, 1995, p. 7).

This means that the researcher suspends his preconceived thoughts concerning a field of study, so as to bypass past habits of thought and intention that lead us to confuse our own theories with genuine knowledge.

Phenomenology has branched off into many different directions. One such branch, which is of relevance to the study, was the system of interpretation developed by Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976). Heidegger was an assistant of Husserl who later went on to develop his own conception of phenomenology: Hermeneutic Phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1971).

3.3.2 Hermeneutic Phenomenology

In tracing the thoughts of Heidegger, we see a convergence of existential concerns of Kierkegaard and the phenomenological method originally developed by Husserl (Halling, 1995). Heidegger’s analysis of human existence was a means towards answering the question of the meaning of *Being* (Spiegelberg, 1982). For him, the goal of philosophy was the concern of the objective *Being*, rather than the subjective consciousness.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is defined as the theory concerned with bringing out the normally hidden purposes of such “goal-determined things-in-being” as human beings. (Spiegelberg, 1971, p. 350). The concern of his hermeneutic phenomenology is to uncover the hidden phenomena, and particularly the meanings that the individual attributes to them. It attempts to investigate the hidden aspects of phenomena – trying to make them directly accessible rather than leaving them in the realm of merely hypothetical explanations which can only be indirectly verified. Heidegger formed the use of the concept “Hermeneutics”, which is defined as:

Hermeneutics is a method for researchers, which involves formal procedures that enable understanding and interpretation (Mohamed-Patel, 2002, p. 27).

Hermeneutics uses methods that go beyond mere description of what is manifest and tries to uncover hidden meanings in consciousness (Spiegelberg, 1971). It can be described as the science of interpretation and understanding (Kockelmans, 1987 as cited in Mohamed-Patel 2002, p. 26).

Since the research is concerned with the meaning attributed by police officers, the researcher is of the opinion that this alternative kind of perception is needed to facilitate understanding. The researcher utilizes this method of Hermeneutics in attempting to analyze what it means to be part of the SAPS.

3.3.3 The Philosophical assumptions underlying Phenomenological Research

Phenomenological research is located in the post-positivist tradition (Mohamed-Patel, 2002). It is descriptive (Idhe & Silverman, 1985) and qualitative (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975), and has a special realm of inquiry – the structures that produce meaning in consciousness (Halling & Valle, 1995). The researcher understands phenomenological research to differ from other “descriptive” and “qualitative” approaches due to its focus on the research subject’s experienced meaning instead of mere descriptions of overt behaviour.

Every individual attaches a specific meaning to an experience, event or phenomena. The locus

of phenomenological research is human experience, and it approaches the topics of interest in psychology through their presence in conscious awareness. Phenomenological research's investigates and describes phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation; and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions (Spiegelberg, 1975). Its emphasis essentially is to *describe* rather than *explain*, focusing more on "*What?*", rather than on "*Why?*".

3.4 Phenomenology and its link to Psychology

This alternative research method seeks to understand the "life-world" of subjects. The phenomenologist is concerned with "understanding human behavior from the actor's frame of reference" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 2), and to "understand the behavior within the context of the experience" (Giorgi, 1983, p. 137). The phenomenologist views human behavior – what people say and do – as a product of how they interpret their world. In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behavior, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). This translates into gathering information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant themselves (Lester, 1999).

Phenomenology illuminates specifics. It identifies phenomena which are perceived as important by that person in a given situation. Within this paradigm, the meaning a person attributes to his or her experiences is key. In utilizing this research methodology, the researcher makes no attempt to test or prove a hypothesis, but rather to position the research subject under the microscope. The researcher zooms in on what the individual deems as important in their thinking patterns.

Within this endeavor, the researcher is required to free himself from the criteria and practices of traditional paradigms. The shift from the collection of numerical data to linguistic qualitative data must be accompanied with a shift in theoretical context. According to Giorgi (1994) this shift in state should be overcome in order to strengthen qualitative research.

"The researcher's phenomenological task, then, is not to specify in advance what reality is like but to describe the nature of reality as taken up and posited by the research participants" (p. 203).

Halling and Valle (1989, p. 45) divide phenomenological based enquiries into two types:

1. Enquiries focusing on how objects are presenting to the various modes of conscious experience (such as perception and memory).
2. Enquiries focusing on how meaning presents itself to experience.

The research commits itself to the second type mentioned. In experience, events appear as meaningful – both the external worldly objects and happenings, as well as our own thoughts and feelings. Although experience is meaningfully ordered, it is difficult to describe. For the researcher, the purpose of the research is to produce clear, precise, and systematic descriptions of the meaning that constitutes the activity of consciousness in police officers.

Spiegelberg (1975) highlights a main problem for phenomenologists:

"How do we obtain direct access to another human person and their consciousness?" (p. 40).

Giorgi (1994) is of the opinion that more and more practitioners are moving towards non-quantitative methods of conducting research. More researchers are recognizing the limitations of mainstream paradigms with regards to qualitative research. He feels that the varieties of qualitative research methodologies available being generated today are due in part to human science researchers being inspired by different philosophies thematizing different aspects of complex phenomena that constitute the matter of human science.

Most mainstream research investigating human consciousness has retained a commitment to the philosophical principles of positivism – which stress observable and measurable phenomena (Halling & Valle, 1989). Positivistic methods may focus on phenomena such as

brain wave activity, and comparing left and right hemisphere activity of split-brain subjects – assuming that these phenomena may correlate with different types of mental activities. The researcher is of the opinion that methods based on the philosophy of positivism may present with inadequacies as it attempts to study more complex activities of consciousness such as emotions, cognitions and mental abilities.

Incorporating the research of Halling and Valle (1989, p. 45), the researcher lists reasons as to why the psychological study of the processes of consciousness is problematic:

- i. Our consciousness differs in significant fundamental ways from natural objects - it cannot be examined under a microscope, or objectively observed by another.
- ii. It is presented to us as a complex of interacting phenomena – there exist different levels of abstractions, awareness's, processes and states.
- iii. Accessing consciousness and its phenomena is problematic. Usually, the data collected when conducting research is several times removed from the actual flow of experience. Even our conscious acts of introspection and reflecting effects a change in our awareness.
- iv. Individually, we have only direct awareness of one consciousness – *our own*. Researchers must be wary of this as they interpret reports from others describing their own experiences.

Phenomenological research holds that the unique characteristics of consciousness require a distinct kind of science, utilizing data-gathering procedures and processes designed specifically for developing general descriptions of experiential processes (Spiegelberg, 1975). Giorgi (1994) is of the opinion that phenomenology is an alternative qualitative research methodology that is able to answer research questions relating to structure of consciousness in such a way that other methodologies struggle to do.

The researcher highlights that this research endeavor is a basic explorative study merely contributing to the current existing body of knowledge. The elements of phenomenological methodology provide a way in which phenomena appear in one's consciousness. The

researcher has attempted to highlight these basic elements, and is of the opinion that the philosophy of phenomenology provides a firmer base from which to develop a research design to study consciousness and its flow of experience within the context of law enforcement. Its set of epistemological principles is different than the set used in positivist psychology. These principles seem more suited in exploring, for instance, how a phenomenon, such as being held at gun point, constitutes itself in the typical unfolding of our experience.

3.5 Concerning validity, reliability and generalization of phenomenology

Halling and Valle (1989) emphasize one of the main purposes of phenomenological research: To describe the structure of an experience, not to describe the characteristics of a group who had the experience.

Rather than seeking to describe the mean and standard deviation of a group as it relates to the experience, the researcher has highlighted phenomenological research's concerns with the nature of the experience itself. Due to phenomenology's research goals and qualitative design, participant selection is limited to only a few members. Research subjects are used to generate a fund of possible elements and relationships that can be used in determining the essential structure of that phenomenon. In using phenomenological type research, validity and reliability may be of concern due to its focus on the individual, rather than the masses. With this statement, the researcher recognizes phenomenology's limitations to generalizing its results to other populations.

Phenomenological research absolutely requires that the researcher "bracket" his preconceived assumptions concerning the field that he is studying. Naturally, there exists a constant danger that the fieldworker remains the victim of his own preconceived assumptions which may have bearing impact on his results. Giorgi (1994) encourages phenomenologists to have an adequate awareness of their presuppositions, and that they should bracket them so as to ensure that they may be self-critical in a systematic way when analyzing data.

3.6 Steps to Phenomenological research

The researcher combined the different steps offered by Halling and Valle (1989, p. 46) as well as Giorgi (1994, p. 206) to form a chronological procedure in the phenomenological investigation. The format for this investigation involves the following interrelated steps:

- Step 1 **Research question:** The researcher identifies an area of experience to explore. In the case of this investigation, it was the subjective experiences and meanings attributed by police officers concerning their employment in the South African context.

- Step 2 **Data gathering and capturing:** Phenomenology is a descriptive exercise. The phenomena to be studied have to be described precisely as they present themselves, neither adding to, nor subtracting from what is given. The researcher gathers and transcribes naïve descriptions from a number of individuals who are having had the experience under investigation.

- Step 3 **Data analysis:** The researcher engages in a systematic process of evaluation and analysis of the data to achieve the goal of the research - producing a research report that gives as accurate and clear as possible description of the research participant's experiences.

- Step 4 **Results presentation:** The results are presented in the form of a discussion format. The goal of this discussion is that the reader should walk away with a feeling of: "I now better understand what it is like for someone to experience that".

3.7 The Investigation

3.7.1 Problem and question formulation

In Chapter One, the researcher presented an 'expose' on the research investigation. The development and motivations of the research were clearly stated, as well as the research

goals. In Chapter Two, the researcher also attempted to provide relevant literature and past research concerning the research theme and its constituents.

3.7.2 Data collection methods and fieldwork practice

The researcher considered it essential to participate directly in data gathering, which allowed him to learn about the experience of being a police officer and to obtain some notions about the experience's structure.

3.7.2.1 Participants selection

Subjects were chosen who were able to function as informants by providing rich descriptions of the experience being investigated. The target population for this study was specific in its regards to finding active police officers. Candidate selection was based on certain criteria.

The criteria set out for candidate's selection were as follows:

- i. The candidate is an active police officer.
- ii. The candidate is a member a police station in the Uthungulu district.
- iii. The candidate use of the English language is adequate.
- iv. Good rapport to be established between researcher and subject.
- v. The candidate is willing to express themselves appropriately for the purposes of research.
- vi. The candidate is able to express his views and provide a full and sensitive description of the experience under investigation. He or she must provide opinions in a clear and logical manner, so as to obtain rich and accurate data.

After identifying these criteria, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique to select research participants based on whether or not they met the criteria.

The goal of subject selection was to obtain rich and varied descriptions, not to achieve statistical generalization. The researcher attempted to choose an array of individuals who provided a variety of specific experiences of the topic being explored. Thus, in considering

factors such as rank, age, gender, years of experience, as well as personal circumstances – none of these factors had bearing on candidate selection.

The participant pool was made up of members from various ages, ranks, gender, as well as differing in active years of service. The total participant population included ten (10) active police officers including 7 males and 3 females. The mean age for the research participants was 35.8 years, and the mean for years of service in the SAPS was 11.74 years.

The rationale for using multiple-participant research was based on how the strength of inferences to be made may increase once identified factors start to occur within more than one participant. This in turn, influences validity and reliability positively.

3.7.2.2 The Interview

In psychological research based upon a phenomenological perspective, the usual purpose of gathering data is to collect naïve descriptions of the experience under investigation. These descriptions provide specific instances from which the researcher can tease out the structure of consciousness that constitutes the experience (Halling & Valle, 1989).

In phenomenological research, the researcher may use written questionnaires or interviewing techniques in the data gathering process. Face-to-face interviews allow the researcher to help the subjects move toward non-theoretical descriptions that accurately reflect the experience being studied. Stevick (1971) explains her preference for interviews:

“Written questionnaires employed in the pilot studies yielded responses of a distant and highly reflective nature. The experimenter’s [written] questions also prestructured the phenomenon for the subjects. Recorded interviews are found to correct these problems” (p. 135).

For this reason interviewing as a data collection technique was chosen. Non-structured as well as structured interviews were considered in the research. The main focus was generation of

data providing as accurate a reflection of the experience, rather than asking structured questions. The researcher wished to obtain as accurate a description of what it is that the respondents felt and experienced. It was decided that unstructured-type interviews would be the best strategy to generate as rich data as possible. As Gognolons-Ciallard and Markson (1971) highlight, the great advantage of a semi-structured or non-directive interviews is its flexibility, which allows the investigator to grasp more fully the subject's experience than would not be possible through the implementation of a more rigid methodology.

In the interview, subjects were asked to describe in detail, examples of their experience with the topic being investigated. Each participant was interviewed individually at a time that suited them. Some participants were interviewed at the police station itself, whilst others preferred a more private venue. The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured, and enough time was allocated to explore the topic of the study in-depth. The goal was to put the participants at ease so that they could converse freely and without interruptions.

The research followed a set of three guiding questions which lay the foundation for data gathering, but the interview process itself gave way to a vast number of topics and experiences related. The interviews' lengths differed depending on both the amount of self-reflection the participant felt comfortable with, and the verbosity of each individual. The average time per interview was around 25 minutes each, with the longest being 1.5 hours, and the shortest 14 minutes.

In utilizing semi-structured interviews in data capturing, the following questions were asked as general guidelines for the generation of data:

1. What does it mean to you to be a member of the SAPS in South Africa today?
2. What has been your experience(s) in this profession? (positive and negative)
3. Does any stress experienced affect any other areas of your life? If so, what areas, in what way and to what degree?

"A statement made by the subject which is self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single, recognizable aspect of the subject's experience" (p. 117).

Each of the N.M.U.s conveys a different meaning which emerges spontaneously from the readings.

- Step 3** These N.M.U.'s are then to be clustered into common categories and/or themes. The aim is to connect natural meaning units with one another and with other protocols.
- Step 4** After having delineated the natural meaning units, the researcher attempts to state the meaning that dominates that natural unit. This step interrogates each meaning unit and its themes. The researcher draws out from each unit of the protocol those aspects that are related to the topic under investigation. He then "redescribes" or "transcribes" these descriptive meanings into scientific psychological language.
- Step 5** The researcher integrates the results with the construction of themes that emerge, which are then to be presented in report form.

The general flow of steps are as follows: (a) The original protocols are divided into meaning units, (b) the units are transformed by the researcher into meanings that are expressed in psychological and phenomenological concepts, and (c) these transformations are tied together to make a general description of the experience.

3.7.4 Reporting

Reporting on the data gathered will focus on three areas:

i. **Summary**

Findings according to what was said by the participants are presented under

the various themes and topics that were identified. The main aim is to describe what was said, rather than explain.

ii. Discussion

Here, a deeper analysis of the data allows for interpretations and identification of links between various variables and themes. These findings may then be compared to previous research and commentary, so as to develop possible tentative theories. This section will provide a deeper understanding of the data gathered.

iii. Conclusions

This section provides an opportunity to be creative with the ideas developed through the discussion. It may suggest ways forward for future research in this field. Key areas of concern and important findings may be emphasized.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The research was an endeavor which attempted to step into the worlds of others. The research material gathered for this study was considered private. Therefore, prior permission to commencement, as well as informed consent had to be obtained from relevant constituents.

For the purposes of the research, permission to conduct research on police officers was obtained. The research study was introduced and discussed with the relevant authorities involved. The station commander at the Police Services branch in question was presented with a letter applying for permission to conduct the research study (see Appendix A).

Each research participant was required to sign a letter of consent before participating in the research study (see Appendix B). Each participant was approached with the possibility of enlisting in the research. Clear information regarding the study and what it entailed was presented. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary and that if, at any time, they wished to withdraw from participation, they could do so without providing reason. Participants

were also informed that any personal information would be dealt with in a professional and private manner. As mentioned previously, only the researcher and research supervisor had access to the data obtained from the study. The interview transcripts will be kept in storage so as to protect the identity of the research participants.

Pseudo names were used to provide participants with anonymity. All material resulting from the research process will be kept safe.

3.9 Résumé

In this chapter the researcher has documented the research methodology that was utilized during fieldwork. The methodology that was used was that of a qualitative design following the phenomenological paradigm. A discussion on the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology was presented, highlighting its assumptions concerning the nature of human understanding and its applicability to this study. The chapter has also outlined and described the method of data collection and how it was analyzed so as to achieve the research goals.

In the following chapter the researcher will outline and discuss the results of the fieldwork. A report on each participant's protocol will be presented, in an attempt to come to a new understanding concerning being employed as a police officer in the South African context.

Chapter Four

Presentation of the data

Men are wise in proportion, not to their experience, but to their capacity for experience.

James Boswell

(www.quotationspage.com accessed November 21, 2008)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline and discuss the results of the fieldwork at the time of interviewing for the ten individual protocols. A report on each participant's protocol will be presented. The information for this section is composed of the field notes of each meeting and the transcripts thereof. Due to the small geographical region, transcriptions of the interviews are not included so as to protect the identity of research participants. A brief introduction is given for each participant, followed by a summary of the interview and an analysis thereof.

4.2 The Research Participants

The researcher provides information regarding participant demographics. It is inferred that these elements would have influence in their response patterns, and should be considered when presenting the data. These elements are explicated in table form (Table 4A).

Participant number	Participant pseudo names	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Years of experience
P1	Terra	21	Black	Female	1yr 11months
P2	John	25	Black	Male	2
P3	Holly	35	Caucasian	Female	17
P4	Albert	45	Caucasian	Male	21
P5	William	39	Caucasian	Male	17
P6	Daniel	39	Black	Male	12
P7	Luke	46	Black	Male	20
P8	Marlene	25	Black	Female	1yr 6months
P9	Steven	33	Black	Male	4
P10	Patrick	40	Black	Male	21

Table 4A: Demographic data of the research participants

4.3 Analysis and discussion of Terra's experience (P1)

Terra is a 21 year old female with dependents. She has been employed as a police officer for the last 23 months.

Summary of Terra's experience

Terra described her experiences of working as a young officer in the SAPS. She commented on various topics and gave a description of her feelings and perceptions regarding her employment and the impact it has had on her.

Although she was apprehensive to admit it, Terra did acknowledge her true reason for joining the SAPS. She explained the difficulty she had in finding stable employment, especially considering that she is a single mother. In the interview itself, the researcher noted that Terra presented with difficulties in answering what it meant for her to be part of the SAPS.

When contemplating further professional development, she did not offer an opinion there

either. Terra did not seem to be troubled by this, as she reported that she does not wish to invest a career in policing, but rather wishes to further herself as an educator.

Her perception regarding this type of work is mostly positive, and she seems to experience little stress. She enjoys working at her stationed branch, but does experience some persecution from fellow community members who know her personally. She feels she has to choose between remaining loyal to those members whom she knows to be criminals, and the commitments of her employment. She did, however, explain that she is able to make a clear decision - she knows where she stands towards these specific community members. She described herself within the policing role, and that others must understand that she stays true to her professional commitments.

Identifying the individual themes

4.3.1 Terra's perception of police employment

Terra noted that employment in policing had taught her much. She has experienced both positives and the negatives aspects to being a police officer, although she was unable not elaborate much on specific elements.

4.3.2 Other's perception of her as a police officer

Terra stated that others' perception of her had changed after she had joined the SAPS. These perceptions tended to be negative. Others accused her of betraying her loyalties to those individuals whom she knew to be criminals in her local community before joining the SAPS. Terra described the commitments one undertakes in this employment by separating herself from those accusing her of betraying community members.

4.3.3 Why Terra joined the police

Terra admitted to joining the SAPS due to the limited opportunity of any alternative employment. She stated she would rather choose to become an educator, and does not intend on making a career for herself in the SAPS.

4.3.4 What it means for Terra to be part of the SAPS

Terra noted that her responsibility as an officer is to maintain order in the public. She was unsure of her personal attachment to employment in the SAPS.

4.3.5 Experiencing stress

Terra reported not experiencing much stress in this employment. She likes her position at her stationed branch.

4.3.6 Possibility of professional development

Terra was of the opinion that she does not have a strong chance of furthering her professional career within the SAPS due to the limited opportunities available.

4.3.7 The police's fight against crime

Terra reported a good perception regarding the SAPS and their fight against crime. She felt that the SAPS are effective at stopping crime, and that they would win this battle in the long-term future. Her opinion was based upon the idea of the SAPS working in conjunction with the communities to combat crime.

4.4 Analysis and discussion of John's experience (P2)

John is a 25 year male with dependents. He has been employed as a police officer for the last 2 years.

Summary of John's experience

John described his experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. He commented on various topics and gave a description of his feelings and perceptions regarding his employment and the impact it has had on him.

John has a positive perception concerning his employment in the SAPS. He is proud of his position, and feels he makes a difference in the community. He conducts himself in a professional and courteous manner, and wishes that people in the community would treat him in the same regard. John was able to reflect on how this employment had impacted him, and identified various areas of his life that has been affected. He felt that policing was a positive experience in his life, as he has become more responsible. Although he did not initially realize that he would benefit personally from policing, he felt this employment is enabling him to develop as a person. He has come to new understandings concerning the community and attempting to solve their problems.

John compared policing in the pre- and post-apartheid era. He felt that the situation might have been better in the days of apartheid when civilians still feared the police. Civilians respected police then, as opposed to the present where police officers are not given due respect.

Currently, John does not experience employment-related stress, and although he experienced much anxiety in the initial stages of employment, it has subsided significantly. He admitted to the difficulty in dealing with the traumatic incidences that police officers were exposed to. However, he identified healthy mechanisms of dealing with these phenomena, including exercising, socializing with friends, as well as avoiding things that were negative and would cause him stress.

He acknowledged his reasons for joining the SAPS. At first, his motivations were based upon his need for stable employment, but later he and his family noticed how he was reaping personal benefits through growth and development. John enjoys working at his stationed branch, but does, however, feel that the building itself needs some renovations so as to promote a positive working atmosphere.

John views the police environment as the place where he is able to form a clear picture of himself. Even though he is labeled as a member of the SAPS, he is also a normal part of society as a community member. When considering the future, John would like to stay in this career, however, although he would prefer to earn a higher income.

Identifying the individual themes

4.4.1 John's perception of police employment

John noted that he is proud of being employed as a police officer. He likes his job, and he is of the opinion that he makes a difference in peoples' lives.

4.4.2 John's attitude towards his work

John explained that he conducts his work in a professional manner to the best of his abilities. He treats people with respect, and wants others to show him the same courtesy.

4.4.3 Comparing the Police Services to the Police Force

John noted a comparison between today's era and the previous apartheid era – where police officers used the element of force in conducting their work. John stated that policing in the apartheid era might have been better than at present. He focused on how many people disrespect police officers presently, as compared to how people used to fear the police force then.

4.4.4 The impact of this employment on John's life

John noted the impact this employment had had on his life. He has experienced positives and negative aspects. He identified the following aspects:

i. Changes in John's life

John commented how this employment had changed him as an individual. He mentioned how he has developed as a person and has become more responsible. This was a positive experience in his life, which gave him strength.

ii. Developing and gaining from his employment

John noted how he could observe this employment developing him as an individual. John explained he was progressing and developing professionally and personally. He felt he is able to reap benefits from being employed as a police officer. Although he focused on his understanding concerning the community and attempting to solve their problems, he was unable to elaborate.

iii. Experiencing stress

John stated that he does not experience stress in his life due to this employment.

iv. Experiencing anxiety

John reported on how he experienced anxiety in the event of shootings and dealings with criminals. These experiences of anxiety were experienced not as intensely as when he was newly employed. He deals with these feelings by relying on his religious beliefs by engaging in prayer and quite-time.

4.4.5 Dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena and stress

John explained his attempts to deal with the violent phenomena and the stress that accompanied employment in the SAPS. He admitted that seeing injured people was difficult, and deals with these feelings by exercising, staying around friends, as well as keeping clear from things that he experienced as negative and would cause him stress.

4.4.6 Why John joined the police

John noted his reasons for joining the SAPS. He claimed that he was unable to find stable employment; however, joining the SAPS was a good decision, due to the benefits he and his

family noticed he was gaining. He had developed in his personal and professional capacity. He is glad to have joined the SAPS.

4.4.7 Considering his branch

John explained he enjoys working at his stationed branch, although there are some things he would have changed if he was the acting commander. His changes would focus mostly on the building structure itself and the necessary changes that would have to take place to ensure a positive working atmosphere.

4.4.8 Future considerations

Overall, John indicated that being employed as a police officer has several positive aspects. He did, however, state that the low income he earns tends to create problems in his personal life as he is the breadwinner and has dependents to support. Although he experiences these problems, he expressed that his intentions are to remain in this career.

4.4.9 What it means for John to be part of the SAPS

John reported that the SAPS is the place where he forms a clear picture of himself – of who he is. He has come to understand that even though he is part of the police services, he is merely a member of the community. He claimed that this forces him to develop as a person.

4.5 Analysis and discussion of Holly's experience (P3)

Holly is a 35 year old female with dependents. She has been employed as a police officer for the last 17 years.

Summary of Holly's experience

Holly described her experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. She commented on various topics and gave a description of her feelings and perceptions regarding her employment and the impact it has had on her.

Holly is currently at the rank of Captain level and is satisfied with this position. However, she admitted that currently she does not love her job. She has lost dedication to the work, which she blames on the lack of competence and support from management levels in the SAPS. This lack of competence and support from management influences Holly negatively, although she accepts the responsibilities her position as a leader entails. She experiences this employment as intrusive into her personal life, something which she struggles to regulate successfully. On many occasions, she has been placed in a position where she must solve problems that others have created, even if these problems interfere with her personal life.

When considering the future, Holly would choose to leave policing as a career, if an opportunity arose. She felt that the people in the SAPS are not conducive to a positive working environment, which influences work productivity. She was of the opinion that her work is influenced to such a degree that she neglects her service to the community. She does not experience the accompanying violent phenomena of this employment as a problem.

In considering her extensive career in the SAPS, Holly contemplated how she has changed as a police officer. Initially, she felt invincible, but ageing and experience, as well as having a family, has influenced her to consider her actions and decisions more thoroughly. She explained that policing has developed her into a tough person. When considering the change in the employment itself, she felt that policing and its policies have shifted its focus to politics and do not consider "serving the community" as the primary objective anymore. She was of the

opinion that the political influences are infringing on police officers' rights to defend themselves. These influences have had a direct negative bearing on officers' abilities to do their jobs effectively. In her opinion, the legislature that regulates how police officers conduct their work is inappropriate, and the newly developed guidelines are too complex and impractical to enforce – examples of this include the policing concepts of “Optimal utilization of manpower”, as well as “Visible policing”.

Although she is content with her position, she does note the shortcomings of her stationed branch itself and the problems experienced when working there. She compared her experiences at her current branch to other locations she has been stationed at previously. She focused on the following areas concerning her current branch: Gross incompetence and poor work commitment; the influence of the Zulu culture; the unique work-setting and challenges presented when working in a rural police station; illiteracy; as well as enforcing the law in a small close-knit community.

Holly admitted that she felt apprehensive when she was given command of her own unit (from hereon referred to as a relief). This apprehensiveness was based on her gender – not knowing how African males would respond to her in the leadership role. However, she experienced no problems and knows that her members have accepted her as their leader. Holly was proud of her abilities as a leader and the relationships she has been able to develop with her relief's members. She felt that leadership in some other reliefs is lacking. She has trust in her members and their work, and allowed them more freedom within their work environment based upon this trust. She stands up for them and provides support where needed - this influenced her relief's work input positively.

In its totality, Holly is not proud of her employment in the SAPS. There are many aspects which she is not satisfied with, including poor service delivery, civilians' intrusiveness into her personal life, as well as the ill-treatment of crime victims. Holly claimed that management support in the SAPS is of poor standard. Her station commander does not assist her when she has work-related problems, which forces her to take her own initiative in attempting to resolve

problems at work. If her initiatives fail, her management refuses to take responsibility. This lack of support influences her work performance negatively.

Holly was of the opinion that many individuals do not consider policing as a career, but rather merely an opportunity to earn a salary. These individuals do only the bare minimum so as to collect their salary. Officers' overall dedication to the work has decreased, and Holly does not completely understand the reasons for this. She has experienced numerous negative phenomena in the SAPS: Discrimination, fast-tracking with regards to promotions, communication barriers, being threatened personally, unethical work practices, as well as poor work commitment. She also voiced a strong negative opinion concerning the phenomena of police officers being intoxicated whilst on duty.

Holly was of the opinion that civilians are influenced by their own perceptions to expect too much from the SAPS. She believed people's perceptions are based on what people see on international television programs. The police have a lack of resources, and civilians are unaware of the specific methods employed by the SAPS to cope with this lack. The lack of resources influences the SAPS's ability to solve crimes – some resources are difficult to obtain, as well as slow to respond. Some officers are even forced to engage in active duty without the use of the necessary safety equipment or arms. This has a direct influence upon these members' remaining families in the event of being killed whilst on active duty.

Holly described the specific treatments different units receive - based on their specialization. Specialized units receive more support from management as compared to the general units. This influences the work performance of the specialized units positively. This does, however, foster animosity between specialized units and general units. She recalled the restructuring of the SAPS specialized units in October 2006 and the negative consequences it had. The only specialized units that are still in existence are The Golden Diamond Branch, The Stock Theft Unit and The Commercial Crime Unit. This restructuring has had negative consequences upon the SAPS's ability to combat specialized crimes.

Holly was of the opinion that the SAPS top management at head office in Pretoria is not fully aware of the needs of field-level officers, as well as not having the ability to plan and manage resources appropriately. She noted significant differences in policing when comparing urban to rural areas. The allocation of new resources and technology favors the larger metropolitan areas, and consequently, this makes the methods of policing different in rural areas as compared to larger cities. In larger cities a police officer is constantly engaged, as compared to the quiet rural branch she is currently stationed at. This frustrates her, and she was unable to understand the rationale behind the allocation of more members to her current relief in a rural setting when considering the work-load differences, as compared to when she was employed at a larger station.

Holly noted the methods by which officers attempt to deal with their personal problems, which she believed are directly linked to their employment. These methods include alcoholism, domestic violence, suicide, as well as applying for a transfer to a different police station. This has led to Holly questioning the effectiveness of the support structures provided to police members. There exists a negative stigma in the police culture itself – focusing negatively on one having problems whilst being employed in the SAPS. This stigma stated that one should not be a police officer if one is not able to deal with the traumatic phenomena one is exposed to. This stigma leads officers to feel intimidated to speak out if they were experiencing personal problems. She did not feel this stigma will ever change, and that officers would continue to feel intimidated when needing help. This reinforces Holly's perceptions that support structures are ineffective in the SAPS.

Holly's family has traditionally chosen to enter into the police services. In line with this, Holly chose to join the police services many years ago. Although she and her family are proud of her achievements, she related many negative aspects and phenomenon experienced during her career. Even though Holly's children have accepted her employment, she felt that none of her children will follow in the family footsteps as they are not interested in her career as a police officer. She was pleased with this, due to her opinion that police officers are restricted in their duties because of political influences. Crimes committed by criminals tend not to be dealt with

effectively.

Identifying the individual themes

4.5.1 Why Holly joined the police

Holly commented on the reasons why she joined the police many years ago. Law enforcement has been in her family history. Her father and grandfather were employed in the police. This influenced her in making her decision to join the police. In some respects she is glad with the decision, and in others not. This opinion was based on the positive and negative experiences in the SAPS.

4.5.2 Holly's family's attitude towards her employment

Holly noted that even though her family is proud of her past achievements, her mother in particular is not very positive towards her work and the commitments it required. Holly's children have accepted her employment, mostly due to other family members also being employed in the same field. She felt that none of her children would consider becoming police officers themselves, as they are not interested and would like to follow other career fields.

4.5.3 Dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena

Holly commented that "pursuing murderers" does not affect her personally. It is one of the requirements of her job and accepted it as that.

4.5.4 Developing through years of service

Holly contemplated how she as a police officer has changed through her years of service. She noted that in the early stages she felt significantly more invincible as compared to the present. She felt that ageing and experience, as well as having a family, made her consider her actions and decisions more thoroughly. She believed she has become a more grounded person.

4.5.5 Holly's children following in the family tradition

Holly noted that she would not want her children to join the SAPS. Her reasons were based upon her perception that criminals have become more organized in the recent past, that they

have better access to resources, and that they do not have to adhere to regulations and laws like police officers have to. She believed criminals are free to do as they like, while police officers are restricted in their duties by legislature.

4.5.6 How policing had changed through the years

Holly stated that policing has indeed changed to such an extent that political influences are infringing on police officers' rights to defend themselves. These influences have negatively impacted policing and police officers' abilities to do their jobs effectively. Holly commented on how she feels that policing is not a career opportunity as such anymore, but rather mere employment. She felt that many individuals do only the bare minimum so as to collect their salary. Policing has shifted its focus to politics, and is unable to serve the community effectively. Dedication from police officers has decreased and she did not understand the reasons why.

4.5.7 Negative experiences in this employment

Holly commented on numerous aspects having a negative impact on her and on the effectiveness of the SAPS achieving their goals:

i. Discrimination against gender

Holly claimed that she experiences gender discrimination in the SAPS, even though she did not provide examples for this claim.

ii. Measuring job performance

Holly commented on the unethical practices in measuring job performance in the SAPS. The reasons for these practices are based upon the large amount of paperwork involved, and that people procrastinate when assessing their employees. The consequence of this is that the work is done quickly and inaccurately so as to complete the assessments by their due dates. She noted how these performance rating procedures are not efficient in their implementation, and subsequently personnel may be placed in professional positions to which they are not qualified for. This makes her feel very frustrated. She claimed that there is no monitoring

system in place to ensure ethical measuring of job performance.

iii. Fast-tracking promotions of ill-qualified personnel

Holly focused on what she felt were “fast-trackings” with regard to promotions. Some individuals more qualified than others are not being considered for promotions. This has occurred in her own relief – which caused her personnel to feel that she had not stood up for them when they applied for promotions. She stated that there are incompetent managers due to these fast-trackings. These promotions are based upon ratings that are not a true reflection of the person’s abilities, due to the fact that there are personal connections between the staff members and the persons designated to check performance levels.

iv. Communication barriers

Holly reported that the communication barriers between her and complainants at the police station are a major hindrance. It makes her ineffective at her job and this frustrated her.

v. Being threatened personally

Holly recalled how she has been stationed at a rural police station previously. She left her post there due to personal threats she and her family received, which were related to the political unrest existing there at the time.

vi. Poor commitment to the work

Holly mentioned how some officers are not happy with others’ commitment to their work. She made a distinction between hard-working and lazy individuals.

vii. Police officers intoxicated whilst on active duty

Holly commented on how many police officers attend work whilst intoxicated. This occurs not only at her current branch, but also at other stations she has previously worked. She related an example of a member found to be intoxicated whilst on duty. However, no departmental steps were taken against the officer. This suggests a lack of consistency regarding discipline.

4.5.8 Holly's current rank and possibility of promotion

Holly stated that her current rank is that of a Captain. She is satisfied with this level, and had recently been offered a higher post. She declined the position because of the accompanying commitments of the position.

4.5.9 Considering her stationed branch

i. Gross incompetence and poor commitment

Holly compared her experiences at her current branch to other locations she has been stationed at. She characterized her branch as one of gross incompetence. Some individuals are committed to their job and others not. This is not specific to the branch itself, but is prominent in the whole Umfolozi area.

ii. The influence of culture

She claimed that the culture which the Zulu people live by does indeed have a negative influence in how these individuals conduct themselves professionally. Some individuals neglect being punctual, which is based on poor discipline. This has a negative influence on her job performance.

iii. Unique challenges

Holly felt she was unable to adequately explain the reasons why working at this specific police station was different to others. She noted some of the unique challenges that one faces at her stationed branch. It presents with difficult challenges such as being situated in a remote area, different environments with specific crime tendencies, the need for custom crime prevention plans, as well as the rotation of officers allocated to specific areas.

iv. Illiteracy

Holly noted that some officers employed at her stationed branch are almost illiterate and are unable to speak adequate English.

v. Enforcing the law in your own community

Holly admitted that enforcing the law in a small community, where members are closely-knit, is difficult. As a result, frequent rotations are enforced so that police members' objectivity is not influenced. These rotations do not seem to influence the officers much.

4.5.10 Holly's unit's loyalty

Holly stated that there is animosity between other reliefs' members and shift commanders. Her relief's members have been requested to work in other reliefs in an attempt to increase those reliefs' performance levels. Her members are unwilling to work in other reliefs, due to the relaxed atmosphere fostered, as well as the freedom she allows her members which other captains are unable to grant.

4.5.11 Holly as a leader

Holly noted that even though she also rates her subordinates' performances; she experiences no problems in conducting these assessments. She felt the police officers she is in charge of are dedicated to their work. She has previously been accused of giving her members special treatment due to her willingness to defend their actions. She claimed that the good performance of her relief may be attributed to her leadership and the effort she invests in her relief's members. Leadership in the other reliefs is lacking, and Holly provided an example to support this statement.

She reported that when she was given command of her relief, she was apprehensive in the initial phase, not knowing how African males would respond to following orders from a Caucasian female. She has, however, experienced no problems, and feels that her members have accepted her as their leader. She supports them and they are appreciative of that support.

4.5.12 Future considerations

Holly mentioned that if an opportunity arose to leave policing as a career, she would do so. Her motivations would be based on the people in the SAPS, not the work itself and the

accompanying violent phenomena.

4.5.13 What it means for Holly to be part of the SAPS

Holly noted that she is apprehensive to tell others that she is part of the SAPS. She becomes angry when others report poor service received from the SAPS. There are many small aspects that Holly is not satisfied with, including civilians' intrusiveness into her personal life, as well as the ill-treatment crime victims received.

4.5.14 Lack of management support

Holly claimed that management support is of poor standard. Police management expects members in leadership positions to solve any and all problems. If they were unable to do so, management notes it as a poor reflection on one's managerial skills. She was of the opinion that her station commander does not assist her when she has employment-related problems. These problems are not resolved.

Holly stated that due to the lack of management and support, she is forced to take her own initiative in attempting to resolve many problems at work. When these initiatives fail, management questions her reasoning behind her decisions taken, and they refuse to take responsibility for her actions.

She noted that individuals are being appointed leadership positions which they are not adequately qualified for as they did not possess the necessary experience or knowledge of how to lead others. Even though those appointed are required to attend training courses, there was a large increase in promotion rates in the last 12 months which could not be accommodated for by the training facilities.

4.5.15 Political influences

Holly stated that the political influences in the SAPS frustrate her significantly. The legislature that regulates how police officers conduct their work is inappropriate. These guidelines are too complex and impractical to enforce.

4.5.16 The impact of this employment on Holly's life

Holly claimed that policing has allowed her to develop into a "tough" person. She experienced the employment as intrusive into her personal life, which is difficult for her to manage. On many occasions, she is placed in a position where she has to solve problems that others create.

4.5.17 Others' expectations of her as a police officer

Holly stated that civilians expect considerably a lot more from the SAPS, due to the influence of what they see on international television programs. The SAPS have limited resources which are only accessed when clear indications exist.

4.5.18 Lack of resources and management thereof

Holly mentioned how the lack of resources in rural areas influences the SAPS's ability to solve crimes in those areas. She compared their area to larger metropolitan areas, and noted the impractical logistics in attempting to access specialist forensic utilities when working on murder cases. These resources are difficult to obtain, as well as slow to respond.

Holly stated that newly appointed officers are forced to engage in active duty without the use of the necessary safety equipment and arms. This has a direct influence upon these members' families in the event of death whilst on duty. If an officer is killed whilst on active duty, and s/he was not wearing a bullet-proof vest, then no financial compensation would be paid to the remaining family members. Some members in her own unit are not appropriately armed for service, which resulted in her being forced to leave them at the station office during a shift.

4.5.19 Different units receive different treatment

Holly described how different units are treated based upon their specialization. Specialized units receive more support from management as compared to the general units. This influences the work performance of the specialized units positively. Due to the negativity fostered by this difference in treatment, there exists animosity between specialized and general units.

4.5.20 Restructuring of the SAPS's specialized units and its consequences

Holly stated that SAPS specialized units were restructured in October 2006. All the specialized units were disbanded and incorporated into different police stations. The only specialized units that are still in existence are The Golden Diamond Branch, The Stock Theft Unit and The Commercial Crime Unit. This creates a lot of animosity for many members, and Holly felt fortunate that she was not in a specialized unit at the time of disbandment. This restructuring has had negative consequences upon the SAPS's ability to combat specific crimes.

4.5.21 Holly's attitude towards her work

Holly admitted that, currently, she does not love her job. She is not as dedicated as before, which is based upon the lack of competence and support from management levels in the SAPS. This lack of competence and support influences Holly negatively, and she felt her work was impacted to such a degree that she neglects her service to the community.

4.5.22 Increase in promotion rates

Holly claimed a salary increase in the SAPS is the result of a promotion in rank. The method of identifying individuals for possible promotions is unethical, which results in a negative perception of the SAPS from within its own members. These unethical methods are based upon personal relations with panel members, unreliable performance enhancement documents, as well as no interviews being conducted with any of the possible candidates.

4.5.23 Poor leadership and planning

Holly reported that top management at head office in Pretoria is unaware of the needs of field level officers, as well as not having the ability to plan and manage resources appropriately.

4.5.24 Abundance of vehicles

Holly noted that her stationed branch currently has a sufficient amount of police vehicles.

4.5.25 Preference to larger metropolitan areas

Holly commented that the allocation of new resources and technology favors the larger

metropolitan areas. Consequently, this makes the methods of policing easier in larger cities as compared to rural areas. .

4.5.26 Comparing policing in larger cities to rural areas

Holly stated that there are significant differences in policing when comparing urban areas to rural areas. In larger cities a police officer are constantly engaged, as compared to the relaxed atmosphere of their rural branch. This frustrates her, and she is unable to understand the rationales behind the allocation of more members to her relief in a rural setting, as compared to when she was employed at a larger station with fewer staff members.

4.5.27 Optimal utilization of manpower

Holly expressed her confusion surrounding the allocation of more members to her relief at her stationed branch. Holly believed that manpower is being utilized ineffectively and inappropriately. For example, when she was employed at CR Swart Square Durban Central Police Station, staff responded to more complaints per shift, even though there was less manpower than at her current branch.

4.5.28 Visible policing

Holly noted that the concept of visible policing is sabotaging the efforts of police to combat crime. Police officers cannot use covert methods to track down criminals or solve cases. She believed it to be impractical as a crime deterrent to the unique circumstances of their rural branch.

4.5.29 Dealing with personal problems in the SAPS

i. Employee Assistance Program

Holly explained the support structures that the SAPS has developed to assist their members. The Employee Assistance Program is a hotline that members can phone when they are experiencing difficulty in dealing with work-related problems and phenomena. She questioned their ability to assist police officers in dealing with trauma and believed them to be ineffective. She was unable to understand how a counselor will be able to assist an officer in dealing with

work-related problems affecting his or her personal life, if that counselor has never been exposed to the same phenomena as police officers have.

ii. Negative stigma attached to having problems

Holly stated that the Employee Assistance Program is a futile attempt to assist their officers. Her opinion was based on the negative stigma attached to staff having problems whilst working in the SAPS. This stigma states that one should not be a police officer if one is not able to deal with the traumatic phenomena one is exposed to. Officers feel intimidated to speak out to others if they are experiencing personal problems.

iii. Methods of coping

Holly noted the methods by which officers attempt to deal with their problems related to their employment. These methods include alcoholism, domestic violence, suicide, as well as applying for a transfer to a different police station. She explained that there are possible misunderstandings that exist between a police officer and their spouse, such as a spouse who is unable to comprehend what the police officer is experiencing at work. She felt she is fortunate, due to her husband also being employed in a law-enforcement organization. This results in both individuals being in a more informed position to provide support for each other in difficult times.

iv. Changing the stigma

Holly claimed that the stigma surrounding police officers and their problems has been long-standing, and that it will always exist.

4.6 Analysis and discussion of Albert's experience (P4)

Albert is a 45 year old male with dependents. He has been employed as a police officer for the last 21 years. Albert's wife accompanied him to the interview and contributed to some of the interview topics.

Summary of Albert's experience

Albert described his experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. He commented on various topics and gave a description of his feelings and perceptions regarding his employment and the impact it has had on him.

Albert decided to join the police based on the perceived similarities between this profession and the military. He had enjoyed his conscription to the military, and subsequently furthered his career in the police. However, if provided the opportunity now, he would rather leave the police services. His rationale for remaining in the police is based upon his inner pride for the work itself, as well as having no skills in other areas which would allow him to pursue an alternative career. Although he does enjoy the work itself, he experiences much frustration based upon the poor support provided by management. He is proud of his professional achievements and the criminal cases he has solved. For Albert, being part of the police was a passion which has dwindled. This passion was more intense when he was younger, however, currently he experiences no passion for the police. He does not go beyond the scope of his required commitments as he did in the past.

At present, Albert described the summary of his experiences in the police as mostly negative. He experiences discrimination in his career based upon his race. Albert admitted to feeling a constant underlying threat to losing his employment, and the well-being of his family. He was of opinion that Caucasians are not considered for promotions, which influences their opportunities for career development. He also felt that Caucasians are being dismissed from active duty without significant reasons. Further, poor candidates are selected for promotions, which are based upon unethical performance ratings and corrupt officials. Albert is frustrated at not being considered for promotion. He has been in the police services for 21 years and feels

he has been neglected in this regard. A major problem for Albert is the general laziness and lack of accountability which has developed amongst police officers. He emphasized that individuals in senior positions present poor examples to their subordinates, such as the poor work attendance and few disciplinary actions taken towards those who do not adhere to policing regulations.

Albert made a comparison between pre- and post-apartheid policing. He recalled that in 1994, the Police Force was renamed the Police Services. He experiences a definite decline in work standards and discipline since this conversion – describing the older generation of police officers as “true to their work”, and the newer generation of police officers as “corrupt in their duties.” This is based on the “older generation’s pride in themselves”, as compared to the younger officers who lack discipline and pride. Some officers in this “younger generation” steal from the community and issue verbal threats of violence against community members. Albert also experiences colleagues disrespecting seniors by not conveying the due respect to higher ranking officers, as traditions in the police would prescribe. In the years prior to 1994, he experienced his work as being less corrupt and stressful, a more positive environment to work in, as well as the police having been more effective in achieving their goals. He claimed that individuals’ motivation to work hard, as well as support from higher management, as reasons for this difference. The medical aid scheme provided for police officers has also been altered. In the past, medical aid was not deducted from an officers’ salary - it was a free benefit of working for the police. Currently, a large deduction is made from Albert’s salary for medical aid benefits. Even though the medical aid scheme is of high standard, he feels this deduction is unfair due to the dangerous nature of the work and the personal risks police officers engage in.

Enforcing the law and meeting one’s professional commitments has become significantly more difficult for Albert. Conducting one’s work as an officer without the influence of corrupt government officials is a constant struggle, and many officers become despondent. This despondency influences some to such an extent that they tend to conduct criminal activities themselves. An example of this includes how some police officers serve as informants for criminals – warning them from raids of premises. Albert also experiences a negative influence

from the local Zulu culture. He described this culture as one of laziness, which influences some officers' professional conduct. He felt that reporting corruption is not an option, as there is a threat to one's life. No one reports bad elements out of fear for their own well-being and that of their families. Even reporting corruption to an anonymous tip line has little benefits due to the courts' emphasis on empirical evidence and declarations from credible witnesses.

Albert described a significant presence of corruption in the SAPS, where police officers assist criminals in their illegal activities. According to Albert, the corruption is due to the poor salaries officers receive, which has been a long-standing problem. They receive little compensation even though they engage in a high-risk work of vital importance in the community. It is Albert's viewpoint that this element of corruption may be eradicated if salaries were increased. Many deductions are made from Albert's salary, some paying for benefits which his family does not require. Albert does not welcome salary increases due to the increases made to his salary's deductions. After these adjustments, his salary increases minimally. Thus, the increases are not seen as earning a higher income, based upon the increase in one's deductions as well. Senior management benefits more from these increases due to their high income brackets, with few deductions made. After deductions, Albert earns almost R3000 per month.

Concerning high ranking officials, Albert was of the opinion that individuals such as Jackie Selebi and Charles Nqakula were inappropriate candidates for the high ranking positions which they had obtained. He felt these individuals were not knowledgeable concerning police employment, and not in an informed position to understand the police sector and oversee the running thereof due to their lack of personal experience in the full spectrum of policing. Albert felt that individuals considered for such positions needed to be exposed to the phenomena the lower ranking officers engage with. He also believed certain policies that government has developed are inappropriate and ineffective, hindering the effectiveness of the SAPS. He felt the government regards the rights of arrested criminals as of more importance than those of the families affected by their crimes. Certain procedures and laws developed are impractical in their application to fighting crime. These procedures and laws exist only in South Africa, and did not exist in the previous era of the Police Force.

Albert experiences a poor standard of management support. On the odd occasion of him needing guidance in a case, he claimed he receives little support from management. Management is not interested in his well-being, provided that his work is done. Albert felt the support and faith officers received from management in the pre-apartheid era outweighed the efforts experienced at present. Albert described the existence of a monitoring body in the SAPS as a negative. This monitoring body only exists to exploit cases with a potential for definite conviction which results in media publicity. This influences his willingness to engage criminals with his firearm, for fear of being charged for professional misconduct in the event of a shooting. He also experiences a lack of rewards and recognition that is bestowed on officers, which causes a poor morale in the SAPS. Currently, only certain individuals' actions are recognized which Albert feels is based upon their race.

Albert has become accustomed to the nature of his employment, and experiences no problems in dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena. The stress he experiences from his employment he attributed to the SAPS's increasing powerlessness, as well as the political influences from higher management - the influence of an official "watchdog" on the activities of police officers. Their involvement into police officer's actions and decisions is confusing for Albert due to the inappropriateness of the nature of the regulations they attempt to impose on officers. According to the laws set out by government, criminals may conduct themselves in any matter they wish, and have more rights than law abiding citizens. He does not agree with these principles. He also experiences some form of a sleeping problem which he believes is related to his employment. Previously, one could obtain professional assistance from Eshowe regional office if one experienced personal problems. Since its closure, one has to seek assistance from a professional in the private sector. The costs of these services are covered in the medical aid provided for police officers.

Albert felt that being employed as a police officer keeps him away from his family for most of his day due to the work commitments required of him. Even whilst being "on standby", Albert is unable to commit to formal gatherings at his local church due to his work responsibilities. He viewed the working schedule that police officers have to adhere to as impractical, especially if

one pursues criminals at specific times of the day (i.e. during lunch time or shift-changes). On occasion, Albert works past his required working hours or does not have a lunch break due to his workload. He also experiences frustration from the deductions made from his salary for the weekly sports and recreation afternoon that police officers are required to engage in. Albert does not engage in sport activities due to his workload.

Considering his stationed branch, Albert is not compensated in any manner for overtime that is not officially mandated. He has highlighted this grievance to his union, although no response has been issued. Albert felt much frustration at not having appropriate action taken towards his complaints due to his perceived powerlessness. He experiences his station commander as a racist, possessing poor management skills, lazy, incompetent, as well as having no accountability for his actions or decisions. The station commander is unable to deal with his personal problems appropriately, which influences the manner in which he deals with his subordinates negatively. Albert experiences the procedure for rating individuals in the Performance Enhancement Program at the station as illogical and unreliable. He is confused because no feedback is given, and feels cheated due to others developing professionally whilst he receives no compensation or recognition for his professional inputs.

Albert claimed that the information provided to the public concerning issues in the SAPS is false. Police statistics paint a misrepresentation of the amount of crimes officers have to deal with. There exists a general lack of knowledge from the public at large. They are unaware of the frustrations and negative phenomena police officers have to cope with. Albert's local church community is also unaware of the necessary sacrifices he has to make which influences his attendance to church, as well as fostering mistrust between these community members and Albert himself.

Albert experiences the forensic capabilities for South Africa as inadequate. These units are understaffed and evidence analysis is too lengthy. Some of his pending cases have been dismissed due to the forensic evidence not having been analyzed when court proceedings commenced. Albert felt that privatizing certain elements of the SAPS would not be beneficial,

due to past problems they have encountered with private companies. Ascribing certain functions to private companies is potentially dangerous due to the SAPS having to rely fully on these companies for important services. He was, however, of the opinion that the forensic specialties may be considered as a potential candidate due to the lengthy backlog of cases.

Albert was of the opinion that crime based on poverty is illogical and unnecessary. There are many employment opportunities available. He felt it is the unrealistic standards individuals have towards work and the salary which they expect, that encourages those individuals not to work and stay at home. People are too lazy to earn an honest day's pay for working hard. Also, Albert experiences the lack of general discipline in youngsters as influential in fostering criminal behavior.

Concerning community members who take the law into their own hands, he identified with their frustration experienced. Community members are of the opinion that they are not receiving justice for the crimes being committed against them. This is based upon the circumstances to which criminals are sentenced to. Criminals are sent to jail where they receive benefits and luxuries at the cost of general tax payers - the community members the criminal committed the crimes against. Albert was of the opinion that it is unfair that criminals should be awarded these luxuries and comforts, whilst law-abiding people do not have access to these utilities and suffer from poverty.

Identifying the individual themes

4.6.1 Why Albert joined the police

Albert stated that he had been employed in the post office, but was not stimulated in that profession. He had completed his conscription to the military, and enjoyed his experiences there. He decided to join the police based on the similarities between the two professions.

4.6.2 Albert's perception of police employment

i. Displeased due to discrimination

Albert noted that he is not pleased with his work environment due to the discrimination he

experiences based upon his race. He is not able to leave this career due to his lack of skills in other fields.

ii. Frustration when no support is provided

He admitted that he enjoyed his employment, but he experienced frustration when no support was provided upon request. Albert claimed that one had to be a strong character to be employed in the SAPS.

iii. If one knew beforehand

Alert's wife stated that if one was aware of the problems in the SAPS, one would be relieved not to be part of it. Albert agreed with this opinion.

4.6.3 Discrimination in the SAPS

Albert claimed to have experienced discrimination in his career. Caucasians are not considered for promotions, which hinders their opportunities for career development.

4.6.3 Fast-tracking of ill-qualified personnel

i. Unfair promotions

Albert reported that many individuals have received multiple promotions even in the event of them not being able to meet the criteria of their current rank adequately. He felt that this is unfair and discriminatory due to him being a long-standing employee, and these individuals being "fast-tracked" into higher positions.

ii. High ranking officials

Albert was of the opinion that individuals such as Jackie Selebi and Charles Nqakula were inappropriate candidates for the high positions they were promoted to. There were other candidates more suited for the positions. Individuals who are not knowledgeable concerning police work are not able to understand the police sector and oversee the running thereof.

iii. Not being exposed to the dangers of policing

He explained how these individuals who were “fast-tracked” into higher positions, need to be exposed to the phenomena the lower ranking officers engage with. It is unfair that those individuals reap the financial benefits of working in SAPS management, but are not exposed to the full spectrum of police work.

iv. Example

Albert noted an example of his frustration at not being considered for promotion. He has been in the police for 21 years and feels he has been neglected in terms of receiving promotions.

4.6.5 Decline in policing standards

Albert stated that there has been a definite long-term decline in work standards in the SAPS. He compared the work standards and ethics of police officers to the previous era of policing during the apartheid regime. He was of the opinion that police officers work standards were higher at that time.

4.6.6 Corruption in the police

i. A significant presence

Albert claimed that there is a significant element of corruption in the SAPS. Some police officers supply criminals with ammunition and arms, as well as tipping criminals off to possible raids of premises.

ii. Poor salaries causes corruption

Albert noted that the influence of poor salaries is the basis for police officers involving themselves with corruption. He stated that the earning potential of crime is a motivation for police officers to become corrupt.

iii. Unreliable police statistics

Albert explained that the statistics released by the SAPS to the media are false, which made him angry. These figures are a misrepresentation of what officers were experiencing in active

duty.

iv. A solution to corruption

Albert stated that increasing salaries would resolve the presence of corruption in the SAPS.

v. Old police officers versus young police officers

He described the older generation of police officers as being true to their work. He believed that the younger generation of police officers are corrupt in their work duties. They are involved in stealing from the community and issuing verbal threats of violence against community members.

vi. Difficulty in enforcing the law

Albert noted that meeting one's commitments as a member of the SAPS is becoming increasingly difficult. Their ability to conduct their work without the influence of corrupt government officials is decreasing to such an extent that many officers would become despondent and even conduct corrupt activities themselves.

vii. Corrupt informants

Albert and his wife explained the difficulty in attempting to raid suspects' dwellings due to corrupt police officers serving as informants for criminals. This makes him furious.

viii. Reporting corruption

Albert noted the potential threat to one's life when reporting corruption. Even though he knows who is corrupt in his stationed branch, no one would report this bad element out of fear for their own well-being and that of their families. He explained that reporting corruption to an anonymous tip line has little benefits due to the courts' emphasis on empirical evidence and declarations from credible witnesses.

4.6.7 Poor salaries in the SAPS

i. Long-standing problem

Albert stated that salaries have always remained of poor standard in his years of service. Salaries are extremely low and the standards of living are difficult to maintain.

ii. Deductions

Albert's wife stated that many deductions are made from his salary. There are no clear indications what these deductions were for, although these amounts are small. Upon request, the details for these deductions were provided, some of which Albert felt his family did not need.

iii. Salary increases

Albert explained how salary increases are not necessarily welcomed due to the adjustments made to one's deductions. After these adjustments, one's salary increases minimally because deductions increase as well. Senior management receive more benefits from these increases due to their high income brackets. Albert and his wife noted that salary increases are not seen as earning a higher income due to the increase in one's deductions.

iv. Albert's monthly salary earnings

Albert admitted that after deductions he earns almost R3000 per month which he felt was not enough to cover living expenses for his family.

4.6.8 Lack of management support

i. Providing guidance

Albert claimed that he receives little management support when requesting guidance with a police investigation. Upon requesting assistance, he is referred to a colleague. He generally perceives negativity in their response.

ii. Poor interest in the well-being of officers

Albert explained that police officers are investing much effort to combat high crime rates,

although experience little support from senior levels. Management is not interested in the well-being of the individual, provided the work is done.

iii. Lack of recognition

Albert and his wife explained the lack of rewards and recognition that officers were bestowed. In the pre-apartheid era, appraisal and thanks were conveyed more frequently. Currently, only certain individuals' actions are recognized, which is based upon their race. This is unfair due to the fact that every individual in the police services has equal responsibilities. He reported that the lack of recognition causes poor morale in the SAPS.

4.6.9 Decline of public trust in the SAPS

Albert was of the opinion that the public's trust in the SAPS and their ability to fight crime is declining because of all the negative perceptions and the negative phenomena in the SAPS.

4.6.10 Comparing the Police Force to the Police Services

Albert noted a general preference to the old Police Force. He focused on the following aspects:

i. Converting the Police Force to the Police Services

Albert recalled that in 1994, the South African Police Force was renamed the South African Police Services

ii. Lack of discipline and respect

Albert stated that the discipline in the SAPS has declined since the conversion of the Police Force to the Police Services. Colleagues are not conveying the due respect to higher ranking officers.

iii. Less corruption, stress, and a more positive working environment

Albert claimed that in the years prior to 1994, he experienced his work as being less corrupt and stressful, as well as a more positive environment to work in.

iv. Powerlessness

Albert explained that the stress experienced currently, is due to the SAPS's increasing powerlessness and the influence of an official "watchdog" on the activities of police officers. According to the laws set out by government, criminals may conduct themselves in any matter they wish, and have more rights than law-abiding citizens. He did not agree with these principles.

v. Older police officers versus younger police officers

He reported that the older generation of police officers possessed more pride in themselves and their work, as compared to the younger officers who lacked in discipline and pride.

vi. Effectiveness of the SAPS

Albert noted that the police was more effective in achieving their goals in the pre-apartheid era. Crime rates were significantly lower in that era as compared to the present. This, he believed, was due to individuals' motivation to work harder, as well as better support from higher management. Albert and his wife noted the inappropriateness of certain policies developed by government that has hindered the effectiveness of the SAPS. He used the example of attempting to obtain fingerprints from various databases within the different systems of government sectors. These systems are not linked, as it is viewed as "infringements on people's rights" to have access to these various databases.

Certain procedures and laws developed were seen as hindrances due to their impracticality to fighting crime. These procedures and laws exist only in South Africa, and did not exist in the previous era of the Police Force.

vii. Support from higher management

Albert explained that the support and faith officers received from management in the pre-apartheid era outweighed the support he experienced at present. This, he believed, influences officers' willingness to engage criminals with their firearms negatively as they feel they do not have support from their own organization in the event of a being charged for misconduct.

viii. Threats of losing employment

Albert stated that he had overheard individuals' intentions to discharge all police officers that were employed in the Police Force prior to 1990. These intentions are based on the negative stigma attached to officers in that era, as well as individuals' greed for power.

ix. Medical Aid

Albert and his wife noted the differences in how police officer's medical aid benefits have changed. In the past, medical aid was not deducted from an officers' salary - it was a free benefit of working for the police. Currently, a large amount is deducted from Albert's salary for medical aid benefits, which he felt was unfair due to the dangerous nature of the work and the personal risks officers engage in. He was of the opinion that police officers should not have to pay for medical aid benefits. The medical aid provided to police officers, however, is of high standard.

4.6.11 The impact of this work in Albert's life

i. Dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena

Albert claimed that he is accustomed to the nature of his work. He experienced no problems in dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena.

ii. Experiencing Stress

Albert admitted that he experiences stress due to the political influences from higher management. Their involvement into police officers' actions and decisions is confusing for him due to the inappropriateness of the nature of the regulations they impose, as well as the method utilized to communicate important notices to officers. Albert's wife stated that she is of opinion the stress Albert experiences in his line of work influences him significantly. She related a narrative of Albert threatening to end his life due to the stress he had been experiencing. He was subsequently relieved of active duty for a few months.

iii. Experiencing Insomnia

Albert claimed that he does experience some form of sleeping problem which he claims to be

related to his employment.

iv. Impact on his family life

Albert admitted that this work keeps him from his family for most of the day. His commitments force him to work long hours. Albert's wife explained how the commitments of this employment influence his family life negatively. These commitments are many and require sacrifices of Albert's time which would otherwise be spent with his family.

v. Influence into his religious life

Albert described the commitments of "being on standby" and how it influenced his religious life negatively. He was unable to become part of any commitments at his local church due to his work responsibilities.

4.6.12 Considering his stationed branch

i. Lack of compensation for unofficial overtime

Albert explained that police officers at his stationed branch are not compensated in any manner for overtime that is not officially mandated.

ii. Incompetent leadership

Albert compared one of the lower ranking captains to the station commander. He claimed the captain was more knowledgeable and competent than the station commander.

iii. Racism

Albert claimed that the station commander was a racist based upon the nature of their frequent clashes.

iv. Poor communication between head office and rural police stations

Albert noted the ineffectiveness of the relaying of important notices from the police's head office to rural stations. This has negative consequences when stations were required to provide officials in other areas with important documents by specific due dates. He stated that

poor commitment from individuals at the provincial offices was the reason for the delay in relaying messages between head office and rural police stations.

v. Lack of accountability

Albert noted the lack of accountability of the station commander at his stationed branch.

vi. Performance Enhancement Program

Albert explained the procedure for rating individuals in the Performance Enhancement Program at his stationed branch. Each quarter the station commander hands out the rating scales to each individual. Each officer is required to fill these in themselves, after which they meet with the station commander personally to discuss the document. Although, no discussion is made concerning any details of the rating. This confuses Albert due to the lack of feedback.

vii. Management's personal problems in the workplace

Albert claimed that the station commander was experiencing personal problems, which influenced his work manner towards his subordinates. The Caucasian employees and an Indian captain suffered most, although other African colleagues suffered as well.

4.6.13 Police Unions

Albert stated that they have highlighted their grievances of "no compensation for overtime worked" to their union, but no response had been issued.

4.6.13 Albert's experiences in the SAPS

i. The summary of his experiences

Albert described the summary of his experiences in the SAPS as mostly negative.

ii. Complaints not dealt with

Albert noted his frustration at not having appropriate action taken towards his complaints. One just has to accept the unfairness experienced and remain quiet.

4.6.15 Regional offices

Albert explained how the regional offices had been disbanded. They were the relaying stations between head office and the area's police stations. Their work-practices were unethical and based upon greed. The offices were disbanded in the month of April 2007 due to their ineffectiveness. The employees were sent to their respective police stations to report for duty.

4.6.16 Abundance of resources

Albert stated that they were serviced in the area of necessary resources. This came about as a direct consequence of the disbandment of the regional offices because they had not provided their branch with adequate resources.

4.6.17 Measuring job performance

i. Earning incentives

Albert noted the Performance Enhancement Program and its use in evaluation of individuals in their performance for a set period. A rationale for these evaluations is motivating individuals to perform higher so as to earn incentives. Albert felt that these efforts are not effective in motivating him to perform better.

ii. Unreliable evaluations

Albert claimed that these evaluations are unreliable and incorrect. Others copy his evaluation form, and they subsequently earn the incentives based upon their race.

iii. Considering his own performance

Albert noted that he has successfully completed numerous cases where the suspects have received life-long sentences, as well as solving cases within a week with full recovery of all articles stolen. He was proud of these achievements.

4.6.18 The influence of culture

Albert claimed that the influence of culture has a negative impact on some police officers. The indigenous culture is one of laziness, which influenced those individuals' stance towards

working in a professional career.

4.6.19 What it means for Albert to be part of the SAPS

Albert explained when he started working in the police, he had a passion for law enforcement. This passion was more intense when he was younger. However, he currently experiences no passion for policing. He does not go beyond the scope of his required commitments as he used to. The SAPS is not a place of enjoyment for him.

4.6.20 Why Albert remains in the SAPS

Albert explained that his rational for remaining in the SAPS is based upon his inner pride for policing, as well as not having adequate skills or opportunities in other fields of work. He felt trapped and frustrated at not being able to change to another profession.

4.6.21 The police's watchdog

Albert described that the existence of a monitoring body in the SAPS as a negative aspect. The Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD) only existed in larger metropolitan areas. In rural areas, the police station is expected to investigate complaints themselves. He explained that the only occasion the Independent Complaints Directorate will assign someone to a case of possible misconduct in rural areas, would be if there is potential for a definite conviction which results in media publicity.

4.6.22 Laziness and a lack of accountability

Albert claimed that a major problem in the SAPS is the general laziness and lack of accountability from certain officers. He emphasized management levels, from superintendent level upwards. They present a poor example to their subordinates, which includes poor work attendance and few disciplinary actions taken towards them. He explained that in the SAPS, individuals would only look after those beknown to them. Officers would protect their own kin, as long as their responsibilities were met.

4.6.23 Lack of public knowledge

i. The national community

Albert noted that the public at large is unaware of the frustrations and negative phenomena in the SAPS. Albert's wife described the attempts that have been made by the national broadcasting agency to inform the public of the life of police officers. A weekly program would be screened on local television informing the public about the scope of their employment. Both Albert and his wife viewed this as a positive because citizens will gain insight into police officers' occupation.

ii. The local church community

Albert explained that the local church community is unaware of the necessary sacrifices he has to make as a police officer. These sacrifices influence his attendance to church, as well as fostering mistrust between these community members and Albert himself. In an attempt to solve this problem, Albert's wife noted her intentions of distributing leaflets in her local church community in an attempt to bridge the gap between the public's lack of knowledge into Albert's work life, and providing them with reasons for his poor church attendance.

4.6.24 Dealing with personal problems in the SAPS

Albert and his wife stated that previously one could obtain professional assistance from Eshowe regional office if one experienced personal problems. Since its closure, one has to seek assistance from a professional in the private sector. The costs of these services are covered in the medical aid provided for police officials.

4.6.25 Working hours

Albert explained the working schedule that police officers have to adhere to. These working hours are inappropriate towards officers pursuing criminals at specific times of the day. On occasion, Albert works through his lunch break or past his required working hours. He explained the weekly sports and recreation afternoon that police officers are forced to engage in. Albert's wife claimed that he does not engage in sport activities due to his workload. He received a deduction from his salary for these recreation afternoons, although he does not

utilize them.

4.6.26 Specialized sectors

Albert noted the importance of forensic and ballistic evidence in attempting to prosecute suspects. Considering forensic capabilities, South Africa has two units servicing the country's needs. They are understaffed and evidence analysis takes too long. Some of the pending cases where Albert was personally involved in, have been dismissed due to the forensic evidence not having been analyzed by the time court proceedings have commenced. He noted the reasons the waiting periods for forensic analysis were so lengthy. The standard protocols in applying for forensic analysis are inefficient and time-consuming. One waits upon a forensic report to such an extent that criminal cases are dismissed. If a forensic report arrives too late, and the case is dismissed, it can not be reopened when the investigating officer finally receives forensic report . Albert felt this is a critical element the government should address.

4.6.27 Privatizing the SAPS

Albert expressed that attempting to privatize certain elements of the SAPS will not be beneficial. The SAPS have previously relied on private companies for certain functions, and have experienced problems. Ascribing certain functions to private companies is potentially dangerous due to the SAPS having to rely on these companies. However, forensic specialties may be considered as a potential candidate for privatization, due to the lengthy backlog of cases, but not ballistics.

4.6.28 Criminals and the community

i. Criminals have more rights than law-abiding citizens

Albert explained the standpoint of the government concerning criminals' rights. He claimed that the rights of arrested criminals are more important than attempting to serve justice to the families of those affected by the crimes.

ii. Taking the law into one's own hands

Albert described the reasons for members of the community taking the law into their own

hands. It is based upon their frustrations of not receiving justice for the crimes committed against them. If community members take the law into their own hands, little is done by the SAPS to solve these murders. He felt that community members killing criminals is justified because they do not receive justice. He admitted that many police officers feel the same way as he does. Albert's wife emphasized the older generation of police officers and their similar viewpoint concerning this remark.

iii. Crime based on poverty

Albert claimed that there is no need to engage in crime due to poverty. There are many employment opportunities available. It is however the unrealistic standards individuals have towards work and the salary which they expect, that encourages those individuals not to work and stay at home. People seem too lazy to earn an honest day's pay for working hard.

iv. Youngster exhibiting criminal activity

Albert explained the influence the lack of general discipline has in youngsters fostering criminal behavior. He emphasized the African community and highlighted the lack of parental control over children. The youngsters threaten their elders with violence.

4.6.29 Children

Albert and his wife noted the influence that the policies set out by government concerning physically punishing one's children (i.e. "spanking") have on them as parents. They were against these policies. They chose to punish their children if the need existed according to the rules of their own home. This is done so as to teach their children specific important lessons.

4.7 Analysis and discussion of William's experience (P5)

William is a 39 year old male with dependents. He has been employed as a police officer for the last 17 years.

Summary of William's experience

William described his experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. He commented on various topics and gave a description of his feelings and perceptions regarding his employment and the impact it has had on him.

William explained his reasons for joining the SAPS. He was required to commit two years conscription to the military, and subsequently joined the police based upon his need for a challenge and not knowing what to do with his life. He describes his experiences in the SAPS as positive, except when considering his employment environment. William experiences discrimination based upon his gender and race. He bases this opinion on the neglect of Caucasian males when considering promotion statistics. Otherwise, he is satisfied with his employment, especially if he solves a case or can assist a community member. This is his most prominent motivation for remaining in the SAPS. However, there are times when he contemplates his reasons for continuing in this career. He recognizes the difficulties of his work. Even though he would like to remain in the SAPS for as long as possible, he intends to exit the SAPS after completion of a part-time degree. William remains committed to the founding principles and values of his work which were imparted to him when he was still in training.

Considering his stationed branch, William experiences less pressure as compared to previous locations he has worked at. He experienced problems when he initially started at the current branch relating mostly to his work and transfer papers. He noted that this branch does struggle at times with certain resources. Reporting misconduct of an individual was not experienced as a problem. If reported, the appropriate procedures and actions are undertaken so as to discipline the individual, although there exists an inconsistency in the manner in which those reported are disciplined.

William experiences a regression in the police as compared to earlier in his career. He cited the lack of promotion opportunities and recognition for good work performance as grounds for this regression. He noted the difference in the current lack of accountability, the threat of losing one's employment if one reports unethical conduct, as well as poor discipline in management as compared to earlier years where these were not problems. He experiences the lack of poor discipline as a consequence of the non-existence of training structures for officers who receive promotions. William experiences a problem with employing new officers who consider the police only as work, rather than a career opportunity. Those individuals, who choose to join the police for mere employment, are not as motivated to learn as those who wish to pursue a career. They do not understand the challenges in being a police officer. William also noted the lack of commitment and training for new recruits joining the SAPS.

William stated that the standard and efficiency at which officers are able to deal with problems have declined, due to the lack of reporting and disciplinary measures taken. One has to carefully consider before reporting so as not to be marginalized in the work environment. He felt frustrated at individuals' lack of taking responsibility for their work commitments, and feels at times, that he is expected to correct the negligence of others. His frustration increases when those individuals receive promotions, and he remains in the same rank.

William has become accustomed to the accompanying violent phenomena of policing. It is, however, a threat which he and his family are reminded of constantly. Being employed in the police affects William's relationship with his family. It keeps him away from his family for significant periods of time, and he has experienced problems with his partner who does not fully understand his work.

William noted his reasons as to why the public perception of the SAPS is negative. He believes that these reasons are based upon employing ill-qualified individuals, as well as those with a prior criminal record in the SAPS. He does not support employing individuals who are not suited for their professional positions. He compared this to earlier years, where officers had to engage in a long history of employment prior to being considered for high positions. Appointing

individuals in high positions who are not appropriately suited has consequences among lower ranking police officers. This is owing to the limited knowledge such individuals have concerning the phenomena police officers are exposed to. Orders are issued from above which are not practically viable in the field. William experiences the influence of politics in the SAPS as excessively strong. He felt that these influences contribute to the current poor standards.

Identifying the individual themes

4.7.1 William's perception of police employment

William noted that most of his experiences in the police were positive, except considering his work environment. He explained that he does like his work when he accomplished something significant. He experiences satisfaction when he solves a case or can assist someone. This motivates him to continue working in the SAPS. There are, however, other days when he contemplates his reasons for continuing this employment. He is hopeful towards a change in the SAPS. He recognized the difficulties of his work, but wishes to remain in the SAPS for as long as possible.

4.7.2 The impact of this employment on William's life

i. Influence into his family life

William stated that this employment keeps him away from his family for significant periods of time. He felt that if one's partner is not part of the SAPS, they have difficulty in understanding the work one does.

ii. Dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena

William stated that he has become accustomed to the accompanying violent phenomena of policing. It is, however, a threat which he and his family are reminded of constantly.

4.7.3 Considering his stationed branch

i. Experiencing less pressure

William explained that he presently experiences less pressure at his current branch.

ii. Lack of certain resources

William noted that his current police branch struggles at times with certain resources. This frustrated him somewhat, although he has been able to solve any resulting problems adequately. He reported that he experienced problems when he initially started his employment at the branch, although the problem was resolved without much difficulty.

iii. Reporting misconduct

William stated that when misconduct of an individual is reported, the appropriate procedures and actions are undertaken so as to discipline the individual. There is, however, inconsistency in which those reported are disciplined.

4.7.4 Why William joined the police

William explained that after completing his schooling, he was required to commit two years conscription to the military, and subsequently joined the police based upon his need for a challenge and not knowing what to do with his life.

4.7.5 How policing had changed through the years

William claimed that police standards have regressed when compared to his earlier experiences. He cited lack of promotion opportunities and recognition for good work performance as grounds for this claim. He noted the difference in the current lack of accountability, the threat of losing one's employment if one reported unethical conduct, as well as poor discipline in management, as compared to earlier years where these were not problems. He felt that the lack of discipline is due to the non-existence of training structures for officers who receive promotions. William is of the opinion that the political influences into the SAPS have grown very influential. These influences are to blame for the current poor standards, as well as police officers not being permitted to partake in any political demonstrations or actions.

4.7.6 Future considerations

William noted his intentions of leaving the SAPS after completing his part-time degree.

4.7.7 Public perception of the SAPS

William noted his reasons why public perception of the SAPS is negative. He cited the employment of ill-qualified individuals, as well as those with a prior criminal record as the basis for his claim.

4.7.8 Negative experiences in the SAPS

i. Discrimination against race and gender

William stated that Caucasian males experienced discrimination when considering promotion statistics. Although females of the same race are not as unfortunate, males have been neglected with regards to promotion opportunities.

ii. Fast tracking of ill-qualified personnel

William explained his disapproval towards the employment of individuals who are not suited for their professional positions. He compared this to earlier years where officers had to engage in a long history of employment prior to being considered for such high positions. He stated that this phenomenon has consequences for lower ranking police officers, due to the limited knowledge these ill-qualified personnel have concerning the phenomena police officers are exposed to. Orders are issued from above which are not practically viable in the field.

4.7.9 Lack of training

William noted the lack of training for new recruits joining the SAPS. Some of the young officers are motivated to learn, and others not.

4.7.10 An employment opportunity versus a career opportunity

William noted the problem of employing new officers who considered the SAPS as mere employment, rather than a career opportunity. Those individuals who chose to join the SAPS for mere employment are not as motivated to learn and develop. William felt they do not understand or realize the challenges of being a police officer.

4.7.11 What it means for William to be part of the SAPS

William noted that he remains committed to the principles and values laid as foundation to his employment when he was still training as a recruit.

4.7.12 Reporting misconduct

i. Lack of consistency

William noted the inconsistency of corrective disciplinary measures taken against individuals who are reported for misconduct. It displeases him, although he felt that it occurred less as compared to when he was stationed at a previous branch.

ii. Lowering standards and efficiency

William stated that the standard and efficiency at which officers are able to deal with problems have lowered. This is due to the lack of reporting, as well as disciplinary measures taken against transgressors. Reporting misconduct is difficult: One has to consider carefully before reporting so as not to be marginalized. He felt frustrated at individuals' lack of taking responsibility for their work commitments, and is at times expected to correct the negligence of other colleagues. His frustration increases when those individuals are promoted, and he remains in the same rank.

4.8 Analysis and discussion of Daniel's experience (P6)

Daniel is a 39 year old male with dependents. He has been employed as a police officer for the last 12 years.

Summary of Daniel's experience

Daniel described his experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. He commented on various topics and gave a description of his feelings and perceptions regarding his employment and the impact it has had on him.

Daniel noted mere contentment for 12 years of employment in the SAPS. He has experienced the employment as too risky, and officers are expected to fight heavily armed criminals with small firearms. He has no alternative to being a police officer, as he has no other professional qualification that would assist him in moving to a different field of employment. He feels he is stuck in this field and would have chosen a different career had he been given a second chance. If given the opportunity, Daniel would indeed leave the SAPS. He does not wish any of his children to follow in this career choice and would prefer them to choose a career in education rather. Daniel has negative feelings towards being employed in the government sector.

Daniel has experienced a long-term decline in the available resources, even though the workload police officers have to attend to has remained constant. He also noted the poor quality of some of the resources provided. Vehicles are not fitted with bullet-proof glass windows which protect officers in the line of fire. Daniel also experiences a lack in proper organization of members to different crime scenes, something which requires the coordination of multiple units. These factors contribute to slow response times. This in itself contributes to the negative perception the public has concerning their jobs as SAPS members. Daniel believes that the public has a lack of knowledge and understanding. Daniel felt that more vehicles and police members are possible solutions to these problems. Employing more police members would have a direct influence on the crime fighting strategies that the SAPS utilizes.

Daniel felt that being employed as a police officer has influenced his family life. His family members are constantly concerned for his safety. Although Daniel is stationed in the charge office due to a physical impairment, he has come to accept the accompanying violent phenomena of his employment. He understands it to be an integral part of his employment. Daniel explained that he was injured in a motor vehicle accident whilst on duty, and has not received compensation for his injuries suffered. This has made him negative, due to him being injured and not being adequately compensated.

He has had some positive experiences in the SAPS, including the opportunity to be trained in various different courses. He has experienced no problems with the structures within the SAPS. He considered his current station commander to be fair and a good leader to the police members there.

Daniel compared his experiences of policing pre- and post-apartheid. He noted his preference to the Police Force as compared to the Police Services. The Police Force was better able to fight crime than today's Police Services. This was due to the tactics allowed, which included physical intimidation of a suspect, which often led to suspects providing the officers with valuable information. Presently, criminals have more protection and rights: Police members are not allowed to use physical coercion tactics in any manner. Daniel did not agree with this and feels that previously, criminals felt intimidated by the presence of the police. The police utilized this influence in fighting crime. Considering the SAPS's current fight against crime, Daniel felt that there is little hope that one can make a difference.

Identifying the individual themes

4.8.1 Daniel's perception of police employment

Daniel noted contentment for 12 years of employment in the SAPS.

4.8.2 Daniel's experiences in the SAPS

i. Positive experiences

Daniel stated that he has experienced some attractive training opportunities in the SAPS

based on all the various courses he has been trained in.

ii. Negative perceptions

Daniel mentioned that the negative perception that community members have towards police members are due to their slow response to complaints. He felt this is a negative aspect to his employment as a police officer.

iii. The structures within the SAPS

Daniel mentioned that he has no problems with the structures within the SAPS.

iv. Lack of public knowledge

Daniel noted that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding from community members regarding their jobs as police members and the workload they have to attend to.

4.8.3 Problems in the SAPS

i. Slow response times

Daniel stated that there was a long-term decline in resources with which they had to compensate for in their normal workload. Their station's covering area is large and there are procedures that need to be followed at every crime scene, which is time-consuming. All these factors contribute to slow response times. He noted that more vehicles and police members are possible solutions to this problem.

ii. Too few police members

Daniel stated that there are too few police members, which has a direct influence in the crime fighting strategies that the SAPS utilizes.

iii. Lack of proper coordination

Daniel mentioned that there is a lack of effective organization and coordination of various units when deployed to different crime scenes.

4.8.4 Daniel's attitude towards his work

Daniel noted that if given the opportunity, he would leave the SAPS. The employment is extremely risky, and officers are expected to fight heavily armed criminals with small firearms.

4.8.4 The impact of this employment on Daniel's life

i. Influence on his family life

Daniel stated that this employment impacts his family in terms of concerns for his own safety. They pray for his safety until his return home.

ii. Experiencing stress

Daniel noted that he does not experience stress in his current position. He attributed this to him being stationed mostly in the charge office due to his physical impairment resulting from an injury at work.

iii. Dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena

Daniel noted that the accompanying violent phenomena of his work is an integral part of his work and rather believes that this should not influence him due.

4.8.6 Injury whilst on duty

Daniel explained that he was injured in a motor vehicle accident whilst on duty. He has not received compensation for his injuries suffered. Although he has hired a private lawyer to assist in his claim, he was told that his hospital fees were to serve as his compensation. He feels this has made him negative towards serving in the government. He was injured whilst attempting to assist community members, and received no compensation for that.

4.8.7 Considering his stationed branch

Daniel noted that the commander at his station is fair and a good leader to the members there.

4.8.8 Comparing the Police Services to the Police Force

i. Preference to the Police Force

Daniel noted his preference to the Police Force as compared to the Police Services. Presently, the situation is worse than before with police officers doing the bare minimum in their job.

ii. Fighting crime

Daniel explained that the Police Force was better able to fight crime than today's Police Services. This, he believed, is due to the tactics allowed in the era of the Police Force, which included physical coercion of a suspect.

iii. Protection for criminals

Daniel believed that criminals have more protection presently than before. Police members are not allowed to use physical coercion tactics to gain valuable information. Daniel did not agree with this, and he explained that previously criminals felt intimidated by the presence of the police, which the police used as a valuable tool in fighting crime.

iv. Better quality resources

Daniel stated that although they are allocated enough resources, the quality of some of the resources provided previously was of higher standard than present. Vehicles were fitted with bullet-proof glass windows which protected officers in the line of fire. Criminals today are also equipped with stronger weapons as compared to police officers.

4.8.9 The SAPS's fight against crime

Daniel noted that one cannot make a difference in the fight against crime. He did not provide adequate reasons for this viewpoint, except merely stating that impacting crime positively is impossible.

4.8.10 What it means for Daniel to be part of the SAPS

Daniel stated that there is no alternative to being a police officer for him. He has no other professional qualification that would assist him in moving to a different field of employment. He

felt stuck in this field and would have chosen a different career, had he been given a second opportunity.

4.8.11 Daniel's children following in his footsteps

Daniel mentioned that he would be in disagreement at the possibility of any of his children following in the same career choice. He preferred them choosing education as a career choice above policing. Daniel is rather negative towards being employed in the government sector.

4.9 Analysis and discussion of Luke's experience (P7)

Luke is a 46 year old male with dependents. He has been employed as a police officer for the last 20 years.

Summary of Luke's experience

Luke described his experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. He commented on various topics and gave a description of his feelings and perceptions regarding his employment and the impact it has had on him.

Luke joined the SAPS after the passing of his parents and eldest brother. There was no money for living expenses, and although he decided to join the SAPS, his real interest was in education. He intends on remaining in the SAPS until retirement. He was of the opinion that starting a new career after investing 20 years is not an option worth considering. Luke did not have a problem if one of his children decided to pursue a career in the SAPS.

Luke is currently at Inspector level. He was not satisfied with the rate at which he has progressed in the SAPS. He has a technical diploma and has served in this rank for almost a decade. Luke has experienced poor communication from management regarding the reasons as to why he does not receive a promotion, regardless of whether he qualifies for the position or not.

Luke does not experience much stress in his employment. In the event of problems, he copes with it through discussions with his wife. He was satisfied with the station's commander, and considers him to be a problem-solver as well as being sensitive to the officers' needs.

Luke was of the opinion that the SAPS do indeed make a positive difference in the community, especially since the transition from the Police Force to the Police Services. This transition has fostered the consideration of each individual's rights and how the SAPS deals with complainants. When comparing, Luke prefers the Police Services over the Police Force. He based this opinion upon how members of the community complained about the Police Force. It

is alleged that police members in that era used unnecessary excessive physical force in their work.

Identifying the individual themes

4.9.1 Considering his career

i. Luke's dissatisfaction with his rate of promotions

Luke explained that he is not satisfied with his current rank considering his lengthy career in the SAPS. He is an inspector, and has served in this rank for almost a decade, despite having a technical diploma.

ii. Poor communication

Luke noted that the poor communication within the SAPS could be a reason as to why an applicant does not receive a promotion, regardless of whether he qualifies for the position or not.

4.9.2 Experiencing stress

Luke stated that he does not experience much stress in his employment as a police officer. In the event of experiencing problems related to his work, Luke copes with life as a result of discussions with his wife.

4.9.2 Considering his stationed branch

i. The commander

Luke stated that he is satisfied with the station's commander. He is a problem-solver, who is sensitive to the officers' needs.

ii. Close to home

Luke stated that he lived near to his stationed branch, which lessens his travelling time to work. This adds to his job satisfaction.

4.9.4 Why Luke joined the police

Luke explained his reasons for joining the police many years ago. After the passing of his eldest brother and parents, there was no money to pay for living expenses. Luke decided to join the police as it was a source of income, although his real interest was in education.

4.9.5 Considering the future

Luke stated that he intended on remaining in the SAPS until retirement. Starting a new career after investing 20 years is not an option worth considering.

4.9.6 Making a difference in the community

Luke noted that the SAPS does indeed make a positive difference in the community, especially since the transition from the Police Force into the Police Services. This transition has fostered the consideration of each individual's rights. This, in turn, influences the way in which the SAPS dealt with complainants.

4.9.7 Comparing the Police Force to the Police Services

When comparing, Luke stated that he preferred the Police Services over the Police Force. He based this opinion upon how members of the community complained about the Police Force. Members of the Police Force in that era used unnecessary excessive physical force in their work.

4.9.8 Luke's children following in his footsteps

Luke noted that he would not have a problem if one of his children decided to pursue a career in the SAPS. He would encourage them to join, but only after completing tertiary education.

4.9.9 Private sector versus Government sector

Luke explained that the earnings and benefits in the private sector is of higher standard than in the government sector. He felt his children should consider this when deciding their future plans.

4.10 Analysis and discussion of Marlene's experience (P8)

Marlene is a 25 year old female. She has been employed as a police officer for the last 18 months.

Summary of Marlene's experience

Marlene described her experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. She commented on various topics and gave a description of her feelings and perceptions regarding her employment and the impact it has had on her.

Marlene admitted that she joined the SAPS for mere employment. She was relieved when the SAPS offered her a position, but does not foresee herself remaining in the SAPS long-term. Initially, she felt merely content to be part of the SAPS, but has since come to love her position. She is positive regarding her possibilities for promotion, and wishes to continue her studies after her initial training regiment has been completed. Upon entering the SAPS, Marlene was studying to become a secretary.

Although Marlene did not want to become part of the SAPS, she has come to like and enjoy the work. She has a positive perception regarding her job. When comparing this work to previous jobs, this is the first job that developed her as a person, as well as giving her practical tools to help her cope with things in her own life. She felt the SAPS has had a positive impact upon her life: She has become more responsible, as well as more motivated to achieve goals which she thought were previously unattainable.

Marlene does not experience stress due to her work. She does, however, consider that this might change when she completes her training and she is exposed to new phenomena. She felt that she makes a difference in the community, and has not come across any situation that she has not been able to cope with adequately. She feels positive when she achieves something significant.

Marlene has experienced a difference in people's attitudes and behaviors toward her since

becoming an SAPS member. This has created pride within her, since people respect her more by not doing wrong things in front of her. She has come to understand that upon entering the SAPS, one may lose some of the friends one had before due to their perception of not being able to be themselves or do any wrong things.

Marlene has experienced a positive influence from the older, more experienced SAPS members. They motivate her to conduct herself in a professional manner, as well as making her feel proud of wearing the SAPS uniform. She has learnt many new things and different ways of conducting her work from working with individuals from different backgrounds.

Marlene felt that the SAPS is effective in fighting crime. She based her opinion upon her experiences of being pressured to respond to complainants as soon as possible. However, when considering the public, Marlene has experienced a negative perception from some public members concerning the SAPS. This makes her feel negative and sad. Some members of the community do not understand their working environment, and develop intense anger towards SAPS members when they are slow to respond. Even though Marlene understands the community's perspective and the reasons why some members become angry, she was of the opinion that some members of the community abuse SAPS members when they display this anger. Marlene explained that hiring more SAPS members and buying more vehicles may solve the problem of poor service delivery.

Marlene has experienced a lack of resources at her stationed branch. She related problems with limited computer facilities and what impact this has on delaying administrative tasks or investigations.

Identifying the individual themes

4.10.1 Her perception of police employment

Marlene noted her positive perception regarding her current employment. At present, she was feeling positive, but does not know whether this would change in the future. She claimed that she has not come across any situation that she has not been able to cope with adequately.

She was of the opinion that she makes a difference in the community.

4.10.2 Why Marlene joined the police

Marlene admitted that she joined the SAPS for mere employment. She claimed that she applied for work at numerous institutions, and that she was relieved when the SAPS offered her a post.

4.10.3 Marlene's attitude towards her work

Marlene stated that although she did not want to become part of the SAPS, she has come to like and enjoy the work. When comparing this work to previous jobs, she claimed that this was the first job that developed her as a person, as well as giving her practical tools to help her cope with things in her own life. She felt positive when she achieves something significant.

4.10.4 Future consideration

Marlene noted that she did not foresee herself remaining in the SAPS long-term. At present, she was not experiencing any difficulties that would make her leave the SAPS. She was positive regarding her possibilities of promotion, and wishes to continue her studies after completing her initial training regiment. Upon entering the SAPS, Marlene was studying to become a secretary.

4.10.5 The impact of this employment on Marlene's life

i. Developing and gaining from the employment

Marlene was of the opinion that her employment in the SAPS has had a positive impact upon her life: She has become more responsible, as well as more motivated to achieve goals which she thought were previously unattainable.

ii. Learning from other individuals

Marlene noted that in working with individuals from different backgrounds, she has learnt many new things and different ways of conducting her work.

iii. Experiencing stress

Marlene claimed that currently she experiences no stress due to her work. She was unsure if this might change when she completes her training and she is exposed to new phenomena.

iv. Loosing friends

Marlene stated that upon entering the SAPS one may lose some of the friends one had before, due to their perception of not being able to be themselves or do any wrong things.

4.10.6 The influence of older, more experienced members

Marlene noted the positive influence older, more experienced SAPS members have had on her. They have motivated her to conduct herself in a professional manner, as well as making her feel proud of wearing the SAPS uniform.

4.10.7 The SAPS's fight against crime

Marlene was of the opinion that the SAPS is effective in fighting crime. She based her opinion upon her experiences of being pressured to respond to complainants as soon as possible. This resulted in an improvement in service delivery.

4.10.8 Public perception of the SAPS

i. Abuse of SAPS members

Marlene stated that the negative perception of some public members concerning the SAPS makes her feel negative and sad. Some members of the community do not understand their work environment, and develop intense anger towards SAPS members when they were slow to respond. Marlene was of the opinion that some members of the community abuse SAPS members when they display this anger.

ii. Understanding the community's perspective

Marlene stated that she understood the community's perspective and the reasons why some members become angry.

4.10.9 Solving the problems of service delivery

Marlene explained that hiring more SAPS members and buying more vehicles would possibly solve the problems of poor service delivery.

4.10.10 Lack of resources

Marlene commented on the lack of resources at her stationed branch. She related problems with limited computer facilities and the impact this has on delaying administrative tasks or investigations.

4.10.11 What it means for Marlene to be part of the SAPS

Marlene explained that initially she felt merely content at being part of the SAPS. She was grateful that she had managed to find stable employment, but has since come to love her position.

4.10.12 Others' perceptions of her as a police officer

Marlene noted that there has been a change in people's attitudes and behaviors toward her since she has become a SAPS member. This has created pride within her, since people respect her more by not doing wrong things in front of her.

4.11 Analysis and discussion of Steven's experience (P9)

Steven is a 33 year old male with dependents He has been employed as a police officer for the last 4 years.

Summary of Steven's experience

Steven described his experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. He commented on various topics and gave a description of his feelings and perceptions regarding his employment and the impact it has had on him.

Ever since Steven was in high school, he had been interested in becoming part of the SAPS. Even though he has obtained tertiary education and could possibly obtain other employment, Steven still wishes to remain in the SAPS. Steven reported that loves his job based on the potential he has to make an immediate impact on others' lives when he assists them. This potential of "making a difference" is of importance to Steven and it is what motivates him to do the work. It is a challenging, but satisfying job for Steven. He does not shy away from its difficulties, and he is proud of serving his country and its people. Every time someone is a victim of crime, he feels as if he has disappointed them somehow.

Steven's father was against his decision to join the SAPS. His father, who is employed as a prison warden, was negative towards the idea of working within the government sector. He pressured Steven to obtain tertiary education. Consequently Steven obtained a diploma in Management. Although Steven loves his job and does not want to decide his children's career for them, he admits that he would not want his children to follow in his choice of career, based on his negative experiences of the SAPS.

Steven has received numerous employment opportunities outside the borders of the SAPS due to the tertiary qualification that he holds. He has experienced difficulty in progressing professionally within the SAPS itself, as they do not recognize his diploma. If one wishes to advance, one has to obtain qualifications within the SAPS itself. One has to pay for these courses oneself because no financial aid is provided by the SAPS. Steven felt frustrated by

this because it means that if one does obtain qualifications within the SAPS, a promotion is not guaranteed. Even in the event of loving his job, he felt discouraged by the difficulties in advancing professionally, and does sometimes consider possibly exiting employment in the SAPS.

Steven explained that when one is employed in the SAPS, one needs to be "a jack of all trades." The responsibilities of the SAPS are diverse in nature. One can not shy away from anything, and one does one's best - even if you are not trained for it. Steven explained policing as a voluntary job. One had to love the job, or you would not remain in the SAPS – the salaries are just too poor. He also commented on the presence of the SAPS reservists and how they assist the police without any financial remuneration (except when working on public holidays). Steven respected their bravery as they are willing to risk their lives even in the event of knowing they may be exposed to life-threatening situations.

Steven does experience some negative phenomena in the SAPS. This included his frustrations experienced when considering the small salary he earns. Also, he was of the opinion that the training new recruits received focused excessively on physical fitness, whilst neglecting personal development. The training received is not adequate when one considers the range of problems officers experience in the field. Steven felt the training he received did not provide him with the adequate tools to face all the challenges he has been confronted with. Another negative aspect was the extent to which working in the SAPS kept him from his family. Whilst the community benefitted from him joining the SAPS, his family and friends did not. They wished he never joined the SAPS.

Steven has experienced an element of corruption in some government employees. Even in the event of salary increases, he does not feel this would stamp out this element. Within the government sector, there are few incentives to perform harder in one's job. It is of no concern how hard one works, one would still earn the basic salary. In the private industries, employees receive remuneration for good performance. Steven felt this aspect is important when one considers that some individuals work significantly harder than others, but everyone earns the

same salaries. There was nothing in the SAPS motivating individuals to work harder or develop into more competent officers. Steven suggested that only those individuals who have good networking relationships with senior police officials will be considered for promotions. This factor contributed to him lowering his work performance and input, due to others reaping professional benefits even though they do not work as hard.

Steven felt that the public do not fully appreciate the SAPS. They take the SAPS for granted, and there is also an excessive focus on SAPS members as public servants. This pressures him due to the premise that whatever he does reflects on his professional character and the SAPS. He was of the opinion that the public do not recognize the importance of the SAPS until they themselves are in dire need of assistance. Only when one significantly impacts the life of a community member would their perceptions and opinions change to a more positive regard. This negative public perception he attributed to the bad elements in the SAPS. They as police officers are undervalued and disrespected, and Steven does not understand the reasons for this. Whenever Steven hears members of public speaking of "police incompetency", he becomes hurt by this because he invests himself fully in this work. The public are not well informed concerning the SAPS and all the phenomena officers have to deal with.

Steven has experienced stress due to the nature of this work. One is exposed to phenomena of an extreme nature, and it may be debilitating if one is not prepared for it. He felt that one has to be of strong character to be able to adapt to the police environment. When times are tough, Steven counsels and motivates himself to push forward. His dominant coping mechanism for dealing with trauma he is exposed to, is to "cut" himself off from such thoughts.

Steven voiced contradictory positive and negative feelings towards his work in the SAPS. He has become aware of the changes within himself since joining the SAPS. Even though he loves his job, he felt it has changed him to become less friendly and positive, as well as more tempered and stressed. In total, he has experienced more negatives than positives.

Steven did not agree with the way in which officers at his branch are re-imbursed for overtime

worked. They do not get paid overtime, but rather accumulate extra leave-days. The process of claiming these extra leave-days is difficult, as well as impractical when one considers the amount of work police officers have to attend to. In the end, these extra leave-days expire before one could take the earned leave days.

Steven considered the SAPS and their new orientation as a Police Service. This new organization makes no difference to him personally. He has experienced it as merely a politically orientated development addressing the wrongs of the apartheid era. He understood the rationale for the change, and acknowledged the significance of this change into a more service-orientated organization. However, Steven felt that this new orientation contributes negatively to the criminal element in South Africa: Criminals know their rights and abuse them at the expense of police officers. He was of the opinion that the new emphasis on criminals' human rights creates a situation where police officers have fewer rights than criminals. With this emphasis on human rights, crime is not motivated by poverty or unemployment; rather it is motivated by our law or judicial system that is too weak. Criminals are not afraid to commit crimes because they know they have a substantial chance of not being prosecuted. Laws are excessively favorable to criminals, and bail is awarded too easily. The efforts that police officers invest in investigating a crime and arresting criminals, far outweigh the punishments received from the criminal justice system. In this regard, Steven was of the opinion that South Africa is losing the battle against crime.

Identifying the individual themes

4.11.1 Why Steven joined the police

Steven claimed that ever since he was in high school, he was interested in becoming part of the SAPS. Even though he has obtained tertiary education, Steven still wished to remain in the SAPS.

4.11.2 Steven's family's attitude towards his employment

Steven admitted that his father was against his decision to join the SAPS. His father, who is employed as a prison warden, was against the idea of working within the government sector.

He pressured Steven to enter into studying for a degree, and subsequently earned a diploma in Management. He still joined the SAPS based on his personal interest in this type of work.

4.11.3 Steven's attitude towards his work

Steven stated that he loves his job based on the potential he has to make an immediate impact into others' lives when he has assisted them. This potential of "making a difference" is of importance to Steven - it is what motivates him to do the work.

4.11.4 Negative experiences in the SAPS

i. Poor salaries

Steven noted that being employed in the SAPS is financially frustrating. This influences officer's to work on public holidays and in festive seasons, due to financial incentives available. Working for eight hours on a public holiday, earns a constable roughly R200. Steven noted that one had to be extremely desperate for a job to consider policing, due to the low salary.

ii. Lack of training

Steven noted that the training officers received focused excessively on physical fitness, whilst neglecting personal development. He felt that the training was not adequate when one considers the range of problems officers experience in the field. The training received does not provide one with the adequate tools to face all the challenges he has been confronted with.

iii. Corruption

Steven admitted that there is an element of corruption in some government employees. Even in the event of salary increases, he does not feel this would stamp out this element. He was of the opinion that corruption is very detrimental to the image of the SAPS. Negative elements receive much more exposure than the positive elements, especially in the media.

iv. Government versus Private companies

Steven noted that within the government sector, there are few incentives to perform better in one's job. It is of no concern how hard one works, one will still earn the basic salary. In the

private industries, however, people get remuneration for good performance. He felt this aspect was important when one considers that some individuals work significantly harder than others. There is nothing in the SAPS motivating individuals to work harder or develop into more competent officers, and everyone earns similar salaries.

v. Working on public holidays and in festive season periods

Steven admitted that he does not prefer working on these occasions. These were periods he would also want to rest and be joyful like other people around him, but due to his work commitments he was unable to. However, if the option was provided, Steven would work on public holidays for the financial incentives. When working on these occasions, a police officer is not posted in high risk areas, but rather areas such as patrolling the beach, attending road blocks or operating at toll-gates. However, in the event of high risk situations such as riots, officers were still expected to attend to them and assist where needed.

vi. Fast-tracking promotions of ill-qualified personnel

Steven suggested that only those individuals who have good networking relationships with senior police officials are considered for promotions. He explained that this factor contributes to him lowering his work performance and input, due to others reaping professional benefits even though they do not work as hard. His comment was based on the premise that if one considers professional development within the government sector, it does not matter how good one's work performance is, but rather who one is acquainted with. Steven felt that the private sector is more professional in this aspect, based upon their emphasis on work performance and professionalism.

4.11.5 Steven's perception of police employment

Steven explained that when one is employed in the SAPS, one needs to be "a jack of all trades." He was of the opinion that police members need to be diverse in nature, based on the unique needs of each individual community they serve. There is nothing one can shy away from. One did one's best even if one was not trained for it. Steven used examples such as delivering a baby if there was no doctor present, or even changing someone's tyre.

Steven explained that policing is a voluntary job. One has to love the job, or one would not remain in the SAPS - the salaries are just too poor.

4.11.6 Public perception of SAPS

Steven noted that the public do not fully appreciate the SAPS. Only when one significantly impacted a community member, will their perceptions and opinions change to a more positive regard. He attributed some of this negative public perception towards the bad elements in the SAPS, as well as the public taking the SAPS for granted. Steven admitted that whenever he hears members of public speaking of "police incompetency", he is hurt by this. He claimed to invest himself fully in this work, and that little appreciation from the public affects him personally.

i. Excessive focus

Steven noted the excessive focus on them as public servants from the general public. This adds pressure on him, based on the premise that whatever he does reflects on his professional character and the SAPS.

ii. Lack of public knowledge

Steven stated the public are not well informed concerning the SAPS and all that the officers have to deal with.

4.11.7 The impact of this employment in Steven's life

i. Experiencing stress

Steven admitted to experiencing stress due to the nature of the work. He related a narrative of attending an accident when one is not prepared for the gruesome scene. This is a hard thing to expose oneself to, and may even be debilitating to an extent if one is not prepared for it.

ii. Influence into his family life

Steven noted that working in the SAPS keeps him away from his family. He used public

holidays and festive season periods as examples. Everybody around him is excited, but he does not join in the celebrations as he is expected to work during those periods (i.e. "special duty"). Even in the event of being ill during these periods, sick notes are not accepted. Steven stated that the community benefits from him joining the SAPS, but not his family and friends. They wished he had never joined the SAPS.

iii. Changes in Steven's life

Steven explained that the nature of this work changed him as a person. It changed him to become less friendly and positive. He became more short tempered and stressed, and overall he experienced his work as a police officer as more negative than positive.

4.11.8 Dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena

Steven was of the opinion that he is of strong character, based upon his ability to have adapted to the police environment. He claimed he counsels himself when times are tough, and motivates himself to push forward. In the event of being exposed to trauma, he admittedly "cuts" himself off from such thoughts, suggesting suppression as a main coping mechanism.

4.11.9 The SAPS reservists

Steven noted the presence of the reservists and how they assist the SAPS without any financial remuneration (except when working on public holidays). He respected their bravery as they are willing to risk their lives even in the event of knowing they may be exposed to dangerous situations. Steven claimed that he has never known any reservist's family to receive government financial compensation for being killed whilst on duty.

4.11.10 Future considerations

Steven noted that he has received numerous employment opportunities outside the borders of the SAPS. Within the SAPS, he has experienced difficulty in progressing professionally. The SAPS does not recognize his diploma, as it was achieved at an institution independent of their organization. If one wishes to advance, one has to obtain qualifications within the SAPS itself. Steven claimed that one has to pay for these courses oneself - no financial aid is provided

from the SAPS. Consequently, Steven was unsure regarding his future possibilities of advancing in the SAPS.

4.11.11 Possibility of professional development

Steven explained that if one does obtain qualifications within the SAPS, this does not guarantee a promotion. After joining the SAPS, one would only be considered for promotion after a minimum of five years' service. This discouraged Steven, as well as making him consider the possibility of leaving employment in the SAPS.

4.11.12 Concerning his stationed branch

Steven noted that officers at his branch do not get paid overtime, but rather accumulated extra off-days. He did not agree with this method of remuneration, due to the work load officers have to attend to. He explained that the process of claiming one's leave days is difficult. When one does intend to take leave days, such as weekends and holidays, then the option is not available due to increased demand for law enforcement (in areas such as the beach or at road blocks). In the end, these extra work days expires before one can claim them. Also, if there is work or criminal cases outstanding, then one is not permitted to take leave. It is a desperate situation, due to officers always being overloaded with cases.

4.11.13 Comparing the Police Services to the Police Force

Steven stated that the new organization does not make a difference to him personally. He was of the opinion that it is merely a politically orientated development addressing the wrongs of the apartheid era. He understood the rational for the change, and acknowledged the significance of this change into a more service-orientated organization. However, Steven felt that this contributed negatively to the criminal element in South Africa. Criminals know their rights and abuse them at the expense of police officers.

i. Criminals have more rights than police officers

Steven claimed that the new emphasis on criminals' human rights, creates a situation where police officers have fewer rights than criminals. Criminals may lay complaints against officers

for supposedly mishandling them, but officers may not defend themselves if criminals attempt to harm them whilst in custody. If a criminal lays a complaint against an officer whilst in custody, that complaint would be attended to faster than if an officer laid a complaint against an offender. He was of the opinion that this change in human rights laws probably came about so as to please those who suffered in the apartheid era.

ii. Crime within South Africa

Steven explained that due to the emphasis on human rights, crime is not motivated by poverty or unemployment. It is motivated by our law or judicial system that is rather weak. Criminals are not afraid to commit crimes because they know they have a substantial chance of not being prosecuted. Laws are favorable to criminals, and bail is awarded very easily. The efforts police officers invest in investigating a crime and arresting criminals, far outweigh the punishments receive from the criminal justice system.

4.11.14 Steven's children following in his footsteps

Steven noted he would not want to choose his children's career for them, and would allow them the freedom to choose their own professional path. However, he admitted that he would not want his children to follow in his choice of career, based on his negative experiences of the SAPS.

4.11.15 What it means for Steven to be part of the SAPS

Steven explained that people do not recognize the importance of the SAPS until they themselves are in dire need of assistance. He felt that the SAPS is taken for granted: They are undervalued and disrespected, and he does not understand the reasons for this. Considering the job, he likes his work. It is a satisfying job, but with many accompanying stressors. Policing is a challenging job, and Steven does not shy away from its difficulties. He was proud of serving his country and its people, and every time someone suffers from crime he feels as if he has disappointed them.

4.11.16 The SAPS's fight against crime

Steven stated that South Africa is losing the battle against crime.

4.12 Analysis and discussion of Patrick experience (P10)

Patrick is a 40 year old male with dependents. He has been employed as a police officer for the last 21 years.

Summary of Patrick's experience

Patrick described his experiences of working as an officer in the SAPS. He commented on various topics and gave a description of his feelings and perceptions regarding his employment and the impact it has had on him.

Patrick joined the police during the years of the previous apartheid regime. It was a volatile situation, and he recalled seeing policemen when he was still at school. At that stage the police were still largely feared, and he decided to become a police officer. He is proud to wear the police uniform and he enjoys his work.

Patrick is the station commander, and indicated the importance of motivation when considering new recruits. There are individuals who join the SAPS purely because they can not attain other employment. Their first priority and motivating factor is to earn a salary. Patrick has experienced a need to change these individuals' motivating factors – so as to become more competent police officers. This is where he as a station commander plays a significant role – utilizing the strengths of individuals to the benefit of the SAPS and the community they serve. This, he believed, makes individuals more motivated.

Police officers are at times expected to deal with situations that they were not formally trained for. On some occasions, they were expected to sacrifice beyond their required prescribed duties. For Patrick, the main goal always remains that the community be served by their actions. He has experienced stress in this line of work, although he felt he is able to cope with it adequately. It does not affect him much, and he has never been booked-off from work due to stress-related causes. He has accepted and become accustomed to the violence attributed to policing work.

Policing does affect Patrick's family life, especially when he is called out in the middle of the night to attend to an incident. However, his family has accepted it as a part of their lives. Overall, he felt that being part of policing has been a positive aspect in his life.

Patrick defined the role of the SAPS as the representatives of the government to the citizens of South Africa. They served the people in terms of the interests of the government. Patrick had served in the previous apartheid regime, as well as the new democratic government. He agreed and subscribed to the new policies set out by the current regime. With this new regime, many changes have taken place within the SAPS. Patrick was also aware of the role the community plays and its contribution to community-orientated policing. The goal is that the SAPS and the community work together in terms of dealing with problems, reporting and solving crimes. He felt that initially people were negative towards this concept, although presently they have accustomed to the change. Citizens seem more open to reporting crimes and working with the SAPS.

Patrick admitted that it is difficult to remain loyal to all the new regulations and policies implemented when conducting police work. Many technicalities exist that hinder officers' ability to conduct police work and convict criminals. There is a definite influence of the official watchdog on one's behavior. However, Patrick felt that this structure should not hinder the SAPS in completing their duties, although there are situations where one becomes confused concerning which action to take – that is, which action would be viewed as correct by the official watchdog.

Patrick admitted that there are members of the SAPS who do not have adequate reading or writing skills. He attributed this phenomenon to the hiring of "special constables" in 1987. These constables were responsible for guarding certain facilities such as hospitals, or even accompanying prisoners. After the democratic change realized in 1994, these constables were incorporated into the structures of the SAPS, even though some of them did not have the adequate reading and writing skills. However, the government is attempting to rectify these issues by providing them with Adult Based Education Training (ABET) so that they may

achieve grade 12 academic status.

Patrick has experienced an element of corruption within the SAPS. He felt that these individuals do not belong in the SAPS and should be removed from the policing system.

From a police perspective, Patrick felt that they would be ready and able to deliver the required services when the FIFA tournament is underway in 2010. Currently, police officers are being trained to deal adequately with the challenges of hosting such an event.

There are many strategies and organizations within the SAPS to combat crime. Patrick was aware of people under-reporting crimes, especially in rural areas where common-law sometimes dictates certain behaviors and practices. He was aware of the conflict between common-law and state-law in these areas. People in these areas are ignorant to the seriousness of certain practices, which are regarded as crimes by state-law. An example of this is where common-law dictates the seduction of minors by religious pastors, which is seen as a serious offence within state-law.

Patrick noted the support services provided for police officers who feel the need for debriefing from situations that affect them. These services include access to a psychologist, three social workers, and a pastor. These five individuals are expected to service the 22 police stations in the upper Kwa-Zulu Natal area. Patrick felt these efforts are not enough in servicing such a large area. Based on this, members of management are presently also being trained in debriefing their units' members and providing assistance.

Identifying the individual themes

4.12.1 Comparing the Police Services to the Police Force

Patrick explained that the SAPS are operating in unison with what the principles set out by the current Constitution of South Africa. Previously, people expected the police to use force to extract information from culprits, but presently these tactics are not part of the methods employed by the SAPS.

i. Community-orientated policing

Patrick defined Community Policing as the SAPS and the community working together in terms of dealing with problems, reporting and solving crimes in their respective areas. He commented that initially people were negative towards this concept, although they have become accustomed to the change. They are now more open to reporting crimes and working with the SAPS. He noted that at present those individuals who remain negative towards community-orientated policing are in the minority, and that they are usually the ones perpetrating crimes.

ii. Representatives of the government

Patrick equated the SAPS as the representatives of the government to the citizens of South Africa. They serve the people in terms of the interests of the government. Patrick noted that he had served in the previous and current government regimes, and that he agreed and believed in the new policies set out by the current regime.

iii. New curriculum for new recruits

Patrick stated that there exists a newly designed curriculum for recruits joining the SAPS. He had a positive opinion regarding this new curriculum.

iv. Adhering to the regulations and policies

Patrick admitted it was difficult to remain loyal to all the regulations and policies when conducting police work. He related an example of how an officer is expected to inform a culprit of his rights, even during gunfire. These technicalities are limiting their ability to conduct police work effectively and convict criminals.

4.12.2 What it means for Patrick to be part of the SAPS

Patrick stated that he is proud to be "a man in blue", and that he enjoys his work.

4.12.3 Why Patrick joined the police

Patrick noted that he joined the police during the years of struggle against the apartheid

regime. It was a volatile situation, and he recalled seeing policemen when he was still at school. At that stage the police were still largely feared. Patrick decided to become a police officer, but was unable to elaborate clearly his reasons for this decision.

4.12.4 Dealing with the accompanying violent phenomena

Patrick explained that he has accepted and become accustomed to the violence attributed to policing work. He equated a shooting incident which he was involved in personally as merely an exercise.

4.12.5 The impact of this employment in Patrick's life

i. Experiencing stress

Patrick noted that even though he has experienced stress in this line of employment, he copes with it adequately. It does not affect him much, and he has never been booked-off from work due to stress-related causes.

ii. Influence into his family life

Patrick admitted that policing does affect his family life, especially when one is called out in the middle of the night to attend to an incident. However, his family has accepted it as a part of police life and procedure.

iii. A positive aspect to his life

Patrick claimed that being part of policing is a positive aspect in his life.

4.12.6 The 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup Tournament

Patrick stated that from a police perspective, they would be ready and able to deliver the required services when the tournament starts. Police officers are being trained to deal adequately with the challenges of hosting such an event.

4.12.7 Incompetence in the SAPS

Patrick admitted that there are members of the SAPS who do not have adequate reading or

writing skills. He explained that in 1987, there was an increase in the hiring of "special constables." These constables were responsible for guarding certain facilities such as hospitals, or even accompanying prisoners. After the democratic change taking place in 1994, these constables were incorporated into the structures of the SAPS, even though some of them did not have the adequate reading and writing skills. However, the government is attempting to rectify these issues by providing them with Adult Based Education Training (ABET) so that they may achieve a grade 12 status.

4.12.8 Why people consider police employment

Patrick stated that when considering two individuals for a post in the SAPS, they would hire the more motivated individual rather than the more qualified individual. There are those individuals who join the SAPS purely because they can not attain other employment. Their first priority and motivating factor is to earn a salary. Patrick explained that there exists a need to change these individuals' motivating factors – so as to become more competent police officers. He felt that this is where he as station commanders plays a significant role – utilizing the strengths of individuals to the benefit of the SAPS and the community they serve. This makes them more motivated.

4.12.9 Resources

Patrick noted that currently there is restructuring of certain elements within the SAPS. The area commissioners and certain other units, such as the president's party, have been disbanded and relocated to station level. This relocation meant that each police station now receives its resources direct from government level. Patrick was of the opinion that this restructuring was positive, and it has empowered stations in terms of resources and manpower.

4.12.10 Corruption in the SAPS

Patrick noted that there is an element of corruption in relation to high profile convicts escaping whilst in police custody. He felt that those individuals who have contributed to these escapes should be removed from the policing system – they are not an asset to the SAPS.

4.12.11 The SAPS's fight against crime

Patrick explained that many strategies and organizations existed within the SAPS to combat crime. He acknowledged the existence of under-reporting of crimes, especially in rural areas where common-laws sometimes dictate certain behaviors and practices. People in those areas are ignorant to the seriousness of certain practices, which are regarded as crimes by state-laws. Patrick used the example of common-laws dictating the seduction of minors by religious pastors, which is seen as a serious offence.

4.12.12 The official watchdog and its influence

Patrick noted the possible negative influence of the official watchdog on one's behavior as a police officer. However, he explained that this should not hinder the SAPS in their duties, although there are situations where one becomes confused concerning which action to take; which action would be viewed as correct by the official watchdog.

4.12.13 "A jack-of-all-trades, but master-of-none"

Patrick commented that the SAPS are at times expected to deal with situations that they were not formally trained for. On some occasions, they are expected to sacrifice beyond their required duties. His example related transporting ill people in a police vehicle due to the unavailability of an ambulance. The main goal always remains that the community be served by their actions.

4.12.14 Providing support for police officers

Patrick noted that there exists support services for officers who feel they need debriefing from situations that affect them. These services include access to a psychologist, three social workers, and a pastor. These five individuals are expected to service the 22 police stations in the upper Kwa-Zulu Natal area. Patrick admitted that these efforts are not enough in servicing such a large area. Based on this need for extra support structures, management members are now also being trained in debriefing their unit members and providing assistance.

4.13 Résumé

In this chapter the researcher has presented the individual analyses of all ten research participants' protocols. The analyses included a summary of each participant's experience of being a police officer in the SAPS, as well as identifying the themes that emerged from the interview transcriptions. In the following chapter the common themes for the group will be identified and analyzed alongside the research that was explicated in chapter two.

Chapter Five

Discussion of data

In every bit of writing in the world, there is a base theme. Try to understand men, if you understand each other you will be kind to each other. Knowing a man well never leads to hate and nearly always leads to love.

John Steinbeck

(www.quotationspage.com retrieved November 21, 2008)

5.1 Introduction

The data of this research has produced a description of some of the experiences of police officers in the SAPS. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the rationale for using multiple-participant research was based on how the strength of inferences to be made may increase once identified factors start to occur within more than one participant. This in turn, influences validity and reliability positively.

In the previous section, the analysis of each individual participant's protocol was presented. The researcher now attempts to identify and analyze the common group themes that emerged from the individual protocols. A variety of authors have noted key elements in the experiences, feelings, and thoughts of police officers, as discussed in Chapter Two. A comparative analysis will be attempted whereby the findings of this study will be discussed in relation to the literature available. The researcher will initially present an analysis of the three guiding questions which were asked to all participants, followed by an explication of the general structure of the experience of being a police officer. This explication will be compared to the research that was presented in Chapter Two. Concluding the chapter, the researcher attempts to form a general description of the experience of being a police officer in the SAPS.

5.2 Three principle guiding questions

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the researcher identified three guiding principle questions in the generation of raw data. Each of these questions will be discussed.

5.2.1 *"What does it mean to you to be a member of the police services in South Africa today?"*

The research participants attributed different meanings to being part of the SAPS. All the participants were able to answer this question, except Luke.

Terra and William focused more upon their commitment to the duties and values of officers: To maintain order in public. It seemed as if their personal attachment to this work was not as intensely experienced as the other participants.

Holly and Albert experienced a close interaction and intense motivation for their work at the start of their careers. They were passionate, but this passion has dwindled in the long-term and currently they are negative towards their employment and the meaning attributed to being part of this organization. They experienced feelings of anger and embarrassment when they contemplated the current SAPS and how it has regressed in standards. If possible, both would leave the SAPS. This feeling was shared by Daniel, who felt 'stuck' in his profession. His views concerning this profession were poor, and he was not motivated to perform.

Marlene did not want to join the SAPS, and was merely content with finding stable employment. However, the meaning she attributed to this work has developed into a positive attitude, based on the influence the work has had on her life. She had consequently come to love her job. John shared some of these sentiments. His positive perception surrounding his employment focused on a feeling of pride, and the ability to assist people in need. The SAPS assisted him in defining himself. He was able to form a clear picture of himself and who he is.

Steven and Patrick both experienced feelings of pride for serving the citizens of South Africa. However, Steven felt that community members took the SAPS for granted by undervaluing and disrespecting them.

5.2.2 *What has been your experience(s) in this profession? (positive and negative)*

All the research participants were able to relate positive and negative experiences in working within the SAPS.

Positives

In considering the positives, most of the participants focused on personal aspects and influences their employment had upon them.

Terra and John noted their positive perception regarding their employment. John also identified significant positive changes in his life as a consequence of working in the SAPS. These consequences included becoming more responsible and developing personally. Holly, Albert and William focused more on their sense of pride and achievement when they accomplished something significant, or successfully solved a case. Holly also noted how working in the SAPS had placed her in a leadership role and the positive aspects in assisting to develop others below her. Daniel experienced positives in the SAPS due to the courses he had been trained in. Luke experienced positives when considering the commander at his stationed branch and his abilities to lead others. He also enjoyed the closeness of working near his home. Marlene experienced significant positive aspects to joining the SAPS as compared to her previous occupations. This was the first career that developed her as a person, as well as giving her the practical “tools” to help her cope with her own life. Working in the SAPS had a positive impact on her life, and she had become more responsible, as well as motivated to achieve goals which she thought were previously unattainable. Steven loved his job based on the potential he had to make an immediate impact on the lives of others when he assisted them. Patrick felt that policing was a positive aspect in his life. He experienced pride to be “a man in blue”, and he enjoyed his work.

Negatives

In considering the negatives, most of the participants focused on external aspects in the community and within the structures of the SAPS itself. They were able to introspect on how these experiences made them feel and how it affected them.

John reported negatives in the form of how community members disrespected police officers. Steven and Daniel shared similar sentiments, where members of community were not appreciative of the SAPS and took the SAPS for granted. Many of the respondents felt that this may be attributed to a general lack of knowledge in community members concerning the SAPS and policing.

Holly and Albert had experienced many more negatives than positives whilst working in the SAPS. Both experienced discrimination based upon their race or gender, an experience which William shared too. For Albert, the element of corruption within the SAPS was particularly negative, whilst Holly focused more on poor service delivery and the lack of accountability in SAPS members who neglected their duties. William contemplated the lack of training structures in the SAPS, and the difficulty in reporting misconduct of fellow officers.

Terra experienced negatives concerning others (friends and family) and their perceptions of her as a police officer. They have accused her of betraying those she knew to be criminals before joining the SAPS. Marlene also experienced negatives with regards to losing some close friends since joining the SAPS. They perceived her as different, and were unable to be themselves or do any wrong things in front of her.

Luke was dissatisfied with his lack of promotions, as well as the poor communication regarding the reasons as to why he had not received a promotion.

Steven also experienced negatives when considering the influence this work had had on his family and other aspects of his personal life. He explained how policing was more like a voluntary job, based on the poor salaries they received. Holly, Albert, William, Daniel, and Patrick also noted this influence into their family lives. Steven thought that this work had made him to become less friendly and positive. Holly, Albert, and William shared similar sentiments.

5.2.3 Does any stress experienced affect any other areas of your life? If so, what areas, in what way and to what degree?

The research participants highlighted their experiences of stress and the possible effects it had had on other areas of their lives. Terra, John, Luke, Marlene, Holly, William, Daniel, and Patrick were of the opinion that employment-related stress was not a major factor for them. Currently, they were not experiencing significant amounts of stress, or in the event thereof, they presented with adequate coping mechanisms. These coping mechanisms included discussions with spouses, avoiding stress-provoking situations, healthy living habits, as well as being able to fully accept the violent phenomenon they were exposed to. They had become accustomed to the violent nature of their employment. Daniel, William, Holly, Albert, Steven and Patrick did however note the influence of working in policing upon their families. It kept them from families for long times as well as during holiday periods, and their families constantly feared for their safety. Their families were significantly aware of the dangerous nature of working in this line of employment.

Albert and Steven had different opinions regarding employment-related stress. They experienced significant amounts of stress, as well as a prominent influence into their lives due to this stress experienced. Albert claimed problems with sleeping, and felt his work kept him from his family for most of his day which influenced his family life negatively. Albert's commitments were many and required sacrifices of his time which would otherwise be spent with his family. Policing also influenced his religious life negatively as he was unable to become part of any commitments at his local church due to his work responsibilities. Steven reflected on the extreme nature of his work, and felt it was a difficult phenomenon to be exposed to. Poor salaries were also a stressful issue because he has dependents.

5.3 The general structure of the experience of being a police officer

As highlighted in Chapter Two, a variety of authors have attempted to study various aspects of policing and its influences upon a person. A comparative analysis will be attempted whereby the findings of this research study are to be discussed in relation to the literature presented. A general structure of the experience of being a police officer is presented in Table 5A, followed by the analysis of each phenomenon identified.

Experience	Participant pseudo names
A. Feelings of changing within one's self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>When others learn you are a police officer</i> <i>Through the experiences of being a police officer</i> 	Terra, Holly, Marlene, Steven Terra, John, Holly, Albert, Marlene, Steven
B. Experiencing stress and anxiety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Minimal stress</i> <i>Intense stress</i> 	Terra, John, Holly, William, Daniel, Luke, Marlene, Patrick Albert, Steven
C. Joining the SAPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Merely earning a salary</i> <i>A need for adventure/excitement</i> <i>Making a difference and contributing to the community</i> 	Terra, John, Holly, William, Luke, Marlene, Patrick Albert, William Holly, Steven, Patrick
D. The SAPS's fight against crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A winning battle</i> <i>A losing battle</i> <i>Neutral</i> 	Terra Albert, Daniel, Steven Patrick
E. The Police Force versus The Police Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Inclination to the Police Force</i> <i>Inclination to the Police Service</i> 	John, Albert, Daniel, Steven Luke, Patrick
F. Policing and its influence into one's life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Personal life</i> <i>Family life</i> 	John, Holly, Albert, Daniel, Marlene, Steven Holly, Albert, William, Daniel, Steven, Patrick
G. Coping mechanisms for dealing with traumatic phenomena	John, Holly, William, Daniel, Steven, Patrick
H. Private sector versus government sector	Albert, Daniel, Luke, Steven

Table 5A: Summary of the experiences of being a police officer

Experience	Participant pseudo names
I. "A jack-of-all-trades, but master-of-none"	Steven, Patrick
J. The inadequate justice system and crime in South Africa	Albert, Steven
K. Negative experiences in the SAPS	
• <i>Fast tracking of ill-qualified personnel</i>	Holly, Albert, William, Steven
• <i>Poor work commitment/lack of accountability</i>	Holly, Albert, William, Daniel, Patrick
• <i>Measuring job performance</i>	Holly, Albert
• <i>Lack of management support</i>	Holly, Albert, Patrick
• <i>Political influences and the new emphasis on human rights</i>	Holly, Albert, William, Daniel, Steven, Patrick
• <i>The police watchdog and the negative influence thereof</i>	Albert, Steven, Patrick
• <i>Racial and gender discrimination</i>	Holly, Albert, William
• <i>General decline in policing standards</i>	Holly, Albert, William, Steven
• <i>Policing had changed through the years</i>	Holly, Albert, William
• <i>Poor salaries</i>	John, Albert, Luke, Steven
• <i>Lack of proper training/inadequate training provided</i>	William, Steven
• <i>Working hours and being paid overtime</i>	Holly, Albert, Steven
• <i>Corruption in the police</i>	Albert, Steven, Patrick
• <i>Lack of resources</i>	Holly, William, Daniel
• <i>Lack of recognition</i>	Albert, William
L. Public perception of the SAPS	
• <i>The general attitude and perception of police employment</i>	Holly, Steven
• <i>Public unaware of their situations and variables in policing</i>	Holly, Albert, Daniel, Steven
M. Problems when considering service delivery	Daniel, Albert, Marlene, Steven
N. The officers' children following in their footsteps	Holly, Daniel, Luke, Steven
O. Future considerations	
• <i>Remaining in the police</i>	John, Luke, Steven
• <i>Pursuing another career</i>	Terra, Holly, Albert, William, Daniel, Marlene

Table 5A: Summary of the experiences of being a police officer

5.3. A Feelings of changing within one's self

The participants were able to identify how their self-concept changed when others learned they were police officers, as well as through their direct experiences in law enforcement.

According to Steyn (2005), some officers believe strongly that members of the community at all times critically observe police officials. Four of the participants noted the influence others' perceptions of them as police officers had upon their self-concept. People seem to change their conduct and attitude towards these respondents when they learn that they are involved in law enforcement. The participants' experiences were described as mostly negative, which seems to be based on an excessive focus that citizens have on them as public servants. This confirms Whitaker's (1979) assumptions that officers seem inclined to conceal their employment. Members of public tend to make a mental shift concerning them as individuals when they learn of their occupation in law enforcement. They do not regard them as mere people, but rather focus on their labels as "police officers". This label ties in with Yarmey (1990), confirming the belief that citizens do not bestow them due respect as individuals, but rather expect them to conduct themselves in certain ways based on this label.

Half of the research participants reflected on how this profession had impacted their self-concept. Some of these influences were positive, and others negative. For two of the participants it seems that they benefitted from policing, for example, developing into more responsible and tougher individuals, or becoming more motivated to achieve personal goals. However, two participants seemed to develop their self-concept more negatively, for example, becoming more negative with life in general, as well as fostering bad tempers and stress.

5.3. B Experiencing stress and anxiety

The majority of participants interviewed seem to cope adequately with the stress accompanying policing. Coping mechanisms included discussions with spouses, avoiding stress-provoking situations, as well as healthy living habits. Although these participants were coping well with stress, they were able to highlight the negative influences of these stressors.

The majority of respondents expressed little concern about the violent nature of their work and the possible stress experienced. This is in contrast to the findings of Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004). Two of the participants did, however, exhibit significant amounts of stress related to policing. Most accepted the violence as an integral part of policing that could never change - one just has to accept it. Two younger participants expressed that their viewpoints might change in the future, as their careers spent in the SAPS were still very short – they had not yet been exposed to much intense phenomena which they were not able to deal with.

The two participants admitting to significant stress experienced, focused on the excessive nature of policing, the poor salaries that created problems in their families, as well as the structures within the SAPS and policing and how these influenced their work. This confirms some of the findings of Minnaar and Mistry (2006). For one officer the political influences were debilitating in attempting to serve the community. It presented as such an extreme barrier, that he developed negativity towards the SAPS and crime fighting. This influence on police officers' actions and decisions was also felt by some other participants. They admitted to concerns surrounding charges laid against them for alleged misconduct. As Minnaar and Mistry (2006) mentioned in their study, some officers generally perceive that they were being victimized in this regard. This contributes to the low morale in the SAPS.

5.3. C Joining the SAPS

There were differences noted in the reasons why participants initially joined the SAPS. The role of merely obtaining employment versus considering a career in the SAPS was highlighted by the majority of research participants. Four of the officers admitted to joining the SAPS for mere employment, as well as three officers having had felt the impact of this factor in policing. Lefkowitz (1973, 1974, 1975, 1977) suggests that individuals join policing for the perceived job security offered. The researcher is of the opinion that the motivation of these individuals is based predominantly on desperateness, rather than job security. South Africa's high unemployment rate seems more influential, and individuals are more willing to accept any employment obtainable.

It was noted by some participants that individuals joining the SAPS as a mere source of employment do not seem to understand or realize the challenges of law enforcement. Identifying one's motivation for joining the SAPS seems of significant importance. Problems result from employing new officers who considered the SAPS as a mere source of employment, rather than a career opportunity – these individuals do not have much motivation to perform. Motivation is a significant factor when considering officers' work performance and commitment. This was confirmed by participants in leadership roles. Some participants, who joined the SAPS as a source of employment, view the work as a stepping stone, whilst they invest professional interests elsewhere. They do not wish to have a long-term career in the SAPS.

Two officers were attracted to the perceived challenges and adventurous nature of policing. They were long-standing members of the SAPS, and recalled joining after their conscriptions in the military. They had had positive experiences in the military, and explored policing as an employment opportunity of similar nature to that of the military. This confirms the research of Yarmey (1990) and Van Maaned (1973), which suggests that these individuals have a sense of social responsibility combined with a desire to be a person of action and adventure.

According to Allen et al (1964), some of these individuals chose this line of work because they wanted to work with people in trouble. Three of the participants noted their needs to make a positive contribution to society and how this was influential in their decisions to join the police. All these participants were long-standing members in the SAPS. The potential to influence people positively was a contributing factor to feelings of work satisfaction. They were proud of their achievements.

5.3. D The SAPS's fight against crime

Masuku (2001) suggests that perceptions of the SAPS as inefficient and corrupt are increasing. He questions the effectiveness and efficiency of the SAPS in combating crime. The majority of individuals commenting on the SAPS and their fight against crime felt that it was a losing battle. Only one individual felt significantly positive regarding this topic, whilst three

others remained skeptical. The theme of community policing was perceived as a positive, although corruption, poor salaries, and under-reporting of crimes were perceived as hindrances. This poor perception of the SAPS's fight against crime ties in with Minnaar and Mistry (2006), where officers display negative attitudes and a low morale concerning their work.

5.3. E The Police Force versus The Police Service

Participants exhibited differences in their inclination to the type of orientation the SAPS conformed to. Some of the participants admitted their preference to the previous Police Force and the methods of law enforcement utilized in that era. It seems as if policing was experienced, or perceived to be more positive and effective in that era, with officers earning more respect from community members and criminals alike. Research by Whitaker (1979); Cawthra (1993) and Yarmey (1990) all emphasize the important elements of the relationship between police officers and the community they attempt to serve. Some of these respondents felt they were not receiving due respect from community members or even within their own organizational structure. Respect was something of intrinsic value to these respondents. Respect, along with achieving success in their careers, were factors that motivated them to continue in their profession. It seems as if they felt a stronger presence of these factors in the era of the Police Force, than in the current SAPS.

Van der Westhuizen (2000) stressed that the transition from a Police Force to a Police Service is one of the most important challenges facing the SAPS. Whitaker (1979) highlighted that there exists a built-in resistance to change or modernize ideas based upon the hierarchical organizational structure in policing. Participants with preference to the Police Force preferred the authoritarian decision-making style of the Police Force, as compared to the participatory-making decision style of community policing. These participants were also negative towards the perceived lack of discipline and respect that exists within the SAPS, as well as the increase of political influence into their work. This political influence was experienced as a significant hindrance for them in conducting their work effectively. This ties in with Steyn (2008), who emphasized that the police subculture, with its preference to hierarchical organizational

structure, would possibly hinder this shift towards a community-orientated style of policing. This style requires police members to trust citizens, something which they find difficult. Many interactions with citizens are viewed as potential sources of danger based upon the potential of being reported for misconduct.

Some participants admitted to extreme negative perceptions regarding new policies emphasizing human rights. They perceive the government focusing more on criminals' rights, rather than emphasizing civilians' or police officers' rights. This is in accordance with Minnaar and Mistry (2006), where officers seem to feel powerless: "Fighting fire with fire" does not seem possible due to officers having to adhere to principles and guidelines that are perceived as illogical and unnecessary. If they step outside the boundaries of their jurisdictional powers, they are charged with misconduct. Criminals know their rights and abuse them at the expense of police officers. Due to the emphasis on human rights, some of the participants felt that crime was motivated by our law or judicial system that is too weak. Criminals are not afraid to commit crimes because they know they have a substantial chance of not being prosecuted. Thus, the SAPS is perceived as a "soft" organization with little influence upon the community and crime – something which the Police Force was not. The Police Force had power and influence, and they were feared by criminals. Participants felt that this influence was significant in fighting crime successfully. The Police Force was also perceived as less corrupt and more organized.

Two of the respondents opposed the preference to the Police Force. They preferred the renewed emphasis on human rights, and perceived it as a positive when considering the wrongs of the past. Singh (2004) highlighted that many South Africans still regard the police with hostility and suspicion. Members of the community were displeased with the unnecessary excessive physical force used in that era. The transition to a service-oriented style of policing had fostered the consideration of each individual's rights. Accordingly, members of community were presently more open to reporting crimes and working with the SAPS to fight crime.

5.3. F Policing and its influence on one's life

Policing had a significant influence on multiple areas of the police officers' lives. These areas

focused mostly on the individual self, and their immediate families.

Most of the respondents could highlight a definite influence from policing into their personal lives. Two respondents felt a positive change and development within themselves, whilst three officers differed in their opinions. Positive influences were noted in the form of personal development such as becoming more responsible, a deeper understanding of one's community, gaining motivation to achieve goals previously though as unattainable, as well as developing into stronger people.

The literature reviewed focused predominantly on the significantly negative impact on officers' lives. Incidences of medical boarding, burnout, substance abuse and suicide were highlighted (Nel & Burgers, 1998; Nel 194; Pienaar, 2002; Rothman & Agathagelou, 2000; Rothmann & Strijdom, 2002 in Pienaar & Swanepoel, 2004). However, the negative influences noted by this sample group focused more on the form of intrusiveness into one's personal life. Not being able to make commitments to other areas of life, such as religion, fostering stress and negative tempers included some of the negative influences.

More than half of the participants felt that being a police officer significantly influenced their family lives. Working in law enforcement seems to request many personal commitments and sacrifices from the individual, which ultimately influences one's immediate family. This impact was mostly negative, with family members exhibiting worry and concern for the officers' safety. Being a police officer would require them to leave their families in the middle of the night, or not be able to share festive seasons due to work requirements. Two of the male participants commented on the relationship with their spouses. This correlates with the findings of Steyn (2005) where male participants expressed feelings that their spouses or partners did not really understand their situation in the SAPS.

5.3. G Coping mechanisms for dealing with traumatic phenomena

Most of the officers commented on this aspect. It seems as if the participants initially felt a significant presence of anxiety when they were exposed to extremely traumatic or violent

phenomena at the start of their careers. As time passed, accompanied with experience, these officers came to accept these phenomena as an integral part of their job, and coped better with the overall experience. This is in contrast with Lennings (1997), where some police officers appeared to lack proper coping mechanisms and responses to exposure to traumatic/violent incidences.

The extreme nature of the work seemed such a prominent factor that one was *forced* to deal with it, or simply exit policing as a profession. Positive coping mechanisms for dealing with these phenomena included exercising, socializing with friends, keeping clear from things causing stress, self-motivation, discussing it with a spouse or partner, as well as possibly suppressing the experience. Negative coping mechanisms included alcoholism, domestic violence, as well as suicide.

In accordance with Minnaar and Mistry (2006), some of the participants did not have a favorable impression of counseling services provided. Some felt they did not need these services. They also felt that those offering the services would not understand the environment in which they worked and the situations they had to cope with.

5.3. H Private sector versus government sector

Four of the research participants considered the private and government sectors. They exhibited negativity towards employment in the government sector. The private sector was viewed as of higher standard, with more incentives and benefits. The participants felt that there were too few incentives to perform well when working for the government. It seems this aspect was important when one considered that some individuals worked significantly harder than others, but everyone earned the same salary. Respect and the sense of accomplishment were identified as driving forces of motivation in some of the respondents. However, there seems to be little that motivates individuals to work harder or develop into more competent police officers in the SAPS. This ties in with the statement from Singh (2004) regarding SAPS employees who move towards employment in the private sector.

5.3. I “A jack-of-all-trades, but master-of-none”

Two of the officers felt that policing had a unique aspect of being “a jack-of-all-trades, but master-of-none.” They focused on the diversity of their work and what they were expected to do in attempting to assist others. This meant “moving beyond” that which was required of them as police officers. This implies that at times police officers were expected to deal with situations that they were not formally trained for.

5.3. J The inadequate justice system and crime in South Africa

Linking the community’s feeling of injustice, two participants noted the inadequacy of the justice system in South Africa. The new emphasis on human rights and equality contributed negatively to community members’ feelings of frustration at justice not being served when crimes were committed against them. It seems to have created thinking patterns that criminals have more rights than law-abiding citizens or police officers. The respondents perceived the governing bodies to emphasize the rights of arrested criminals. Due to this emphasis on human rights, crime is not motivated by poverty or unemployment. It is motivated by our law or judicial system that is too weak. Criminals are not afraid to commit crimes because they know they will have a substantial chance of not being prosecuted. This ties in with the findings of Crank and Caldero (1991), where participants were of the opinion that the legal system was soft on crime.

5.3. K Negative experiences in the SAPS

The research revealed a multitude of negative experiences for research participants employed in the SAPS. The following experiences were identified:

- **Fast tracking of ill-qualified personnel**

Some individuals more-qualified than others were not being considered for promotions in the SAPS. These fast-trackings with regards to promotions have negative consequences in the form of incompetent managers. Some of the participants felt this was unfair and discriminatory due to them having served the SAPS loyally for many years. These individuals who are “fast-

tracked" are not knowledgeable concerning police work, meaning that they have not been exposed to the dangers of policing. This concurs with the research by Steyn (2005), reporting on some participants' negative perceptions regarding top ranking officials in the SAPS who did not really know what happened on field-officer level. This has consequences for lower ranking police officers, due to the limited knowledge these ill-qualified personnel have concerning the situations police officers are exposed to. Orders and policies are implemented which were not practically viable in the field. These fast-trackings contribute to negativity in the respondents and lowering their work performance and input, because others reap professional benefits even though they do not work as hard.

- **Poor work commitment/lack of accountability**

Half of the respondents emphasized aspects of a general lack of commitment and accountability in some of their colleagues. It seems that one could divide officers into two groups: Those who work hard, and those who do the bare minimum. Motivation to become a police officer was identified as of central importance positively influencing work commitment. Some of the respondents compared the current situation to the previous era in the Police Force, where general laziness and lack of accountability were not seen as problems. Even on senior management levels, some present as poor examples to their subordinates, which includes poor work attendance and few disciplinary actions taken towards these senior members. This was one of the contributing factors to officers experiencing organizational stress in the studies done by Pienaar and Swanepoel (2004), as well as Storm (2003). Some of the participants also highlighted the camaraderie some SAPS members have towards each other. It seems that in the SAPS, individuals will only look after those known to them. Meaning that it "does not matter *what* you know, but rather *who* you know." Officers will protect their own kin, as long as their responsibilities are met.

- **Measuring job performance**

Two of the respondents had a general negative orientation regarding the practices in measuring job performance in the SAPS. It seems as if these reviews are not given the proper time and effort to conduct accurate job performance measurements. These rating procedures

are not efficient in their implementation, which has the consequence of placing personnel in professional positions to which they are not capable of doing, or some individuals earning incentives which they did not earn. This made the respondents unhappy and very frustrated. There seems to be no monitoring system in place to ensure ethical measuring of job performance.

- **Lack of management support**

One of the most significant negative experiences for some respondents was the perceived poor support they received from management levels. Two participants perceived management support to be of poor standard, not willing to assist them or take responsibility for problems their unit's members were unable to solve. They suggested that individuals appointed to leadership positions which they were not adequately qualified for ("fast-trackings"), do not possess the necessary experience or knowledge of how to lead others. Management support in the pre-apartheid era was also highlighted, outweighing the efforts they experience at present. Minnaar and Mistry (2006) also made mention of their participants experiencing a lack of support from the SAPS, and this also ties in with the research done by Crank and Caldero (1991) which claims that officers protect themselves from their own political heads and commanders. They do not perceive management as "being on their side", supporting their belief that criminals' rights are more important than officers' rights, and that monitoring bodies, such as the ICD, are merely there to foster a feeling of threats to losing their jobs.

- **Political influences and the new emphasis on human rights**

More than half of the respondents perceived political influences as too prominent in policing. These influences seemed to frustrate respondents significantly. Legislation regulating police officers' conduct was perceived as inappropriate, with guiding principles too complex and impractical to enforce. Also, the new emphasis of equality and human rights created a perception that criminals' rights are more important than that of citizens and police officers, supporting the research of Minnaar and Mistry (2006). Some respondents felt it is difficult for them to follow all the technicalities of the regulations guiding policing. They felt these technicalities are a hindrance to their ability to conduct police work and convict criminals.

- **The police watchdog and the negative influence thereof**

Three of the respondents noted the negative influence of the official watchdog monitoring police conduct, which links with the results of Minnaar and Mistry (2006). They are able to understand its significance, although it was felt that it could be a hindrance to them conducting effective police work. It seems some of the respondents felt that the new emphasis on criminals' human rights created a situation where police officers and citizens have fewer rights than criminals. This also supports the findings of Minnaar and Mistry (2006), as well as suggestions from Dintwe and Montesh (2008) that police officers are the ones who are being hunted, instead of criminals. Police officers seem to feel that the efforts aimed at eliminating the bad elements in the SAPS focus excessively on the wrong-doings of the crime fighters, instead of increasing efforts to fight crime itself. Also, this monitoring body only seems to focus predominantly on larger metropolitan areas.

- **Racial and gender discrimination**

The three Caucasian respondents all perceived discrimination based upon their race and gender. It seems Caucasians are not considered for promotions, which influences their opportunities for career development. These participants also perceived a constant threat to losing their jobs due to the influences of the policy of Affirmative Action (AA). These findings support the research of Morrison (2005) confirming the existence of some form of gender discrimination.

- **General decline in policing standards**

Four of the respondents commented on a general decline of standards within the SAPS. This is in line with the research of Marais (2003) highlighting the general decline regarding communities' feelings of safety since 1994. It also supports the research of Singh (2005) highlighting communities' decline of trust in the SAPS.

These declines in policing standards have influenced the respondents' work performance and motivation negatively. Some compared this to the previous era of the Police Force, and were of the opinion that the standard was higher then: Management supported their officers more

and good performance was recognized more regularly. It was also felt that the new emphasis on human rights contributed to this general decline in policing standards.

- **Policing had changed through the years**

The three Caucasian respondents have served in both the Police Force and the Police Services. They noted the differences in the two organizations and how policing had indeed changed to such an extent that political influences are infringing on police officer's rights to defend themselves. Policing has shifted its focus to politics, and they felt these influences negatively influenced their abilities to do their jobs effectively. Also, policing was not perceived as a career opportunity anymore, but rather merely as a source of employment. This means that some individuals will do only the bare minimum in order to collect their salary.

- **Poor salaries**

Problems with poor salaries were reported by four of the respondents. This is in line with the findings of Minnaar and Mistry (2006). Most of these respondents admitted to struggling financially as they were the main bread-winners for their families. This ties in with Singh's (2004) statement regarding difficult working situations and poor remuneration contributing to poor morale in the SAPS. Poor salaries were also thought to contribute to corruption in the SAPS.

- **Lack of proper training/inadequate training provided**

Two research participants noted the inadequacy of the training structures in the SAPS. It seems they perceived that the training provided does not equip a recruit sufficiently for the range of problems officers experience in the field.

- **Working hours and being paid overtime**

As Cawthra (1993) highlighted, officers have to work long hours of unpaid overtime. Three participants in this study felt very negative towards their working hours and overtime payment. Participants were not compensated for overtime worked. Instead, they would earn extra leave days. This frustrated them, due to the workload they have to attend to. Ultimately, extra leave-

days would expire before these participants were able to claim their extra leave-days – there is just considerably many commitments and so much work to attend to.

- **Corruption in the SAPS**

Corruption within the SAPS was confirmed by three respondents. One participant felt that increasing salaries for field officers would eradicate corruption, whilst another felt that it was a useless proposition. These corrupt elements anger the respondents intensely. They do not associate with corrupt SAPS members, and feel there is no place for them in this organization. It is detrimental to the development of a positive image they are attempting to accomplish, as these corrupt elements receive more publicity than positives in the SAPS. Prinsloo (n.d.) is of the opinion that corruption in the SAPS contributes to mistrust between community members and the police officials.

- **Lack of resources**

There seems to be lack of resources at this specific police station. Minnaar and Mistry (2006) also reported similar findings in their research sample. However, the three respondents noting this element each identified different resources. One participant claimed lack of important necessities such as bullet-proof vests and arms, whilst another focused more on the quality of the resources such as police vehicles not being fitted with bullet-proof glass. This lack of resources have a direct influence in their attempts to fight crime and conduct effective policing.

- **Lack of recognition**

Two participants noted the lack of recognition officers receive for their duties and contributions. These respondents are Caucasian, suggesting there exists a possible lack of recognition for individuals of this race. This lack of recognition influenced their motivation to work harder and perform in their jobs.

5.3. L Public perception of the SAPS

The participants noted the perceptions from members of public and the influence these perceptions have on them as police officers and their work performance. Kinsley, Lea, and

Young (1986) highlighted the importance of the community having a *positive regard* towards the police. This fosters a situation whereby community members work together with the police by providing valuable information. From the research respondents' viewpoint, the public's general attitude and perception of the SAPS is poor. This would have a negative bearing on the above-mentioned premise of cooperation between the community and the police.

The officers felt that civilians are uninformed concerning their situations as police officers and the workload they have to attend to, including the frustrations and negative phenomena they experience in the SAPS. They also felt that the community expects exceedingly more from the police, and in some instances take the SAPS for granted. These perceptions seem to influence officers negatively, and even hurt their feelings. The participants were willing to admit to their shortcomings as an organization, but felt that they received little recognition for any of their positive contributions in the community. The researcher equates this to the development of some form of "general negativity", where officers have a predominant feeling of career ambivalence or indifference. This affects officers' motivation negatively. Ultimately, these respondents felt that the community's trust in the SAPS and their ability to fight crime is declining, hence the increase in members of community "taking matters into their own hands" when they felt justice was not being served. This is in accordance with the study of Singh (2005), where members of the community expressed their dissatisfaction at the SAPS not being able to serve their needs for justice.

5.3. M Problems when considering service delivery

Four participants focused on specific problem areas in service delivery. These included slow response times, the justice system not serving citizens, as well as too few officers employed in the SAPS. Slow response times were attributed to various factors including a decline in resources, even whilst having to attend to the same workload, as well as their branch having to cover a vast geographical area requiring officers to drive long distance and accessing rural locations. The problems of the justice system not serving citizens were attributed to the new emphasis on human rights abuses already discussed. Criminals' rights are perceived as more important than police officers' or citizens' rights. Two participants felt that merely hiring more

police officers and purchasing more vehicles would significantly improve on service delivery.

5.3. N The officers' children following in their footsteps

When considering their own children and the possibility of following in the same choice of career, three respondents noted their disagreement to their offspring choosing policing as a career, whilst one participant did not note any problem with the idea. For those in disagreement, they based their opinions predominantly on their negative experiences whilst being employed in the SAPS, as well as the violent and stressful nature of the work. They would encourage them to follow other career opportunities.

5.3. O Future considerations

Considering the future, three participants noted that they want to remain in the SAPS. Even though they were able to note positives and negatives, they wish to remain in the policing sector. Two of these participants enjoyed their work, and are motivated to develop a longer-term career in the SAPS. Another respondent felt there is no other alternative after investing many years in the SAPS. He was comfortable with his position, and wishes to remain in the SAPS until retirement.

For six of the other participants, remaining in the SAPS was an option they would choose not to consider. Some of the participants were not motivated to develop a career from policing, and admitted to joining the SAPS purely because they could not find other stable employment. They wished to use it as a "stepping stone" in achieving other goals. Three of the participants felt frustrated, as they wished to exit the SAPS, but felt it was impossible due to the unavailability of other opportunities. Each had served for a long period, and it seems they perceived themselves to be stuck in their current situation, even though they wished they could leave. They explained that, if given a second opportunity, they would never have joined the SAPS.

5.4 General description of the experience of being a police officer in the SAPS

Considering the literature presented, gathering the raw data personally, as well as analyzing the themes for individuals and the group as a whole, the researcher attempts to form a general description of the experience of being a police officer in the SAPS. Of note is the influence of this experience as a long-term phenomenon. The researcher is of the opinion that comparison to a single experience, such as delivering a baby or being hijacked, is difficult due to the complexity involved in policing as a career. Policing is not one experience, but rather a conglomeration of experiences exposed to over years of service. These experiences synthesize to form an interpretation within the officer – a certain meaning for the officer. The ten research participants each emphasized individual phenomena and the researcher now attempts to extract a general description from the group themes.

Differences were noted in the rationales for choosing policing as a career. A clear distinction could be made between individuals choosing this career for mere employment, and those who chose it out of free will. This rational was important when considering the stance individuals took towards working in the SAPS, and the motivation they had in performing well.

“Monetary-motivated” individuals felt mostly comfortable with their job. They were not as enmeshed with their work environment as those motivated by passion. They did not care as much for the negative phenomena – it did not affect them as much. In general, they enjoyed their work. “Passion-motivated” individuals were not as comfortable in their job. They experienced more difficulties in their work environment, and wanted more things to change. The negative phenomena experienced seemed to affect them more than “monetary-motivated” individuals. They did enjoy the positive aspects to their work, especially if they could assist someone or solve a case. These achievements were significant motivating influences, and created pride in them.

When considering the field level police officer, their work is a source of pleasure and pain. Achieving and succeeding in their work creates feelings of self-worth. They take pride in being able to contribute to developing the community and eradicating the poisonous elements of

society. However, they experience negatives in the form of their organizational structures and policies. Intricate links exist between police officers, the community they wish to serve, and the organizational structures of the SAPS. As the acting representatives of the government, police officers' behaviors are in accordance with the rules and regulations set out by policy. Some participants interpret these policies as hindrances when considering crime, and others not.

Police officers' viewpoints regarding these policies are of no significance when considering the SAPS as an organization. Whether participants focused on correcting the past mistakes of human right violations, or whether focusing on the present and doing everything possible to combat crime – police officers' actions and decisions are prescribed by authorities above them, and they have to act in accordance to these prescriptions. This suggests that they do not have much independence or autonomy regarding their actions and decisions; they merely have to follow policies and procedures.

Crime fighting and serving the community came to be understood as a complex and difficult task. On many occasions officers seem to become confused concerning which action to take - not knowing which actions is in accordance with policy. They doubt themselves, and feel threatened by the possibility of being charged for misconduct. It seems that the emphasis on human rights and people's freedom has created a situation where officers would rather disengage from attempting to act, than acting on what they feel is right and being prosecuted for these actions later.

From the community's perspective, the SAPS seems to be failing in many aspects when one considers an inadequate justice system, problems with service delivery, as well as negative phenomena in the SAPS, for example, corruption. Members of public stare blatantly into the eyes of police officers expecting them to serve and protect them. Although, they seem to forget that police officers do not act independently. They serve a higher power and act in accordance with policies and procedures. This creates much frustration and confusion, because the SAPS seems to play a mediating role between the community and the government, being forced into a position of submission. They are the ones blamed for the lack of service delivery and the

high crime rates, but they are dependent on the government for resources and the government regulates and monitors their actions.

The SAPS is not without its flaws, and suggesting that the SAPS is the victim would not be an accurate representation. There are many officers who join the SAPS to merely earn a salary, as well as a significant presence of corruption. These individuals are not as motivated and committed as others. In light of these elements, the researcher wishes to emphasize the significant contribution the government plays in creating a working environment conducive to the development of bad elements. If the SAPS is seen as the representatives of the government they serve, why not address the government when complaining about problems with service delivery and crime? Why blame the actions of the pawn, when there is a mastermind behind his actions?

Understanding these intricate relationships assists the reader in understanding that police officers are merely people too. They have chosen to carry the labels and burdens of their work. We as individuals should consider their lives and situations in their attempts to address crime, whilst serving in the interests of the South African Government. Criminals' actions are not mandated by policy or guidelines. Unlike police officers, they do not have to answer to anyone.

From the time of interviewing, the researcher noticed that policing was a serious business to most of the participants. It was not something most of them took light-hearted, and they presented with intense emotions and thoughts surrounding the topic. Although there were differences noted in the way policing influenced their lives, it influenced their lives nonetheless. It is a job that places one in harms way, and it *will* have an impact on one no matter what. This suggests the prominence of the experience and its impact – bringing about shifts in participants' lives. The impact, or rather the way that impact is interpreted, relies much on the individual circumstances and personalities. Some noted positive impacts, and other negatives.

Almost all of the participants had an acute awareness of the implications associated with their occupational environment. They have gained deeper appreciation for their own lives, and

understand the significance of their profession in the greater scope of developing South Africa.

Many of the respondents have experienced policing as emotionally challenging. For those who have experienced many negatives in the SAPS, they have even been overwhelmed and this has eroded their passion and commitment in fighting crime and assisting the community. They feel less reluctant to engage in policing activities, as these activities place them in high risk situations which they are not willing to engage with anymore. They are not as passionate about law enforcement and crime fighting as in their youth. If they had the opportunity to exit policing, they would consider. For those who have experienced positives in the SAPS, it remains a source of pleasure and pride. Even though they understood the dangers of policing, as well as the negatives present in their work, they wished to remain in the SAPS until retirement.

5.5 Résumé

This chapter has highlighted the prominent group themes emerging from the phenomenological analyses of interviews with SAPS members. These themes included issues relating to their emotional and cognitive reactions. A general description of the experience of being a police officer in the SAPS was also provided.

In the next chapter, the researcher concludes the research endeavor. It will identify the strengths and limitations to the project, the value of the research product itself, as well as suggesting possible future recommendations.

Chapter Six

Recommendations and Conclusions

Let us take things as we find them: Let us not attempt to distort them into what they are not.

We cannot make facts. All our wishing cannot change them. We must use them.

John Henry Cardinal Newman

(www.quotationspage.com retrieved November 21, 2008)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion to the research endeavor. The researcher will consider the aim of the study and how it was achieved, identifying the strengths and limitations to the findings and research, as well as the value of the research product itself. The chapter ends off with suggestions for future research, and stating the concluding remarks.

6.2 Restating the of aims of the study

The main aim of the research was:

To understand and describe police officer's feelings, experiences, and understandings of what it means to be a law enforcer in South Africa today. The focus was on how the participants interpreted the phenomena they are exposed to on a daily basis, and how these phenomena affected them personally.

The goal was on obtaining deeper insight and understanding into police officers' lives. There seemed to be a lack of understanding from the public at large over police officers and their circumstances, experiences, and feelings. The researcher attempted to bridge the gap between the misinformed and the informed; between the layperson and the police officer.

6.3 Achieving the aims and objectives

In the previous chapter, the researcher attempted to extract a general description of the

experience of being a police officer in the SAPS. This description focused on significant areas of policing such as different rationales for joining the police; experiencing policing; the impact of the experience; as well as prospects for the future for the research participants. In considering these areas, as well as the group themes identified, it is the researcher's opinion that this information provides us with better understanding for the respondents' feelings, experiences, and understandings of what it means to be a law enforcement official in South Africa today. The research provided insight into how participants interpreted the phenomena of their work environment, and how these phenomena affected them personally.

6.4 Strengths of the research

This research adds to the existing body of knowledge concerning the SAPS and its members. The method of phenomenology was consistent and complimented the aim of the research in exploring this particular phenomenon. The analysis of the individual and group themes provided the researcher with an accurate reflection of the phenomenon under investigation.

In conducting the fieldwork, the researcher is of the opinion their existed structure and freedom within the dialogue. The structure provided the basis for the conversation, and the freedom fostered the spirit of exploration and discovery into this particular experience. These two elements successfully fostered the foundation of trust that allowed for deep expansive dialogue between the researcher and participants. In so doing, the research participants were able to mobilize into positions of vulnerability where they could extend themselves and their feelings to the researcher. This position ensured for rich data and an accurate reflection of their experiences.

Due to phenomenology's research goals and qualitative design, the participant group was limited to only a few members. Considering the sample group, the participants represented individuals from various backgrounds, races, cultures, ages, experiences and ranks. Even though the results may not be generalizable to SAPS members in other areas, it is the researcher's opinion that the diverse sample group offered a more accurate all-round reflection of the experience.

6.5 Limitations of the research

Phenomenology focuses on the individual, rather than the masses. Rather than seeking to describe the mean and standard deviation of the group as it relates to the experience, the researcher's concerns focused more on the nature of the experience itself. This was an exploratory study using a methodology that was limited to only a few participants. Even though the validity and reliability of the research is not questionable, the researcher acknowledges that the information acquired is only applicable to these participants at the time of interviewing. With this statement, the study's limitations to generalizing its results to other populations are highlighted.

When analyzing transcripts, there exists a constant danger that the fieldworker remains the victim of his own preconceived assumptions which may have bearing impact on his results. Although the researcher attempted to have an adequate awareness of his presuppositions, the analyses of the transcripts was nevertheless influenced by the researcher's perspectives, values and principles. There exists the possibility that another researcher re-analyzing the transcripts may have derived different themes from the data.

A further limitation to the research is the unique nature of the data elicited. The researcher made concerted efforts to protect participants by omitting transcriptions of the interviews, as well as personal identifiable information. However, there is a risk that reading the presentations of their personal experiences may result in being identified by another reader.

Lastly, the research endeavor depended on self-report data during a qualitative interview. The data gathered might have been influenced by personal variables unknown to the researcher, as well as by a socially desirable bias within the participants so as to be seen in a favorable light.

6.6 Value of the study

When conducting the literature review, there existed little information of this nature regarding police officers in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province. As mentioned previously, this research adds to

the existing body of knowledge concerning the SAPS and its members in the Kwa-Zulu Natal area.

The research highlighted the thinking and feelings of police officers at field-level. This information may be utilized in many ways when considering police officers' work environment, preventing mental health problems in members of the SAPS, as well as broadening our horizons on a topic which may be under-researched in South Africa.

In conducting the fieldwork, the researcher is of the opinion the research participants were able to mobilize into positions of vulnerability where they could extend themselves and their feelings to the researcher. This position did not just ensure for richness of data, but officers gained possible therapeutic benefits of being part of a qualitative study allowing them to air their opinions and concerns. Within their dialogue the researcher is of the opinion that participants engaged in some form of catharsis. This may have positive impacts on participants' live-worlds when considering their professional and personal lives.

The research is also of value when one considers how citizens view the SAPS and policing. This study contributes to laypeople's thinking to an extent where they may be more informed when considering the situation within which police officers have to work in.

6.7 Recommendations

The researcher offers recommendations in consideration of the following areas:

6.7.1 The participants

Extensive consideration for external and personal variables such as age, race, and culture of the participant group were not taken into account in the research. The researcher recognizes the importance of identifying these personal variables and attempting to understand what influence they may have in the field of policing and their experiences thereof. Knowing this may be beneficial in establishing support mechanisms and structures specifically addressing officers' individual needs.

6.7.2 The field of mental health

In terms of recommendations for future initiatives within the SAPS, it is suggested that the support structures and the effectiveness of these efforts be analyzed and reviewed. These structures seem to be failing some officers who struggle to cope with occupational and emotional concerns. Also, reviewing the support structures for victims of crime may also yield new perspectives on how to assist these individuals better.

Some of the respondents felt as if they are being “hung out to dry” whilst criminals do whatever they please. These participants experience little support from the SAPS as an organization. They become anxious that their choices and actions will bring about charges of misconduct against them. This impression has lasting impact on officers’ commitment to the organization and the goals they are attempting to achieve. In order for officers to provide good-quality service, the SAPS should attempt to foster a culture of firm support for their officers.

6.7.3 Future research

This study focused exclusively on a small sample of police officers located at a rural police station in the Uthungulu district. Considering future research, a larger sample size may increase generalizability and validity. It would also be beneficial to extend the research endeavor to include officers from urban areas, as well as law enforcement in the private sector. Studies in these fields could incorporate elements from a quantitative design, thus yielding more objective results

Also, further studies should investigate whether similar results are obtainable in the other eight provinces of South Africa. This would expand our knowledge on the experiences of police officers in the SAPS. Comparative analyses of these alternative research contexts may yield global variables of importance within the SAPS community.

6.8 Conclusion

This research endeavor has provided valuable research regarding the thoughts and feelings of


members of the SAPS. It offered a description of police officers' experiences and understandings of what it means to be a law enforcer in South Africa today. The focus was on how the participants interpreted the phenomena they are exposed to, and how these phenomena affected them personally. The researcher is of the opinion that the unique experience attributed to policing and the complicated nature thereof has been demonstrated through the analyses of the interviews. It has provided the reader with deeper insight and understanding into the lives of police officers.

Significant themes pertaining to the individual participants and the group as a whole were identified and analyzed, as well as offering the reader a general experience of this phenomenon. The qualitative research method used in this research proved to be of value in obtaining the information required. The researcher offered recommendations for the participants, the field of mental health, as well as future research possibilities.

The phenomenon of the meaning attributed by police officers to their work and lives is a conglomeration of intricate variables. The participants displayed profound reactions to being employed in the SAPS, serving the community and fighting crime. These reactions were characterized by unique thinking and emotional patterns. Despite the many unique obstacles they face on a daily basis, the participants remain committed to their profession and serving the community.

Appendix A:

Application for permission to conduct research at the relevant Police Services branch

 UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND Department Of Psychology	Private Bag X1001 KWADLANGEZWA 3886 South Africa Tel: (035) 902 6000 (UZ) (035) 902 6602/6603 Fax: (035) 902 6082 Ref: J
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To whom it may concern

RE: Application for permission to conduct research at the [redacted] police station.


As part of my master's course in clinical psychology at the University of Zululand I am required to conduct a research thesis.

High crime rates and stress can have a detrimental effect on police officers overall well-being. This study will interview ten police officers.

It will allow them to express feelings with regards to their work situation and will increase knowledge on the impact of stress on police officers well-being, thus informing future interventions.


If there are any requests or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me in this regard.

Regards



Guillaume Walters-du Plooy
Clinical Psychologist Student

PP Dr. H. J. B. Ngweni (HOD) Psychology
for Dr. R. M. Dhlomo - Sibiya
Research Supervisor


R. M. Dhlomo

"restructured - reference"

Appendix B:
Consent form for all research participants

Consent form:

With this form I, _____ consent to participate in the research study approved by the University of Zululand for student Guillaume Walters- du Plooy (2007 11 929). I acknowledge the following:

- I understand that my participation is purely voluntary, and I reserve the right to withdraw from the research study at any given time without providing any reasons.
- I have been given adequate information regarding the research, its design, and the uses for which the results are to be used.
- The interview conducted is to be recorded on audio tape. This information is to be transcribed and added to the research appendix without any of my personal/biographical information.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the research.
- I understand that the personal information shared will be kept in the strictest confidence and only be used for the purposes necessary for the research to which I have consented to.

Age:

Gender:

Years of service in the police force:

Signed this day, _____

at _____

Participants signature _____

Researcher signature _____

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